

PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

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Foreword

At the dawn of a new millennium, America paused to celebrate its remarkable achievements and quickly set out to build an even better future. Employers and entrepreneurs created another 2 million new jobs, continuing to fuel what in February became the longest economic expansion in American history. With unemployment hitting a 30-year low, wages rose across the board, inflation held steady, and we paid off a record \$133 billion in public debt.

We also worked to widen the circle of opportunity, so that all people might acquire the skills they need to prosper in our new economy. As part of our New Markets Initiative, I visited East Palo Alto, California, and the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, highlighting our efforts to spread the benefits of new technologies to hard-pressed communities. To help close the digital divide, we opened the first of 1,000 Community Technology Centers across the country, so that Americans from all walks of life might tap the power of the Internet.

In a major scientific breakthrough, researchers completed their first map of the human genome, the complex genetic blueprint of human life. This milestone holds great promise for revolutionary medical treatments, but also raises the possibility of genetic discrimination. To combat this specter, I issued an Executive Order banning the use of genetic information to discriminate against Federal employees, an important first step in our effort to protect all Americans from similar discrimination.

As part of an ongoing effort to strengthen ties between the world's oldest democracy, the United States, and its biggest, India, I traveled to South Asia. There, I urged India and Pakistan to end their nuclear arms race and resume negotiations toward a permanent peace. We also continued to push for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. And at a Moscow summit, we renewed our commitment to blocking the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and explored further steps to reduce our nuclear arsenals.

At the World Economic Summit in Switzerland, I urged leaders to help make sure that globalization benefits workers and the environment. We continued to build a global coalition for debt relief in the developing world and to fund vaccines and treatments that could eliminate the ravages of AIDS and other deadly diseases. And in Germany, I was humbled to become the first American President to receive the Charlemagne Prize, awarded for America's contributions to peace and integration in Europe.

We worked hard for peace at home, too—especially in our continuing efforts to reduce gun violence. We kept pushing the Congress to support sensible gun safety legislation and funding for more gun prosecutors—issues at the heart of the Million Mom March on Mother's Day.

Despite substantial congressional opposition, we continued to push for the passage of both a strong Patients' Bill of Rights and a Medicare prescription drug benefit that would help older Americans afford costly prescriptions.

We also worked hard to protect our natural heritage. We created new national monuments to safeguard the Grand Canyon and the Giant Sequoias of California and proposed permanent conservation funding to ensure that America's greatest natural treasures will forever endure. To combat global warming, we proposed the Clean Air Partnership Fund to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution and outlined tax incentives for developing cleaner engines and renewable energy sources. We also dedicated more funding to climate change research.

With the strong support of the American people, our Nation got off to a strong start in the new century. We built upon our past successes and made smart investments for the future. If we continue to work hard, honor our values, and make wise choices together, America will indeed flourish as never before.

William Clinton

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the 42d President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period January 1–June 27, 2000. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against a tape recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed full-text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes, and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. That coverage provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary. Also included are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed full-text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Hoover, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of Frances D. McDonald, Managing Editor, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Gwen H. Estep, Chief. The Chief Editor of this book was Karen Howard Ashlin, assisted by Brad Brooks, Anna Glover, Christopher Gushman, Margaret A. Hemmig, Maxine Hill, Alfred Jones, Jennifer S. Mangum, Lisa N. Morris, Michael J. Sullivan, and Karen A. Thornton.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Printing Office under the direction of Michael F. DiMario, Public Printer.

Raymond A. Mosley
Director of the Federal Register

John W. Carlin
Archivist of the United States

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Cabinet

Secretary of State	Madeleine K. Albright
Secretary of the Treasury	Lawrence H. Summers
Secretary of Defense	William S. Cohen
Attorney General	Janet Reno
Secretary of the Interior	Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of Agriculture	Dan Glickman
Secretary of Commerce	William M. Daley
Secretary of Labor	Alexis M. Herman
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Andrew M. Cuomo
Secretary of Transportation	Rodney E. Slater
Secretary of Energy	Bill Richardson
Secretary of Education	Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Togo D. West, Jr.
United States Representative to the United Nations	Richard C. Holbrooke
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Carol M. Browner
United States Trade Representative	Charlene Barshefsky
Director of the Office of Management and Budget	Jacob J. Lew

Chief of Staff	John D. Podesta
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Martin N. Baily
Director of National Drug Control Policy	Barry R. McCaffrey
Administrator of the Small Business Administration	Aida Alvarez
Director of Central Intelligence	George J. Tenet
Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency	James Lee Witt

Administration of William J. Clinton

2000–2001

The President's Radio Address

January 1, 2000

The President. Good morning, and happy New Year—or, we should say, happy new millennium. Last night Hillary and I joined thousands of Americans on the National Mall to bid farewell to the remarkable century just past and to welcome the new millennium. The feelings of good will and hope that overcame us all will be among our most treasured moments, and we're deeply grateful that the celebrations were both jubilant and peaceful here and all around the world.

The First Lady. But our celebration didn't just begin at the stroke of midnight, nor will it end today. Two years ago the President and I launched the White House Millennium Project to inspire all Americans to reflect on where we have been as a nation, who we are, and what we want to be, a project "to honor the past and imagine the future."

I've traveled all across our country, encouraging citizens and communities to think of the gifts that America can give to the future, whether it's saving our historic treasures such as the Declaration of Independence or Thomas Edison's invention factory or the pueblos of the American Southwest, opening trails and planting millions of trees for future generations to enjoy, or teaching our schoolchildren to value their own families' and America's immigrant past. The President and I invite you to join these and so many other efforts to extend our celebration far into the new year and the new century.

The President. What is perhaps most remarkable about last night's celebration is the way it was shared all around the world. Millions of Americans, and billions of others across the globe, watched on television as midnight broke first in Asia, then in Europe, then Africa, South America, finally here in North America.

That people all over the planet could experience the same events at the same time would have been impossible for anyone to imagine 1,000 years ago, even 100. Yet, the growing interconnectedness of the world today, thanks to a global economy and technologies like the

Internet, is more than just a mark of how far we've come. It's the key to understanding where we're going and what we must do in the new millennium.

It's clear that our fate in America increasingly will be tied to the fate of other nations and other people around the world. We must have prosperous partners to trade with, secure democracies to share the burdens of peacekeeping, and mutual effort to combat challenges that know no borders, from terrorism to environmental destruction. To advance our interests and protect our values in this new, interconnected world, America clearly must remain engaged. We must help to shape events and not be shaped by them.

The First Lady. Yet, it is not just by our exertions abroad but by the example we set here at home that we can influence the world for the better. For in the new millennium, the world will be looking to America for leadership in meeting our great common challenges.

If we in America can extend prosperity to people and places in this country that have not yet felt it, then perhaps the global economy can bring a better life to the 1.4 billion people who live on less than one dollar a day. If we in America can provide all of our children with a world-class education, then perhaps it will be possible in the not-too-distant future for every child in the world to have a good education. And if we can build one America and make our diversity our greatest strength, then perhaps other nations will see the advantage of working to overcome their own ethnic and religious tensions.

The President. We begin the 21st century well poised to be that guiding light. Seldom in our history and never in my lifetime has our Nation enjoyed such a combination of widespread economic success, social solidarity, and national self-confidence, without an internal crisis or an overarching external threat. Never has the openness and dynamism of our society been more emulated by other countries. Never have our values

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of freedom, democracy, and opportunity been more ascendant in the world.

Nearly 55 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt said that “we cannot live alone at peace . . . our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away,” and, therefore, that we must be “citizens of the world, members of the human community.” I believe his words will prove even truer in the 21st century. With America fulfilling our ideals

and responsibilities, we can make this new century a time of unprecedented peace, freedom, and prosperity for our people and for all the citizens of the world.

Thank you. Happy New Year, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Prayer at Christmas II: Holy Eucharist Services

January 2, 2000

The President. Gathered in the spirit of truth and hope, in unity and peace, at the beginning of the new year, the dawn of a new century, and at the turn of the third millennium, let us offer before God our prayers and thanksgivings.

We give You thanks, O God, for the goodness and love You have made known to us in creation. You fill the world with beauty. Open our eyes to see Your handiwork in all creation and in one another.

Audience members. We thank You and praise You, O God.

The First Lady. We give You thanks, O God, for Your church throughout the world, and for religious faith and freedom in this country. Grant that all who seek You by many names may be united in Your truth, live together in Your love, and reveal Your glory in the world.

Audience members. We thank You and praise You, O God.

The President. We give You thanks, O God, for our Nation; for the gifts of liberty, freedom, and peace; for the women and men who have made this country strong. Give us, like them, a zeal for justice and truth, and grant that we and all the people of this land may, by Your grace, be strengthened to maintain our liberties and righteousness and peace.

Audience members. We thank You and praise You, O God.

The First Lady. We pray also for the world, for the leaders of the nations and for those who strive and work for peace, that all swords may be turned into plowshares and none may hurt or destroy.

Audience members. We thank You and praise You, O God.

The President. We give You thanks, O God, for creating all humanity in Your image, for the wonderful diversity of Your children, of Your races and creeds, cultures and tongues. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us Your presence in those who differ most from us.

Audience members. We thank You and praise You, O God.

The First Lady. In offering You thanks, O God, we become aware of our failings and shortcomings. Time after time, we fail to strive for the vision and world You hold out to us. We do not honor one another. We abuse Your creation. We take for granted our resources, and we fail to recognize Your gracious hand in the harvests of land and sea. Grant us a respect for your whole world.

Audience members. Forgive us, heal us, and restore us, O God.

The President. Time after time, O God, we fail to follow Your ways and to live up to the hopes of our Founding Fathers and Mothers. We turn from the path of justice and peace to follow the way of hatred and anger. So move our hearts that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease, and that, in Your wisdom and love, we may live with our world family in true justice and peace.

Audience members. Forgive us, heal us, and restore us, O God.

The First Lady. Time after time, O God, we hoard the bounty of Your goodness. We store

up goods for ourselves and ignore the cry of the poor and hungry. We store up liberty and justice for ourselves and ignore the cry of the oppressed. Look with favor upon the people of this and every land who live with injustice, terror, poverty, disease, and death, and grant that we who are so richly blessed may, with Your help, respond with costly love and compassion.

Audience members. Forgive us, heal us, and restore us, O God.

The President. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, as we awaken to this second morning of a new millennium, help us to remember that all we are and all we do begins with You, for whom a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

So we begin this jubilee year in humility, with profound thanks for the divine light first revealed 2,000 years ago that has brought us now to this sacred place today. Each in our own way, we thank You for the blessings of this life. For me and my family, I give You thanks for good health, good fortune, and the opportunity to serve the American people.

We thank You for the amazing grace You have shown in getting us through and beyond our individual and collective sins and trials. Through the darkest hours of the 20th century, the shameful trauma of racial oppression, the pain and sacrifice of war, the fear and deprivation of depression, when all we could do was walk by faith, it was Your guiding light that saw us through.

We thank You for the promise of the new century and ask Your guidance and grace in helping us to make the most of it; to free our

children of hunger, neglect, and war; to ease the burdens of the less fortunate; to strengthen the bonds of family; to preserve and protect our earthly home; to use new advances in science and technology to lift all the human family and draw us all closer together.

Finally, we thank You for the rich and wonderful diversity of human life with which You have graced this planet and ask You to give us the strength and wisdom to give up our fear, distrust, and hatred of those who are different. Teach us instead to learn from each other and celebrate our differences, secure in the knowledge that we are all Your children.

Our Constitution tells us You created us all equal. Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves. The Koran says we must do unto all men as you wish to have done to you and reject for others what you would reject for yourself. The Talmud instructs us, should anyone turn aside the right of the stranger, it is as though he were to turn aside the right of the most high God.

By Your grace, we have survived in spite of our blindness to this, Your truth. Help us now to accept at long last the enduring truth that the most important fact of life is not wealth or power or beauty or scientific advance but our kinship as brothers and sisters and our oneness as children of God.

This, Holy Father, is our prayer for the new millennium.

Audience members. Amen.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. at Washington National Cathedral.

Statement on the Death of Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.

January 2, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., today.

In both wartime and peacetime, Admiral Zumwalt exemplified the ideal of service to our Nation. He was a genuine patriot with an astonishing life story. A distinguished veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, he rose to become the Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy's top post. As CNO, he worked vigorously

to improve our sailors' quality of life and devoted himself to eliminating discrimination in the Navy.

But more than most Americans who have served our country with distinction, Admiral Zumwalt paid a deeply personal price for his dedication when his son died of an ailment related to service in Vietnam. Admiral Zumwalt became a great champion of veterans with war-related health problems. He established the first

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national bone marrow donor program to help cancer patients in need. He never stopped fighting for the interests, the rights, and the dignity of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and their families.

Admiral Zumwalt was one of the greatest models of integrity, leadership, and genuine hu-

manity our Nation has ever produced. I was proud to award him the Medal of Freedom in 1998 for his lifetime of dedicated public service.

At this time of sorrow, our prayers and sympathies go out to his family and friends.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Peacekeeping December 28, 1999

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to transmit herewith the 1998 Annual Report to the Congress on Peacekeeping. The report is required by section 4(d) of the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264), as amended, and the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103-236).

The report provides an account of how the United States used peacekeeping last year to promote regional stability and to advance U.S. interests.

United Nations and other peacekeeping operations also helped us protect our interests before they were directly threatened, and ensured that other nations shared with us the risks and costs of maintaining international stability.

We continued to promote greater discipline in decision-making regarding multilateral peace operations in national capitals and at the United Nations. This includes increased focus on key

questions about the mandate, size, costs, duration, and exit strategy for peacekeeping operations before they are approved.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that peacekeeping remains a viable option for dealing with international conflicts.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; John Warner, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 3, 2000.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya December 29, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice,

stating that the Libyan emergency declared in 1986 is to continue in effect beyond January 7, 2000, to the *Federal Register* for publication. Similar notices have been sent annually to the Congress and published in the *Federal Register*. The most recent notice was signed on December 30, 1998, and appeared in the *Federal Register* on January 4, 1999.

The crisis between the United States and Libya that led to the declaration of a national

emergency on January 7, 1986, has not been resolved. Despite the United Nations Security Council's suspension of U.N. sanctions against Libya upon the Libyan government's hand over of the Pan Am 103 bombing suspects, there are still concerns about the Libyan government's support for terrorist activities and its noncompliance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 731 (1992), 748 (1992), and 883 (1993). For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure

to the Government of Libya to reduce its ability to support international terrorism.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 3, 2000. The notice of December 29, 1999, is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus December 31, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1 to November 30, 1999. The previous submission covered events during August and September 1999.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan announced on November 13 the start of proximity talks in New York on December 3 to work towards a resolution to the long-standing Cyprus dispute. The goal of these talks is to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

This welcome news was highlighted during my trip to Turkey and Greece from November 15-20 as a positive step toward bringing about a just and lasting solution for all Cypriots and improving Greek-Turkish relations for a more secure southern Europe.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 3, 2000.

Remarks on the Renomination of Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan and an Exchange With Reporters January 4, 2000

The President. You're supposed to stand over here today.

Chairman Greenspan. Over there?

The President. This is the only time I'm interfering with the independence of the Fed. [Laughter] You have to come over here.

Good morning. Ladies and gentlemen, the United States is enjoying an extraordinary amount of economic success, for which we are

all grateful. It seems clear that it is the result of the convergence of a number of forces: a great entrepreneurial spirit; stunning technological innovations; well-managed businesses; hard-working and productive men and women in our work force; expanding markets for our goods and services; a complete commitment to fiscal discipline; and of course, a Federal Reserve that has made independent, professional,

and provably wise judgments about our monetary policy.

Since I took office 7 years ago, one of the hallmarks of our economic strategy has been a respect for the independence and the integrity of the Federal Reserve. I have always believed the best way for the executive branch to work with the Fed is to let the Chairman and the members do their jobs independently, while we do our job to promote fiscal discipline, to open markets, to invest in people and technologies. That has given us strong economic growth with low inflation and low unemployment.

Thanks to the hard work of the American people, we now enjoy the longest peacetime expansion in our history. In February it will become the longest economic expansion ever. With productivity high, inflation low, and real wages rising, it is more than the stock markets which have boomed. This has helped ordinary people all over America. We have a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, a 20-year low in poverty rates, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty in 46 years.

Clearly, wise leadership from the Fed has played a very large role in our strong economy. That is why today I am pleased to announce my decision to renominate Alan Greenspan as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. For the past 12 years, Chairman Greenspan has guided the Federal Reserve with a rare combination of technical expertise, sophisticated analysis, and old-fashioned common sense. His wise and steady leadership has inspired confidence, not only here in America but all around the world.

I believe the productive but appropriate relationship that our administration has enjoyed with the Fed has helped America play a critical and leading role in dealing with the Asian financial crisis and many of the other things that we have faced over the last 7 years.

Chairman Greenspan's leadership has always been crucial to these successes. With his help, we were able also last year to enact historic financial reform legislation, repealing Glass-Steagall and modernizing our financial systems for the 21st century. He was also, I think it's worth noting, one of the very first in his profession to recognize the power and impact of new technologies on the new economy, how they

changed all the rules and all the possibilities. In fact, his devotion to new technologies has been so significant, I've been thinking of taking Alan.com public; then we can pay the debt off even before 2015.

On a more serious note, let me say again, this Chairman's leadership has been good not just for the American economy and the mavens of finance on Wall Street; it has been good for ordinary Americans. Even though my staff makes sure that I never give Chairman Greenspan advice, they have not been able to stop me from asking him for his advice. So I would also like to thank him for the many conversations we've had over the last 7 years in our ongoing attempt to understand this amazing and ever-changing economy.

Finally, I would like to thank him for his willingness to serve another term. After these years of distinguished public service and at a pinnacle of success, he could be forgiven if he were willing to walk away to a more leisurely and, doubtless, more financially lucrative life. His continued devotion to public service should be a cause of celebration in this country and around the world, and it's something for which I am very grateful.

Mr. Chairman.

[At this point, Chairman Greenspan made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you.

Stock Market

Q. Is the market irrational?

Chairman Greenspan. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], I—

Q. Do you stick by your previous statements on the stock market?

Chairman Greenspan. You surely don't want me to answer that.

Q. Yes, I do.

Chairman Greenspan. You do? Well, I—I don't think I will. [Laughter] Helen, you've been asking me questions now for decades—

Q. Since you reformed the Social Security system.

Chairman Greenspan. —and I usually answer them. So my record's not bad.

Renomination

Q. Mr. President, did it take any persuading to get Mr. Greenspan to agree to serve another term if he's confirmed?

The President. No, I asked him and he said yes. I wish—you know, when we finish here, I have to go back to Shepherdstown. I wish I could have so much success in the Middle East peace talks—I just ask them, and they say yes, the way Mr. Greenspan did. [Laughter] It would be quite a joy.

Q. Are you going today?

Q. Mr. Greenspan, what factors played in your decision to stay? After a decade there, one might expect you might want to retire or move on.

Chairman Greenspan. There is a certain, really quite unimaginable intellectual interest that one gets from working in the context where you have to put broad theoretical and fairly complex conceptual issues to a test in the marketplace. Unlike a straight academic career, you end up fully recognizing that hypotheses matter, that actions matter, and the ideas that you come up with matter. That, as I indicated, is really quite an unusual thing for an economist to deal with. And as I think Larry Summers probably knows as well if not better than I, it's a type of activity which forces economists like ourselves to be acutely aware of the fact that our actions have consequences and it's crucially important for us to try to determine in advance what those consequences are. And that is a challenge, which I must say to you, is, as I said to the President before, it's like eating peanuts. You keep doing it, keep doing it, and you never get tired, because the future is always ultimately unknowable.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, how are the talks going in the Middle East—on the Middle East, Syria-Israel?

The President. Well, we just started, but all the issues are on the table. And it's a pretty full table, as you might imagine.

Q. Are they going to get together?

The President. We're working at it. I'm going back up today, and I'm hopeful.

Q. Are you disappointed at all with the pace of yesterday's talks and that the trilateral did not take place?

The President. No. No, that was partly my decision. We just had a lot of other work to do, and I'm going back today. I think they're both very serious. I think they both want an agreement. I think there are difficult issues, and we'll just have to hope that we work it out.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, everyone. Thank you.

Q. How about the reports that the Israelis need \$17 billion, sir?

The President. What?

Q. The reports the Israelis need \$17 billion—

The President. I don't—excuse me, I've lost my cufflink—I think there will be some costs associated with the security rearrangements. And then obviously, over the long run, as I have made clear, we need to make a contribution, as do our friends in Europe and hopefully some in Asia, to the long-term economic development of a regional Middle East economy. So there will be some costs involved there, over a period of years, not just in one year.

We're trying to determine exactly what that should be. And of course, before I can make any commitments, I will have to consult with the congressional leadership in both Houses and in both parties and some of the committee leaders as well. And I have made that clear. So we're attempting to ascertain what the general outlines of the costs would be, over how many years those costs can be spread, and then I will have to do some serious consultation with the congressional leadership before I can do more than say I would support this.

We want to have a high probability of success, and I believe that in America, Americans of all political parties and all stripes desperately want us to see a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and understand that in the next 3 to 4 months we have an unparalleled opportunity that we have to seize. So I'm quite hopeful about that.

Press Secretary Lockhart. Thank you.

Residence in Chappaqua, NY

Q. [Inaudible]—help Mrs. Clinton move to New York?

The President. I have been helping. We've been working at it. We've been boxing things up and figuring out what to leave here, what to move there. It's been a rather interesting challenge over the holidays. But I've enjoyed it very much.

Thank you.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Is \$17 million—\$17 billion the right figure?

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The President. I don't know yet. What we're working on now up in West Virginia is sort of figuring out what the process for the next few days is going to be. And then we have to start working on that and figuring out what the specific jobs are that we would be asked to help finance, whether we could get any others to help, and over how many years it would have to be done. Then I'll have to go talk to the Congress. And I'm just not in a position yet to say what dollar amount I would ask our Congress for.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration Regulations

Q. Were you aware of these OSHA regulations, sir, about people having to have OSHA regulations when they work at home? Did you hear anything about that?

The President. No, not until I read about them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the Legislative Agenda and an Exchange With Reporters January 5, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. I just had a very good meeting with Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt about our legislative priorities for the coming year and the unparalleled opportunity we now have to take actions that could benefit America for the rest of the new century.

This is truly a remarkable moment. Who would have thought 7 years ago, when we had record budget deficits and high unemployment, that we would begin the new century with record surpluses, the lowest unemployment in 30 years, and next month the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States?

Never before have we enjoyed at once so much prosperity, social progress, and national self-confidence with so little internal crisis or external threat. Never have we had such an opportunity and, therefore, such a responsibility to address our long-term challenges, keeping our prosperity going by maintaining fiscal discipline and making America debt-free for the first time since 1835, the challenge of spreading our prosperity to people in places still left behind, helping parents to succeed at home and at work, preparing for the retirement of the baby boom generation, and most of all, meeting the challenge of giving all our children a world-class education.

President Kennedy once said the time to fix the roof is when the Sun is shining. Well, today the Sun is shining on America, and the roofs that need most fixing in America are the roofs of our Nation's schools. Anyone who visits

schools regularly, as I have, will not be surprised to learn that a third of all our schools need extensive repairs or replacement. I've been to schools not only with leaky roofs but with window frames so old that if you try to powerwash the windows, the glass would pop out; with electrical service so inadequate that if you plug a new computer into the wall, the circuit breaker cuts out.

We can't expect our students to meet high academic standards if their schools don't even meet high building standards. We know that antiquated classrooms do get in the way of learning. One study found that students in high quality school buildings did better on achievement tests than those in low quality school buildings, even when both sets of students were from similar economic and social backgrounds.

That's why I'm pleased to announce today that in the budget my administration is preparing, I will call for a new initiative to repair, renovate, and renew our Nation's school buildings. First, my budget will offer a new program, funded at \$1.3 billion in the first year, of grants and interest-free loans to help the Nation's neediest school districts make urgent repairs on their schools. If we continue this over 5 years, we could renovate 41,000 schools.

Second, the budget will include, as it has in the past, a tax credit to help build or modernize 6,000 schools nationwide so we can take our children out of trailers and put them in modern classrooms.

Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, and I agree on the need to repair older classrooms and build new ones. We know it should be a top priority this year, and we intend to make it so. We also agree on other priorities as well: a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights; sensible gun safety legislation; the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act"; strengthening Social Security; modernizing Medicare with a voluntary prescription drug benefit and strengthening it; and raising the minimum wage.

We've seen bipartisan support for all these programs in Congress. We know that outside Washington, none of these are partisan issues. In the first days of the new millennium, there is a new sense of hope and renewal across our country. We can build on that spirit not just to make this a changing of the calendar but to make it a changing of the times. Our New Year's resolution is to reach across party lines to help our children reach for the sky.

Now I'd like to ask Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt to say a few words.

[At this point, Senator Thomas A. Daschle and Representative Richard A. Gephardt made brief remarks.]

Q. Mr. President—on that point, Mr. President, how convinced are you—

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Can I ask you about the decision of the INS to return Elian Gonzalez to his father in Cuba?

The President. Well, the INS followed the law and the procedures and made the decision that they made after an exhaustive review of the facts. And I told you when we started this that I would do my best to keep this decision out of politics. We have done that. We have not been involved in it. And they, I'm convinced, followed the law and the facts, did the best they could with the decision.

Legislative Agenda and 2000 Campaign

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned that there may not be as much support within the Democratic caucus as you'd like for your program? Since every issue that is passed is one less issue that can be used in an election to retake Congress.

The President. Well, the short answer to your question is no, because I think if you look at the progress we have made in the last 3 or

4 years, it has not weakened the Democrats. The people hire us to come to work here every day. We all draw a paycheck paid for by the taxpayers. And we came to Washington because we wanted to do things for America. I think that it does not hurt the cause of the Democratic Party to pass these reforms.

I think there will always be things that we disagree on that we won't be able to resolve; there will always be differences of opinion that will shape the coming election. And that is in the very nature of democracy. So I don't believe that it in any way weakens the position of my party in the coming elections to do things that are good for America now.

Q. With Social Security and Medicare, are you prepared in either your State of the Union or your budget to propose structural reforms or, as you've indicated in the past, because of the political realities, the political danger of these issues, do you have to wait, get behind closed doors and walk out with Trent Lott and Hastert to announce it?

The President. Well, first of all, I think there is a process that has been established that will start in the Senate for dealing with Medicare next year. And I am very hopeful that it will produce an agreement there.

On Social Security, as I have repeatedly pointed out, there is one thing we could do that would take Social Security beyond the life of the baby boom generation, which is simply to dedicate the interest savings in the national debt from the Social Security surplus to the Social Security Trust Fund. If we just did that, a simple bill, we could take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

If we want to go to 75 years instead of 50, then the best way to do that is to continue the work I've tried to do last year. You know, we had a big Social Security meeting. We had over 40 Members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans, over here at Blair House to talk about this. And I am prepared to meet with them and to work with them to try to work through this. And if there is a willingness to do it, I am certainly more than willing to do my part and to meet them halfway on it.

Residence in Chappaqua, NY

Q. How often are you going to visit your new house?

Jan. 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Q. Any advice for commuter couples? You are the most famous commuter couple now. [Laughter] It's a fair question.

The President. I don't think we've had enough experience to offer advice. But we're about to go up there and start moving stuff into our house. That's what we're going to do when we leave here.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House, prior to his departure for Chappaqua, NY. In his remarks, he referred to Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Senator Daschle and Representative Gephardt.

Videotaped Remarks for Dr. George Washington Carver National Recognition Day January 5, 2000

It's an honor for me to send my greetings to all of you in Santa Clara. I thank you for what you're doing to help instill the joy of science in our children, to help close the digital divide, and to honor the legacy of George Washington Carver.

Dr. Carver overcame enormous obstacles to become one of our greatest scientists and teachers. He was born to a slave mother on a Missouri farm, orphaned from an early age, survived great illness, and often was the victim of bigotry and hate. It wasn't until his late twenties that he was able to obtain a high school education.

And even as a child, Dr. Carver was known for talking to God through flowers and other plants. It's no wonder that agriculture became his ministry to mankind. At Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, Carver applied the almost magical possibilities of chemistry to the fields and farms of the South. He created 300 useful products from peanuts and more than 100 from sweet potatoes, spawning numerous industries. He helped save the South's depleted soils. And no person deserves more credit for liberating the South from its reliance on cotton.

Dr. Carver was also a great humanitarian. In everything he did, he was motivated by a deep desire to help poor, struggling farmers lead

healthier, happier, more prosperous lives. And as if his scientific contributions were not great enough, he donated his entire life savings to help establish the Carver Research Foundation at Tuskegee.

Dr. Carver once said that he tried to lead his life "in the spirit of a little child seeking only to know the truth and follow it." That is the spirit of discovery that the Healing Institute and the Santa Clara Alliance of Black Educators are helping to nurture in our children today. I am deeply grateful for that.

Congratulations to all the Carver scholars and to all of you who are helping our children soar beyond limitations. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 12:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room on December 16, 1999, for transmission on January 5, 2000, to the Santa Clara County Carver Scholars Program meeting at the Santa Clara County Convention Center in Santa Clara, CA. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Security Strategy
January 5, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, I am transmitting a report on the National Security Strategy of the United States.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Exchange With Reporters in Chappaqua, New York
January 6, 2000

The First Lady. Good morning!

The President. Good morning, everybody.

Residence in Chappaqua

Q. So are you now officially New Yorkers?

The President. We're here. Let me say to start that we're delighted to be here. We like this house very much. And we at least have put up all the boxes we brought up here so far. This is the first home we have had since January of 1983, 17 years ago, when we moved back into the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock. So it's exciting. We're seeing some things we haven't seen since we moved to the White House and some things we haven't seen in 17 years. We've got a table in there that we bought shortly after we got married, in 1975, that we haven't used in a long time. So we've had a lot of fun, and I've enjoyed it very much.

The First Lady. We're glad to have you here this morning because this is a lot of excitement and hard work for us, but we're so pleased that we are finally here and moved in and looking forward to many, many happy days here in the days and months ahead.

The President. We also want to thank our neighbors who have been long-suffering with all the attention—

The First Lady. Right.

The President. —that the house has received.

The First Lady. And all of the officials here in Chappaqua and New Castle and Westchester County, who have been so helpful and cooperative with the Secret Service and the other peo-

ple who are a part of the President's official duties.

Q. Mr. President, will you be shifting your voter registration to New York, so you can vote for a certain Senate candidate?

The President. Yes, I've got a particular interest in the election up here next year, so I want to make sure my vote counts. I expect to vote in the election in New York.

Q. What did you do last night? What did you do for dinner? Did you have friends in?

The First Lady. We had friends—we've had a lot of friends helping us, and one of my good friends here who lives nearby came over with her son and brought dinner for us, and then her son helped Bill move some things that needed to be moved. And we had other friends come over who have been helping us. But mostly what we did was unpack boxes, put things up, try to make decisions about where to hang paintings or move furniture, and make a long list of all the things we have to do that aren't done yet that are going to have to be tended to.

Q. Are you going back to Washington today to do that?

The First Lady. Yes, we're going back today, and we'll be packing up more things and moving more things in the next couple of weeks. So it will be a process. We're not going to be totally moved in and everything in place for a while. But it's a lot of fun for us to be able to do this again, for the first time in such a long time. Because we of course worked very hard in the White House and spent an enormous amount of time and effort trying to keep

the White House in good shape and do some additional work that needed to be done there, but it's different when you're doing it in your own home.

Q. Have you thought any more about a schedule for how often you will both be here?

Q. Mrs. Clinton and also Mr. President, the mayor, as you may have heard a couple of days ago, said that both of you, the Clintons, he said, have been egregious violators of soft money, both in how it's collected and how it's distributed. Your reaction, both of you?

The First Lady. We're going to talk about our house this morning, which we are very happy about being in and being New Yorkers. And we'll leave that to another time.

President's Future Plans

Q. Mr. President, are you going to—we haven't heard from you. [*Laughter*]

The President. No. [*Laughter*] No, I keep reading all these things. I've not given very much thought to this. I'm going to work very hard on finishing my library and center. And I'm going to devote all my attention to being President. I've got a big agenda this year. We're going back now, and I have to go back to Shepherdstown this afternoon. But I've had no discussions with anybody about that kind of move. And I was amazed to see that in the paper. No one's even suggested that.

Gays in the Military

Q. Mr. President, last night the Vice President in the debates said that he'll ask military commanders about their feelings on gays serving in the military before appointing people to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Is this litmus test the way it should work?

The President. Well, I think the real problem is—let me go back to what happened, because, as you know, my view was—and I will restate my view. The Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits homosexual contacts. So my view was, if someone was willing to take the pledge to observe the Uniform Code of Military Justice, they shouldn't have to lie about being gay and being in the military. Then, let me remind you what happened. The Congress voted, by a veto-proof majority, against that position. So that's how we got to "don't ask, don't tell."

My focus has been on trying to make the policy work the way the military commanders said it would work back in 1993, which it has

not been doing. No one disputes that. To Secretary Cohen's credit, back in August we announced some new guidelines, which have now been implemented, for training and for implementation, which I think will significantly improve the present situation over the next few months.

Now the Vice President and Senator Bradley say they want to go back to the position that I advocated in '92 and '93. In order to do that, the Congress will have to change the law, I believe. I don't think that the military and the President have the authority to do it. Now, you could go back and look at the constitutional arguments and do some research, but I think a lot of this debate—I think a lot of people have actually forgotten that Congress put into the law the present policy.

And so what I'm going to do is spend the next year trying to make sure that we do what was intended and what I announced would be done, after extensive consultation with our commanders back in 1993. I believe that the next President, if he wants to change the policy, will have to get the Congress to change the law.

Q. A quick followup on that. Wouldn't litmus tests like that have disqualified somebody like Colin Powell from serving as Joint Chiefs?

The President. I think that I'm going to leave the appointment process to the next President. I'm not going to get involved in this election right now. I think that there have been, we know, going back all the way to the First World War, we have clear evidence that there have been gays in the military who have served with great distinction. I think it's quite interesting that most of the Vietnam veterans, combat veterans in the United States Congress, including Senators Robb and Senator Kerry, just to mention two, have felt that—both Senator Kerry and Kerrey and Senator Robb have felt that the policy ought to be changed and supported my original position.

So I would like to find some way for people to be honest, to obey the law, and to serve with distinction in the military. So I think that is where our focus ought to be, and the next President will have to figure out how to do that. But I think there will have to be a change in the law.

Q. Mr. President, the polls show that your wife is trailing right now. Do you have any advice for her?

The First Lady. Thank you so much.

Residence in Chappaqua

Q. What was the first night like?

The President. We had a wonderful time. We don't have a television yet. [Laughter]

Q. So how did you watch the debate?

The President. We didn't. They have a tape for me. I'm going to watch it tonight when I get home. So I had a tape. So we brought up our CD player, and I gave Hillary one of those South African radios that you crank—have you seen them?

The First Lady. Solar-powered radios.

The President. We bought them—and I got it in Washington at the Discovery store. You crank it up, and it's run either by solar power or by hand crank, but you never need a plug or anything. So we listened to the radio last night. It was quite wonderful.

Q. [Inaudible]—what it was like being in the house for the first time in 17 years, your own house?

The First Lady. We loved it. Well, it was a little overwhelming because there is so much to be done, and we stayed up very late, working on getting things organized and put away. And then we're going to be back together next week, and we'll keep the process going until we finally get things moved in.

But it was wonderful having a chance to be here. My mother is with us. We just had a great time.

Q. How late were you up?

The First Lady. Oh, gosh.

The President. Past 1 a.m.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:28 a.m. outside the Chappaqua residence. During the exchange, a reporter referred to Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Message on the Observance of Id al-Fitr, 2000

January 6, 2000

Warm greetings to Muslims across the United States and around the world as the holy month of Ramadan comes to a close and you celebrate the festival of Id al-Fitr.

The month of fasting that Muslims everywhere are completing is not only a sacred duty; it is also a powerful teaching, a gift from Islam to the world. It reminds not just Muslims but all people of our obligation to aid those who face poverty and suffering. It reminds us that we must work together to build a better, more humane world.

We hope and pray for a world where all faiths are respected; where people of different beliefs and ethnic backgrounds can live together in harmony, finding strength and joy in our differences and in our common humanity. And we pray that the new moon will bring a new era of peace between nations—in the Middle East and all across the world—so people can emerge from the shadows of violence and make better lives for their children.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks on the National Plan for Information Systems Protection and an Exchange With Reporters

January 7, 2000

The President. Good morning. I want to thank Secretary Daley and President Rose of James Madison University, who has worked with eight other institutions of higher education to do information technology security training, and Dick

Clarke from the NSC and all the others who worked on this project.

I want to talk just a moment about steps we are taking today to defend our citizens from those who would use cyberspace to do us harm.

There has never been a time like this in which we have the power to create knowledge and the power to create havoc, and both those powers rest in the same hands.

We live in an age when one person sitting at one computer, can come up with an idea, travel through cyberspace, and take humanity to new heights. Yet, someone can sit at the same computer, hack into a computer system and potentially paralyze a company, a city, or a government.

Thanks to the hard work of many people, our computer systems were ready for Y2K. But that experience did underscore how really interconnected we all are. Today, our critical systems, from power structures to air traffic control, are connected and run by computers. We must make those systems more secure so that America can be more secure.

Today we are releasing a national plan to defend America's cyberspace, the product of a 3-year effort. This plan is not the end of the discussion, but the beginning of a dialog with Congress, with the American people, and especially with the private sector. We need to do more to bring people into the field of computer security. That's why I am proposing a new program that will offer college scholarships to students in the field of computer security in exchange for their public service afterward. This program will create a new generation of computer security specialists who will work to defend our Nation's computers.

We also need to accelerate and broaden our research into computer security. Today I am proposing to create a new institute that will fill research gaps that neither public nor private sectors are filling today. The Institute for Information Infrastructure Protection will bring to bear the finest computer scientists and engineers from the private sector, from universities, and from other research facilities to find ways to close these gaps.

As part of the 2001 budget, I am requesting \$91 million for these and other reforms as part of an overall \$2 billion budget to help meet our security challenges. I will work hard to get these measures passed. I will continue to work equally hard to uphold the privacy rights of the American people, as well as the proprietary rights of American businesses. As I said before, it is essential that we do not undermine liberty in the name of liberty.

Information technology has helped to create the unprecedented prosperity we enjoy at the end of the 20th century. This morning we will announce that the unemployment rate for all of this past year was 4.2 percent. That's the lowest in 30 years, the lowest annual unemployment rate since 1969, the lowest annual minority unemployment rates for African-Americans and Hispanics ever recorded. It is important to recognize the role technology has played in this remarkable economic prosperity. But it is also important to recognize the challenges that we face out there in the security area.

I hope that this will be a completely non-partisan issue and that we will work together to ensure that information technology will create unprecedented prosperity in the 21st century, in an atmosphere and environment that makes all Americans more secure.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. One each. Go ahead, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Governor Bush of Florida is appealing to you to rescind the INS order regarding Elian Gonzalez. Is that something you would even consider?

The President. I believe that they followed the law and the procedures. This is a volatile and difficult case. And those who want to challenge it will have to follow the law and the procedures. I think that's the only way to do this. We need to keep this out of the political process as much as possible, within the established legal channels.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Are you satisfied with the cooperation that you've been getting from the Israeli and Syrian negotiators in Shepherdstown?

The President. Yes. This is difficult stuff. This is very hard. But let me say, they're working hard, and they're trying to find ways to resolve their differences. And they're trying to imagine the end of the road here. It's a difficult, difficult set of negotiations, but we're working in a steady way, and I'm satisfied that everybody is working in good faith.

Q. How long do you expect this to take?

The President. I don't know—until we finish.

Q. Mr. President, how do you see your role in Shepherdstown to get these talks moving?

The President. Oh, I don't want to characterize that. I just try to get people together and identify what they have in common and identify what their differences are, try to get people to keep in mind the big picture at the end, what we want the—in this case, what we hope and pray the Middle East will look like in 5 years or 10 years from now. And then try to work these things through to the end. But we're just trying to be helpful, and I hope we are, and we're working at it.

I hope you'll wish us well, and I've got to get up there.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:28 a.m. in the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Shepherdstown, WV. In his remarks, he referred to James Madison University President Linwood Rose; National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-terrorism Richard A. Clarke, National Security Council; and Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father. A reporter referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Statement on Proposed Funding for the Little Rock Air Force Base *January 7, 2000*

I am pleased to announce today that my budget for next year will include \$30 million for a C-130J flight training simulator at the Little Rock Air Force Base. The Little Rock Air Force Base, the preeminent training location for C-130's, has long served a highly significant role in our Nation's system of national defense.

In fiscal year 2002 my budget provides \$10 million for a facility to house this simulator. I am also calling for upgrades to the existing simulators—one each in fiscal year 2001, fiscal year 2002, and fiscal year 2003—for a total of over \$12 million. Also, due to the strong efforts of Representative Snyder, we will also fund over \$9 million for a much-needed fitness facility at the base.

Finally, my budget will call for four C-130J's, two for the Air Force and two for the Marines.

I believe the simulators, the associated facilities, and the planes I am announcing today will support the Little Rock Air Force Base as it continues to serve the vital function of training our Nation's pilots, and will ensure a strong C-130 fleet, continuing its vital role in protecting U.S. national interests.

I want to specifically thank Senator Blanche Lincoln and Representative Vic Snyder for their tireless efforts on behalf of the base. Without their attention to every detail of this program, I would not be making this announcement today. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that these important components are fully funded in next year's budget.

The President's Radio Address *January 8, 2000*

Good morning. January is the time of year when many of us make New Year's resolutions and work hard to keep them. Today I want to talk about steps we're taking to keep a resolution of mine: making sure women and men get the health care they need to have strong children and healthy families.

First, our administration has worked hard to make sure all women have access to prenatal care. We know when women get medical attention before a baby is born, that child is much more likely to be born healthy. And good health is the most precious gift we can offer a child or a family.

Second, we worked with Congress to make sure that every woman covered by Federal Government health insurance has reproductive health care coverage, including prescription contraceptives. That was a significant step for more than a million American women, and it set a standard for insurance coverage around the country.

Third, when I took office, we faced an epidemic of teen pregnancy—children having children. Over the last 7 years, we've reached out to community groups, schools, and health professionals working in an amazing network of American citizens from all walks of life. And together, the American people have cut teen pregnancy by 15 percent.

Fourth, we've made a broad range of family planning and sex education programs more widely available for all Americans. And by making sure women have family planning choices, we are helping to make abortion more rare.

Today I'm glad to announce we will be increasing funds for family planning and reproductive health care by \$35 million next year. My budget for 2001 will include \$274 million in grants for clinics and community-based health services that reach more than 5 million women and families.

That money will help make contraceptives available and keep them affordable. It will fund counseling for teenagers and support educational programs that encourage young people to postpone sexual activity. It will help more than 4,600 clinics screen for cancer, AIDS, and other diseases. And it will fund partnerships with community organizations and health care professionals who are reaching out to teenagers and others at risk.

These services make a critical difference in people's lives. They help working women who otherwise could not afford medical tests that may save their lives. They help AIDS patients who desperately need counseling and assistance. They provide support and information to young people who may not know the basics of caring for a newborn child. They give women access

to the full range of reproductive health care before and during pregnancy. It's in the interest of every American that no one miss out on this kind of care and that no child miss the chance for a healthy start.

America has also been a leader in providing health and family planning assistance for women and families in developing countries. We do this because it's right and because it will help build the kind of world we want for our own children.

Around the world, 150 million women would like to choose the timing of their pregnancies, but have no access to family planning of any kind. In the developing world, the complications of pregnancy kill more than one woman every single minute, because so many lack the most basic health care. These are personal tragedies, and they have profound consequences for families and communities. Where children are born healthy and mothers and families gain power over their lives, communities are stronger; economic progress is faster; and the future is brighter for everyone.

My budget for 2001 will increase funding for international family planning by almost \$170 million. I am asking Congress to support these funds, and to provide them without restrictions that hamper the work of family planning organizations and even bar them from discussing or debating reproductive health policies.

We all agree that we want to save lives, help women and children stay healthy, and empower families to take responsibility for their own choices. Supporting reproductive health and family planning is one of the very best ways to do that. We know it works. At home and abroad, we don't have a woman's life or a child's healthy start to waste.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:03 p.m. on January 7 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq's
Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions
January 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was transmitted on Oc-

tober 1, 1999. I shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 10.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Extension
of Normal Trade Relations Status for Certain Former Eastern Bloc States
January 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 21, 1994, I determined and reported to the Congress that the Russian Federation was not in violation of paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, or paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of that Act. On June 3, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine were not in violation of the same provisions, and I made an identical determination on December 5, 1997, with respect to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These actions allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations for these countries and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The report indicates continued compliance of these countries with international standards concerning freedom of emigration.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 10.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National
Emergency With Respect to Libya
January 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); section

204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); and section 505(c) of the International Security

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and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa–9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month report on the national emergency with respect to Libya that was declared in Executive Order 12543 of January 7, 1986.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 10.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Taliban

January 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Taliban (Afghanistan) that was declared in Executive Order 13129 of July 4, 1999.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 10.

Remarks at a Celebration Commemorating the End of Ramadan

January 10, 2000

Thank you very much. *Eid Mubarak*, and welcome to the White House. Naimah Saleem, you did a fine job for a 14-year-old—or a 24-year-old or a 44-year-old. I thought she was terrific. Thank you very much; thank you. And Imam Hendi, thank you so much for your words, your prayer, and for serving as the first Muslim chaplain of my alma mater, Georgetown University. Congratulations. We're glad to have you here. Thank you, sir.

I'd like to welcome others from the administration who've joined us: our National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger; Assistant Secretary of State Harold Koh. We also have a White House Fellow here, Khalid Azim; and Dr. Islam Siddiqui, the senior adviser to the Secretary of Agriculture and the highest ranking Muslim in the Clinton administration. We thank him for being here. We have a Muslim Army chaplain, Captain Muhammad. We thank him for being here, and the other Muslims who work here

in the White House—they are all particularly welcome—and all the rest of you who have come here. Let me say welcome to you. [*Applause*]

My friend Rasheed, thank you for leading the applause there. I always try to have someone in the audience there who is pumping the crowd at the right time. [*Laughter*]

Let me also say a special word of welcome to you from the First Lady. Hillary has done this celebration for the past several years; many of you have been here with her. And she had to be out of the city today, and that's the only reason she's not here, because this means so very much to her. And I want to welcome you here on her behalf, as well.

Over the weekend, along with Muslims all over the world, you celebrated the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The month of daily fasting is not only a sacred duty; it is also a powerful teaching, and in many ways a gift of

Islam to the entire rest of the world, reminding not simply Muslims but all people of our shared obligation to aid those who live with poverty and suffering. It reminds us that we must work together to build a more humane world.

I must say, it was, I thought, especially fitting that we celebrated the *Eid* at the end of the first round of talks between the Syrians and the Israelis. And I thought it was particularly moving that Imam read the passage from the Koran that said that Allah created nations and tribes that we might know one another, not that we might despise one another.

There's a wonderful passage in the Hebrew Torah which warns people never to turn aside the stranger, for it is like turning aside the most high God. And the Christian Bible says that people should love their neighbor as themselves. But it's quite wonderful to say that Allah created the nations and tribes that they might know one another better, recognizing people have to organize their thoughts and categorize their ideas, but that does not mean we should be divided one from another.

It has been a great blessing for me, being involved in these talks these last few days, to see the impact of the month of Ramadan and the *Eid* on the believers in the Syrian delegation who are here. It was quite a moving thing. And I hope that your prayers will stay with them.

Let me say, also, that there is much that the world can learn from Islam. It is now practiced by one of every four people on Earth. Americans are learning more in our schools and universities. Indeed, I remember that our daughter took a course on Islamic history in high school and read large portions of the Koran, and came home at night and educated her parents about it and later asked us questions about it. And of course, there are now 6 million Muslims in our Nation today. The number of mosques and Islamic centers, now at 1,200, continues to grow very rapidly.

Today, Muslim Americans are a cornerstone of our American community. They enrich our political and cultural life; they provide leadership in every field of human endeavor, from business to medicine to scholarship. And I think it is important that the American people are beginning to learn that Muslims trace their roots to all parts of the globe, not just to the Middle East but also to Africa and to Asia and to the Balkans and other parts of Europe. You share with all Americans common aspirations for a

better future, for greater opportunities for children, for the importance of work and family and freedom to worship.

But like other groups past and present in America, Muslim Americans also have faced from time to time—and continue to face, sadly, from time to time—discrimination, intolerance, and, on occasion, even violence. There are still too many Americans who know too little about Islam. Too often, stereotypes fill the vacuum ignorance creates. That kind of bigotry is wrong, has no place in American society. There is no place for intolerance against people of any faith—against Muslims or Jews or Christians or Buddhists or Baha'i or any other religious group—or ethnic or racial group.

If America wishes to be a force for peace and reconciliation across religious and ethnic divides from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the Balkans to Africa to Asia—if that is what we wish—if we wish to do good around the world, we must first be good here at home on these issues.

I ask all of you to help with that, to share the wellsprings of your faith with those who are different, to help people understand the values and the humanity that we share in common and the texture and fabric and fiber and core of the beliefs and practices of Islam.

Children do not come into the world hating people of different tribes and faiths. That is something they learn to do. They either are explicitly taught to do it, or they learn to do it by following the example of others, or they learn to do it in reaction to oppression that they, themselves, experience. And those of us who are adults have a responsibility to change those childhoods, to give this generation of children around the world a different future than so many have played out tragically in the last few years.

I think it is quite ironic that at the end of the cold war, when a system of atheistic, controlling communism has failed and been rejected, our latest demon seems to be the old-fashioned one of people fighting each other because they are of different religious faiths or racial or ethnic heritages. We know that is not at the core of any religious teaching. We know it is not at the core of Islam.

So I ask you again to rededicate yourselves in this coming year to making sure that others in this country truly understand and appreciate the faith you embrace, its practices, its beliefs,

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its precepts, and its inclusive humanity. [Applause] Thank you.

The Koran also teaches, in addition to the fact that we should do unto others as we wish to have done to us and reject for others what we would reject for ourselves, that we should also make a commitment to live in peace. There is a new Moon that has risen at the end of Ramadan and a new millennium marked in many nations. And again, I say to you as we leave, in addition to your prayers and work for peace and understanding and reconciliation within the United States, I ask especially for your prayers for the current mission of peace in the Middle East.

We are on a track in which the Israelis, the Syrians, I hope soon the Lebanese, and already the Palestinians have committed themselves to work through these very difficult, longstanding issues over the course of the next 2 months—the longstanding commitment between the Palestinians and the Israelis to resolve their busi-

ness by next month. So this will be a time of great tension, where all people will have to search for wisdom and understanding, where there will be great reluctance to open the closed fist and walk out into a new era.

And I think that the prayers of Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of good will all over the world will be needed for us to get through these next several weeks. But for you, I hope it is an immense source of pride that you live in a country that is trying to make peace in the land where your faith was born.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Naimah Saleem, who introduced the President; Yahya Hendi, chaplain, Georgetown University; and Capt. Rasheed Abdul-Muhammad, chaplain, USA.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China and an Exchange With Reporters

January 10, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. This year we face major challenges and opportunities in our relationship with China, in foreign and security policy, economic policy and trade. All those issues come together in one opportunity for the American people: what we stand to gain when China enters the World Trade Organization.

But to lock in our benefits, we first must grant China permanent normal trade relations status. To get this done, I am directing John Podesta, my Chief of Staff, my international economic Cabinet members, my Policy Council coordinators to launch an all-out effort. Each member of this team has a distinctive role to play. I'm asking them to do everything they can to accomplish the task.

To ensure that we have as strong and responsive an effort as possible in both parties in Congress, I'm asking Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti, to lead our congressional effort.

This agreement is a good deal for America. Our products will gain better access to China's

market in every sector from agriculture to telecommunications to automobiles. But China gains no new market access to the United States, nothing beyond what it already has. In fact, we'll gain tough new safeguards against surges of imports and maintain the strongest possible rules against dumping products that have hurt Americans in the past. China's tariffs on United States goods, on the other hand, will fall by half or more over the next 5 years. And by joining the WTO, China agrees to play by the same trade rules that we do.

We continue to have serious disagreements with China on human rights, on proliferation and other issues. We'll continue to press our views and protect our interests. This deal will not change China or our relationship with China overnight, but it is clearly a step in the right direction, and it is clearly in the short- and long-term best economic interests of the American working people.

It encourages China also to take further steps in the direction of both economic reform and

respect for the rule of law. We want to see a China that is moving toward democracy at home and stability around the world. This agreement gives China's people access to goods and services, to ideas and innovations that will help to promote those goals. It also gives China access to the World Trade Organization membership, and that will help to promote those goals.

Bringing China into the WTO is a win-win decision. It will protect our prosperity, and it will promote the right kind of change in China. It is good for our farmers, for our manufacturers, and for our investors. Encouraging China to play by international rules, I say again, is an important step toward a safer, saner world.

I will be working hard over the coming weeks and over the coming months to make sure we do not let this opportunity slip away. I want to thank Secretary Daley and Mr. Ricchetti for agreeing to take on this important task. And we will do everything we can to succeed.

Thank you.

Q. What are the chances?

The President. Well, I think they're quite good if we can get a vote early in the year. I think this is something that is in the national interest. I have made it clear to the leaders of Congress that I strongly support it and that I think it should be scheduled for a vote at the earliest possible time. And if we do that, I think we've got an excellent chance to pass it.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, do you think that Congressman Burton is improperly interfering in the Elian Gonzalez case by issuing that subpoena? And are you troubled that Vice President Gore also thinks that the INS is not competent to make the decision and that it ought to be made by a judge in a court?

The President. Well, I believe that the INS made the decision it was charged to make according to the rules and laws that govern the INS. And if anyone wants to challenge that, the appropriate thing to do is to challenge it in a legal way. I don't have any comment about what Mr. Burton does or any judgment about it. I mean, it's always interesting.

Q. What about the Vice President?

The President. Well, anybody is free to express their opinion about this and whether they think they did right or wrong. What I have successfully done, I think, is to make sure we got through the decision without it becoming

overly politicized. We allowed the INS to review the facts, to interview the relevant parties, and to make a decision based on the law and regulations governing the INS. I think they did that to the best of their ability.

And as I said, if this were an American case, it would be handled in a family court, according to the best interests of the child. I think the INS tried to do what was right by the child, and I think that they did the best they could with a difficult and controversial situation. So I want to stand by them. And if anyone disagrees with them and they have some legal recourse, they ought to pursue the legal recourse. But again, I—and, of course, they can say they don't agree, but I think they did the best they could on the facts.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, how far do you think that they got in Shepherdstown, and when do you expect the two sides to get back together again?

The President. Oh, I think they'll be back here pretty soon. We're just trying to work out the precise arrangements. And you know, these people really talked about the substance of their differences for the first time. They were very open; they were very candid; they covered all the issues. And I think that they broke a lot of ground. But it's tough. I told you it was tough in the beginning. I still think we can get there, but they're going to have to come back here determined to do so, and I believe they will.

Q. You're not disappointed, sir, in the results?

The President. Oh, no. I never expected in the first go 'round that we could have a concluding agreement. It's just—this is too tough. These are very difficult issues. But they're not—the good news is they're not overwhelmingly complicated. That is, sometimes you have in these peace negotiations issues that are both politically difficult and extremely complicated.

I think there's some complexity here, but it's all quite manageable. So I think that they know where they are now; they've talked through. They have a feeling for each other; they've dealt with all these issues. We have a working—a document, if you will, on which we can work through the differences. And so I feel pretty good about it.

I think our United States team did a good job. I'm very proud of Secretary Albright and Mr. Berger and all the rest of them. They did

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a good job. And I think the people who came from Israel and from Syria really are trying to make a difference. So if they want to do it bad enough and they're willing to sort of take a chance on a totally different future, they can get there. And I certainly hope they will, and I'm still quite hopeful.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. You said you were hopeful with the Palestinian talks?

The President. Oh, very, yes.

Q. For next month?

The President. Yes. I'm quite hopeful there, too. Mr. Arafat is coming here in a few days, and I'm quite hopeful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, prior to his departure for Annapolis, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at Funeral Services for Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., in Annapolis, Maryland

January 10, 2000

Mouza, Ann, Mouzetta, Jim, James, Saralee, all the members of this wonderful family, and in the words of Ambassador Lader, this extended family: Hillary and I are honored to be here today to join in praising, remembering, and cherishing the life of a man who was our friend and whose love for his family, his Nation, and his Navy were as deep as the oceans he sailed.

Listening to Phil Lader talk about how Bud and Mouza first met brought back so many old memories to me and to those of us who had the privilege to listen to Bud Zumwalt tell that story. I became convinced that it was the reverse of the fish story, that every time he's told it, she said yes in a shorter and shorter amount of time. [*Laughter*]

The last time I was in this magnificent chapel was to say goodbye to another great admiral of the 20th century, Arleigh Burke. When our historians look back on the century we have just left, they may well record that Arleigh Burke was the spirit of the United States Navy; they will certainly recall that Bud Zumwalt was its conscience.

As much as any other leader in our entire history, Americans could always count on Bud Zumwalt to do the right thing. The midshipmen here learn a lot about honor, commitment, and courage. All his life, he exemplified those virtues. His bravery in World War II, in Korea, what he did in Vietnam, his physical courage and leadership led him to become the youngest

Chief of Naval Operations in our history. But beyond his physical courage, Bud Zumwalt stood out for his moral courage and for saying what he thought was right, regardless of the consequences.

He sailed through rough waters more than once. We heard Dick Schifter so eloquently chronicle his work in the 1970's to bring back the Navy's strength. When he issued his famous Z-grams, he knew that he was taking on more than 200 years of Navy tradition. But because he took the heat, thousands of naval leaders like former Secretary John Lehman have said they actually made the decision to stay in the Navy because Bud Zumwalt made the Navy exciting again.

When we struggled through the racial tensions of the sixties and seventies, he worked in the face of wilting criticism and a highly resistant institutional culture to make the Navy do the right thing and make the Navy one of the most colorblind institutions in our entire Nation. I know it was a special point of pride for him that the very first African-American admiral earned his star on Bud Zumwalt's watch.

At a time when morale and enthusiasm were at an all-time low, he had the vision to see a great future for the Navy. And even though he lived just to see 2 days of this new century, the changes he brought about three decades ago will continue to shape the character and

culture of our Navy for a long time in the 21st century.

Many people have commented on this today, but I want to give you a personal example. Of all the things he inspired, perhaps the greatest impact he had was on the ordinary men and women who served under him. We all know he originally intended to go to West Point, and then a whaling captain set his sails straight. The men and women of the Navy always knew that Bud Zumwalt had their backs, and that loyalty went both ways.

This week we have seen an astonishing outpouring of love and affection from those who served with Admiral Zumwalt. Many of them are here today. This morning, when I was putting on my necktie and getting ready to go out for the day, my naval steward, who has been a Navy enlisted man for more than 30 years, said, "Mr. President, today you're going to Admiral Zumwalt's service, aren't you?" I said, "Yes, I am." He looked at me and smiled, and he said, "He's the best we ever had. He was for us."

He also never forgot to live by the consequences of his commitments. I know there was a family from South Vietnam that was sent after the end of the war to America as refugees, as so many were, and they were sent to my home State of Arkansas. To stay, they were told they had to know someone from our country. The only name they knew was Admiral Zumwalt. When Bud was contacted, to their surprise, the family was actually put on a plane, not to the admiral's home in Maryland but to his son's home in North Carolina, because the admiral already had other refugee families living in his house and he didn't have any more room. When Bud Zumwalt made a commitment, he stuck with it. And when it didn't work out exactly as planned, he honored the consequences and lived by them.

Perhaps the most famous consequence of his leadership during the Vietnam era was the painful loss of his son, Elmo, from the use of Agent

Orange, which clearly he ordered because he believed it would save the lives of our people in uniform. So he lived with the consequences of life's greatest loss. He dedicated himself to fighting for those with illnesses caused by Agent Orange.

Hillary and I were honored to work with him to provide treatment and payments to those who survived. He also established the first national bone marrow donor program to help cancer patients in need. He worked with me to pass the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was truly historic in that it outlawed chemical weapons. And for his service to our Navy and afterward, it was my great honor to present him with America's highest civilian award, the Medal of Freedom.

What I want you to know, Mouza, is that he gave me something and Hillary something even more valuable: honest, caring, steadfast friendship. His letter to our daughter about what her parents tried to do for America is one of our family's most cherished possessions. It is the symbol of everything he was as a man, a leader, and a friend.

And so today we say goodbye to the sailor who never stopped serving his country, never stopped fighting for the men and women in uniform, never stopped being the conscience of the Navy. His earthly voyage is now done. And now he sails beyond the farthest horizon, out of the home port where at last he is safe from all storms.

Bud, we miss you, we love you still, and we will never, ever forget you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:06 p.m. in the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel. In his remarks, he referred to Admiral Zumwalt's wife, Mouza, daughters Ann F. Coppola and Mouza C. Zumwalt-Weathers, son James G. Zumwalt II, brother James G. Zumwalt, and sister Saralee Crowe; former U.N. Ambassador for Human Rights Richard Schifter; and former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman.

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Statement on the Death of Marsha Pyle Martin *January 10, 2000*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the untimely death of Marsha Pyle Martin, the Chairman and CEO of the Farm Credit Administration.

Marsha Martin was a lifelong advocate for farmers, ranchers, and rural America. She worked for more than 30 years in agriculture and agricultural finance. As vice president of the Farm Credit Bank of Texas, she was the first woman senior executive in the Farm Credit System. She was also the first woman to serve as a director of the Farm Credit System Insur-

ance Corporation. And I was proud to appoint her as the first woman head of the Farm Credit Administration in 1994.

We will remember Marsha as a pathbreaker, as someone who truly cared about America's rural communities and who sought not to hide from change but to make change work for ordinary Americans. We pay tribute to her achievements at the Farm Credit Administration. We send our thoughts and prayers to her family, for whom she cared so much.

Statement on the Resignation of Deputy Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre *January 10, 2000*

Today Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre announced that he will step down from his position at the end of March. I want to express my deep gratitude to John for his outstanding service to America.

Since becoming the Deputy Secretary in July 1997, John Hamre has been a respected, decisive, and forward-leaning leader. He directed implementation of the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review and the Defense Reform Initiative. He put in place a wide range of innovative defense management initiatives and worked tirelessly on reforms of defense contracting. His impact in these areas will be felt long after his departure.

Dr. Hamre also was a pivotal adviser as we ensured that the readiness challenges of our

Armed Services are addressed with necessary resources. He was a driving force behind the increase in the defense budget and the increased benefits for military personnel that I signed into law last year. He also led Department of Defense efforts to ensure that their critical computer systems were not affected by Y2K problems.

Although I will miss his advice as Deputy Secretary, I am pleased that the Nation will continue to benefit from his vast knowledge and experience in defense policy. I wish John Hamre all the best as he moves on to become president and chief executive officer of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Exchange With Reporters During a Tour of the Grand Canyon, Arizona *January 11, 2000*

Establishment of National Monuments

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to critics who—[inaudible].

The President. I've been working on these things since I first got here. Go back to 1993.

We had the Pacific Northwest Forest. We set aside the Mojave Desert National Park in California. We did Grand Staircase-Escalante back in 1996. We've been working on the Florida Everglades for years. This whole area of our

national life has been very, very important to me.

Keep in mind, I grew up in a national park. I talked about this when I ran for President, and it's been a big part of our administration. So when you come to the end of an 8-year term, you have one year left, everything you do obviously can be characterized in that way. But if it's a legacy for the children of America, for hundreds of years into the future, then that's not a bad gift to give the future.

Q. What do you say to—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, I don't agree with that. This is the law. I'm acting pursuant to an act of Congress established in the early part of the last century and used since the time of Theodore Roosevelt by every single American President except for three. Presidents Bush and Reagan and Nixon didn't use it. Every other Republican and Democratic President in the 20th century has used this law. And I have used it, and I believe that I've used it well.

We've tried to be, and we will always be, sensitive to the concerns and the legitimate interests of local people, but I think we've done a good job with this. And I think that Secretary Babbitt deserves a lot of credit. We're here in his home State. He's worked this issue very hard. And according to a survey I saw in the local newspaper, over three-quarters of the people who live in Arizona, which means big majorities of Republicans as well as Democrats, believe this is a good thing to do for the future of this State and the future of our country. So I was very gratified to see that public support, and I think it's a good thing to do.

Colombia Assistance Package

Q. Mr. President, on the Colombian money, are you satisfied that there is enough nonmilitary funds that are going there, enough economic development, or is it—would you like to see a different mix?

The President. Well, let me answer you in this way. I think we should get as much economic development and democracy preservation and human rights support funding as we can. I think it's important that most of the money go to helping Colombia deal with its drug problems and its other political problems and working with its neighbors to prevent the export of drugs.

The mix in the package I have announced today is the one that I believe has the right

balance of good policy and likelihood of passage in the Congress. We consulted extensively with Congress. I called the Speaker of the House yesterday because I know he cares very deeply about the conditions in Colombia, wants the country to survive and do well, understands the historic importance of Colombia as a democracy in South America. And we want to do this together.

So I've tried to put together a package that I thought was good on the merits, while being very sensitive to the most interested Members of Congress in what their priorities are, and I'm really hopeful about it. But this is very, very important to the United States, to our long-term ability to protect our borders from drugs and to our long-term commitment to having all of our neighbors south of the border be democracies and be good partners with us. And so I hope that this proposal will find a ready reception in Congress from members of both parties.

Q. Mr. President, people say that the \$1.3 billion just won't stop the drug trafficking. Are they wrong?

The President. No, they're right, but that's not—but that's a misleading statement. It will make it better if the money is well-spent, and it will dramatically strengthen and solidify the Colombian Government in its struggle to preserve democracy, preserve economic growth, and preserve order in the country and be a good neighbor to all of its partners, not just the United States but the neighboring countries there that are threatened with destabilization.

So will it solve all the problems? Of course not. Will it make a big difference? It certainly will. I talked to President Pastrana last night; he certainly thinks it will make a difference. And as I said, this is something I believe both Republicans and Democrats in Congress who know about Colombia care a lot about, and I hope it will pass quickly.

Gov. Jane Dee Hull of Arizona

Q. Are you disappointed that the Governor did not join you today?

The President. She would have been welcome, but I'm gratified that we're doing it. I want to thank Congressman Pastor for being here and Congressman Farr from California for being here and the representatives of the Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. And the most important thing is, I want to thank the people of Arizona for their expressed opinion

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in that survey supporting this, because this will primarily benefit the children, the grandchildren, the great-grandchildren for generations yet to come in this State and people who will be nearest this magnificent area.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:30 a.m. in the Tuweep Valley. In his remarks, the President referred to President Andres Pastrana of Colombia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement Announcing an Assistance Package for Colombia *January 11, 2000*

Today I am announcing an urgently needed, 2-year funding package to assist Colombia in vital counterdrug efforts aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our shores. It will also help Colombia promote peace and prosperity and deepen its democracy. Building on our current efforts, over this year and next, our resulting support would total over \$1.6 billion.

President Pastrana's inauguration in August 1998 brought to Colombia a new spirit of hope—for deeper democracy, for broader prosperity, for an end to that country's long civil conflict. But increased drug production and trafficking, coupled with a serious economic recession and sustained violence, have put that progress in peril.

President Pastrana has responded with a bold agenda—Plan Colombia. It provides a solid, multifaceted strategy that the United States should support with substantial assistance. We have a compelling national interest in reducing the flow of cocaine and heroin to our shores and in promoting peace, democracy, and economic growth in Colombia and the region. Given the magnitude of the drug trafficking problem and their current economic difficulties, neither the Government of Colombia nor its neighbors can carry the full burden alone.

In fiscal year 2000, much of our support will be focused on a one-time infusion of funds to

help boost Colombia's interdiction and eradication capabilities, particularly in the south.

The package will also include assistance for economic development, protection of human rights, and judicial reform.

Our bilateral aid to Colombia will be supplemented by multilateral agencies. The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank are considering hundreds of millions of dollars in loans for Colombia next year. The IMF has already pledged a \$2.7 billion extended fund facility to help jump-start the economy. And we will also continue to encourage our allies to assist Colombia.

The obstacles to a better future for Colombia are substantial. We expect it will require years before the full benefits of Plan Colombia are felt. But I believe that with our support and that of other donors, Plan Colombia can soon accelerate Colombia's nascent economic recovery. Over the longer haul, we can expect to see more effective drug eradication and increased interdiction of illicit drug shipments.

Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia and fighting the drug trade there is in our fundamental national interest. So, with President Pastrana and with our Congress, we must and we will intensify this vital work.

Remarks at the Grand Canyon Announcing the Establishment and Expansion of National Monuments in Western States *January 11, 2000*

Thank you very much. Thank you; good morning. I know we're doing the right thing, because look at the day we've got. *[Laughter]* We've got the good Lord's stamp of approval on this great day.

Ann, thank you for your words and for your life and your example. Superintendent Arnberger, thank you and all the staff at Grand Canyon National Park. And through you, I'd like to thank all the people who work for all of our national parks. I have spent quite a good deal of time as President in the national parks of America, and I grew up in one. I am, I suppose, therefore, more personally indebted to the people who give their lives to the Park Service than perhaps any of my predecessors. But I want to thank you.

I also want to thank all the people here from the Bureau of Land Management for the work they do and for the remarkable partnership that will be launched here. We have worked very hard these last 7 years to try to get these two agencies to work together, to support each other, to believe in each other, and to have common objectives. And I think we've made a lot of progress. So I want to thank the BLM people who are here, as well. Give them all a hand, thank you. *[Applause]*

I want to thank the environmental groups who are here. I want to welcome the children who are here. We have children from Grand Canyon Middle School and St. Mary's Middle School, and we welcome them. They are a lot about what today is all about. I want to thank Congressman Ed Pastor, of Arizona; Congressman Sam Farr, from California, for joining me; and former Congresswoman Karan English, from Arizona, for being here. Thank you. And I want to thank all the people from the White House who supported me in this decision: my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, who is here; and the head of our Council of Environmental Quality, George Frampton.

I want to thank someone I want to acknowledge particularly who worked with Secretary Babbitt on this, his Counselor, Mollie McUsic, who played a big role in what we celebrate today. She's not here because she's celebrating

an even bigger production: yesterday she gave birth to her son, Benjamin, so she couldn't be here, but I want to acknowledge her and her service.

And finally, I want to say this is, as you can see, a special day for Bruce Babbitt, not only because he has been a devoted champion of the Antiquities Act and of protecting land but also because he is the former Governor of Arizona. And when we served together as Governors, we made it a habit, Hillary and I did, at least once a year at these Governors' meetings to have dinner with Bruce and Hattie Babbitt. And he was giving me the speech that he gave here today 15 or 20 years ago. *[Laughter]* I've heard Bruce's speech a lot now, but it gets better every time he gives it. *[Laughter]*

Our country has been blessed by some outstanding Secretaries of the Interior, Gifford Pinchot, Harold Ickes. But I'll make a prediction: I believe when our time here is done and a fair analysis of the record is made, there will be no Secretary of the Interior in the history of the United States who has done as much to preserve our natural heritage as Bruce Babbitt, and I thank him for that.

Secretary Babbitt talked about Theodore Roosevelt's role. You might be interested to know that it was exactly 92 years ago today, on January 11, 1908, that he designated the Grand Canyon as one of our Nation's first national monuments. Now the first light falls on the 21st century and this breathtaking landscape he helped to protect. None of you who can see what is behind me can doubt the wisdom of that decision. And so it is altogether fitting that on this day and in this place we continue that great journey.

This morning, on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, I designated three new national monuments and the expansion of a fourth to make sure more of the land that belongs to the American people will always be enjoyed by them. What a remarkable place this Canyon is. It is in so many ways the symbol of our great natural expanse, our beauty, and our spirit.

Thirty years ago, for the first time, I watched the Sun set over the Grand Canyon for over 2 hours. This morning I got up and for about

an hour I watched the Sun rise over the Canyon for the first time. In both cases, watching the interplay of the changing light against the different layers and colors of the Canyon left me with a lifetime memory I will always cherish.

Millions and millions of Americans share those memories and a love of our natural treasure. In fact, I believe maybe if there's one thing that unites our fractious, argumentative country across generations and parties and across time, it is the love we have for our land. We know, as President Roosevelt said, we cannot improve upon this landscape. So the only thing we can add to it is our protection. President Roosevelt challenged us to live up to that ideal, to see beyond today or next month or next year. He said, "The one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight. It should be the growing nation with a future which takes the long look ahead."

I am very grateful for the opportunities that Vice President Gore and I have had to build on President Roosevelt's legacy, to take that long look ahead, to chart a new conservation vision for a new century. From our inner cities to our pristine wild lands, we have worked hard to ensure that every American has a clean and healthy environment. We've rid hundreds of neighborhoods of toxic waste dumps, taken the most dramatic steps in a generation to clean the air we breathe, to control emissions that endanger the health of our children and the stability of our climate. We have made record investments in science and technology to protect future generations from the threat of global warming. We've worked to protect and restore our most glorious natural resources, from the Florida Everglades to California's redwoods and Mojave Desert, to Escalante, to Yellowstone.

And we have, I hope, finally put to rest the false choice between the economy and the environment, for we have the strongest economy perhaps in our history, with a cleaner environment, cleaner air, cleaner water, more land set aside, safer food. I hope finally we have broken the hold of an old and now wrong idea that a nation can only grow rich and stay rich if it continues to despoil its environment and burn up the atmosphere. With new conservation technologies and alternative energy sources, that is simply no longer true. It has not been true for quite some years now, but it is only now coming to be recognized. And I can tell you that in the next few years, no one will be able

to deny the fact that we will actually have more stable, more widespread, more long-term economic growth if we improve the environment.

We are on the verge—the Detroit auto show this year is going to showcase cars that get 70 and 80 miles a gallon, with fuel injection and dual fuel sources. Before you know it, we will crack the chemical barriers to truly efficient production of biomass fuels, which will enable us to produce 8 or 9 gallons of biomass fuels with only 1 gallon of oil. That will be the equivalent of getting cars that use—get 160 miles to a gallon of gasoline. And this is just the beginning.

We built a low income working family housing project in the Inland Empire out in California, in cooperation with the National Home Builders, with glass in the windows that lets in 4 or 5 times as much light and keeps out 4 or 5 times as much heat and cold. And we promised the people on modest incomes that if they moved into these homes their energy bills would be, on average, 40 percent lower than they would have been in a home of comparable size. I can tell you that after 2 years, they're averaging 65 percent below that. So, therefore, their usage is much lower. We are just beginning.

So I ask all of you not only to celebrate this happy day but to see it in the larger context of our common responsibility and our opportunity to preserve this planet. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Now to the matter at hand. We began this unforgettable morning on the edge of this magnificent park. The deep canyons, rugged mountains, and isolated buttes of the North Rim of the Grand Canyon tell a story written over the course of billions of years, illustrated in colorful vistas and spectacular detail. It is a lonely landscape, a vast and vital area of open space which, as Secretary Babbitt said, includes a critical watershed for the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon. Today we protect more than a million acres of this land. That is an area larger than Yosemite Park. For America's families, we designate it as the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. This effectively doubles the size of protected land around the Grand Canyon.

Second, we act to promote some of the most significant late prehistoric sites in the American Southwest. In the shadow of Phoenix there lies a rough landscape of mesas and deep canyons rich in archaeological treasures, distinctive art etched into boulders and cliff faces, and stone

masonry pueblos once inhabited by several thousand people centuries ago. As the suburbs of Phoenix creep ever closer to this space, we act to protect history and heritage. For America's families, we designate this land the Agua Fria National Monument.

Third, we are protecting thousands of small islands, rock outcroppings, and exposed reefs along California's splendid coastline. These are natural wonders, and they're also the habitat and nesting ground for sea mammals and hundreds of thousands of sea birds, forced from the shore because of development. Today we act to protect all the coastal islands, reefs, and rocks off California now owned by the Federal Government, designating them the California Coastal National Monument. Help Congressman Farr there. Clap! [*Applause*]

Fourth and finally, we will expand California's Pinnacles National Monument, created by President Roosevelt in 1908. Pinnacles is about 2 hours from Silicon Valley, but it's a world away. It includes soaring spires from an ancient volcano. Its mountain caves, desert, and wilderness are home to abundant wildlife and a haven for campers, climbers, and hikers. For one and all, Pinnacles is a sanctuary from sprawl. And for one and all, we act to keep it that way.

Now let me say again, all these areas are now owned by the Federal Government. Secretary Babbitt's recommendation that they be protected came as a result of careful analysis and close consultation with local citizens, State and local officials, Members of Congress.

Clearly, these lands represent many things to many people. In managing the new monuments, we will continue to work closely with the local communities to ensure that their views are heard and their interests are respected. This is not about locking lands up; it is about freeing them up from the pressures of development and the threat of sprawl, for all Americans, for all time.

I have said many times that the new century finds America with an unprecedented opportunity and therefore an unprecedented responsibility for the future, an opportunity and a responsibility rooted in the fact that never before, in my lifetime anyway, has our country enjoyed at one time so much prosperity, social progress, with the absence of internal crisis or external threat to our existence. Can you imagine the sacrifices laid down by our ancestors, generation after generation after generation, in the fond

hope that one day our country would be in the shape we are now in?

Now, when we're in this sort of position, we have a heavier responsibility even than our forebears did a century ago to take that long look ahead, to ask ourselves what the next century holds, what are the big challenges, what are the big opportunities, to dream of the future we want for our children, and then to move aggressively to build that future.

So I say again, there are these big challenges in the long look ahead: The aging of America—we'll double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years; I hope to be one of them. The children of America, the largest and most diverse group ever—they all have to have a world-class education, whether they live in remote areas in Arizona or the poorest inner-city neighborhoods across America. The families of America—most of them are working; they need more help to balance work and parenting, and they all need access to affordable health care and child care. The poor of America—it is well to remember that there are people in places that have been left behind by this recovery. We have a strategy of economic empowerment that should be brought to every person willing to work. If we don't do it now, when will we ever get around to doing it?

The world we live in is ever more interdependent, not just on the environmental front but in many other ways. We have to build a more cooperative world. America is in a unique position now, with our economy, our military strength, our political influence. It won't last forever, and it's almost impossible for us to avoid having people resent us. But we have done our best to be responsible partners for peace and prosperity and for bridging the racial, religious, and ethnic gaps that tear apart so much of the world. It is time for us to work with others, against the dangers of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism and the other threats, and to build a better world together and to build one America here at home across the lines that have divided us too deeply for too long.

But a big part of all of this, in my opinion, the long look ahead, is making an absolute, firm commitment that going forward here at home in America and with friends and partners throughout the world, we will build a 21st century economy that is in harmony with the environment that we will continue to improve and protect even as we grow. And we have to keep

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working until we convince people all over the world, in countries that long for the level of prosperity we take for granted, that they do not have to grow rich the way countries did in the 19th and the 20th century, that the fastest way to grow the economy today is the most environmentally responsible way. We owe that to the future.

Taking the long look ahead, as manifest in the protections we give today to the land around the Grand Canyon and in these other monuments, is fundamentally an act of humanity, and I might add also, an act of humility.

I think it's interesting that—I'll close with this—I had two rather interesting experiences today only proliferally related to what we're doing. One is, the press asked me whether I saw this as a legacy item, as if that was the reason for doing it. I said, "Well, I've been working on this stuff for 7 years now. And I grew up in a national park. I believe in what I'm doing today."

But I'll say again, this is an act of humility for all of us. When we were flying today over the North Rim, when we got further west along the Canyon, Bruce looked at me and he said, "See, there's some dormant volcanoes, and you

can see the residue of the ash." And I said, "When did that volcano erupt?" He said, "Oh, not very long ago, 10 or 20,000 years." And if you look out here, you see, 10 or 20,000 years from now, if the good Lord lets us all survive as a human race, no one will remember who set aside this land on this day. But the children will still enjoy it.

So I say to all of you, I hope you will go forth from this place today with a renewed dedication to the long look ahead, with a renewed sense of pride and gratitude, with a sense that we have reaffirmed our humanity as well as our devotion to our natural home, and a sense of humility that we are grateful, we are fortunate, and we are obligated to take the long look ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. at Grand Canyon Hopi Point. In his remarks, he referred to hiker Ann Weiler Walka, who introduced the President; and Robert L. Arnberger, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park. The national monument proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Initiatives To Empower Young People

January 11, 2000

I am pleased to announce today that my budget for Fiscal Year 2001 will include over \$850 million for the Corporation for National Service. The investments in my budget will keep us on track to my goal of 100,000 AmeriCorps members serving annually. They will also fund several innovative initiatives to empower young people. Through a new AmeriCorps Reserves program, modeled on the military reserves, we will be able to engage former AmeriCorps members in service during times of crisis. Through a new Community Coaches program, we will place dedicated adults in 1,000 schools who can guide students in effective service and connect the school to the wider community. And through the Youth Empowerment grants I am proposing, we will be able to reward social entrepreneurship among young people who are finding their

own solutions to problems like youth violence and civic alienation.

Everyone who serves is a catalyst for change. Since the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act, more than 150,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps. They represent our very best ideals—they have helped to immunize more than a million people; taught, tutored, or mentored 4.4 million children; helped build some 11,000 homes; and truly sparked a new spirit of public engagement across the land. The initiatives I am announcing today will help more Americans share in the power and promise of community service. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure their enactment.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Sheila Jackson Lee in Houston, Texas

January 11, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, let me say I am delighted to be here and delighted to see such a large crowd. I keep reading in the Washington press that I am a lame duck, whatever that is. But I think what it means is that someday you show up, and no one else does. [Laughter] So it's delightful to see you here.

Let me say, I am also profoundly grateful to Jenard and Gail for opening their magnificent home to us tonight. And I did try to come once before and was unable to do so. So, Gail, I'm glad your mother came twice. Thank you, Ida. And I'm glad you hugged me and kissed me. I feel much better now. Thank you. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mayor Brown for being here. He has done a superb job for Houston. I'm very proud of Lee Brown. You know, he was our drug czar in the national administration before he got elected mayor. He proved that there was life after Washington. [Laughter] And I hope it's catching. [Laughter] I'm very proud of him.

I want to thank Lloyd and B.A. Bentsen for being here, and I don't want anybody to forget that this great economic recovery started on Lloyd Bentsen's watch and started before I ever took the oath of office, when Lloyd Bentsen announced we were going to cut the deficit by \$500 billion. The stock market boomed. Interest rates went down—[inaudible].

One of us needs to show respect for the other. You know, the other night they had this big dinner honoring Lloyd, and I called in, and I lathered all over him and said all these incredible things. And then I got off the phone and he said, "Now, who was that guy again?" [Laughter]

I want to thank my friend Billie Carr, who taught me a lot of what I know about politics. I love you and will always love you all my life. Thank you for being here. And thank you, Kathy, for singing. And I'd also—I've got something special I want to say about Sheila Jackson Lee, but I will introduce it by saying I'm glad Goldie Hawn came all the way from California to be with us tonight.

And here's what the relevance of this evening is to me. I was nominated for President, effectively, on June 2, 1992, because I won the California, Ohio, and New Jersey primaries and numerically had enough votes to win the nomination on the first ballot. Now, some of you may remember there was a guy from Texas named Perot who was also running, who was the rage of the moment. And the next day—this was supposed to be a happy night in my life, but that night on television and the next day, all the news stories were: Clinton wins the nomination, but he's dead meat; he can't be elected President; he's running third; everybody really wants to vote for Perot.

So it was not the happiest election evening headquarters we had in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel, the old Biltmore downtown, and everybody I knew was around there feeling sorry for themselves. I thought it was pretty good. After all, I had gotten nominated, and I figured we had a few months to fix it. And Goldie Hawn and Chevy Chase showed up to tell me that they didn't think we were going to finish third. I have never forgotten it. I never will. I thank you for being here tonight. Thank you.

Now what's that got to do with Sheila Jackson Lee? A lot, because Sheila Jackson Lee also sticks. You know, I hate to tell you this. Sometimes we make jokes about you behind your back. [Laughter] Why? Because you have one pace—fast—and one pressure level—hard. [Laughter]

But let me tell you, this Representative from Congress—and I know a little something about the burdens that are imposed on Members of Congress, so let me say I'm delighted that Elwyn and Jason are here tonight. And I want to thank them for the contribution they have made to the welfare of the people of this congressional district and the people of this country, because it is very difficult to have a family and serve in Congress, much harder than most people know. It is very hard, and I thank you, sir. Thank you, Jason. Thank you.

But a lot of people think I came down here because they also went to Yale Law School. That had nothing to do with it. [Laughter] Your

Member of Congress is immensely well-educated. She is very attractive, and she is very articulate. But the best thing about her is, she fights, she works, and she doesn't give up.

There are a lot of smart people in the world; there are a lot of attractive people in the world. The people who make a difference are the people who take whatever the opportunities and the burdens life gives them, and they fight for their dreams and for the welfare of other people. And that's the kind of Member of Congress Sheila Jackson Lee is.

Now, all of you know that. But no longer than she has been in Congress that she really has established a truly astonishing record across a very wide range of issues. I can't think of any Member from any district that's been there the length of time she has that's done so much in so many different areas, and I appreciate that—in housing, in mental health services, especially in mental health services for children, something that I think is profoundly important. She's the leader of the congressional children's caucus and a great leader doing the things that we think need to be done to reduce violence against children, to have sensible measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, to have after-school programs for children, to have mental health services in our schools for the children who need them. And in all of these areas she has actually had an impact. It's not just—because she doesn't just give a speech and then go away. She understands that words just drift into air and disappear unless they're backed up by deeds, and not just one day's worth but consistent, systematic, determined effort. Fast and hard. [Laughter]

I loved it—on the way over here tonight, my Chief of Staff and I, John Podesta, were sitting in the car saying, "I wonder what old Sheila is going to ask us for tonight." [Laughter] Then we pull up in the driveway, and there's Mayor Brown and Sheila. And I said, "My God, they want me to move the Capital to Houston." [Laughter] If she decided that was the right thing to do, I wouldn't bet everything I own against it getting done. [Laughter]

I say this with respect. You see, I think—and I know I can say this for Lloyd Bentsen, who is one of the finest public servants I've even known—public service is an honor. And most people who do it are honorable people. But the special people who do it are not only

honorable and passionate, they stick, and they work, and they get things done.

The reason I asked him to be my first Secretary of the Treasury is I thought he was the best Senate finance chairman I could ever imagine. And I knew if I named him to be Secretary of State—Treasury, people would be serious. They'd say, "This guy really is putting the economy first. This President really is going to turn the economy around."

Serious people are people that are not only smart and articulate, they get things done. That's what Sheila Jackson Lee does. I could give you a lot of other examples. She's been so active in Africa and the fight against AIDS in Africa, in the Africa trade bill, and trying to pass the Caribbean Basin Initiative trade bill and just on and on and on. She is the ranking member of the subcommittee of the Judicial Committee on Immigration, a big deal for Texas and to the United States.

Yes, we should enforce our immigration laws. And people who wait their turn should not be discriminated against by people who don't. But we should never forget, looking around this room, that we are a nation of immigrants. Except for the Native Americans, we all came here from somewhere else. And even they did, but it was across a landmass that no longer exists, many millennia ago. And we should never forget this. All of us, one way or the other, got here by the grace of God from somewhere else.

And so, what—we've tried to make it clear that America is stronger because we're a nation of immigrants, that our freedom to practice our faith is stronger because we welcome people of all faiths to our country, and offer them the protections of our Constitution for their religious and cultural practices and their right to free speech. And she carries the banner of protecting those values in the United States Congress.

Like I said, she just got there. Another thing I said to my Chief of Staff, I said, "You know, if Sheila had been in Congress for 20 years, it would take me 3 hours to introduce her." [Laughter] She will have done so much by then, we'll just have to forgo the introduction. [Laughter] This is very important. We need people like this.

You know, I read—as a lot of you know, I read a lot of American history, and I spent a lot of time when I was asked by one of the major magazines to write an essay on the person I thought should be considered the person of

the century. And Time magazine selected Mr. Einstein, which I think is a good selection. They could have selected Gandhi; that would have been a good selection. They could have selected Franklin Roosevelt or Winston Churchill. I argued for Roosevelt. I spent a lot of time; I went back and I re-read a lot of the things I'd read about Roosevelt.

I'll tell you an interesting story. Shortly after Roosevelt contracted polio—keep in mind, he was almost 40 years old when he got it. He had run for Vice President of the United States at the tender age of 38. He was a dashing, handsome, thin man; he cut a great figure on the campaign trail in 1920. And he seemed to have the world at his finger tips. And there he was, just a couple of years later, hobbled by polio.

And he nourished the dream for many years that he would, in fact, walk again. And he also knew that, whatever happened, he had to keep fighting. So at length, he decided he would take an office in New York, in a highrise, and he would actually try to go to work there. But because he wanted to leave open the possibility of walking again, he would not be seen in his wheelchair.

So he had these big braces, and at the time they were heavy and awkward and impossible to navigate. And he walked into this New York highrise the first day, and he got up, and he fell flat on his face. And there was no one there to pick him up. And everyone was staring

at him. Now keep in mind, just a year or so ago he had run for Vice President. And even though the Democrats had lost, no one thought it was his fault. And he was alone, lying on his face in New York. And he pushed himself up off the floor and threw his head back and laughed and smiled and drug himself across the floor to the wall, straightened his braces out, and pulled himself up.

What is the lesson in that? Life is 50 percent what happens to you and 50 percent in how you respond to what happens to you. You can lose a lot of options in life, but as long as you're breathing and thinking, you've still got some left—a large number. The thing is to make the most of the moment, with heart.

I think that your Member of Congress has done that. I admire her, and I'm honored to be here for her tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Jenard and Gail Gross; Mrs. Gross' mother, Ida Fink; Mayor Lee P. Brown of Houston; former Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, B.A.; Billie Carr, chair, Texas Democratic Committee; gospel singer Kathy Taylor-Brown; actress Goldie Hawn; Reform Party founder H. Ross Perot; actor Chevy Chase; and Representative Jackson Lee's husband, Elwyn C. Lee, and son, Jason C.B. Lee.

Remarks to the Texas Legislative Victory Fund in Houston

January 11, 2000

You know, when Debbie got into that, how we were probably related to each other—[laughter]—I did not know where she was going with it. I thought she was going to do some hillbilly shtick about how our eyes were too close set—[laughter]—or I could offer to play you that banjo song from "Deliverance." I didn't know what was going on there for a while. [Laughter] And after I became President, I found that I had all these relatives I didn't know existed. [Laughter] They just kept cropping up all over, and most of them had more limited resources than I did.

I'll tell you one real quick story. I did get one letter from a woman way up in her eighties in northeast Louisiana who showed me how John Grisham and I were like tenth cousins. And I wrote him a letter and said, "Praise God, you're the first one that has any money"—[laughter]—"come to the White House tomorrow." [Laughter] And it was really funny. It turned out it was true. She wrote him identical letters. We checked our lineage, and we turned out to be kin. And one of us is still claiming it. [Laughter]

I want to thank John Eddie and Sheridan for having us here in their home, their modest little home. [Laughter] It makes the White House look like public housing. [Laughter] I also want to thank them, if you'll indulge me, for having Hillary here just a few weeks ago. She had a wonderful time and was jealous that I was going back today.

I want to thank Debbie and Frank for being such wonderful friends to us, and for all of you being here tonight. You know, my interest in this legislative endeavor obviously relates, in part, to reapportionment. I have worked as hard as I could—and we've had some terrific fights in Washington—to preserve the integrity of the census. I just want everybody counted who's entitled to be counted, and in the most effective and complete and honest way.

I also very much hope that members of my party will win the House of Representatives, and they have actually an outside chance to at least split the United States Senate this year. If we can pick up two or three more candidates, we maybe could do better.

But then the census comes along, and it will be done in 2000, and the whole thing could be undone again. And so I think it's very important that—you know, when Debbie was saying what she was saying, I wanted to just stand up and say, there is a real meaning here. You could work your hearts out and have a great 2000, and then have it undone in 2002, and you wouldn't like that. So I do want to thank you for being here, and I want to urge you to redouble your efforts.

The only other thing I'd like to say is this. One other thing Debbie said made me think of a point I wanted to make. She said that I believe that you could have a country in which we protect the individual rights of our citizens, including their access to the courts, and still grow the economy. I do believe that. And when I was pondering whether I should run for President—it seems like a hundred years ago now, way back in 1991—one of the things that just drove me crazy about the way Washington worked at the time—and I obviously felt that the other party was more responsible, but I didn't think our crowd was blameless either, because when you get into a—you know how it is, you get into any kind of relationship and you're just frozen, and then if you're not careful you just keep making the same mistakes over and over again. And we all have to work on

that, in our families and our businesses and everything we do.

But the thing that really bothered me was that in order to sort of break through on the news or in the media or whatever, that it seemed to me that the people in Washington, beginning at the White House, kept posing false choices to the American people. You'd have to—are you going to be for business, or are you going to be for labor? Are you going to be for a strong economy, or are you going to be for all those trial lawyers having the right to bring suit? Are you going to be for a strong economy, or are you going to be for those chokingly burdensome environmental regulations? Are you going to be for American jobs or all that trade business?

And I could give you 30 examples. It made a nice debate. And once you decided which side you were on of the either/or questions, it relieved you of all responsibility to think, which gives you a lot of free time to do other things. But it's ultimately a very unsatisfying way to live. And it's one of the big reasons our country got in the ditch we were in, in 1992, because you just had to get on one side or the other and they were bogus choices, by and large.

There are real choices to be made, and they're hard enough in life. But you completely paralyze yourself if you spend all your time organizing your mind and your activities around false choices. And one of the things that we have tried to do in the last 7 years is to at last put real choices before the American people and to try to make the right ones. And I think the results have been pretty good.

Some of you commented that you saw the television coverage today of how I was fortunate enough to start this day. I woke up on the edge of the Grand Canyon and watched the Sun rise not only over but in the Grand Canyon. It was an amazing experience. And I used authority established under President Theodore Roosevelt to set up national monuments, to set aside another million acres of land around the Grand Canyon to protect it—a very important part of the watershed there for the Colorado River—and a number of other places.

And I was looking at some of the things that Theodore Roosevelt said. I admired him very much, and he actually served as President at a time very much like the time in which I have served, when we not only changed centuries,

but we changed the paradigm of the economy, from a rural economy to an industrial economy, just as in my time we've moved from an industrial economy to a global information-based economy, with all the attendant upheaval and changes.

But he said that if you were part of a growing young country, you had a special responsibility to take the long look ahead; that successful enterprises always took the long look ahead. And that's the last thing I'll leave you with.

In my lifetime, anyway, our country has never had this much economic prosperity, social progress—you know what the economic numbers are, but let me also tell you we had—the welfare rolls have been cut in half; they're the lowest they've been in 32 years. The unemployment rate among African-Americans and Hispanics is the lowest ever measured. The poverty rate among Hispanics is the lowest in 25 years, among African-Americans the lowest ever measured. Among women, the unemployment rate is the lowest in 40 years; and keep in mind, 40 years ago there was a far smaller percentage of women seeking jobs in the work force. So the society is beginning to grow together. We have the lowest crime rate in over 25 years now.

So we've never had in my lifetime this kind of economic progress, social progress, national self-confidence, with the absence of a crisis at home or a threat from abroad. You just think about it, in your lifetime.

I've often—I'm glad to see, since I'm in Texas I want to say this, I've been telling this to folks at the White House—I'm glad to see a lot of people reassessing and revising upward their estimation of the performance of Lyndon Johnson as President, because of the work he did in civil rights and education and health care and against poverty.

But basically, his Presidency was weakened in its potential impact because he not only had to deal with—he had enormously successful economy in the beginning, but he had to deal with the civil rights issue at home and the Vietnam war abroad. And the competing demands eventually undermined the economy, instead of opening the economy more so he could move ahead on the social problems. So we never had this happen before, in my lifetime.

That's the last thing I'd like to tell you. Whatever you do in politics this year, this issue, the Presidential race, and everything in between,

you just remember that. And I say that as a citizen. I'll be a citizen after this next election, for the first time in a long time. And what I want, what I tried to do, is to turn this country around and to bring it together so that we would be in a position to paint the picture of the 21st century we want to. And I think we have turned it around and brought it together.

But very often, when things are going well, people get distracted or do what seems easiest and most at hand. And what we really ought to be doing is dealing with the aging of our society, make sure we've got Social Security and Medicare fixed before we double the number of people over 65. We've got all these kids out there who come from all different racial, ethnic, religious groups. They all need a world-class education if our retirement is going to be secure.

We've got all these people and places that haven't participated in this recovery. They need to be empowered to be part of the free enterprise system. If we don't do that now—if we can't prove now that we can do something about poverty in terms of community and individual empowerment, we will never get around to doing it, because we will never have these conditions any better.

We need to work with our friends around the world to build a truly interdependent world where we can lead but not dominate, where we can share responsibilities and be good neighbors and ask others to be good neighbors in return. We need to prove that just as we tried to get the Irish and the people in the Middle East and the people in the Balkans and the people in Africa to lay aside their racial and tribal and ethnic and religious hatreds, that we can do that here at home. We need to think about the big things.

And we don't need to get into false choices. One of the reasons I went to the Grand Canyon today was to say that it is no longer necessary, for a country to grow rich, to burn up the environment. You can now improve the environment and get even richer. That's a fundamental difference in the last 20 years; it was not true in the industrial age. It is no longer true. The Detroit auto show, right now, they've got cars getting 70 miles a gallon, demonstration cars. They'll be on the market in no time. And it's just the beginning.

So I think we're going into the most interesting, exciting time in human history. I'm proud

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that my country is in good shape. And I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] I came here today because you were good to me, both those of you who are having me here, John Eddie and Debbie and the others who brought me here, but also because this country has been good to me. And we're in good shape now. And I don't want to see us squander this opportunity. I don't know when we'll ever get it again. I just know it has never been here before in my lifetime.

So you think about that every day between now and election day. Ask your friends and your neighbors, without regard to their party, not to

make any bogus choices, not to divide people in artificial ways, and take the long look ahead. If we do that, I'm pretty confident how it will all come out.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:58 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts John Eddie and Sheridan Williams; Debbie D. Branson, president, Texas Trial Lawyers Association, who introduced the President, and her husband, Frank; and author John Gris-ham.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Loan Guarantees to Israel Program

January 11, 2000

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 226(k) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), and pursuant to section 1205 of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 (ISDCA), enclosed is a copy of the 1999 Report to the Congress on the Loan Guarantees to Israel Program. As the report under section 226(k) of the FAA is required annually until December 31, 1999, this will be the final report submitted under section 226(k) of the FAA.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdensen, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12.

Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council

January 12, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all, I think we ought to acknowledge that public speaking is not something Jessica does every day, and I think she did a terrific job. I thank her for coming here. I want to thank Tommy and Sarah and Maggie and Aliza and Grandmother for coming also, so that you would have a human, real example of the subject I want to address today and one of the biggest reasons I ran for President.

I thank my old friend Senator Joe Lieberman for his leadership of the Democratic Leadership Council. President and Mrs. Trachtenberg, thank you for welcoming me back to George Washington.

I want to acknowledge two other people in the audience today without whom many of us would never have been able to do what has been done, and particularly I am indebted to

them: first, Will Marshall, who runs the Progressive Policy Institute of the DLC, who has been at this for well over a decade and come up with so many of the ideas that have been hallmarks of our administration. And I want to thank my long-time friend Eli Segal, who actually gave birth, in fact, to two of our most important ideas. AmeriCorps, our national service program—he set AmeriCorps up, and then he set up the Welfare to Work Partnership, which has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people being hired by private business from the welfare rolls. So thank you both for coming here and for what you have done for our country.

I always get nervous when people start talking about legacies, the way Senator Lieberman did. You know, alliteration having the appeal it does, it's just one small step from legacy to lame duck. I keep hearing that. [*Laughter*] And I've finally figured out what a lame duck is. That's when you show up for a speech and no one comes. [*Laughter*] So thank you for making me feel that we're still building on that legacy today.

I want to put the issue I came here to discuss today, which directly affects the Cupp family and so many tens of thousands like them all across America, in the larger context of what we have been about since 1993, in January.

Eight years ago, when I ran for President, I came here to Washington and asked for change in our party, change in our national leadership, and change in our country, not change for its own sake but because in 1992 our Nation was in the grip of economic distress, social decline, political gridlock, and discredited Government. The old answers plainly were obsolete, and new conditions clearly demanded a new approach.

By 1992, we in the DLC had been working for some years on a new approach, rooted in the basic American values of opportunity, responsibility, and community; dedicated to promoting both work and family here in the United States and to promoting America's leadership around the world for peace and freedom, security, and democracy. We believed that Government was neither the primary problem, as the new Republicans had been telling us for a decade by then, or the primary solution, as many New Deal Democrats still earnestly believed. Instead, we asked for a new direction for our National Government, with a focus on creating the conditions and providing people the tools to make the most of their own lives and a com-

mitment to a partnership with the private sector and with State and local government, so that the Federal Government would be a catalyst, promoting and experimenting vigorously with new ideas. It would be a smaller and less bureaucratic but a more active Government.

Those of us who were in the vanguard of this movement called ourselves New Democrats, and we said our agenda was a third way, a way to create a vital center that would bring people together and move our country forward. But we were also quick to acknowledge that labels don't define a politician or a political movement, ideas do.

Our new ideas were first built on the premise that we had to discard the false choices that then defined politics here in our Nation's Capital.

We believed, for example, that we could both eliminate the deficit and increase our investment in education, in science and technology, in the truly significant national priorities. We believed we could be pro-business and pro-labor. We believed we could be pro-growth and pro-environment. We believed we could reform welfare to require those who are able to work and still do more for poor children and poor families. We believed we could improve education both by raising standards and accountability and investing more where it was urgently needed. We believed we could help Americans succeed both at work and at home, rather than forcing them to make a choice, as so many, regrettably, still have to do every single day. We believed we could lower the crime rate both with more effective punishment and with more effective prevention. We believed we could lead the world with greater military strength and more diplomatic aid and cooperative efforts with other nations.

We had a whole lot of new policy ideas that we implemented. I'll just mention a few: the empowerment zone program and the reinventing Government program that the Vice President's led so brilliantly; community development financial institutions; AmeriCorps, which now has given over 150,000 young Americans the chance to serve in their community and to earn some money for a college education; the HOPE scholarships, which along with our other college incentives have effectively opened the doors of college to all Americans; the V-chip; trade, with environmental and labor considerations taken

into account; after-school programs; 100,000 police; the Brady bill; the family and medical leave law; the assault weapons ban; housing vouchers for people on welfare to move closer to where the jobs are; environmental right-to-know laws; and many, many other ideas, all within this basic framework of opportunity, responsibility, and community, all with a view toward a Government that was less bureaucratic but more active.

Today, we're in a position to make an assessment—very different from 1992. In 1992 Al Gore and I went around the country and made an argument to the American people, and they took a chance on us. And our friends in the Republican Party said, even after I got elected President, that none of it would work. They said our economic plan would explode the deficit and bring on another recession. They said our crime bill, with 100,000 police and the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill, would do nothing to lower the crime rate or the murder rate. And I could go on and on and on, through issue after issue after issue.

Well, back in 1992, it was, after all, just an argument, and the American people took a chance. Now I think we can safely say the argument is over, for one simple reason: It has been put to rest by the record. We have been fortunate enough to implement virtually all the ideas that were advocated in the 1992 campaign and most of those advanced in the '96 campaign. And we now have 7 years of measurable results. Some of them were mentioned by Senator Lieberman, but I think it's worth going over again, to set the stage for the point I want to make, which is the more important one.

We have the fastest economic growth in more than 30 years, the lowest unemployment rate and the smallest welfare rolls in 30 years, over 20 million new jobs, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in our budget in 42 years, the highest homeownership in history. And in just a few weeks, now, we'll have the longest economic expansion in the history of the country, including those when we were fully mobilized for wartime.

In addition to that, there has been a definite improvement in the social complexion of America. We have the lowest child poverty rate in more than 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American unemployment and poverty rates ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic unemployment

rate ever, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in 25 years, the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households in 46 years.

Along the way, we have immunized 90 percent of our children against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of America. We have 2 million more kids out of poverty and 2 million more children with health insurance. Twenty million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law. Over 450,000 people have been denied the right to buy a handgun because they were felons, fugitives, or stalkers, under the Brady bill. We have cleaner air, cleaner water. We have cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as in the previous 12 years.

And yesterday I had the privilege to go to the Grand Canyon to set aside another million acres of land. Now, in the lower 48 States, we have protected more land than any administration in American history, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

Our country has helped to further the cause of peace from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Bosnia and Kosovo to Haiti; established new partnerships with Latin America, Asia, and Africa for economic cooperation; restrained the nuclear missile programs of North Korea; fought against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program; worked to reduce the threat of terrorism, chemical and biological weapons; cut thousands of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of Russia and the United States; expanded NATO; increased our debt relief and economic assistance to the poorest countries of the world. We have helped to minimize economic problems in Asia and Mexico and concluded over 270 trade agreements, all with a view toward implementing the basic ideas that were articulated in 1992 and developed in the years before through the Democratic Leadership Council.

Now what does that mean in practical terms to all of you and especially to the young people in this audience? It means for the first time in my lifetime, we begin a new century with greater prosperity, greater social progress, greater national self-confidence, with the absence of an internal crisis or an external threat that could derail our further forward movement. This has never happened in my lifetime.

The first time I came to George Washington University was in September of 1964, to a Judy Collins concert in Lisner Auditorium. [Laughter] I remember it well. Some of you were not alive

then, maybe more than half of you. That's the last time we had this sort of economic growth and this kind of range of interest in our country toward helping people who had been left out and left behind or were in distress. But we were unable to resolve the civil rights challenge at home without major crises, including riots in our cities, and our efforts to deal with that came a cropper with the costs and the burden of carrying on the war in Vietnam.

In my lifetime, we have never had a chance like this—never. And I would argue to you that the most important question today is not what we've done for the last 7 years in turning the ship of state around and moving America forward, but what are we going to do now that we have the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children? That's the most important thing. I am gratified by all the results that I just recounted to you, but after all, that's what you hired me to do. And that's what our administration signed on to do.

The question is, what are we going to do now? What will you do, as citizens, when I am no longer here and I'm just a citizen like you? As a country, what will be our driving vision?

The thing I worry about most is that when people have been through tough times and they've achieved a lot, the first thing that you want to do is sort of relax. And most everybody here who's lived any number of years can remember at least once in his or her life when you made a mistake by getting distracted or short-sighted because things seemed to be going so well you didn't think you had to think about anything else. That can happen to a country just as it can happen to a person, a family, or a business. So the great challenge for us today is to make up our minds, what are we going to do with this magic moment of promise?

What I want us to do is to put our partisan divisions aside to complete the unfinished business of the last century, including things like the Patients' Bill of Rights, sensible legislation to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children, the hate crimes legislation, all the things that were still on the agenda when Congress went home, but to deal with these big, long-term challenges.

What are they? The aging of America—the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] The children of America, the largest

and most diverse group ever—in a globalized information society, education is more important than ever, and we must give all of them a world-class education.

We can make America—yes, we've got the lowest crime rate in over 25 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years—no one believes it's the safest—safe as it ought to be here. We ought to dedicate ourselves to making America the safest big country in the world.

We've proved that we can improve the environment and grow the economy, but we still aren't taking the challenge of global warming seriously. And we still not have said explicitly, "The world has changed; it is no longer necessary to grow rich by despoiling the environment. In fact, you can generate more wealth over a longer period of time by improving the environment." America ought to prove that, instead of continuing to be a problem and having our heads in the sand on the issue of climate change.

We ought to dedicate ourselves not just to running surpluses but to getting America out of debt for the first time since 1835, so that all the young people here will have lower interest rates and a healthier economy throughout their adult lifetime. We ought to dedicate ourselves to bringing opportunity to the people and places who have been left behind. We ought to dedicate ourselves to building a world in which there is a more human face on the global economy and in which we work with our friends and neighbors to deal with the new threats of terrorism, ethnic, racial, and religious warfare, and chemical and biological weapons.

And we ought to recognize that in a world in which we know the most important job is still—is still—the job that Jessica and her husband have taken on of raising these three children, we cannot allow—we cannot allow—our country to be a place where you have to make a decision about to whether succeed at home or to succeed at work. Because if we ever get to the point where a significant number of our people have to make that decision, we are in serious trouble. And too many have to make it every day, anyway, because they can't afford child care, or because of the burdens of the basic cost of raising their children in dignity and good health imposed on their limited ability to earn money, even in this prosperous economy. And that's the thing I want to focus on today, because I think when the American

family is doing well, the family of America does well.

In the State of the Union Address, I will put forth my last but still a new agenda, rooted in responsibility, designed to create a wider, stronger, more inclusive American community and to create new opportunity. Today I want to talk about one important element of the new opportunity agenda.

We know that we are now in a position to do more to create opportunity or, as Senator Lieberman and Al From say, to expand the winner's circle, to include men, women, and children still at the margins of society who are willing to work and ought to be rewarded for it.

The ideas that I will advance in the State of the Union will be built on what we have been talking about since 1992, advancing our understanding of what opportunity means in the information age. For example, once textbooks were central to a child's understanding in education; today, computers are. Once a ninth-grade education was all anyone needed for a job, then a high school education; today, the only people who have good chances of getting jobs which will grow over time in income, over a longer period of time, are those who have at least 2 years of some sort of post-high-school education and training.

One new opportunity agenda tries to take account of these new demands but also the new pressures on working families, including the need for quality, affordable child care and the importance of being able to access health care.

The main idea here is still the old idea of the American dream, that if you work hard and play by the rules, you ought to have a decent life and a chance for your children to have a better one. That's been the basic goal of so much of what we've done, from the earned-income tax credit to the empowerment zone program the Vice President ran, to the micro-credit program the First Lady's done so much to advance, to increasing the minimum wage, to greater access to health care and child care, to the partnerships that we have made with so many American businesses to help people move from welfare to work.

Now, I will have more to say about all these other ideas later. But I just want to talk a little bit today, in closing, about what we should do with the earned-income tax credit, something that you've heard Jessica say has already helped

the Cupp family to raise their children but something that is not as helpful now as it was when they first drew it.

In my State of the Union Address and in my budget for 2001, I will propose a substantial increase in the earned-income tax credit. It's a targeted tax cut for low income working families.

In 1992, as has already been said, one of the first things that I did as President was to ask Congress to dramatically expand the EITC. It had been on the books for some time. It had been broadly supported by Democrats and Republicans. President Reagan had hailed it. Everybody seemed to like it, because basically it involved a tax credit for people who were working and had children—almost all of them have children—and who just didn't have enough to get along on.

It is not just another acronym. The EITC was anonymous, I think, in America until a previous Congress tried to do something to it, and then all of a sudden it became something we all knew about and liked, which was immensely gratifying to me. But the EITC stands for, again I will say, the E is about "earned." It's about working. It's about a fundamental American value. It's about rewarding people who do what they're supposed to do.

I think every one of you, when Jessica was up here talking, describing the conditions of their children's birth, their work histories, how they had worked hard to provide a decent home for their kids, every one of us was sitting here pulling for them. Every one of you identified with their struggle. Every one of you could imagine what it would have been like to be the father in the delivery room and see these kids come out, one, two, three. *[Laughter]* Every one of you. That's what this country is all about, the dignity, the struggles, the triumphs, the joys of daily life that we all share.

And I think our Government has a responsibility, as part of our basic compact with the American people, to make sure that families like the Cupps find that work does pay, to make sure that we reward work and that we enable them to succeed at their even more important job, raising those three little girls. It is still, I will say again, society's most important job. And I suspect that every parent in this room today agrees with me about that.

So these incentives to work are just as important to how life plays out for millions of Americans as the rate of economic growth or interest rates or debt reduction. Studies from Harvard to Wisconsin have confirmed that the EITC is an enormously powerful incentive to work. It encourages people who are on welfare, who are unemployed, to move into the work force, even in modest-paying jobs, because their income will be, in effect, increased; they'll get a check at the end of the year as a credit against the taxes they pay, because they're working hard for modest income.

Now, in 1998 the EITC helped more than 4.3 million people make that move. That's double the number that were being helped in 1993, when we advocated the expansion. This tax credit is a major reason, along with the strength of the economy, the rise in the minimum wage, and the movement from welfare to work, that there are fewer people in poverty today than there have been in over 20 years. It explains why the child poverty rate is lower than it's been in over 20 years and why poverty among African-American children is the lowest on record and the lowest among a quarter century among Hispanic children.

Now, because we know this works, and we know there are still far too many families and children in or near poverty and far too many people struggling and working, having a tough time taking care of their children, we know there is more to do. Today I am proposing the following changes in the EITC.

First, I want to eliminate the marriage penalty exacted by the EITC to make sure that the tax credit rewards marriage and family just as it rewards work. It's a big problem.

Second—the next two are very important to the Cupp family; they will affect all the families in our country like them, and there are a lot of them—I am proposing to expand the EITC for families with three or more children.

The pressures on these families rise as their ranks increase. Twenty-eight percent of them—let me say that again—28 percent of them are in poverty, more than twice the rate for smaller families. Our plan would provide these families tax relief that is up to \$1,200 more than what they now receive. The way the EITC works now, it's a really good deal if you're working for a very modest income and you have two kids. But the benefits drop off dramatically after that. And I don't think we ought to make these

folks choose among those little girls and others in their situation.

Now, the third thing we're going to do is to give more people more incentives to continue to work their way into the middle class. You heard Jessica say that when her husband's income reached \$30,000, the EITC benefit dropped off dramatically. We set these ceilings back in 1993, and they haven't been really adjusted since then. What we want to do now is to phase the EITC credit out more gradually. It has to be phased out, but if it's phased out too sharply, then there is, in effect, for families with a lot of kids, almost no net gain to earning a higher income. And if he's going to work longer than 40 hours a week and he's going to miss more hours at home with those kids, then we want him to receive the benefits of that. And again, I say, this is not just about this one family; they represent millions of people in this country.

So that's what we're going to do: Eliminate the marriage penalty, increase aid to families with three or more kids, and phase the credit out more gradually, so there's always an incentive to keep working to improve your income and your ability to support your children.

Now, for families like the Cupps, these new initiatives would mean an additional tax credit of \$850. That would help them to provide for their children or own a home or buy a car that makes it easier to get to work and, therefore, to work.

We dedicate \$21 billion to these priorities over 10 years, increasing our investment in people without in any way undermining our commitment to a balanced budget and to getting us out of debt over the next 15 years.

Opportunity for all is a measure of not only how far we've come and where we're going but what kind of people we are. Robert Kennedy once said, "Our society, all our values, are views of each other and our own self-esteem." The contribution we can make to ourselves, our families, and the community around us—all these things are built on the work we do.

The young people here, the students here, are probably beginning to think about the work you will do. I hope because you're getting a good education, more than anything else, you'll be able to do something that you love. And if you do something that you love, I believe that you ought to be properly rewarded for it and that you ought also to have the freedom

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to raise a strong family while you're doing it. That's what today is all about.

And if there is anything that America ought to be about in the 21st century, it ought to be about finally really creating opportunity for all, a responsible nation of all citizens, and a community in which everyone has the chance to do the most important work of all: raise strong, healthy, happy children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Dorothy Betts Marvin Theatre at George Wash-

ington University. In his remarks, he referred to Jessica Cupp, who introduced the President, her husband, Tommy, and their triplets Sarah, Maggie, and Aliza; Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, founder, New Democrat Network; Stephen J. Trachtenberg, president, George Washington University, and his wife, Francine Zorn Trachtenberg; William Marshall, president and founder, Progressive Policy Institute; Eli Segal, president, Welfare to Work Partnership; and Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council.

Statement on the Death of Tom Foerster

January 12, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Tom Foerster, who for 40 years served the people of Allegheny County with pride, distinction, and most of all, compassion. Tom's years in office, a record 28 of them as Allegheny County commissioner, should serve as an example to everyone of what a public servant ought to be.

Throughout his long political career, Tom always put the needs of the people of Allegheny County first. I was particularly pleased that last year Tom decided to return to politics and was victorious in his race for a seat on the Allegheny County Council.

Hillary and I extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Georgeann, and to his family.

Remarks at Boricua College in Brooklyn, New York

January 13, 2000

Thank you. You know, I have to tell you, I was sitting here listening to all the previous speakers and looking at the people in the audience, feeling very grateful for how good Brooklyn's been to me over the years, and thinking, you know, this is why I ran for President; these are the people that deserve help, a hand up, a chance to work together and to live their dreams.

Enealia Nau, thank you for your wonderful words. Thank you for the power of your example. Thank you for the kind things you said about my wife, who, I should tell you, has been involved, as I was, for now over 15 years in these kind of endeavors. We brought a small development bank to our State, modeled on the South Shore Bank in Chicago, which did so much to revitalize difficult neighborhoods there.

We started a microlending program, and we're now spreading microlending all across America. And last year we made 2 million loans in poor villages in Latin America and Africa and Asia, as well, to help people everywhere—[inaudible].

I always like to come to New York and give my wife a plug. I thought she was going to run for office here, but after "David Letterman" last night, she may be trying to get his job instead. [Laughter] I sat there, and I said, "You know, I thought I was supposed to be the funny one in this family." [Laughter]

I want to thank Aida Alvarez for the wonderful job she's doing. She's the first Puerto Rican American ever to serve in a President's Cabinet, and she's doing quite—[inaudible]. And I want to thank our HUD Deputy Secretary, Saul Ramirez, who has already been acknowledged. But

he and Secretary Cuomo have been real champions of economic development here in New York and across the country. I thank him.

President Alicea, thank you for having me here. I love to go to community-based educational institutions. I think they are in many ways the most successful institutions in America. They are entrepreneurial, creative, flexible, and they give everybody a chance at the brass ring. And so I thank you.

I thank Jim King, the State director of the Small Business Development Center, and Woodrow McCutchen, the president of the National Association of Small Business Development Centers. I want to thank all the people who put up the money so far. Thank you, Steve Kravitz, for making this day possible. I want to thank Marge Magner and her boss, Sandy Weill, from Citigroup, for donating \$100,000 to help launch this Boricua Small Business Development Center. I thank ACCION and its representative for being here.

But most of all I want to say a word or two about Nydia Velázquez. She has one emotional level—intense. She communicates one feeling only—passion. [Laughter] When she asks you for something, you get the feeling that you can tell her yes now or tell her yes later. And in the end, you wind up with Enealia's pun on her last name; you decide to go for now. [Laughter]

So she will do anything, I mean anything, to get her way. She took a trip with me on Air Force One. She gave dancing lessons to a Republican Congressman just to try to get him—[inaudible]. He was a very nice, attractive Republican, but being a Republican, he had rhythm problems. And she took care of it, you know. [Laughter] It was wonderful. I say that because I never want that to hurt her in her overwhelmingly Democratic district; she was just trying to build more bridges the way she always does. [Laughter]

It is also true that she was one of the first people to say to me, now that we had turned the American economy around, we had to reach out to the markets in America that had not turned around. And so, for all of you, the most important thing I can just say is, thank you, because you have proved that this can work, and therefore you have laid a very strong foundation for the legislation I'm going to ask Congress to pass this year.

Let me just say, for example, if you look at the work of the Small Business Development Centers in New York State alone—let's just take New York State—the 5-year success rate of businesses getting off the ground here with the help of these local centers is an astonishing 95 percent.

Now, as you have heard, the center that will be here at Boricua College is getting a tremendous boost from the New Markets Lending Cooperative that Representative Velázquez has been so instrumental in creating. This will provide more than \$13 million in loans and venture capital for entrepreneurs like Ms. Nau. And many of them would not have access to capital in any other way.

Again, let me say I want to thank ACCION, the Loan Source, Medallion Financial Corporation, all of them for their commitments to this cooperative. For hundreds of hardworking families in this community, you are underwriting the American dream.

Over the past year, I've been to places that Presidents don't normally go. I've been to Watts. I've been to Watts half a dozen times since I started running for office, but I went back to Watts. I've been to inner-city Newark, inner-city Atlanta, the poorest housing projects in Chicago, in East St. Louis, the barrios of south Phoenix and Hartford, rural and farming communities in my native State of Arkansas and Mississippi and Kentucky. I've been to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent. In every one of these places, and here in Williamsburg, as well, I see potential, not hopelessness.

Now, here's the pitch I try to make when I'm not here to get support for many, many more endeavors of this kind. Seven years ago, when I started this odyssey as President, we had national economic distress, social decline, discredited Government. But today—so we could be forgiven for concentrating on the big needs of the majority of the American people. We had to turn the ship of state around.

But now we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the first

back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years—surpluses. We have, for the first time in my lifetime, a strong economy, an improving social fabric, and the absence of severe domestic crises or foreign crises. Now, if we cannot fulfill our responsibility now to give every American a chance to live up to his or her God-given potential, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it? If we can't do it now, when will we ever do it?

The second thing I want to do is to amplify a little bit on a point that Nydia made, that this is good business. A long way from this community in Washington, DC, you would be amazed at how many hours we spend with our economic team—and Aida has been part of it—and how many hours they spend over at the Federal Reserve with Mr. Greenspan, figuring out how can we keep this economic growth going. In just a few weeks, this economic expansion will become the longest expansion in the history of the country, eclipsing those which occurred in wartime when we were fully mobilized. Now, how do you keep it going?

Well, what normally kills expansion? They run out of steam because there is no opportunity to grow, or the growth leads to inflation. And then to break inflation, you have to raise interest rates. And that ends the economic expansion because people can't afford to borrow any money anymore, and they're paying more for what they've already borrowed. And they get in trouble, so that ends it.

Now, is there an inflation-free way to keep the economy going? Yes, there is. What is it? You have to find new markets and create new jobs and new businesses in places where they didn't exist before. If, at the same time, you create new businesses and new employees and new consumers, you will have more growth without inflation.

So in a funny way—you need to know this—what you're doing here is good for people in North Dakota where the unemployment rate is under 3 percent. It's good for people in New Hampshire where the unemployment rate is under 3 percent. Why? Because you are permitting them to having a growing American economy without inflation.

So every American should be supporting this, not only because it's morally right to give people who are poor and who don't have access to capital the chance to live their dreams but because it is in our self-interest as a nation if

we want to keep this astonishing economic revival going.

And more and more people are coming to understand that. I thank the Congress on a bipartisan basis for already passing the first bill last year appropriating the funding, the first level of funding, for my national new markets initiative. Now we're working to pass a set of tax incentives and loan guarantees to give companies the same financial incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia.

I support the incentives we give American businesses and financial institutions to invest overseas. Those people are our customers too, and they're our partners for the future. And if we want democracy and peace and harmony to reign around the world, people need a chance to live their dreams, too. It's no accident that the crime rate goes down in America when the economy goes up. And the trouble rate goes down around the world when the economy goes up. But I do believe that people in America deserve to have the same opportunities from their Government, and people in America with money deserve to have the same incentives from their Government to help Americans that we give them to help people in the rest of the world. And that's the basic theory behind the new markets initiative.

An essential component of this is the new markets venture capital fund, which your Representative in Congress has played such an enormous role in creating. The idea is basically simple, but I want to explain it. For every dollar in equity capital you invest in America's new markets, we will give another dollar in Government-backed loans, effectively doubling the investments. Altogether, we think this program that Nydia has helped to create will stimulate \$1.3 billion over 5 years in new investments to start up and expand businesses in areas that have been left behind in urban and rural America. And I thank her again for this remarkable thing.

Now, we still have to pass this. That's why we need her passion and focus, you see. [*Laughter*] And it is a great testament to the efforts that she and others have made that not very long ago we had a big new markets event in Chicago, and the Speaker of the House, who is from Illinois, joined us there—just a couple of months ago. He made it clear that he is

ready to work with us to come to agreement on legislation early this year. And I talked to him a few days ago; he reaffirmed that commitment. If we do get this kind of bipartisan agreement, I don't want you to forget that Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez will be a major reason why we get this done.

Let me just close with this. Think about where we are now, as opposed to where we were 100 years ago, right here. At the turn of the last century, Williamsburg was known as one of the best incubators of new businesses anywhere in America. It was positioned near a big port and a major market. The waterfront was packed with docks, shipyards, warehouses, metal works, sugar refineries, and mills. After World War II, everything changed.

Today you've heard your unemployment rate, your poverty rate, and your rate of homeownership are more than twice the national average in the wrong direction. But the people here represent a whole new wave of American immigrants, more than 90 ethnic groups represented within just a mile or so of where we are. And Williamsburg once again is becoming a remarkable incubator, from retailers and restaurants to bodegas and bookshops. And the economy is changing.

We had a huge wave of immigrants who came into New York City 100 years ago from all over the world, just as people began to move from rural areas in America to the city, because the economy changed from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy. And America was changing with it, and people saw hope. Well, the economy has changed again. And for 30 years, Brooklyn bore the brunt of it, as the industrial economy shrank, particularly in the number of employees it took to produce things

and manufacture them, and we developed a new information-based economy in an increasingly globalized society.

But we're hooking into that now with things like information services. There's a tremendous opportunity out there for people who will help do what lawyer Nau is doing—now. [Laughter] And this represents a clear understanding that most of the job growth is coming in America from small businesses. And most people who start small businesses have a good idea of what they want to do, but they may not know how to do it, or all the other stuff you've got to do just to do what you want to do and what you're trained and skilled to do.

So this is a big part of America continuing its growth and using, literally, the only chance in my lifetime, which is getting a little longer as the days go by, the only chance in my lifetime we have ever had to give every American who is willing to work the chance to live the American dream.

So I want to say again how profoundly grateful I am to all of you, to say thank you, and *Dios los bendiga*. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the third floor atrium at the college. In his remarks, he referred to Enealia Nau, Brooklyn business owner, who introduced the President; Victor Alicea, president, Boricua College; Steven D. Kravitz, president, Loan Source, Inc.; Marge Magner, Primerica Financial Services and Citibanking North America executive; Sanford I. Weill, chief executive officer, Citigroup; Terri Ludwig, president and chief executive officer of ACCION; and late night television talk show host David Letterman.

Remarks at the Wall Street Project Conference in New York City *January 13, 2000*

Thank you. The reason we were scurrying around up here is that Reverend Jackson had taken my speech. [Laughter] That's okay. I've taken a lot of his over the years. [Laughter]

Sandy, thank you for that wonderful introduction. I'm glad one of us made money out of this administration. [Laughter] I want to con-

gratulate Robert Knowling and my longtime, wonderful friend Berry Gordy on their awards. I thank Mr. Ivester and Mr. Seidenberg for supporting this important work. I thank Secretary Slater and our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez, for being here with me. And I think Secretary Cuomo spoke here earlier today. He and the

Vice President have done a wonderful job with our empowerment zone program and the other HUD economic development initiatives.

I want to say a special word of appreciation here today to the Members of Congress who are here—Congressmen Rangel, Velázquez, Owens, Maloney, Engel, and Jackson. And my personal thanks to two former Members of Congress who are here, the leader of the NAACP, Kweisi Mfume, and my good friend Reverend Floyd Flake, who went home to his mission in life. And I thank him.

I saw my friend Mayor Willie Brown from San Francisco, and we congratulate him on his reelection. And former Mayor David Dinkins of New York, thank you, Mayor Dinkins; and our comptroller, Carl McCall; and so many others who are here.

I want to thank Hugh Price for the Urban League's work. And I'd like to thank all the business leaders here who have helped the whole effort that Reverend Jackson has made over the last several years, but I would like to say a special word of appreciation to three who have been close to me and also close to Reverend Jackson: Willie Gary and Ron Burkle and Dennis Rivera. Thank you all very much for what you have done.

Now, we've got a lot of folks here who have done things, but I want to say also how much I appreciate Reverend Jackson's family, Jackie and all their wonderful children. They've been great friends to Hillary and to Chelsea and me, and I just get a big rush every time they stand up and get introduced. It's quite exciting. Reverend, you've done a lot of important things in your life, but those kids are the most important, by a long, good way, and I want to thank you.

Let me say, I always look forward to this event, but it keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger. If it gets any bigger, we've going to have to start holding it in Yankee Stadium—[laughter]—and that's a good thing. I would like that very much.

You know, I'm just practicing for my—did you see the way I got Berry up here and I took out the stand and then I picked up his glasses when he dropped them? I'm practicing for my role as a Senate spouse. [Laughter] Did you catch my wife on "Letterman" last night? Was she great, or what? [Applause] You know, it's bad enough that I have to give up being President; now I've got to give up being the

funny one in my family. [Laughter] Life is always teaching you lessons of humility. [Laughter]

Although the press, you know, they keep saying I'm a lame duck. I think what a lame duck is, you know, you show up for one of these things, and nobody else comes. [Laughter] So I want to thank all of you for making me feel like I'm still President today.

Now, to the business at hand. We all know why we're here, and we all know what we're supporting. I am profoundly grateful, not only as President but as a citizen, for the work that Reverend Jackson has done with this Wall Street Project. I am profoundly grateful that so many business leaders have supported it.

I want to say, also, a special word of appreciation to the Members of the Congress that I have already introduced and to the current and former leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Representatives Waters, Clyburn, Roybal-Allard, and Becerra. I want to thank Senators Sarbanes, Kerry, Robb, Rockefeller, and Congressman LaFalce from New York, because they've been especially supportive of this new markets initiative.

Now, you heard Sandy Weill say some very kind things about the economic record of the administration, but I would like to put it in a little different context. It is true that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, that in just a few weeks we'll have the longest economic expansion in the history of America. We'll then be over 20 million new jobs, surpassing the expansions that occurred in World War II when we were fully mobilized for war. It is true that we have the lowest recorded African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. That's all true. But it's also true that the minority unemployment rate and the minority poverty rate is still about twice the national average.

I was just in Brooklyn with Nydia Velázquez to kick off a small business center with Aida Alvarez. You heard her talking about it. In Brooklyn, a borough in New York City that has been very good to me and to the Vice President—the national unemployment rate is 4.1 percent; the Brooklyn unemployment rate is still over 9 percent. The national poverty rate down to about 11 percent; the Brooklyn poverty rate

way over 25 percent. The national homeownership rate, 66 percent; Brooklyn homeownership rate about 28 percent.

A lot of good things are happening there. And the whole area has been reborn on the energy of new immigrants, and I feel very good about it long term. But I want to make a point here. If we're in a position—which we weren't in 7 years ago because the whole country was in a mess, economically and otherwise. But if now it is true that we have perhaps the best economy we've ever had—instead of having the biggest debt in history, we're now paying the debt off for the first time in the history of the country. The Treasury Department started buying the debt in early, so we could provide more capital for the private sector at lower interest rates, and our goal is to have America debt-free, the Government debt-free in 15 years.

Now, if we're in a position to do that, there will never be, number one, a better time for us to bring economic opportunity to people and places that have been left behind. Number two, it has to be done in a partnership with the public and private sector, because we've still got a debt to pay off and an economy to keep strong, and the Government can't do this alone. This needs to be driven by private sector investment, private sector expertise, the kind of thing that will change for the long term not only people but whole neighborhoods and rural areas, Native American reservations, by empowering them to shape a different future for themselves.

If we can't do this now, we will never do this. We will never get around to doing this if we don't do it now. So, point number one, we have a moral obligation to use our prosperity at this moment, especially, to lift up the areas not only of New York City but upstate New York, which would rank 49th of all our States in job creation—if you took the city and the suburbs out, the rest of New York would be 49th of the 50 States in job creation. And there are lots of things that need to be done there that creative entrepreneurs can deal with, in terms of transportation and investment, lots of other issues—and all over America.

The second thing I want to say is, this is in the economic self-interest of the people who are doing very well, the people whose stock has gone from 5 bucks to 55 bucks. Why? Why is that? Well, Sandy stole Bob Rubin from me, and he probably figures that now he's bullet-proof from whatever we do in the Government,

you know. But let me tell you, you would be astonished at the time we spent both when Secretary Rubin was there and after he left, in the White House and a few blocks down, the time Chairman Greenspan and his staff spend at the Federal Reserve thinking about the following question: How can we keep this going? How much longer can this go on, after we even eclipse the record of expansion in wartime in just a couple of weeks? How can we do it?

How do economic expansions end? Well, sometimes they just run out of steam. There's nobody left that doesn't have any loose money to buy more stuff. You know? And then, sometimes they run out of steam because everybody starts making so much money that they ask for higher pay, or supplies get tight and they become so expensive they could get inflation in the economy. And then you have to raise interest rates to stop inflation, and the cure for stopping inflation also breaks the economic growth. Unemployment goes up, growth goes down, and it happens over and over again.

Have we sort of repealed the laws of the private economy? No, we haven't repealed it, but technology and open markets and competitiveness and productivity have changed it and made new things possible. But how are we going to keep this going?

Well, I would argue the only way to keep the growth going without inflation is to find both new businesses and new employees and new customers at the same time. If you have new people with money to spend and jobs to hold, then you can have growth without inflation—so that if the unemployment rate in Brooklyn drops from 9.4 percent to 4.1 percent, where it is nationwide, because you've got a whole lot of new jobs there, and then those people that have the jobs spend their money there, that won't contribute to inflation; it will keep the economy going.

And the same thing is true all across the country. And don't forget, folks, this is not just an inner-city problem. One of the best things Jesse Jackson ever did was go to Appalachia. We were out there in Appalachia with this new markets tour last summer, in this little courthouse town in West Virginia, and he got a bigger hand than I did because he had been there before. [Laughter] The face of—today we celebrate the fact that the face of wealth is color-blind and that there is an equal distribution of talent in our country. You also see that the

face of poverty and deprivation and the lack of opportunity is colorblind. This is an American challenge.

We were in Appalachia; we visited a company called Mid-South Electronics that now makes communications equipment—some of you might buy it—that makes its way onto the desktops of many Fortune 500 companies represented in this room. Ten years ago, in a distant place in Appalachia that's hard to get to, they had 40 employees. And now, thanks to the availability of capital, they have 850—way back in the hills in Appalachia.

In East St. Louis, with the great Mel Farr, Jesse Jackson and I visited a large new Walgreens store, first store that had been built in this distressed neighborhood in 30 years. And the manager of the store was a 24-year-old woman who just graduated from college a couple of years ago—running that store with 30 employees. And I believe every one of them but two were older than her, and they thought she was great. And the neighborhood was coming alive because of capital.

In Mississippi we met a woman who had been working for years in a small computer store and never made any money at all—just in this little, bitty store in a town in Mississippi. She had no money in the bank, and they were going to close her store. But she got an equity capital investment, and then she could get some loans. And she bought her business, where she had just been an employee all these years, but within a year she had more than doubled the size of the business and was making good money. She went from modest wages to being a proud business owner.

And there are lots of stories like this everywhere. But for every story like it, in these distressed places there are 10 more people who could be this story and aren't yet. And that's why people like you come to events like this.

This country owes a lot to visionary business people who are part of this movement. We owe a lot to the Members of Congress who are trying to help me pass my initiative, without which I could do nothing, and I thank them for being here. And we owe a lot to you, Jesse Jackson, for understanding that this was the next great frontier in the civil rights movement, years and years ago, and fighting for it all these years.

Now, here's what I'm going to try to do this year, in our last year in office, to set up a framework that will enable us to bring oppor-

tunity to the people and places that have been left behind. First, I will resubmit, with certain changes, my new markets initiative. The general idea is that I want to give people the same incentives to put money in underdeveloped neighborhoods and towns in America that we give them today to put money into poor areas in Latin America and Africa and all over the developing world.

Now, I strongly support that, too. I believe that when Americans give people in distant villages a chance to build a decent life, they're more likely to be good citizens and to support democracy and less likely to join the narcotraffickers or the people that are trying to corrupt governments and end freedom or later try to cause problems in the world that the United States will have to deal with. So we need to keep reaching out there. But we can't say, at this moment of heightened prosperity and a real challenge to keep our growth going, that we're not going to give the very same opportunities to our own people.

Now, what are we going to do? First, I will propose a major expansion of the new markets and empowerment zones tax credits, to give investors tremendous incentives to give a long look to the underdeveloped areas in urban and rural America. I want to thank especially Representative Charles Rangel for the very large role that he has played in leading the charge on both these tax credits. I'll ask for more than twice the funding I asked for last year for this tax credit to spur \$15 billion in new investment.

I'm also going to ask Congress to authorize two new components of our new markets agenda. First, our New Markets Venture Capital Firms, a program geared toward helping small and first-time entrepreneurs; and then America's private investment companies, modeled, as I said earlier, on the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, to help larger businesses expand or relocate to distressed inner-city or rural areas. Now, together, all these components of the new markets initiative will leverage over \$20 billion of new equity investment in our underserved communities.

Here's how it works. Through our New Markets Venture Capital initiative and the American Private Investment Corporation, we'll spur new investments in both small and large businesses by telling investors the following: If you put

up \$1 of equity capital for new markets investments, we'll provide \$2 of Government-guaranteed loans. In some cases, we'll even defer interest payments for up to 5 years.

What is the practical impact of this? It says, if you're willing to take the chance of seeking a profit in the new markets with new partners, we'll help to lower your financing costs and some of your risks. Then, on top of that, the new markets tax credit will give investors a 25-percent tax credit on investments in the Private Investment Corporation, in the New Market Venture Capital Group, in community development banks, and other funds that invest in our new markets. This will enable us, alone, to increase the amount this tax credit serves, from 6 to 15 billion dollars.

Now, is anybody going to, all of a sudden, put money into a sinkhole where they think they'll lose it? No, not unless we give you a 100 percent tax credit. But if you know there is a marginal increased risk but a potential big reward, not only for your investment but for our country as a whole, what these initiatives will do will say, hey, take a look at these places in America that have been left behind. And they're out there, and they're gifted people.

I ordered Christmas presents, a few Christmas presents on the Internet this year for the first time. But you know who my seller was? One of America's Indian tribes. When we went to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota—do you think it's tough in Brooklyn—do you know what the unemployment rate on the Pine Ridge Reservation is, because it's so far from everywhere? One of the most noble places in America, the home of the Oglala Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse—their unemployment rate in this economy is 73 percent.

I met—I was taken around through this neighborhood by this young woman who had had a very difficult childhood, but she was one of the most impressive, self-possessed, articulate people I have met in a long time for her age. And I thought to myself, there is an equal distribution of talent and intelligence everywhere in our country, and it is wrong for these people to be denied good jobs, good education, good housing, decent businesses, and the opportunity to build a different kind of 21st century community. Now, this is wrong.

So I say to all of you again, I want you to help me pass this new markets initiative. I want you to help me increase the empowerment zone

tax credits. And I want you to help me keep doing the things that are working. I want you to help me work with Vice President Gore and Secretary Cuomo to get a whole other round of empowerment zone communities, so we can put even more intense efforts there. And I want you to help me make it a nonpartisan deal.

The Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, a Republican from Illinois, joined Reverend Jackson and me and Congressman Bobby Rush and some others in Englewood, Illinois, recently, and he pledged to work with us to find common ground on these proposals. Economic opportunity should not be the political province of any particular party. Economic opportunity should be the birthright of every American.

Let me just mention one other thing I'm going to do, which is related to this, because I think it's important. Our new budget will carry a new initiative we call First Accounts to expand access to financial services to low income Americans—an idea long championed by Maxine Waters and many other leaders in Congress. Today, it's hard for some of you to believe, but far too many families have no bank accounts at all. They wind up spending a lot of their precious money on unnecessary fees, therefore, when they pay bills or cash checks.

Under this First Accounts initiative, we're going to work with financial institutions to encourage the creation of low cost bank accounts for low income families; to help bring more ATM's to safe places in low income communities, like the post office; to provide training to help families manage household finances and build assets over time, which will work very nicely with the financial education efforts you're launching at this conference.

And then, finally, I want to convene a roundtable at the White House to build even greater awareness in the corporate community of the benefits of the Community Reinvestment Act. You've already heard a lot of talk about that, but we had to work hard to ensure that when we passed the financial modernization bill and expanded the powers and opportunities for banks, we expanded the CRA, as well, and kept it instead of weakening it. That law has been on the books for over 20 years, with more than 95 percent of all the money loaned under it has occurred in the last 5 years. And I'm very proud of that because more than a \$1 trillion in long-term commitments have been made to invest in our communities.

So I say to you, we've got to do more of this. Especially when you put the responsibilities of financial institutions on the Community Reinvestment Act with all these incentives—if we can pass them through Congress, we can have a flood of money into areas that have never before had it, to people that have never before been able to get a loan, in ways that are good for all the rest of us, because they'll keep this engine going with no inflation.

Anyway, that is the idea. And I loved all this new markets tours we've done. And Reverend Jackson and I, many Members of Congress, we've stopped at a lot of places where Presidents never go. And I'm having such a good time, we're going to do another one this spring. So, Reverend, you've got to clear your calendar; we're going to go. And we're going to specifically focus on something that I hope all of you will help us on. We're going to focus on the digital divide.

This very conference is being broadcast live over the Internet to people all over the world. But a lot of the people you're trying to reach don't have a computer, can't afford the hookup. We have worked very hard, under the Vice President's leadership, to get something called the E-rate as a part of reform of the telecommunications system, which gives a couple of billion dollars in subsidies to schools and libraries around the country that are in low income areas, so everybody can afford to be hooked up.

When we started 5 years ago we had—only about 14 percent of the schools in our country were connected to the Internet; now over 80 percent are. We're really working hard, and we've had a wonderful partnership with the private sector. But it's not enough for the schools.

I went to Hudson County, New Jersey, which has a lot of first-generation immigrants, in a school that had so many problems it was almost closed by the State. And then the principal of this high school not only started making sure all the immigrant kids whose first language was not English were trained on the computer, they started putting computers in the parents' home and showing them how to do it, so that all these low income working people could E-mail their parents, teachers, and their principals every day. The dropout rate went way down and the performance of these kids in a low income neighborhood, most of them immigrant kids, rose about the State average of New Jersey.

We can do this if we close the digital divide. Your company had a lot to do with that, and I thank you.

So again I say, you know, when you know something works and you know you ought to do it, you know, by the way, it will help you as well as help other people, you need your head examined if you don't do it.

I see this as a part of America making the most of this precious moment. This week—I'll just close with this—this week I had one of the great sort of personal encounters with beauty in my whole life. I flew to the Grand Canyon, and I got there late at night. And I stayed in this old lodge built in 1905 which is right out on the edge of the Grand Canyon.

Thirty years ago, when I was a young man, not long after I met Hillary, I drove all the way to California to see her. And I stopped at the Grand Canyon late in the afternoon. And back then, you had greater access, before we lawyers got hold of everything. And I crawled out on a ledge, and I watched the Sun set over the Grand Canyon for 2 hours. And you know, that canyon was formed over millions of years, and there are lots of layers of rock and lots of different shapes. So when the Sun sets, the light comes out of the Canyon until it disappears, and it changes everything. So for the first time in my life, this week I got to see the Sun rise over the Grand Canyon. So when it rises, it goes down into the Canyon and has the same impact.

And I went there to set aside another million acres to protect it there, under authority that Presidents have had since Theodore Roosevelt got Congress to pass something called the Antiquities Act in 1908. And really, 100 years ago the times were—bore a lot of similarities to today. We were becoming a nation of immigrants; we changed from being an agricultural country to an industrial country—just like we're going from being an industrial country to an information-based global society now.

And Theodore Roosevelt said that the great hallmark of every young and growing society must be that it takes the long look ahead. It's a nice phrase, isn't it? So if we are what we dearly want our children and grandchildren to believe we are, we will take the long look ahead.

We'll deal with the challenge of the aging of America, the children of America, the need to balance work and family, the need to prove that we can improve the environment as we

grow the economy, the need to put a human face on the global economy, the need to stand against the new threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and the old demons of racial and ethnic and religious hatred around the world. But we need to start in the long look ahead with the clear understanding that this is the only time in the lifetimes of most of us here when we ever had a chance to give everyone their shot at the American dream.

When Martin Luther King was preparing to go to Chicago a long, long time ago, and Jesse Jackson was not still in high school but he was very young—[laughter]—in preparation for Dr. King's arrival, Jesse launched Chicago's Operation Breadbasket, an effort to open the dairy, the grocery, the other segregated industries to African-Americans. In just 2 years, he helped more than 3,000 men and women secure good jobs and an income that totaled over \$22 million a year. So decades ago, Chicago got a glimpse of how good business could be when more people could play, to use the Reverend's phrase. Now, everyone in America knows this. You are all here in recognition of this.

In a little more than a year, I'll just be a citizen again. And when I leave, I want to know that my country took the long look ahead, to give every poor person a chance to have the dignity that comes when your mind and your body and your spirit are engaged in productive

labor for yourself and your family and your children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Imperial Room at the Sheraton Towers Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, and his wife, Jacqueline; Sanford I. Weill, chief executive officer, Citigroup; Robert E. Knowling, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Covad Communications Co.; Berry Gordy, Jr., founder, Motown Record Co.; M. Douglas Ivester, chairman of the board of directors and chief executive officer, Coca-Cola Co.; Ivan Seidenberg, vice chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Bell Atlantic; Kweisi Mfume, president and chief executive officer, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; former Representative Floyd H. Flake, pastor, Allen AME Church, NY; State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League, Inc.; attorney Willie E. Gary, 1999 Horatio Alger Award winner; Ronald W. Burkle, chair, Yucaipa Companies; Dennis Rivera, cochair, board of directors, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; late night television talk show host David Letterman; former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; and former NFL Detroit Lion Mel Farr, Sr., president, Mel Farr Automotive Group.

Statement on the Treasury Department's Planned Use of Debt Buybacks *January 13, 2000*

America has come a long way in the last 7 years. We moved from the largest deficit in history to the largest surplus in history. We have put this country on a path of fiscal discipline that has led to paying down \$140 billion in debt over the past 2 years and put us on course to be debt-free by 2015 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

The announcement that the U.S. Treasury will use debt buybacks is a dramatic reminder of this progress on fiscal responsibility. This new tool for this unprecedented era of surpluses will, in effect, help refinance old debt and pay it down on the best terms possible. It represents our commitment to pay down our Federal debt in a way that best serves the interests of the taxpayers.

Interview With Ron Insana of CNBC's "Business Center" in
New York City
January 13, 2000

Mr. Insana. As you know, the Wall Street Diversity Project has been underway for a number of years now, and President Clinton is here at the New York Stock Exchange to talk about diversity on Wall Street, among a number of other topics.

Mr. President, it's good to see you again. Thanks for coming back to the program.

The President. Thank you, glad to be back.

New Markets Initiative

Mr. Insana. Are you getting a sense that there is some progress being made on the diversity issue down here in the lower corridors of Manhattan?

The President. Oh, I think so. We had the annual meeting of the Wall Street Project here with Reverend Jackson and Sandy Weill and Dick Grasso and a lot of other people. There is, I think, a general sense that the economy is opening up more and more to all America and a specific sense of urgency that one of the ways to keep this expansion going without inflation is to involve people and places that have been left behind. So I'm quite hopeful.

Mr. Insana. Now, last time we met, in fact, in July—that was one of your initiatives, the new markets initiative, that focused on underprivileged people in rural and other parts of the country. And today you talked about tax incentives, also, for the working poor. How likely is it that a Congress in an election year will let you make any progress on that issue?

The President. Well, I think it's quite likely, actually. I have worked very hard to make this a bipartisan or a nonpartisan issue. I don't think economic opportunity ought to be the sole province of the Democratic Party. I think it ought to be the birthright of every American. And I've worked very hard to involve the Speaker of the House, particularly, who is from Illinois. And he came to our meeting in Chicago, and I've had several good conversations with him. And I expect that we will have legislation coming out of the House to give significant tax incentives to people who will invest in poor places in America that haven't been part of this recovery.

What I want to do is basically give the same sort of incentives, at least, if not more so, that we give to people to invest in poor communities in Latin America or Africa or Asia. And I'm going to offer a more aggressive program this year even than I did last year in the State of the Union. And I think it will be well-received.

National Economy

Mr. Insana. Let me ask you a question about the broad economy right now. We've got some information today showing that retail sales were strong, inflation starting to creep up a little bit, and bond market interest rates have gone up a lot in the last 15–16 months to nearly 6.75 percent. Do you get the same whiff of inflation that the financial markets seem to be getting at the moment?

The President. I think the evidence is mixed. There still have been remarkable increases in productivity. And I think the fact that we're still—we actually paid off some of our debt in advance in the last day or so, for the first time in the history of the country. So the Government is continuing to try to get out of the debt market, make it more liquid. Wages still aren't going up at any unreasonable amount. Productivity driven by technology is going up a lot, and we're still trying to keep our markets very open.

So I think that the larger forces are still operating against the resumption of inflation. It's almost inevitable that you're going to have—well, like we had last year, where oil goes up, or you have a bottleneck in this product or that service because of the growth of the economy. But so far I feel pretty good about where we are on inflation.

Mr. Insana. When we spoke in July, I asked you a question about whether or not you were worried if there was a bubble in the stock market. At the time, the NASDAQ was at about 2800, and you said thoughtful people should think about this question and at least review how they should invest in that environment. It's gone from 2800 to 4100 on the NASDAQ, a 46 percent gain in that period. What should thoughtful people do now?

The President. Well, I think one of the things that we have seen, since you and I talked last, are some very encouraging new studies about the nature of productivity, indicating that people who do this sort of thing are actually beginning to measure, and feel comfortable measuring, much bigger increases in productivity driven by technology and information spreads than they had previously thought.

To me, the main thing for us to do is to keep our markets open, keep paying the debt off, try to have a competitive environment, and continue to invest in new technologies and the human capacity of our people. And we'll just see how long it will go. In a few weeks, this will be the longest expansion in history, including that which embraced World War II, where we were completely mobilized for a war and had legal controls on inflation.

So there's never been anything like this before. The truth is, no one knows for sure what's going to happen. I will say again, I think having good fundamentals and then continuing to invest in the people and places left behind—because that's a noninflationary way to go, where you create new markets as well as new businesses, new employees—that, I think, is what we should do. And then we'll see what happens. But I'm quite hopeful.

Microsoft Corporation

Mr. Insana. One of the architects of that technological revolution, Bill Gates, today stepped back from his day-to-day responsibilities at Microsoft, elevated Steve Ballmer to the CEO position. What do you think about Mr. Gates switching his emphasis in his career?

The President. Well, I think it's a very interesting move by him. Ballmer is obviously a very able man, and Gates is a genius with technology. So it will be interesting to see what happens.

I'd like to say, since you asked the question, a word of appreciation to Bill and Melinda Gates for the commitments they've made through their foundation to help minority young people go on to college and the massive commitment they've made to make vaccines more available to poor people throughout the world. I think the fact that he is doing these kinds of things with the wealth he's accumulated is a very good thing to do. So I wish him well, and I want to encourage him to do more of that.

Mr. Insana. Mr. Ballmer had a statement in his first day as CEO and suggested that it would be reckless and irresponsible of the U.S. Government to break up Microsoft. How would you respond to that?

The President. Well, my response would be, first of all, that the decision would have to be made by a court and that, because it is a legal proceeding, I had nothing to do with what the Antitrust Division did, and I certainly can't have anything to do with what the judge does.

So my response is, whatever I think, I shouldn't say it, one way or the other, because I'm not involved in it, and I shouldn't attempt to impact either the market or what's going on here. I think the record has been made; the judge's opinion is there, and they have to argue about the remedy, which is anybody knows in antitrust cases completely different from finding whether someone violated the laws or not. And they'll go through it all, and I hope they'll do what's best for the American economy and the American consumers in the short run and over the long run.

Presidential Candidate Al Gore

Mr. Insana. Going back to the economy for a minute. Vice President Gore has been out doing his campaigning, but he has not necessarily delivered a full-scale platform on the economy yet. Do you think he should? And if he did, what do you think should be included in that platform?

The President. Well, I think he—first of all, he did give a pretty comprehensive speech in New Hampshire a couple of weeks ago, which I thought was quite good, committing himself to continuing to pay the debt down, which I think is very important, and to increasing our investments in education and in science and technology. And he has committed himself to continue to expand the frontiers of trade.

I have said before, and I'll say again, I think it is a mistake that there are elements in both parties of the Congress that seem to be afraid of continuing to expand trade. I do believe we should try to put a more human face on the global economy. I think that core labor standards, being against child labor, trying to have basic environmental standards, all that is very important. But the expansion of trade is very important for a country like ours, with 4 percent of the world's people and 21 percent of its income and the longest growth in history. You

can't keep that going unless you find more customers. And he believes in that.

So he's for continued paying off the debt, continued investment in people, science and technology, and continued expansion of trade, and doing it in a way that tries to bring all people into the stream of economic opportunity. I think it's a good economic program, and I support it.

President's Future Plans

Mr. Insana. Final question to you. Down here on Wall Street, there have been a couple published reports that suggested that you have an interest in coming to work here, once you finish your term as President, and going to Lazard Freres for what is not an inconsiderable amount of money. Any truth to those stories?

The President. It's a total fabrication. I must say that it was an immense surprise to my wife and daughter that anybody would ever offer me that kind of money to do anything. [Laughter] So, no, I don't think it's really appropriate for me at this time to be discussing that.

What I want to do is to work until the last hour of the last day I'm President, to get as much done for the country as I can, to leave America in the best shape I can, and then to have—for the rest of my life, try to be a good and useful citizen. And I'll have plenty of time to figure out what I should do to make a living at a later time.

It was a flattering rumor. Many of the other rumors have been flattering. But they're all, as far as I know, completely unfounded.

Hillary Clinton's Appearance on "Late Show With David Letterman"

Mr. Insana. We saw Mrs. Clinton on "Letterman" last night. You didn't happen to bring a Top 10 list with you this evening, did you?

The President. No, but I thought she was fabulous. I must say, I was sort of—I was amazed. I used to think I was the funny one in our family. And I was very proud of her. I thought she was wonderful.

Mr. Insana. Mr. President, good to see you. Thanks for joining us tonight.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:55 p.m. in a broadcast booth at the New York Stock Exchange. In his remarks, the President referred to Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; Sanford I. Weill, chief executive officer, Citigroup; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; Steve Ballmer, president and chief executive officer, and William H. (Bill) Gates, chairman and chief software architect, Microsoft Corp.; and Mr. Gates' wife, Melinda. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Wall Street Project Conference Reception in New York City
January 13, 2000

Well, first let me thank Reverend Jackson. And Jackie, thank you. And Dick Grasso, thank you for having all of us here tonight. This is the first time I have ever spoken from this microphone. You know, as President, I'm superstitious, and we've had such a good stock market. I don't ever comment on it—except I like the way it finished today. [Laughter]

I wanted to say just a couple of things very briefly. First of all, I want to thank Dick Grasso for his leadership in the Wall Street Project. A lot of people don't know that the stock market was organized over 200 years ago so that there would be a mechanism through which bonds could be issued to finance America's debts in

the war for our independence. So, in the beginning, this stock market had not just a profit motive but a public interest purpose. This man has infused the stock market not only with its greatest success in history but with a public interest purpose, to include all Americans in our prosperity. And we thank him.

Most of you were with us today in the afternoon, and I won't make you sit through my speech again—or stand through my speech again, even though I'd kind of like to, because this is the first crowd in a long time when I've been guaranteed a standing ovation. [Laughter]

I just want to make two points. One, I want to thank Jesse Jackson for being there on this issue for a long time, saying we would never be the country we ought to be until we really had economic opportunity for all—that's what the Wall Street Project is all about—and that it would be good business, as well as good morality.

The second point I want to make, that I made today and I leave with all of you is, this is the only time in my lifetime we have had a booming economy, improvements in all of our social fabric, the absence of crisis at home and domestic threats, and the absence of threats to our security around the world as big as those we faced in the cold war. None of this has ever happened before. The big question before us is, what are we going to do with this magic moment? Are we going to take the long look into the future and do the big things that America needs, or are we going to indulge ourselves in shortsighted frittering away of our present wealth and serenity at home and stability around the world?

I'm just telling you, we will never be the country we ought to be until every person, in-

cluding the people and places that have been left behind in this remarkable recovery, has a chance to live the American dream. We will never be as safe a country, as whole a country, the one America we ought to be, until everybody has a chance.

That's what the Wall Street Project is all about. That's what my new markets initiative is all about. And I want to implore you to use this millennial year of 2000 to ask all of our fellow Americans to think about those who could be a part of what we celebrate and thank God for every day, but aren't yet. If we make them a part of it, we'll really give a gift to our children and to the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:48 p.m. at the Bell Podium at the New York Stock Exchange. In his remarks he referred to Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, and his wife, Jacqueline; and Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in New York City January 13, 2000

The President. Thank you. First of all, let me say I've had a good time tonight. I've enjoyed taking the pictures with all of you, and it's the only way I get to make absolutely sure I meet everyone. [*Laughter*] So I'm sorry that we had to do it so quickly, but at least I got to see all of you briefly.

I want to thank John and Margo for opening their beautiful home for us and for being my wonderful friends for a very long time now. And I want to thank the other cochairs of this event for the efforts that you made and the success that you had. And I would like to just take a moment to say some things that may be obvious to all of you about why I think it's important that you did this tonight.

When I ran for President in 1992—and I'm quite sure that most people in New York could not imagine voting for a guy who was Governor of a State that many people here couldn't find

on a map, you know—[*laughter*]—as President Bush said, a small southern State. [*Laughter*]

Let me say something else—I know I usually get on—[*inaudible*]. I keep reading—several times in my tenure, for various reasons, the press has said that I was a lame duck, and now they say I really am because I only have a year to serve. You know what a lame duck is, really? That's when you're supposed to show up at an event, and you do, and nobody else is there. [*Laughter*] So you all were immensely reassuring to me tonight, and I thank you. I'll sleep well tonight. I thank you very much.

But let me say to you—

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Listen, that is—part of the reason we're here tonight; it's a high-tech economy, you know all these cell phones—

Audience member. Buy 500 shares. [*Laughter*]

The President. Even I know it's—[*inaudible*]. The thing that I want to say about it, just very

briefly, why I hope you will—if somebody asked you tomorrow why did you come, apart from you wanted to get a picture or you wanted to say something to me about a particular issue, Cyprus or something else—I’ll say more about that in a minute. I just want you to remember, 7 years ago, when I ran for President in 1992, we had economic distress, social division, political conflict, and Government was discredited.

And the only reason I ran—I was actually very happy at home in my job, raising my daughter, with my friends—some of whom have become your friends, some of you, in the last 7 years. But it really bothered me because I knew this was a great country that had more strengths and more potential for the 21st century than at any time in our history. And I felt we had an obligation to the rest of the world because this is the only place that has the kind of economic strength we have and political strength, and also we have people from everywhere else on Earth living in America. We have people from everywhere else on Earth, nearly, in this room tonight. [Laughter] And that’s very important.

So, anyway, we set about our work. And the reason this is so important is now the American people have to decide whether to ratify the approach that has had such a large role in producing the last 7 years, or take a different approach.

John talked about we’ve gone from a big deficit to a big surplus. We’ve got the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and in the last 2 days we actually bought in Government debt before it was due, for the first time in the history of the United States. We’re going to get this country out of debt.

And all of you know we’ve got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the longest—in just a few weeks, we’ll have the longest economic expansion in the history of America, including the times we were fully mobilized for war. And I’m grateful for that. And I’m grateful for the fact that we have the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the lowest murder rate in 30 years and all of those things.

But what I want to say to you is, elections and public work are just like your work: It’s really always about tomorrow. And I appreciate what John said about the job that we’ve done. But I never will forget when I was thinking about running for a fifth term as Governor—we used to have 2-year terms, and then we

went to 4-year terms—I went out to the State Fair. And this old man in overalls came up to me and said, “Are you going to run for another term?” And I said, “Well, I don’t know. If I run, will you vote for me?” He said, “I guess so. I always have.” [Laughter] I’d been in 10 years. And I said, “Well, aren’t you sick of me after all these years?” He said, “No, I’m not, but nearly everyone else I know is.” [Laughter] So I got my feelings hurt. I said, “Well, don’t you think I’ve done a good job?” He said, “Yeah, but that’s what I hired you to do.” [Laughter] He said, “You drew a check every 2 weeks, didn’t you?” It was a very interesting encounter.

So every time we come around to a decision, we always have to think about the future. And the only thing I want you to think about is this. This is the only time in my lifetime when we have had at the same time dramatic economic progress, dramatic decline in our social problems, the absence of an internal crisis, and the absence of an external threat to our existence. We have never had all those four conditions at one time. Therefore, we have the opportunity of a lifetime to chart the future of our dreams for our children here at home and to be the world’s most responsible nation abroad.

A lot of you came up to me; some talked about the Middle East peace process, which I’m heavily involved in. I hope and pray we can reach an agreement between Syria and Lebanon and the Palestinians in Israel in the next several weeks. And several of you talked to me about how we’ve made some progress in repairing the breach between Turkey and Greece, but we haven’t done enough on Cyprus. You think about it: There’s no other place in the world where people would come and talk to the head of a country and talk about these things. And it’s a great privilege to be an American, to live in a country where we have people from everywhere and where our country has the opportunity and the responsibility to try to move the world toward greater harmony, to go beyond the racial and ethnic and religious conflicts that have caused so much turmoil in the world. And I think that’s important.

We have an opportunity to do the same thing here at home. We have an opportunity now—the reason I’m here today in New York is I came to the Wall Street Project, sponsored by Jesse Jackson, Sandy Weill, and Dick Grasso—now, that’s an interesting trio. [Laughter] And

why are they doing that? For the same reason that I'm going around America trying to get changes in the law and new investments and tax incentives to invest in areas and people that have been left behind, because we'll never have the opportunity we have right now, today, to give people who have been poor and forgotten a chance to be part of this free enterprise economy. If we don't do it now, we'll never get around to it—we'll never get around to it.

Let me just mention two or three more issues. We've got the most diverse group of young people in our country's history and the largest number of students. We've got the best system of college education in the world, and we have effectively opened the doors of college to everybody, although I'm going to propose some things to make it more affordable in the State of the Union. But no one believes we've done what we need to do to give every child a world-class education, kindergarten through 12th grade. Until we do that, we won't be secure in the 21st century.

The number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] And I'm trying to get the Congress to take the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life of the baby boomers and to add to the life of Medicare and to let elderly people on Medicare who can't otherwise afford it buy insurance so they can have prescription drugs when they need them. These are big issues.

And just one more—I could mention four or five more—I want to mention one more. I had an incredible experience this week, which I hope every one of you will have at some point in your life if you have not already. I flew in very late at night into the Grand Canyon. And I spent the night in an old lodge built in 1905, with a balcony right over the edge of the Canyon. And I spent an hour in the morning watching the Sun rise over the Grand Canyon.

Thirty years ago, when I was a much younger man, I spent 2 hours crawling out on a ledge to watch the Sun set over the Grand Canyon. And it's a source of infinite humility. People ask me all the time about my legacy. It took millions of years to form the Grand Canyon; doubtless in a few thousand no one will remember that I did a lot to save it or expand it, you know. It's not about your legacy; it's about your life.

But if you go to the Grand Canyon and you watch the sunrise or the sunset and you see that it took millions upon millions of years for all these layers of rock to form and they're different colors and different shapes, so when the Sun sets you watch the light come up out of the Canyon and, when the Sun rises, you watch the light dive down into the Canyon, and it's like watching this breathtaking, constantly changing painting, there's nothing like it anywhere in the world.

And I went out there because I added a million acres to the land we're protecting, almost doubling the size of the Grand Canyon. And when we did that, our administration has now protected more land in the lower 48 States than any administration in history except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. [Applause] Thank you. You don't have to clap for that, but I like it. [Laughter]

But here's why I make this point. When I ran for office in 1992, I used as my theme song that old Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow." And all during the times I've been President, the good times and bad, I have hammered my Cabinet and my staff to remember why we came here. I was immensely gratified when, a couple of years ago, a scholar of the American Presidency said that we had—and this was 3½ years ago—already kept a higher percentage of our promises to the American people than the previous five administrations he'd studied. And it's not a mystery. We just sort of showed up for work every day, and no matter what else they were lobbying in, we just kept working and kept working.

The reason I think it's important you're here tonight is this: Just remember, for all the good things that have happened, what we have basically done is turn the ship of state around, got the country going in the right direction, and got it coming together.

We now have a chance to think about these big things—I mean really big things. Just think about it. We could make America the safest big country in the world. We could prove forever that you could grow the economy and improve the environment. We could move beyond our own racial and religious and ethnic conflicts and basically make a lasting peace in other parts of the world. These are things we could do. We could prove you could educate all children. We could prove you could bring free enterprise to poor people. These are things we can do.

But they won't happen unless we make a decision, as a people, in this election that we will not be devoted, distracted, or divided by the good times before.

Now, there are a lot of young people here, and I'm glad that you're here. But everybody over a certain age can cite some personal experience when you made a big mistake in your life because you thought things were going so well that there were no consequences to the failure to concentrate. Everybody over a certain age—[laughter]—isn't that right? I have about 10 laws of politics, one of which is, you're always most vulnerable when you think you are invulnerable.

This country will never get an election like this again in our lifetime, when all these things are in alignment. And now we have to make a decision about what we want to do for our children and our grandchildren. And it's not as if we don't know what the great opportunities and the great challenges of the next 30 or 40 years are going to be. So we have no excuse. We know.

So if somebody asks you why you came tonight, say, "I got to see the President, and he told a joke or two, and we took a nice picture. But I care about the America and the world my children and grandchildren are going to live in, and I want us to use this election to take what Theodore Roosevelt called, almost 100 years ago, the long look ahead."

Thank you very much.

Audience member. One or two questions.

Judicial Nominations

Audience member. [Inaudible]—so much about the future, and one of the reasons I think everybody is here is because of their concern. And one of the key things that keeps coming up in this election is not about the next 4 years; I think it has a great effect on the Federal judiciary for the next 30 years. I don't know the statistics, but I know the Supreme Court is basically up. I just wondered if you could comment on this.

The President. I think a lot of people have not given much thought to this, but when you vote for—now, this is a self-interested statement I'm about to make. When you vote for the Senate—[laughter]—and when you vote for President, one of the things you should know is,

I have appointed a very large number of judges. In spite of the fact that I think the Republican Senate has been way too slow in considering our nominees, I've appointed more than 40 percent of all the judges in the city today, but only two members of the Supreme Court.

Most people believe there will be at least two and maybe as many as four members of the Supreme Court retire in the next 4 years. That means—and there are only two groups of people that matter then, the President who nominates and the Senate who confirms.

And all these people have been pretty honest, I must say. The candidates have been pretty honest. Governor Bush said the other day that the two people on the Supreme Court that he most admires were Clarence Thomas and Justice Scalia. That's what he said. So he's sending you a signal. He said, "I want you to know that so you'll know who I'll appoint to the Supreme Court if I get elected." And you have to assume—I can tell you that the people who are in the President's party are more likely to vote to confirm his nominees, whether or not they agree with him.

So you need to think about that. What do you want in a Supreme Court judge? Do you care if they repeal *Roe v. Wade*, or not? Do you want them to? Do you not want them to? It's a big issue. And nobody is talking about it yet, but you should be aware. This is not an idle, sort of sideline conversation. This is a real, significant possibility. And so it's something you should think about. And there's not just that, there are all the civil rights cases and a lot of other issues that are big, big issues. So you should know that.

The power of the President—I really tried to—and my judges were much less politically controversial than previous judges, both Democrat and Republican, because I focused on getting people who had good skills and were highly regarded by the American Bar Association. Even though there were more women and more minorities in my appointees than anybody in the past, they also had the highest ratings. So I tried to keep it out of politics. But it could get very political very fast, and the public would be making a mistake if they didn't take into account these things as they voted.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts John and Margo Catsimatidis; Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/

PUSH Coalition; Sanford I. Weill, chief executive officer, Citigroup; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 13, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Attached is a report to the Congress on cost-sharing arrangements, as required by Condition 4(A) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting a Certification Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 13, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify that:

In connection with Condition (9), Protection of Advanced Biotechnology, the legitimate commercial activities and interests of chemical, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical firms in the United States are not

being significantly harmed by the limitations of the Convention on access to, and production of, those chemicals and toxins listed in Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

Remarks on Airline Safety and an Exchange With Reporters

January 14, 2000

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I asked you here today so I could

make some remarks about airline safety. But in view of an item that was in the morning news, I would like to also say a few words

about the efforts we're making to ensure prescription drug coverage for millions of our senior citizens and disabled Americans who rely on Medicare.

Last year I proposed a comprehensive plan to modernize Medicare to meet the challenges of the 21st century, to extend the life of the Trust Fund and add a much-needed voluntary option for prescription drug coverage. And as you know, there's been some considerable resistance up until now from both the drug companies and from some in Congress.

Today's news that the drug companies say they are ready to work with us on providing affordable optional drug coverage and making sure older people have access to the highest quality medications developed is a very good first step. Now, what we need is positive actions from the drug company and positive action in Congress, not just on the benefit but on the efforts to strengthen and extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund.

I hope that this is a good beginning of what can be a very good year for the American people.

Airline Safety

Now let me begin my remarks by welcoming and thanking the people who are here with me, beginning with our FAA Administrator, Jane Garvey; Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mort Downey; American Airlines Chairman Don Carty; Delta Airlines CEO Leo Mullin; first vice president of the Airline Pilots Association International, Captain Dennis Dolan; Allied Pilots Association President Richard LaVoy; and Mark DeAngelis, the Aviation Safety Action Program representative for the Transport Workers Union.

Three years ago I asked Vice President Gore to lead a Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, looking at how to make our skies as safe as they can possibly be. Already, there is less than one fatal crash for every one million commercial flights. But we know we can do better still. Any accident, any death in the air is still one too many.

The Commission set a goal of reducing fatal accidents by 80 percent over 10 years. Its members agreed that the best way to meet the goal was to stop accidents before they happen and identify problems before they have terrible consequences. This is a completely different way of looking at safety. It requires business, labor, and regulators to work together in a completely

different way—as partners, not adversaries. Everyone must focus on fixing problems, not fixing blame.

I'm proud to be here with all these people today to announce a new partnership among business, labor, and Government to set us ahead of the curve on safety. Under aviation safety action programs, pilots will report problems or concerns immediately to safety experts at their airline and the Federal Aviation Administration. They'll be encouraged to share their valuable insights about doing the job more safely. They will be freed from the fear of being disciplined for admitting that something went wrong.

The FAA will still have the right to take action against deliberate violations of aviation rules, criminal activity, or drug and alcohol use. The experts will get the data they need to stay in front on safety, to solve problems, evaluate existing safety systems, and propose new ones.

We know these programs will work because American Airlines and its pilots have run one as a demonstration for more than 5 years now. Pilots reported literally thousands of concerns to the FAA. Those reports produced real improvements in procedures and in equipment. They even helped designers and builders create safer planes and airports.

For example, pilots' expertise changed the way some airports use lights and signs on the runways, and pilots helped to rewrite the safety checklist they must complete while planes taxi from the gate. And when American extended its program to mechanics and dispatchers, they improved equipment manuals and maintenance procedures.

I hope we'll be able to follow their example and open this program to all the people who make airplanes fly, flight attendants, mechanics, dispatchers. For the first time, we have regulators, business, and labor working as real partners. When it comes to safety, everyone has a responsibility. We want everyone on the team. And let me again say, I have only the profoundest gratitude, on behalf of all the American people and especially those who will be in airplanes in the future, to all those who are here with me today and those whom they represent.

Thank you very much.

Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, why are you dropping caps on the budget, which were so dear to you in the past?

The President. Well, first of all, the caps were literally completely shredded in the last budget by the majority in Congress. And so what I have to do now is to adopt an honest budget based on the spending levels that were adopted, in the reasonable expectation that inflation at least will be taken care of, particularly in defense. If you will remember, we had a big issue about how much the defense budget would be increased, but there were other increases, as well.

So you will see when my budget comes out that it still does everything I said we have to do. It invests more in education, science and technology, and other important areas. It protects the money necessary to take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, to extend the life of Medicare, and very importantly, will still allow us to get out of debt, for the first time since 1835, over the next 15 years.

So all the budget objectives that I have—continuing to run the surpluses, getting the country out of debt, but continuing to invest in the things we need—will be met by the budget I present to Congress.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Q. Mr. President, on drugs, a pharmaceutical industry spokesman today did say that your plan is still unacceptable to them, and if you come back with the same plan, they'll still fight you on this. My question to you is, are you prepared to compromise with them? And what is your understanding—if their big objection is the danger of price caps not only on Medicare drugs, but that this could spill over to the commercial sector—

The President. Well, first of all, there's no danger of price caps. But what I think they're worried about is the fact that if the Government becomes a big buyer, that we'll be able to bargain for lower prices at greater volume. I don't think that's a bad thing.

You know, someone ought to ask them how they can possibly justify the fact that American senior citizens are now being carried across the border to Canada to buy drugs produced in America by American drug companies, with the

help of public funds that have paid for research, with the availability of tax deductions for research and all of that, and Americans are going across the border in Canada and buying the same drugs for less than half of what they cost here.

So I think what they ought to do is come sit down with us and let's see if we can agree on a common approach. There may be a way that we can agree on an approach. That's why I was somewhat cautious in my remarks today.

I think it's a good thing that they recognize that it would be better if Medicare could provide this benefit, because we know 75 percent of our senior citizens and probably a higher percentage of our disabled people who need medications cannot afford what they need. And we know it can not only lengthen life and in many cases save lives, but it can also improve the quality of life.

So I think it's a very important issue. And I take their offer in a positive way, and I just hope they'll come sit down with us. And we'll try to sit down with them and with people in both parties in Congress who care about this and see if we can't work out a common position that we can pass, because I think it's a very important issue.

Q. Do you think it's real, not a PR move on their part just to keep you from bashing them?

The President. I don't know. You know, I don't like to bash people. I never have done that as an option of first choice. And I'm not bashing them today. But I think that their big problem is that ordinary Americans now know that if they live close enough to the Canadian border, they could cross the border and buy a lot of drugs for half what they pay here, and in many other countries, even though the drugs are produced here by our companies, and that any large producer will do the best—like in the private sector, try to get the best bargain they can.

But if there's some way to work through this, I'll be glad to sit down and make sure our people are available to them, and we'll try to work it out.

Director of National Drug Control Policy

Q. Mr. President, is it right to offer financial incentives to TV networks for incorporating anti-drug messages into scripts? And are you inclined to try to seek similar incentives for other issues

involving TV programming, like, say, gun violence?

The President. Well, first of all let me say, it is my understanding that what General McCaffrey was trying to do is to amplify the impact of the advertising program that we have been running—and keep in mind, a number of networks have agreed not only to take paid ads but have run a lot of our ads for free or reduced rates. And they are under an obligation to run public service announcements.

I think that General McCaffrey reached a conclusion, based on how many people see public service announcements that are on late at night as opposed to primetime programming that more people watch, that if the networks were willing to put a good antidrug message in heavily watched programs, particularly by the most vulnerable young people, that would be a good thing. And it's my understanding that there's nothing mandatory about this, that there was no attempt to regulate content or tell people what they had to put into it—of course, I wouldn't support that. But I think he's done a very good job at increasing the sort of public interest component of what young people hear on the media, and I think it's working; we see drug use dropping.

And let me say, I've talked to a lot of people in the entertainment community who liked the idea that without compromising the integrity of their programs, they might be involved in all kinds of public service efforts. So that's where I am on this. This was his initiative, and I hadn't given any thought to the question of whether it might be applied in other ways, frankly.

Q. Do you think it's a deceptive move? It could be used for other messages in the future.

The President. Well, it could be. If the Government were writing the content, it could be. And I don't think we should be doing that. I think that—however, I think what General McCaffrey tried to do—which was to say, look, if you will do this, this can count against your obligation to run public service announcements which, as you know, are very often run in off hours and times when not many people are watching—I think this guy's intense and passionate and committed. And we've got too many kids using drugs, still. So I think that's what he was trying to do. I don't think there was any attempt to try to undermine the content or the independence or the integrity of the networks and the programming.

Airline Safety

Q. Mr. President, on aviation safety, the Europeans have been very successful not doing what you're announcing today but downloading data from airplanes, analyzing hundreds of flights for patterns that could cause problems. We don't do that much in this country, because there's still a dispute between the airlines and the FAA over what would happen if this turned up some violations that could result in prosecutions. When are we going to get the kind of safety program they're using successfully in Europe to analyze data instead of pilot reports?

The President. Jane, you want to answer that?

FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. Thanks, Mr. President. Nice to see you, Matt. Well, first of all, as you know we're really looking at the whole issue of FOQA. We do have a policy in place which—the policy allows the information to be protected, which we think is very, very good. We've got a number of airlines who are working with us on that issue.

I think the real critical question is, when can we see that in an actual rule? And we are working that through the administration and working very hard to see it in a rulemaking. I think it's absolutely the right direction. And certainly the combination of the information we can get from the flight data recorders as well as the information we can get from the pilots or the mechanics makes a very powerful tool. So I'm glad we have the policy in place, and we're moving toward the rulemaking.

The President. I'd like to make a general comment about this, and then we've got to go. I'm obviously not an expert in how airlines work, but I know quite a bit about production processes and manufacturing. It's something I've spent a lot of time studying over nearly 20 years now. It was a big part of the job I used to have when I was a Governor. And I can tell you that the kind of teamwork approach that has been announced today, in making people feel they won't be punished when they say they think there's something wrong or a mistake was made, was, in my judgment, the most significant factor leading all kinds of American manufacturers to a zero-defect approach, which had a major role in the resurgence of the manufacturing sector over the last decade and a major role in the comeback of the American economy.

So I believe that what they're doing here is very important. It is not rational to believe that

what has worked so well in some other sector of our economy won't work just as well here. I think it's a great thing, and I thank them for doing it.

Michael Jordan

Q. Should Michael Jordan come to Washington?

The President. You bet. It will be fun. [*Laughter*] That's a no-brainer. [*Laughter*]

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A reporter referred to former NBA Chicago Bull Michael Jordan, reported to be accepting a management position with the NBA Washington Wizards. Administrator Garvey referred to FOQA, Flight Operations Quality Assurance.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 14, 2000

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2000, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 15.

The President's Radio Address

January 15, 2000

Good morning. On Monday America will celebrate, through reflection and service, the birth of the 20th century's great champion for justice and civil rights, Dr. Martin Luther King. Today I want to talk with you about new steps we're taking to fulfill Dr. King's dream and redeem America's promise.

Of course, we've come a long way. I'm joined today by a woman named Charlotte Filmore. Mrs. Filmore is 100 years old. Through the years, she's seen her share of discrimination. A good while ago she worked at the White House, and back then, even here, she had to use a side door. Well, today Charlotte Filmore came to the White House through the front door, and all the way to the Oval Office. But

there is still more to do. So, this morning I want to tell you about what we're doing to open more doors of opportunity for all Americans.

In his last speech, Dr. King reminded us that the work of dignity and justice is as old as America itself. He said it's about going back to those great wells of democracy dug deep by our Founding Fathers and the Constitution. To draw from that well, Dr. King challenged us to dig deep within our own hearts to face our flaws, renew our values, live up to our Nation's creed.

We are doing better. We have the strongest economy in a generation, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, and thankfully, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment

rates ever recorded, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, and the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in 25 years. We are coming together as a community. Our social fabric is on the mend.

But still there are people and places throughout America that have been left behind by this economic recovery. Minority unemployment and poverty still is about twice the national average. Still there are too many barriers on the road to opportunity, too many examples of Americans facing discrimination in daily life.

No American in the 21st century should have to face such discrimination when it comes to finding a home, getting a job, going to school, securing a loan. That's why I'm very proud that my budget for the coming year will include the largest ever investment to enforce our civil rights laws, to help make sure that protections in law are protections in fact.

I'm proposing a 20 percent increase for the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. That would almost double the annual budget for the office since I became President 7 years ago. Under the leadership of Acting Assistant Attorney General Bill Lann Lee, the Civil Rights Division has enforced our civil rights laws justly and fairly. And so again, on behalf of all Americans, I ask the Senate to confirm Mr. Lee as our Nation's top civil rights enforcer.

Our budget also includes a 14 percent increase for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, so that it continue its work to enforce laws prohibiting employment discrimination. And we're beefing up our other civil rights enforcements effort throughout our National Government.

We must also do more to root out forces of hate and intolerance. We've seen far too many acts of violence targeted at others solely because of who they are, from the dragging death of James Byrd to the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard to the murder of the African-American basketball coach and the Korean-American student in the Midwest to the shooting at the Jewish school in Los Angeles and the murder of the Filipino postal worker. Such hate crimes leave deep scars not just on the victims but on our larger community, for they take aim at others for who they are. And when they do, they take aim at America. So once again, I ask Congress to stop the delay and pass strong hate crimes legislation.

Taken together, these efforts will move us closer to building one America in the 21st century.

Dr. King taught us the most important civil right is to provide every citizen with the chance to live the American dream. This is the best chance we've had in my lifetime, maybe even in Mrs. Filmore's lifetime, to give every American a shot at that dream.

So as we celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy, let's keep following his footsteps to draw from that deep well of democracy and deepen the meaning of freedom for all Americans.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday proclamation of January 14 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington January 17, 2000

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, are the peace talks still on track?

The President. We're working on it. That's what I've been doing this morning.

Q. Who are you talking to?

The President. Just our team, so far today.

Q. Mr. President, the Syrians say there is an issue that needs to be resolved before they

can come; they may not come on Wednesday. Is that right?

The President. I'll probably put out something later today. I'm working on it, trying to make sure—we're trying to figure out what the most effective way to go forward is. The good news is I'm convinced they both still want to do it. They're not as far apart as they might be; they're not as far apart as they have been. So that's the good news.

The difference is right now about how or what the best way to go forward in the—so I'm working on it. We'll try to make a decision by the end of the day, the next couple of days, about what the best way to go forward is, and we'll let you know.

Q. Meaning a decision as to whether there will actually be talks on Wednesday?

The President. Yes. The decision about what the best way is, based on where they both are, to take the next steps.

Residence in Chappaqua, NY

Q. Are you going to start doing this in Chappaqua?

The President. If I need to. [*Laughter*] I've done a lot of other stuff. We've got a lot of work to do on that place. But it's a great house,

and we're making progress. We did a lot of work the last few days when I was up there.

President's Race Initiative Report

Q. Mr. President, some are curious about how your book on race relations is coming on this Martin Luther King Day. Can you give us an update on that?

The President. You know, I'm not going to put it out until I have lots of time personally to spend on it. I don't want it to be something somebody else did that my name is on. The Middle East peace talks took away a lot of the time that I was going to spend on it, so I'm a little behind. But I'm working on it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:01 a.m. in the computer lab. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington *January 17, 2000*

Thank you very much. Good morning. First of all, I want to take my notes out, because the older I get the worse my memory is. [*Laughter*] I want to begin by thanking Alex and all the people of DC Cares—the executive director, Susan Linsky, and all the others who are here with DC Cares. I want to thank the Washington CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs, Pat Shannon. Thank you. And I want to say, Charles Mann, it's good to see you. Wish you had been on the field. [*Laughter*] Next year. We'll get it next year.

Let me also say how honored I am to be here with your Mayor and your Representative in Congress. The Mayor used to be a member of our administration, actually. A lot of people don't know that. I always think that's why he's such a successful mayor; he got good preparation. [*Laughter*] And everything he said about Eleanor Holmes Norton is absolutely true. When she asks you for something, there is only one question: Are you going to do it now, or are you going to do it later? [*Laughter*] Because, in the end, she always gets what she wants. She's been a brilliant Representative.

When Hillary and I moved here to Washington, we wanted to be good citizens of the

District of Columbia. Some of you may remember, one of the first things I did after I moved to Washington was to go to Georgia Avenue and walk up and down it, talk to business people there. And ever since then, we've tried to be involved in the life of the city. And it's a source of immense pride to me to see the success that Washington is having and to have had the opportunity to work with so many of your local officials.

I see also my good friend Charlene Drew Jarvis back there—welcome. And Sharon Ambrose, who is the councilperson for this ward, I think is here. Thank you very much. Where are you? There you go.

So this is, to me, a source of immense pride to see DC really coming back and doing well. But it won't happen, we cannot realize the full potential of this city without Greater DC Cares, without other volunteers, without people, companies like AT&T doing their part to help everybody become what they ought to be and to make all these neighborhoods come alive again.

And let me also say a special word of appreciation to the head of our national service program, who has already been mentioned several times, Senator Harris Wofford. It is actually

Harris Wofford and another good friend of Martin Luther King, Congressman John Lewis, who had the idea for making the King holiday a day on, not a day off. And AmeriCorps volunteers—when we started—I signed this bill 6 years ago to make the King holiday a national holiday and a day of service, and I think we had 10,000 volunteers that day. Now we have hundreds of thousands of volunteers, all across America, doing things like what we did today, thanks in no small measure to you, sir. And we thank you very much for your leadership.

And now I just want to do one other thing. I want to acknowledge the young people who worked with me today—we were in there staining the bookcases in the computer room—because they made sure I didn't mess up too bad. [Laughter] So, thank you, Dietrich, Marcus, Dedra, Artile, and Shawntesse. Thank you. Raise your hands, all the people who worked with me. Thank you all very much. They're here somewhere. There they are, back there. [Applause]

I just want to say one final thing that I hope will go across America today. You look at all these young people here, with your T-shirts on, doing good things. Dr. King once gave a sermon at the National Cathedral here in Washington in which he said we are all caught up in—and he had a wonderful phrase—he said, “in an inescapable web of mutuality,” which is an elegant way of saying that I can never be fully what I want to be unless you have a chance to be fully what you want to be, and you can never be fully what you want to be unless I have a chance to be what I want to be; that we are in this together, that we are members of the community of this city, the community of this Nation, and the community of humanity.

And frankly, we all know that in the last 30-plus years since Martin Luther King left this Earth, we have forgotten that too much. And I have done my best to remind the American people of the truth of that at every single opportunity for 7 years now. And it is a source of immense pride and joy to me every time I see

people reaching across the lines that divide them to do things that lift us all up. This holiday embodies that. All these children embody that.

In my lifetime, and perhaps in the lifetime of our country, we have never, ever, ever before had at the same time so much economic prosperity and social progress, with the absence of internal crisis or external threat. And that means that we have an enormous obligation, those of us who are grown now, to make the most of this magic moment; to bring to all the people, the neighborhoods, and the children who haven't been a part of this economic prosperity a chance to live their dreams, too. To bring to bear—yes, you can clap for that. That's all right. [Applause] To bring to bear our best efforts to meet the long-term challenges of this country and not to forget that more than a billion people in this old world of ours still live on less than a dollar a day and that there are people, not only at home but around the world, that the United States ought to be lifting up.

And if you believe Martin Luther King was right, every time we give a child in America a chance, every time we give a child in Africa, Latin America, or Asia a chance, all the rest of us are better off, too. Every time you give a little, you always get more back. Let's remember that as Dr. King's enduring legacy.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the game room. In his remarks, he referred to Alex Orfinger, chairman of the board of directors, and Susan Linsky, executive director, Greater DC Cares; former NFL Washington Redskin Charles Mann; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Washington, DC, Councilmembers Charlene Drew Jarvis, ward 4, and Sharon Ambrose, ward 6; and Boys & Girls Club members Dietrich Williams, Marcus Harrison, Dedra Gamble, Artile Wright, and Shawntesse Jefferson. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday proclamation of January 14 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Election of Ricardo Lagos as President of Chile January 17, 2000

I congratulate Ricardo Lagos on his victory in Chile's Presidential election on Sunday, January 16. I also congratulate the Chilean people for an election that was a model of civic participation and evidence of their strong commitment to democratic government.

I look forward to working with President-elect Lagos and to deepening the friendship and cooperation that have characterized the excellent relations between our two nations.

Remarks on the National Firearms Enforcement Initiative in Boston, Massachusetts January 18, 2000

Well, Mayor, I was just thinking that you should hope that Detective Holmes stays in police work and out of politics. [Laughter] Didn't she give a good speech? Let's give her another hand. That's great. [Applause] I thought it was great.

Mr. Mayor; Senator Kennedy; Representative Joe Moakley; Barney Frank; Mike Capuano; to Commissioner Evans and all the members of the Boston Police Department that are here; representatives of law enforcement who have come to Boston today to be with us—Jerry Flynn of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, Tom Nee of the National Association of Police Organizations—I thank you all for welcoming us.

I want to say that in addition to the Attorney General, we are joined today by Treasury Under Secretary Jim Johnson; the Director of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Division, Brad Buckles; and of course, as the Attorney General mentioned, our United States attorney, Don Stern.

I also want to thank Lynn Jackson for welcoming us to Orchard Gardens Community Center. She was nervous when she got up here to speak. I said, "Go on, you're supposed to start." She said, "I'm not supposed to start until they sit down." So I said, "You go up there and speak. I'll make them sit down." [Laughter] So then when you stood up for Lisa Holmes, she said, "Make them sit down. Make them sit down." I said, "Not on your life." [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly grateful to the people of Boston and the State of Massachusetts for being so good to me and

to my family and to our administration. I've been running over in my mind all the wonderful moments I've had here just since 1991 when I first started exploring whether I should run for President, the first time I visited City Year here in Boston, the day I spent—Commissioner Evans and the mayor took a half a day with the Attorney General and me to explain what you'd done to lower juvenile crime and lower dramatically the fatalities among children in this community—all the other incredible times I have spent in this city and in this State, including the times that Hillary and Chelsea and I have been vacationers here and contributed, I might add, to the tax base of Massachusetts. [Laughter]

But this is a special day for me, because it is an enormous source of pride for me to stand up after hearing a community leader, a police officer, the mayor, your Representatives in the United States Congress, and our Attorney General talk about what you have done to give real life and real freedom back to this community.

When I ran for President, the biggest issue on most people's minds was the economy. Here I am in Boston, just south of New Hampshire; 8 years ago, I would have been up there today. But they were all concerned about the banks closing and people having their mortgages foreclosed and all these other problems. But I knew that the challenges facing America were not simply economic and that we had to have a policy to try to move people from welfare to work, we had to have a policy to try to open up educational opportunities to all of our young

people, and we had to have a policy to lower the crime rate.

In Washington, the primary debate then was whether we needed more prevention or tougher punishment and whether the Federal Government ought to just give speeches about it, because it was primarily a local problem, or give money and walk away. Well, I felt that on both counts, we should do both.

The first elected job I ever had was attorney general of my State. Before that, when I was a young lawyer, and even when I was a law student, I used to teach criminal law, criminal procedure, and constitutional law to law enforcement officials. I have always been interested in this, and I have always been convinced that we had to have the proper balance of punishment and prevention and that the police could never do it alone, not without the community, not without the people in the street and the neighborhoods, not without the parents and the kids, people who want the blessings of a normal, safe life in every neighborhood in this country.

And so we've been working to try to give you the tools to do both, to prevent more crime, to save more kids, to effectively punish those who violate the law. In 1993 we passed the Brady bill. The Congress passed it; it had previously passed, but it had been vetoed by the previous President. I signed it and said I wanted to sign it, and I believed in it. And I heard all that talk about how terrible it was going to be and what an awful burden it is. And now we have almost half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers who have not been able to get handguns because of the Brady bill, and not a single hunter in America who's been inconvenienced. It was the right thing to do. There are more citizens alive; there are more police officers alive today because the Brady law is in effect.

In 1994 the crime bill provided funds for 100,000 police officers over a 6-year period. Thanks to the leadership of the Attorney General and those working with her, we distributed those funds and got those folks hired, under budget and ahead of schedule. We passed the assault weapons ban, cracked down on illegal gun dealing to young people, kept an eye out also for the most innovative local crime-fighting strategies like Operation Cease Fire here in Boston.

Now, the things you have done and the things we've tried to help you do have transformed

life in America. As the Attorney General said, the crime rate's dropped now for 7 years in a row. The overall crime rate's at its lowest level in 25 years. The murder rate is the lowest level nationwide in 31 years; gun crime down 35 percent; juveniles committing homicides with guns down 57 percent; gun prosecutions up at all levels of government, local, State, and Federal. Federal firearms prosecutions are higher today than they were in 1992, but they're up 25 percent just since 1998 to 1999; those convicted of Federal gun crimes serving longer sentences. We are trying to send a message, an unambiguous message, to people who violate the law: If you commit crimes with guns or violate gun laws, you will pay a heavy price.

No city has sent that message more clearly than Boston. But your message is more than that. You have made us know that this is not just a numbers game. You have shown that to reduce crime most and therefore to increase freedom most among your families, your children, and your neighborhoods, prosecutions must be targeted where they'll have the greatest impact—in Boston's case, on violent repeat offenders and on gun traffickers who supply them.

You have also shown that there needs to be a team effort, partnerships with citizens and leaders in every community, focused on saving kids and preventing crime before it occurs. And so after all these years of effort and the leadership of your great mayor and others, you have made Boston one of the safest cities in America. It is essential to making America what we want it to be in the 21st century.

You know, yesterday we celebrated the annual holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday. And I was honored to sign the bill that made it not only a national holiday but a national day of service. We call it a day on, not a day off. Yesterday, in keeping with my tradition, I went to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Washington, DC, with a group of citizens called Greater DC Cares and some young AmeriCorps volunteers, and we worked on rehabbing a facility. But in preparation for that day, I thought about all the other King holidays we've had since I've been President and an astonishing opportunity I had back in 1993 to speak in the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. That's where Dr. King spoke the night before he was killed.

We had all the leaders of that great church in America there, at a time when America was

a much more unsafe place. And I just started thinking off the top of my head, with the crowd. I said, "You know, if Dr. King could come back to Earth today, what would he say?" He'd say we've done a pretty good job of integrating our society, and we have more African-Americans and other minorities moving into the middle class, taking jobs in public service, being fairly compensated for what they do. But he would be sick by the crime and violence that is ravaging all the poor neighborhoods of this country. And he would say, "I want you to know I did not live and die so that children could destroy children, so that children could destroy themselves with drugs and become millionaires destroying the lives of other children."

And a lot of you are nodding your heads about that. This is a different country today because of you. Yes, those things still happen, but now America knows we can make it better. All you have to do is tell somebody the story of Boston and all cynicism disappears, all skepticism disappears. Everybody knows we can make it better. We don't have to give up on our kids. We don't have to give up on our neighborhoods. We don't have to tolerate a level of fear and violence and crime and insecurity that no civilized society will tolerate.

Now, that is the good news, and we can all celebrate that good news. But if I were to ask you this question—and I won't make you do it—but if I were to ask you this question, if I were to say to you, "Now, everybody that now thinks that Boston and Massachusetts and America are safe enough, please raise your hand," nobody would raise their hand, right? Even though we're at a 31-year low in the murder rate, even though the juvenile murder rate with guns has gone way down, even though the crime rate's at a 25-year low, nobody believes that America is as safe as it ought to be. No one who knows anything believes that all of our kids are as safe in their childhood as they ought to be.

And so I say to you, what are we going to do with this moment of promise? We don't have any excuses anymore. You know, maybe 7 years ago people could throw up their hands and say, "Oh, we can't make it better. Just support the police, lock them up longer, and hope someday it'll get better." Nobody really knew.

Now we know. We don't have any excuses now. We know how to drive the crime rate down, down, down. And we know how to keep

kids out of trouble in the first place. We know how to save children. I think it's time we had the real goal we ought to have as a nation. We ought to say, "Okay, we got the crime rate down. Here's our real goal: We want America to be the safest big country in the entire world."

We can do that, not with a silver bullet but by continuing to build on what has worked. And in my new budget and in the State of the Union Address, I'm going to ask the Congress and the country to continue to move forward in the direction that has worked. Today I want to announce to you five specific initiatives that I believe will help us a lot.

First, in my new budget I will call for hiring 500 new ATF agents and inspectors, the largest increase in ATF firearms enforcement ever. These new agents and inspectors will help us to crack down on violent gun criminals, illegal gun traffickers, and bad-apple dealers, a small percentage of the dealers who supply a very large percentage of the guns that go to criminals and to kids.

Second, we will add, as the Attorney General said, 1,000 new Federal, State, and local prosecutors to help take dangerous gun criminals out of our communities and put them where they belong, behind bars.

Third, to strengthen the hand of the prosecutors, we will invest more in the ATF's national gun tracing center and supply local law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to utilize that center, from computers to training. We want to make it possible and we can make it possible to trace the origin of every single gun used in every single crime in the United States.

Fourth, we will create a groundbreaking national ballistics network that eventually will enable us to trace almost any bullet left at a crime scene anywhere in America to the gun of the criminal who fired it.

Fifth, the budget provides local communities with grants to run the same kind of anti-gun-violence media campaigns that have been such an important part of the successful strategy used to reduce gun crime here in Boston or in Richmond or in other cities which have tried it.

All together, these efforts represent the largest national gun enforcement initiative in the history of the United States. They will help communities across America to push violent crime rates down by cracking down harder on gun criminals and, again, by interrupting the flow to prevent more crimes.

But I ask Congress to support them and also ask Congress to start this new century by abandoning another stale debate. For in addition to the old debate about whether we should focus on punishment or prevention and whether the Federal Government should make speeches or give money, there's a debate that unfortunately hasn't died out in Washington, and that's about whether it's better to strengthen the enforcement of the existing gun laws or to have strengthened gun laws.

The truth is, just like the other questions, the real answer is, we should do both. That's what we've done with the Brady bill. That's what we have done with the assault weapons ban. And we should do more. The drop in the crime rate has been due both to changing laws and to better enforcement and better prevention.

Last year we passed some sensible measures in the United States Senate, thanks to the help of Senator Kennedy and with the Vice President casting a tie-breaking vote. As he says, whenever he has to vote, we win. [Laughter] So by one vote, we were able to defeat the high-pressure tactics of the NRA to pass an important advance in doing background checks at gun shows and urban flea markets, having child safety locks for all new handguns, a ban on importing large capacity ammunition clips. But we couldn't pass it in the House of Representatives, even after the travesty of Columbine High School. I believe passing commonsense gun safety legislation should be the very first action of this Congress.

I will say again, to all the people who listen to these arguments, there has been no discernible increase in the burden on any law-abiding sportsperson in this entire country with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, but we've saved a lot of lives of kids, police officers, and citizens. And closing the gun show loophole, which is something I know something about because they're very popular in my part of the country, or the urban flea market loophole or banning the import of these large capacity ammunition clips, which people can't manufacture and sell here at home anyway, or requiring these child safety locks for kids is an important advance, and it ought to be done. It'll have the same impact that the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban did. It won't cause anybody who is law-abiding any hassle, but it'll save lives. It's important that we do this, too.

I also want to say I think it's important that the gun industry take more responsibility in

changing the way it designs, markets, and distributes firearms. [Applause] And let me say to all of you who care about this—there was some spontaneous applause there—you should know this. There are responsible citizens in the gun industry who actually want to work with us to find new ways to make sure the guns they sell don't wind up in the wrong hands and that kids aren't killed accidentally with them. Part of the answer may be in new technologies that could reduce accidents.

I want all of you to listen to this. The law enforcement officers probably won't be surprised by this, but this is important that you know this. The accidental gun death rate of children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than that in the other 25 biggest industrial countries combined—combined. We don't have to put up with that either. Technologies now exist that could lead to guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them. My budget helps the gun industry accelerate the development of this technology. So we need to support that as well.

In his last campaign in 1968, Robert Kennedy said the fight against crime, and I quote, "is a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness." We saw something about the root of America's greatness today here in Orchard Gardens: a community leader proud of her center; a police officer who grew up just a stone's throw from here; elected leaders who know the people who live in this area, whom they represent; a mayor proud of the progress that people working together can do; all these people in uniform justifiably proud of what they have achieved. That's what this is all about, all of us working together and helping each other.

I say again, for all the progress we have made, we should never rest, not any of us, as long as there's one more child whose life needs to be saved, as long as there's one more kid that can be turned away from drugs and guns and violence and kept out of prison in the first place, as long as there's one more street to make safe. We shouldn't quit until your country, your State, and your community are the safest places in the world.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Orchard Gardens Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas M. Menino

of Boston; Lisa Holmes, detective, and Paul F. Evans, commissioner, Boston Police Department; Gerald Flynn, alternate national vice president, International Brotherhood of Police Officers;

Thomas J. Nee, executive vice president, National Association of Police Organizations; and Lynn Jackson, director, Orchard Gardens Community Center.

Interview With Francine Kiefer and Skip Thurman of the Christian Science Monitor in Boston

January 18, 2000

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, I know your time is valuable. Let me start my recorder here. The first thing I wanted to ask you, there have only been a couple of times in this century that Congress has come together, got their heads together enough, both sides of the Congress, to come together and pass legislation to give somebody citizenship. It happened with Winston Churchill, a few other people. I wanted to know if Congress does—it looks like the first thing they're going to do when they come back into town is work on the Elian Gonzalez case. If they did pass a private bill in both Houses and they feel like politically they've got enough backing to do that, what would you do with that bill if it got to your desk?

The President. I don't know. I haven't thought about it. I think it would be—this is not Winston Churchill, for one thing. You know, I don't think that Congress should put it—unless they know more about the facts than I do, I don't think they should put themselves in the position of making a decision that runs contrary to what the people who have had to do all the investigation have done.

I think that, obviously, if they believe the INS made a mistake, their decision is subject to challenge in Federal court. And the Congress—even Members of Congress can petition to be heard there. But I think that we're setting a—I think that it would irrevocably lead people to the conclusion that this was much more about politics than it was whether that little boy ought to be taken away from his father.

They're basically taking a position that if you live in Cuba, if we can take you away from your father, you're better off—your parents. And I think that's—the INS reached a different decision, having exhaustively looked at what was best for that child.

As you all know, I have no sympathy for the Castro regime. I signed the present bill. I think it is tragic how they have blown every conceivable opportunity to get closer to the United States. Just as we were making progress, they murdered those pilots. So I'm not sympathetic there. But I think that we need to think long and hard whether we're going to take the position that any person who comes to our shores who is a minor, any minor child who loses his or her parents should never be sent home to another parent, even if that parent is capable of doing a very good job, if we don't like the Government of the country where the people lived.

And again, I say I am not—I have no brief for the Castro government or for many of their policies. I think the way he has attempted to politicize this is also terrible. It's not just the Cuban-Americans that have attempted to politicize it. He has responded by attempting to politicize it. So this poor little boy is 6 years old. He has scars from his mother's death of which he can only be dimly aware. And making a judgment about what is in his best interest and what is most likely to give him a stable, healthy, whole childhood and allow him to grow into an adult as a solid person, I'm sure, may not be free of difficulty. And I just think that the decision ought to be made, insofar as possible, independent of countervailing political pressures.

State of the Union Address

Q. Mr. President, the State of the Union is right around the corner, so I guess is the State of the Union part of the interview. In the previews that you all have made available of what's coming up, it seems like most of it is beefing up programs that you already have, like today's announcement, and returning to—

The President. It's quite a beef up. This is the biggest thing ever done—yes—

Q. Quite a beef up—which is—or trying to get back to unfinished business. And I was wondering whether you were planning on trying to go for some new breakthrough issue this year, or whether that's not really possible in a last year.

The President. Oh, I think that when you see everything we recommend in the aggregate, you might think that in terms of specifics, it's the most ambitious set of proposals since my first year.

Last year was a very ambitious speech, but in terms of what I asked the Congress to do, it required some willingness on their part to meet with me and work through a joint position on Social Security, for example, or joint position on Medicare. I still think we may get a joint position on Medicare, and we may get part way there on Social Security. I'm still going to try to persuade them to take all the interest savings that we get from not spending the Social Security surplus and putting that in the Trust Fund; that will take Social Security out to 2050, beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

So I'm still not sure we won't make that, but if you just look at the specific policy proposals I will make, not just in the unfinished business area but in the new area—and the unfinished business is important. I mean, you've got the Patients' Bill of Rights, closing the gun show loophole, and banning the import of large ammunition clips. You've got the minimum wage. You've got the hate crimes legislation, the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," the prescription drug for Medicare. So we've got a huge—even though we got a great deal done at the very end of the last Congress, there's a big unfinished business list.

And then, as you know, I've been rolling out a lot of these new proposals. And actually, there will be a couple of things that will be quite new that I'm not prepared to release yet. But I will have a couple of new proposals. But I think that the most important thing to me is to keep the country moving in this direction and aggressively embracing change, the right kind of change. That, I think, is critical to keep the recovery going, to keep bringing more people into the process of prosperity, and to keep bringing the country together. I think that's very important.

So a lot of what I will recommend that is new is certainly consistent with what I've been doing for 7 years. I came to office with a very clear idea of where I thought America was off base, what I thought we ought to do, what kind of governing strategy I would have. And I believe that it's working. And I think people—some people will say, "Well, he does things in increments." But if you walk down the road 7 years and you look back—I mean, if I told you 7 years ago, after 12 years of quadrupling the national debt, I'll give you in year 6 and 7 the first back-to-back balanced budget surpluses in 42 years, from a \$300 billion debt, you'd say that's not an incremental change; that's a big change. But you do those things in small steps.

If you look at the millions of people—we've cut the welfare rolls about in half—it happened in incremental steps. But it's a huge thing in the aggregate. And all the economic changes—we've got the lowest African-American, Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, lowest poverty rate in 20 years, lowest single parent household poverty rate in 46 years. So you take it in steps, but if you keep walking in the same direction, all of a sudden your steps constitute a giant leap forward.

Federal Budget

Q. In that larger mosaic, how do you—of your record and your legacy in what you've done incrementally—down the road, how important will it be if, 15 years from now, we haven't made significant advances on the debt? I mean, already your budget soon will break the '97 Balanced Budget Act. And certainly the surpluses are far greater than was predicted at that time. But how will history judge this generation of leadership if significant—

The President. I think we should pay the debt off. And I think we should do it in 15 years. And the proposals that I will make are consistent with that, based on our latest numbers.

Now, I have two things to say about the '97 budget caps. They were very severe, and they were thoroughly shredded by the Republican majority last year by turning everything into an emergency. I mean, the census was an emergency; Head Start was an emergency; continuing defense expenditures were emergencies. So the caps are not disappearing this year; the caps were shredded last year.

So the real question is—the question I asked our people to look at, and we spent lots of time on it the end of last year—is whether we could present to the Congress a budget that was not full of gimmicks, that reflected what the Congress spent last year, inflation in areas where with—had that—for example, in the defense area where we know they intended—and still could we do that based on what we now believe the figures are and what our costs are in health care programs and other things and still get this country out of debt in 15 years and still not spend the Social Security surplus.

And the answer, we believe, is yes, that you can avoid spending the Social Security surplus, continue to get the country out of debt in 15 years, and have a spending program for the next 5 years that reflects the decisions made by the Congress in the last year, without all those gimmicks. And you could still have a modest tax cut, nothing anywhere near the high end of what people had talked about in the campaign and what the Congress tried to do last year, but you could still have a modest one.

So I think this is an honest budget that is fiscally responsible and still gets us out of debt. And I believe that we ought to embrace these big challenges, and I think that our children will judge us very well if we do and somewhat harshly if we don't. Because in my lifetime—you've heard me say this over and over again, but I'm not young any more. I'm 53 years old. In my lifetime we've never had this combination of economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, with the absence of internal crisis or external threat. Not that we have no problems at home or no threats abroad, but none of it is sufficient to derail us from trying to imagine the future and then go after it.

And it seems the one—that one of the elements of that future ought to be a commitment to take America out of debt. Another element of the future ought to be a commitment from going to—what I said today—trying to make our country the safest big country in the world. Another element of that future ought to be trying to prove that we can grow the economy and dramatically reduce the global warming by maximizing technology. We ought to be able to prove that we can equalize the economic opportunity, that we can—without holding anybody back, that we ought to be able to bring economic opportunity to these poor people in poor places that haven't had it.

And I think in all those areas, in the education area, in the health care area, I think we will be judged by whether we made the most of what is truly a magic moment. The last time we had this sustained rate of economic growth with low inflation was in the early sixties, about 40 years ago. And if you look at the indicators now, compared to then in the aggregate, I think you would say our economy is stronger today, but there were a couple of years there where unemployment averaged under 4 percent and without much inflation.

And it all came apart, first trying to come to grips with the civil rights crisis at home and then trying to pay for the war on poverty and the war for equal opportunity and civil rights and the war in Vietnam abroad. So that, basically, we had a moment there that we lost, not only because we became divided as a people politically but because our system simply could not accommodate building the America of our dreams.

Q. So what do you see as a threat to that? I mean, if the Vietnam period and all of that was a threat, what's the threat to that now?

The President. I don't think there is one. That's why I think we have no excuse not to really—this should be a truly historic moment in America. I can't think of any time in our history when we've had this sort of opportunity. You might argue that it was similar, that the times which produced Theodore Roosevelt's administration, and then Woodrow Wilson's, were similar, where we were an emerging global power, we were basically at peace, where the world was becoming more integrated.

You go back and read McKinley's speeches around the turn of the century—he was the first President of the last century—he said a lot of this. It's quite interesting. And so you might argue that that was a time like this. But I think that—and I think it is a time in our history that most closely parallels this.

If you go back to the early 19th century, you can find historical parallels in the exploration of Lewis and Clark and the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory. But the world was so different then, it's hard to do.

So I just don't think we ever have had a time like this. It's not to say we have no foreign crises or security threats. We do. But they can all be managed. And the cost of managing them now is not inconsistent with what our obligations are in science and technology, in education, in

economic opportunity, across the range of other areas.

Agenda on Race

Q. Mr. President, you spoke a while ago about how you wanted to keep pushing for change. And I was thinking what's happened to minorities under your administration, that they have seen a pretty drastic improvement in their standard of living because of the strong economy. But one could also say that attitudes toward race maybe haven't changed that much. And I was wondering whether there was something that you thought you could still do about attitudes towards race in your last year.

The President. Well, I think they have—first of all, I dispute the premise. I think they have changed. I think that we continue to see evidence that it's still a real problem. I mean, the unfortunate comments that the Atlanta baseball player made, that's really troubling. On the other hand, the fact that Hank Aaron and Andy Young met with him is encouraging. I mean, you know, 30 years ago that wouldn't have happened.

I think—last night I watched—I was working on the State of the Union last night, and I had basketball on, on TV, muted. And I was watching the Minnesota Timberwolves play the Indiana Pacers. And they beat them on a buzzer-beater shot. And then they interviewed Kevin Garnett, who is a very young man. I think he's the highest paid player in basketball, but he's very young, didn't finish college. And they asked him what Dr. King meant to him, and how his life had changed, and you could just see—of course, 30 years ago no young African-American would be making that kind of money and would have the kind of slant he had.

So I think things are changing. But I think what I have to do—I think there are three things generally I should be doing.

Number one, I think we have to continue to try to close the differential in education and economic advancement. For example, the African-American high school graduation rate right now is about equal to the white, non-Hispanic high school rate, which is quite extraordinary. But the college-going rate is different. And the Hispanic dropout rate is still quite a bit higher, largely because of the immigrants, first—immigrants. So I think that this economic empowerment agenda I have, and the education agenda,

the Hispanic education initiative, all those things, closing those gaps, that's important.

Number two, I think we need to continue to have a vigorous enforcement of the law and highlighting those things we do not agree with.

And number three, I think we have to continue the activities of the President's Office on One America. I think we need to continue to appoint more people from different backgrounds. We need to continue to have more meetings. We need to continue to highlight the problems. And I need to continue to speak out and work on this in America.

I said three, but I like to say the fourth thing is I think that when our country continues its mission to try to end racial and ethnic and tribal and religious conflicts around the world, I think that has a reverberating effect here at home. I can give you just one very concrete example.

Chelsea and I went to Kosovo together, and we went to the military camp. And you have this highly racial and ethnically diverse American military, very conscious of what they were doing in Kosovo and trying to end ethnic cleansing, and also very aware that insofar as they work together and live together and create a genuine community where everybody was treated equally, the power of their example could have as big an impact on the people of Kosovo as the force of their arms.

So I don't think this—this is the sort of work that may never be done, since in all of human history we haven't succeeded in rooting out people's fear or suspicion of those who are different. And there always will be those radicals which seek to advance themselves by demonizing groups of others. But I think we're doing better there. I think we're doing—and I think there is a lot more we can do.

Cyberspace Warfare and Cyberterrorism

Q. The Chinese Army's daily newspaper has signaled its willingness to aggressively use the Internet as a venue for warfare, to attack our military websites and our military—attack us through on-line methods. You in your critical infrastructure report recently sort of achieved parity with that and—with your ROTC Corps idea and that sort of thing. But I'm wondering what precedents that sets. Even what we did in the conflict with Serbia, the precedents that that sets is sort of like fighting each other, attacking each other's satellites. Are you concerned about the precedent that using on-line

warfare in any form will have for future generations, since we are the most vulnerable set on the planet from E-commerce to a lot of our Government installations?

The President. Because we're more open, you mean?

Q. Yes sir, because we're more open.

The President. And more Internet—

Q. So we bring down—in a hypothetical conflict, we bring down the PLA's air defense system, and they just take out our 911 systems and all that—turn out all the lights at every 7-Eleven in the country.

The President. Well, I think, first of all, it is unrealistic to think that such systems would not be the targets of our adversaries. I think they're far more likely to be the targets of terrorists, organized criminals, narcotraffickers, than other countries.

I believe that the answer is that we have got to be as strong as we possibly can be in the whole area of cyberspace safety. We've got to be as resistant to cyberterrorism and assault as we possibly can.

And interestingly enough, this is something we get to practice on every day a lot, because every day there are always people trying to break into our computers, break into the Defense Department computers, break into various security computers. And so we get to work at it every day. And we've given a lot of thought to how you protect power systems, how you protect telephone systems, how you protect financial records.

And so all I can say is that the question you asked confirms what I said at the National Academy of Sciences, I guess over a year ago. I think that's when I spoke there. We have got to be prepared to deal with the explosion of technology in ways that could threaten our security, not only on data systems themselves. Another thing you're going to see—everything involving technology is getting smaller, the miniaturization of everybody. Everybody's got their little notepads now.

Q. I just got the Palm Pilot.

Q. He's way ahead.

The President. You ought to see old Kris's Palm Pilot. It's got everything from his great grandfather's birthplace—I just saw the newest AT&T and Nokia telephone that fits right inside the palm of the hand. Now, that same miniaturization process is bound to go on with weapons. So you're not only going to have the attempt

that you mentioned to invade, to invade telecommunication systems and computer systems, but you're also going to have a miniaturization system that will affect chemical and biological weapons and other sophisticated traditional weapons, which will make them harder to detect, easier to use, easier to comport. You may have composite materials that don't show up on airport scanners. All these things are going to happen.

That's why we're going to make cars out of different materials, make weapons out of different materials. And in the whole history of combat among nation-states and before that, feudal groups or tribal groups, the normal thing that happens is a weapons system will be developed, and it will enjoy a period of success, and then a defense will be developed to it, and then there will be equilibrium until a new weapons system is developed that will give some dominance, and then you'll have some equilibrium. What we're trying to do with this massive investment we're making against bioterrorism, chemical terrorism, nuclear terrorism, cyberterrorism, is to collapse the timespan between offense and defense.

One of the things, for example, that we really hope that will come out of the human genome is that we'll be able to develop software programs that will immediately adjust the antidote for certain viruses. If there's a biological warfare attack and you've got a mad scientist somewhere who changes the—I'm just making this up—but who changes the anthrax virus, for example, in some way it's never before been changed, and so then this person—and then they spread it over 400 people in some town, and they begin to come around—what we're attempting to do with the human genome project, what I think one of the corollary benefits will be is that you'll have software packages developed so that you will be able to immediately analyze that, and someone will tell you exactly how you would have to modify the antidote to anthrax to meet the new strain that is resistant to all known antidotes.

So this whole struggle, as things change faster and faster and faster and you have the miniaturization of weapons systems to parallel with the miniaturization of other communication systems, will be to keep closing the gap between offense and defense until there is close to no difference as possible.

That is the struggle for security in the 21st century. And I have tried to put America on that path. Without frightening the American people, without raising alarm bells, I've tried to make sure that when I left office we would have in place a properly funded, properly staffed system to prepare for the security threats of the 21st century. All the press goes to the high-dollar hardware systems—should we have a strategic defense initiative, a missile defense.

Q. Mr. President, we're running out of time here, so do you mind if we move on to some other topic?

The President. This is a big issue. All I'm saying is—I'm not—missile defense is important if we can do it. And missile threat is important. But you should know that I consider both the cyberthreats and the miniaturization of these other threats very significant. But I do believe when I leave office we'll have for my successor and for our country a system that will enable us to deal with it.

President's Spiritual Growth

Q. Since you are talking to the Christian Science Monitor, we are interested in your spiritual journey, which you've mentioned a couple times. And you've talked about how amazed you've been by the power of forgiveness, especially in the last 18 months. And I was wondering if you could share with us what your own spiritual growth has been. Have you found any Bible passages particularly dear? Have you found any concepts that you've held onto that have helped promote your own spiritual growth? Could you just describe what's been happening with your own growth in the last 18 months?

The President. Well, this is a subject I think people in public life should address with some amount of humility and reluctance, not because people shouldn't be willing to affirm their faith but because we should remember the story that Christ told, in effect, bragging about the people that prayed in their closets instead of on the street corner. So I say that with all—but having said that, I think the thing that has struck me is that in this journey I have made to try to—that really has been a lifetime journey for me, and it's certainly something that's deepened since I've been President and something that I had to really focus on the last 2 years—I think the thing that I have really had to work on is trying to gain some spiritual anchor that will enable me to give up resentments and dis-

appointment and anger and to understand that in seeking forgiveness I had to learn to forgive.

It's easy to ask for forgiveness. A lot of people think it's hard, but I think it's—when you plainly need it, it's easy enough to ask for. But we're taught over and over again that we can't get it unless we give it. And I think what is—you know, there's the wonderful Scripture where people are admonished to forgive those not just in the same measure that they're forgiven but 70 times 7.

I think that what I have gained more than anything else is a certain humility in recognizing how important forgiveness is, but how it doesn't count and it can't count unless you can give it as well as ask for it. And that basically—I used to see life as a struggle for always learning more things, cramming more things in my head, anywhere I could do more things, you know. Now I see the search for wisdom and strength is also a process of letting go. A lot of things you have to let go of.

And I've been helped a lot by a lot of these ministers that have met with me and the Scriptures they've given me to read; by a lot of Christians and even sects of Christians have written me around the country with tracts on forgiveness, how you merit it in what you do and how you have to give it in turn; and also a number of people with whom I have worked as President.

I learned a lot—I've had on more than one occasion the opportunity to talk to Mr. Mandela about how he came to forgive those who were his oppressors, you know, and how he felt about it and how he—what kind of forgiveness he ever sought for himself. I've really tried to deal with this in a very serious way, and I think I've learned quite a lot about myself in the process. And it's an ongoing effort. But I have to remember every day that human nature is so prone to find self-respect in some element of one's character that you think is superior to someone else, and a lot of this is a matter of letting go. You just have to learn to let that go, just get up every day, try to do the best you can, be the best person you can be, and continue that individual journey of growth.

And I work on it—hard. And it's been a very humbling experience, but I think very much worthwhile for me, personally.

Chelsea Clinton

Q. Mr. Lockhart is giving me the one-more-question signal, so I thought what I might do is use an old Wolf Blitzer trick which is—

The President. Which is what—ask three questions?

Q. Ask a question with the second question. [Laughter] Well, briefly, you mentioned Chelsea just a moment ago. And as you know, the White House can be a pretty tough place on first kids. But the thing you always hear everybody talk about is the poise and the grace that she has now as a young woman. I'm wondering basically what you attribute that to, and how you feel the press has been on her—if they've kind of been giving her a fair shake as the kind of parameters were laid out from the very beginning?

And secondly, not at all related to that, is you were heavily criticized for the FALN commutations, and there's a lot of irony in that, in that you're the least pardoning President in the modern history. You've issued fewer pardons than any President in the modern era. I'm wondering why you haven't availed yourself of that Presidential power more, since aside from the FALN thing, there's typically very little fallout for that, using that power.

The President. Well, let me say first, I think—let me answer the first question first. Say exactly what you asked me about Chelsea again.

Q. The thing you hear everybody talking—

The President. Oh, how the press treated her.

Q. How the press treated her, but how she, under the hothouse environment that the White House can be, with all the looking in—

The President. I feel, first of all, very grateful that even though I don't agree with everything—first of all, I think it's impossible to generalize about "the press," and it will become harder and harder to refer to something called "the press." Where is the press in the publications in the merger of America Online and Time Warner, right? So I'm always reluctant—I sort of knew what that was, I thought, when I got elected. I'm not sure I know what that is anymore.

But I think that, by and large, all elements of the press, with some very few exceptions, have been willing to let my daughter have her life and try to grow up and deal with all the challenges that entails and the extra burdens of her parents being in public life and all the controversies and ups and downs we've exhib-

ited, without trying to shine the glare on her. And I am profoundly grateful for that, because I think every young person needs the chance to find his or her own way to maturity. And it's very difficult when your parents are as publicly exposed and prominent in daily life as her parents are.

And it's made more difficult if you are prematurely turned into a public figure. I think to some extent she is one anyway, whether she's in the press or not. But I think basically the press has been sensitive to that. And I am profoundly grateful for that.

And I hope that the life that her parents have lived in public life has been—has offered more good than bad for her, as a child growing up. And she's a young woman now, and I hope that, on balance, it's been a positive thing. We love her very much, and we hope that it's—and believe that, on balance, it's been good.

Now—

Presidential Pardons

Q. On the related question of the pardons—[laughter].

The President. Let me say about—

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. She's going to get a pardon. [Laughter]

The President. I want to say something here that nobody has ever given me a chance to say in public before. This is important to me. And I've been working on this hard. I did not know until—ironically, until the controversy over the FALN thing that I had, apparently, both commuted fewer sentences and issued fewer pardons than my predecessors. I did not know that, but you should know what my generic attitude is.

Generically, I believe a President should rarely commute sentences and should have good reasons for doing so if he does, knowing that that will always be somewhat controversial—that is, if you attenuate a jury or a judge's sentence. That's what I did in the FALN case. I did it after Chuck Ruff, my lawyer, did an extensive survey. I thought it might be controversial. I regret it became as controversial as it was. I still think, based on the facts of those cases, I did the right thing. I still believe strongly that I did the right thing.

And I can tell you categorically there was no politics in it, that Chuck Ruff handled this, and everything he says about it is true. I think everyone knows him as being an extremely

truthful person. He handled it entirely, and only he handled it. And then he dealt with me on it.

Now should we do some more commutations? Perhaps we should. But I think I would probably always be on the low side of that. On the other hand, I tend to have a much more generous attitude on pardons, particularly because under the Federal system—I think people ought to get their voting rights back; I don't think they ought to be discriminated about in getting jobs or keeping jobs or getting contracts if they have discharged their sentence and they've been out in law-abiding society.

Now, over time, before I ever got there, there developed a whole apparatus in the Justice Department which is its own independent bureaucracy for evaluating these things. And the tradition is that the President doesn't rule on them, one way or the other, until you get all these recommendations sent to you. And I think what I believe is that—although this operation has a life of its own, I've asked—I've tried to review it now because my instinct is that we should be granting more pardons. I don't mean we should just be cavalier. I mean if you still think somebody might be involved in something wrong—not so much to wipe away the past as to free people up to live in the present and future.

There are all kinds of—suppose when you're 18 you commit some offense which gets you a 5-year sentence. And suppose—and let's suppose under the sentencing guidelines then applicable, you served 2 years of the sentence. Well, my view is if you served the 2 years, then you get out, and you've got 3 years on parole. So the 5 years is discharged. Then you have to serve—then you live a couple more years, and you have a totally exemplary life. I don't think that your past mistake should unduly cramp your present and future life.

If you do something really terrible, you're going to be in prison for a long time. But I mean, people are just getting out all the time—

90 percent of the people who go to jail get out. When they get out, we do not have a vested interest in seeing them continue to be punished. Our interest as citizens, after they pay their debt to society, is to see them be successful. I mean, when somebody pays, then when they get out, surely we don't want them to keep on paying. If they have to keep on paying, that's why you end up with more crime and a less successful, less healthy society.

So my instinct is that—again, I speak for myself; each President will be different on this—is that the President should be pretty reluctant to shorten sentences but should be willing to do so in appropriate cases; but that the President should be more forthcoming in being willing to grant pardons when it's not really for the purpose of pretending that it didn't happen but of liberating people to make the most of their todays and tomorrows, because every single American has a big stake in people who actually do get punished later going on and living their lives in a straight and effective way. So that's my take on this. And we're looking to see whether there are any kind of changes we can make to be more effective in that regard.

Q. Thanks.

The President. I'm glad you asked me. You're the only person who ever asked me that.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:13 p.m. in the 15th Floor Lounge at the Park Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Juan Miguel Gonzalez, father of Elian Gonzalez; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; John Rucker, relief pitcher, MLB Atlanta Braves; Henry (Hank) Aaron, member, Baseball Hall of Fame; Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.; Kevin Garnett, power forward, NBA Minnesota Timberwolves; and former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. An interviewer referred to Wolf Blitzer, correspondent, Cable News Network. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Boston January 18, 2000

Thank you so much. Let me say, I am delighted, first of all, to be back here in the Solomonts' home. I love this place, and it's obviously a place with a loving family, and I feel very good that they let us come in. I thank Steve and Barbara Grossman for their work for our party and for their help in this event tonight, and all of you for being here.

I want to join Mayor Rendell in thanking you, Mayor Menino. We had a great day in Boston today, had a great anticrime event. And Senator Menard, thank you. And I'd like to also thank our DNC treasurer, Andy Tobias, my longtime friend, for being here. And thank you, Brian Hardwick, and thank you, Fran Katz.

We're going to have a chance to visit later on. I just want to make a few points. First of all, the kids were fabulous, the singers. I loved that. I'm something of a music lover, and they sang that wonderful old Jim Croce song—those of you who are about my age, maybe a little younger—it's all the more wistful because he did die young. And there's that great line in that song: "There never seems to be enough time to do the things you want to do once you find them." It's something that the older you get, the more sober it makes you to hear that line.

And I guess if I could say anything to you tonight that you haven't heard, is that we do have time to do what we want to do, as a country and as a people, to a degree virtually unheard of in our history. And we need, in this election and in this year, to continue to find the right things and to find the strength and the vision and the will to do them.

I am profoundly grateful to the people of Boston and the people of Massachusetts. They have been very good to me and to Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore. And indeed, all of New England has been very good to—we have carried all the States in New England in both elections. And that is something for which I am very grateful. And I am quite mindful of the fact that the energy and the drive for that came in no small measure out of Massachusetts and out of the uncommon kindness of the Democrats in New Hampshire and staying with me against all the odds on more than one occasion.

But what I want you to think about is this. A lot of you mentioned to me the wonderful 100-year-old woman who came to the White House on Saturday to the radio address. I loved that lady because she was on television, and she continually referred to me as a young man. [Laughter] And I just loved that. [Laughter]

And we got in a great discussion about older people, and Willard Scott asked me if I had anybody in my family who lived to be 100. I said, "No, but I had a very close uncle who died at 91 a couple years ago, who helped to raise me." And I told the story about how when he was 86, he used to once a week take a 92-year-old woman for a drive and once a week take a 95-year-old woman for a drive. He was describing this to me, and I said, "Well, Uncle Buddy, you like those older women, don't you?" He said, "Yeah, I do. Seems like they're a little more settled." [Laughter]

So anyway, it's all a matter of your perspective whether you're young or not. And as I've gotten older, I've learned that the definition of young is anybody that's a day younger than I am. But I've lived a fair number of years now, and there has never been a time in my lifetime when our country has had at once this level of economic prosperity, social progress, self-confidence, without overwhelming internal crisis or external threat. Therefore, I would argue to you that we have an unparalleled opportunity to do the things we want to do and that every year, it's about defining them, finding them, and dreaming them.

The second thing I want to say is that—Alan talked about all the tough times when we've been here. The great British essayist Samuel Johnson said that "Nothing so concentrates a man's mind as the prospect of his own destruction." And many times, when the Democratic Party's been under the gun, when the administration's been under the gun, people marveled at how well we did. Well, what option did we have? If we wanted to show up for work every day for the American people, we just had to concentrate, take a deep breath, and keep on working.

I have found that sometimes people are most vulnerable to making errors when they think

things are going along so well they don't have to think about them. And this is not just—this is true of people—everybody here who is over 30 in this room—certainly everybody over 30—everybody who can think of at least one instance in your own life, when in your personal life, your family life, or your business life, something went wrong because you thought things were going so well you didn't have to think about it anymore.

So I would say to you that the thing that I am seized with here in this final year of my Presidency is keeping the attention of the American people on the future and making people understand that this is an enormous opportunity and, accordingly, a profound responsibility, to define the dreams that we have for the 21st century and then to come up with a strategy toward achieving them.

For me, it means finishing the unfinished business of the last year, the Patients' Bill of Rights, the hate crimes legislation, the prescription medicine for people on Medicare, gun legislation. It means an aggressive agenda, which you will hear more about in the State of the Union, for the last year that I will be your President. But it also means defining those big, long-term goals that can't be achieved in a year that we have to move toward.

And I believe that elections are always about the future. And I believe we have—I have always believed, as anybody who's had any conversation with me about this—I have always believed we would do fine this year if we were proud of our record, explained how it was part of a coherent philosophy that was driving us into the future, but more importantly, articulated a vision that America could buy into for tomorrow and that we then had to be competitive, in terms of communicating our message. And that's what you've helped us to do.

So, we'll have more to say about this as the night goes on, but I think it would be helpful—you all know what I think the big challenges of the future are. I think we have to make the most of the revolutions in science and technology, especially in biotech and telecommunications, in materials development and environmental technologies. I think we have to embrace, not run away from, globalization, but put a more human face on it so that everybody has a chance to feel they're treated fairly and has a chance to win. I think we have to give every child in this country a 21st century edu-

cation, something we've never really done in our whole history, giving every child whatever the globally excellent education was at the moment, and that we've got to deal with the aging of America. We've got to decide what we're going to do with Social Security and Medicare, and how we're going to prepare for this explosion in the number of people over 65 doubling in the next 30 years. Most of us who are here hope to be among them.

We have to decide what our responsibilities are in an increasingly interdependent world to deal with the global challenges we have. And I think most important of all, as I have repeatedly said since the day I got here, we have to decide whether we really believe we're all in this together, and we have to keep expanding the real family of America. We have to—that's why I'm so strongly in favor of the hate crimes legislation, the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," continuing to work toward reconciling the differences that rend America and the world apart, day-in and day-out. Every day now, it seems like I'm spending more and more time trying to reactivate the Middle East peace process. But in a calm setting like this, and you see all those children up there singing tonight, it's self-evident to all of us that we have more in common than whatever it is that divides us.

And somehow, if I could leave one gift to America, I would leave us the ability—if I could just wave a magic wand, instead of getting up and going to work in the White House every day—I would leave us the ability to remember that, every hour of every day, in everything we do, because we waste so much energy and we get ourselves in so much trouble in this old world just trying to pull ourselves up by putting other people down. And I am convinced that the only way we can make the most of all the modern wonders of tomorrow is to learn this most ancient of lessons.

So those are my big ideas for the 21st century. But the Democratic Party has been reformed, reenergized, and reborn in the last 7 years, in a way that is entirely consistent with our history and our values. And we can be really proud of the role we've played in the economic revitalization of America and the declining crime rate and welfare rolls and the fact that 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious diseases for the first time and all the progress that has been made.

But every election is about tomorrow. And I believe, with all my heart, if we make time to do the things we should do, we will do fine in the year 2000. The only thing that can keep us from ratifying this important direction the country has taken in the last 7 years is if either we don't care enough to exert the effort to fight and to finance our side of the argument, or we don't care enough to articulate the choices so that it's clear what the election is about.

And all I can say is, if everybody in the country who thinks the way we do were as committed as you are, then I wouldn't even worry about that.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Alan D. Solomont, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee (DNC), and his wife, Susan; Steven Grossman, former DNC national chair, and his wife, Barbara; Edward G. Rendell, DNC general chair and former mayor of Philadelphia, PA; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston; State Senator Joan M. Menard, chair, Massachusetts State Democratic Party; Fran Katz, former DNC national finance chair; and Willard Scott of NBC's "Today" show.

Remarks on the Health Insurance Initiative and an Exchange With Reporters

January 19, 2000

The President. Good morning, everyone. I'm glad to be joined today by Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman, Deputy Secretary Eizenstat, and OPM Director Janice Lachance. We want to talk to you about the health care of America's families, one of the biggest challenges we face still in this new century.

Today I want to talk about two major proposals that are in my budget for 2001, which will help Americans to shoulder the cost of health care by extending coverage to millions of people who do not now have it and by helping Americans of all ages meet the demands of long-term care. These proposals are a significant investment in the health of Americans, another step toward giving every American access to quality health care.

As our Nation ages and we live longer lives, we face the need to provide long-term care to larger and larger numbers of Americans. Yesterday we put forward proposals to help Americans to face these new challenges, first by providing a \$3,000 tax credit for the cost of long-term care—that is 3 times the one I proposed in last year's State of the Union; second, by expanding access to home-based care through Medicaid; and third, by establishing new support networks for caregivers. We shouldn't let another year go by without helping those who are doing so much to help others. And I will

say again, we should also, this year, pass the Patients' Bill of Rights.

We must also keep fighting to extend affordable health care to Americans who lack it. This is a continuing problem in our Nation, as all of you know. Still there are too many children who lose their hearing because an ear infection goes untreated or wind up in the emergency room because they couldn't see a doctor in a more regular way. Too many parents skimp on their own health to provide coverage for their children. Too many missed chances to prevent illness and prepare young people to lead healthy lives—all these the products of the fact that tens of millions of Americans still don't have affordable health care.

So today I'm announcing that my budget will set aside more than \$110 billion over 10 years to expand health care coverage. If enacted, this would be the largest investment in health coverage since the establishment of Medicare in 1965, one of the most significant steps we could take to help working families.

This proposal has four components. First, it's hard to have healthy children without healthy parents. We know parents who have access to health care themselves are more likely to get care for their children. And children who see their parents getting regular medical care learn good habits that last a lifetime. Yet, most of

the parents of the children covered in our Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program, are themselves uninsured. That's why, as the Vice President has urged, I propose to allow parents to enroll in the same health insurance program that now covers their children. I thank the Vice President for this proposal. I believe it can make a difference to millions of families. You all remember that we set up the CHIP program in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act.

Second, we will work with States to reach every child now eligible for CHIP or for Medicaid. We've doubled the enrollment in the CHIP program in just the last year, as the States have really gotten up and going and taken the right initiatives on this. We now have something over 2 million children in the program. But still, many children are missing out. To find them, we have to take information and enrollment to where they and their parents are: in school lunch programs, in day care facilities, in centers for the homeless. Our budget will fund efforts to do just that, because there is no reason for any child in America to grow up without basic health care.

Third, we are reaching out to Americans who have few or no options for affordable insurance. The numbers of people without insurance are growing fastest among those nearing retirement, an age when many people are already on fixed income or have limited health insurance choices. I met a woman who lost her home trying to pay medical bills on a retirement income while she was waiting to become eligible for Medicare. This shouldn't happen to anyone. I've already proposed that this group of Americans be allowed to buy into Medicare coverage, that is, those between the ages of 55 and 65. And now, this new budget will provide for them a 25-percent tax credit to help them do it.

It's also hard to keep insurance for those who change jobs or are laid off, something that happens more and more in our fast-moving economy. That's why we have the COBRA benefits, allowing workers to pay to stay enrolled in health insurance when they're laid off. But too many workers cannot pay the full costs themselves. That's why we're also proposing tax credits that will make COBRA insurance affordable to more people and help workers take advantage of job flexibility without worrying every single day that they may lose their health insurance coverage if they do so.

We will also build on public and private sector insurance programs to help cover 19- and 20-year-olds aging out of insurance, people moving from welfare to work, employees of small businesses, and legal immigrants.

Finally, we must strengthen the network of clinics, hospitals, and dedicated professionals who serve the uninsured. They care for families in need and help to provide the referrals that get children and parents into insurance programs. And their resources are stretched very thin. So I will ask Congress to make a significant investment in these public health facilities next year.

Investing in health care coverage is a smart choice for America. We're meeting our responsibilities to all our American citizens, supporting seniors, helping make our children more ready for the future. I look forward to working with Congress to seize these opportunities this year.

Again, let me say what I have said so many times: In my lifetime we have never had this much economic prosperity and social progress with the absence of paralyzing internal crisis or external threat. We have an opportunity now to really make a dent in this problem of health insurance coverage, in the problem of long-term care, and we ought to do it. I hope we will.

2000 Presidential Campaign

Q. Mr. President, are you happy that health care is an issue on the campaign trail? And what do you think of Bill Bradley's plan? You seem to be endorsing Gore here.

The President. His plan is more extensive than mine, too, the Vice President's is. But they're in a different position.

Number one—let me answer your first question—I am elated that health care is an issue in the campaign. It is a good thing. It's an issue in people's lives. You can see that every time we debate a health care issue. You can see that support we got for the Children's Health Insurance Program in '97. You can see it in the enormous grassroots support for the Patients' Bill of Rights.

And just as Hillary and I predicted in 1994, when the health care proposal was defeated, we said there would be an increase in the number of uninsured people because the cost of insurance would go up and it would be harder for employers, particularly smaller business employers, to continue to cover their employees.

So I think that what's going on in the campaign is a great thing for America.

Both the candidates have proposed—made proposals even more sweeping than the one I make today—even though if this were adopted, as I said, it would be the biggest expansion in health coverage since Medicare. But the reason—they should be doing that because they're looking at what they can do over 4 years, what they can do over 8 years. This is a proposal for this year's budget, and it is a very ambitious one-year proposal that will add millions of people to the ranks of those with insurance.

It also is very important because of the \$3,000 long-term care tax credit. That's something that I've been involved with, well, for more than 20 years now, something that I feel I know something about and I care a great deal about, and I believe there will be a lot of bipartisan support for that.

Go ahead, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Health Insurance Initiative

Q. What makes you think that you can get a more expansive health care program through Congress this year than you were able to get through last year?

The President. Well, for one thing, the budget picture is clearer. At least so far, the Republican leadership in the Congress has not put on the table a tax program which would make it impossible to pay the debt off and make it impossible to meet our fundamental obligations.

And I believe if you just look at what's going on in the election season this year, the public cares a lot about health care, and they're talking a lot about it. And all these people, without regard to their party, who come here in the Congress, they've been home talking to the people they represent. They've been listening to this. They know what their folks are up against. They know what kind of problems people face with long-term care. And I think they also, those with a lot of experience, understand how very complex this is and how difficult it is to add to the ranks of the insured in a cost-effective way. And this is clearly, based on our experience, the most cost-effective way to add people to the ranks of the insured.

Let the parents of kids in the CHIP program buy into CHIP or cover them with our funds. And let the people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare, and give them a tax credit to do so. Republicans, you know, naturally are

inclined to have tax solutions to social problems, and in the case of long-term care, that is exactly the right thing to do. The tax credit is exactly the right way to go there, because there are so many different kinds of long-term care options out there that are appropriate for different families given different circumstances. So I'm actually quite hopeful that we can work together and get something done on this.

Q. Do you think Harry and Louise will support you this time?

The President. Well, I hope so. They've been acting like they want to support me. And I'd like to get together with Harry and Louise; I thought they were pretty effective last time, and we ought to be on the same side. So I'm hoping old Harry and Louise—I wish they would come into the Oval Office here, and we could have a little press conference, a Harry and Louise press conference, endorsing this expansion of health coverage.

Q. After what they did to you?

Q. Can we cover it? [*Laughter*]

The President. You bet. I want you all to be here. It will be a crowded room if they come, but I'd love it if Harry and Louise would just sidle right on in here and say that they think this is the greatest idea since sliced bread, and we could go forward together. And it would be great.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, you've spoken to President Asad. Do you have any reason to believe that the peace talks will restart soon?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's very important that you—I think this has been well and accurately reported, as nearly as I can tell. But I want to reiterate, neither side has decided to back away from the peace talks, call an end to them, call a freeze to them. That's not what's going on. They are having a genuine dispute about sequencing now that I'm trying to work through for both of them.

But the good news about this is that both these leaders, I think, want a peace that meets each other's needs. That is, they're both quite mindful of the fact that there won't be a peace agreement unless the legitimate concerns of both sides are met.

And I would not say the gaps in the positions are 90 percent; I'd say they're much closer to 10 percent than 90 percent. But keep in mind, these folks had not dealt with each other in

a very long time. And that week they spent together at Shepherdstown was really the first time they had had these kind of direct contacts, get a feel for where they were. They wanted to go home and reassess their positions. And so we need to do some trust-building. We've got some work to do, but I'm actually quite hopeful.

And I see that both sides have continued to evidence a fairly high level of confidence that they can succeed, and that's good news. So we're in a little patch here where I've just got a little extra work to do, and I'm working at it. And hopefully, we can do it.

Q. [Inaudible]—Asad today or yesterday?

The President. Yes, I talked to President Asad, I think yesterday, wasn't it?

Q. But since then—

The President. No, not since yesterday morning. But I'll be in regular contact with him continuously. So we're working this very, very hard. And of course, we're also working on the Palestinian track, and tomorrow Chairman Arafat will be here, and I expect to have a good meeting with him. You know, if this were easy, it would have been done a long time ago. But we're working at it, and I'm pretty hopeful.

President's Last Year in Office

Q. Are you mournful that tomorrow is the last—the start of your last year in office, sir?

The President. Yes, tomorrow is the day, isn't it?

Q. Yes.

The President. Well, I will certainly mark the day.

Q. In what way?

The President. I mean, I'll just be conscious of it, in all kinds of little ways. When I go

in a room in the White House now, I look around more carefully to make sure there's something—that I've actually noticed something that I may not have seen. You'd be amazed, when you're living a busy life and you're working really hard—I bet it happens to you, too—how many times you walk in and out of a room, and you'll see something in a room that you've been in the room for 5 years and you never noticed before. So I'm sensitive to all that.

But I'm actually very—I'm so grateful that the country is in the shape that it's in. And I'm so grateful that I've had the chance to serve. And I'm so energized about the State of the Union and, in many ways, in the sweep and depth of the proposals that I will make to the Congress and the country in the State of the Union are arguably the most far-reaching since the very first one I made. So I'm feeling good and grateful, and I just want to milk every last moment of every day.

The only thing, I wish I didn't have to sleep at all for a year. [Laughter] I wish that God would give the capacity to function for a year without sleep. That would make me very happy. [Laughter] But I think it highly unlikely. Therefore, I will keep trying to get some.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Harry and Louise, characters in Health Insurance Association of America-sponsored television advertisements in opposition to health care reform legislation proposed in 1993; President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Gala

January 19, 2000

Thank you very much. I would like to begin this evening by asking you all to give another round of applause to my friend Phoebe Snow and her band. I thought they were great here tonight, and I thank them for coming. [Applause]

I want to thank Ed Rendell for agreeing to become the chair of our party, for the work

we have done as friends and partners in the last 7 years. I want to thank Joe Andrew, who has really been an indefatigable sparkplug. You know, most people think I'm in a good humor most of the time, but he makes me look like a sourpuss. [Laughter] I mean, the guy is always up. He's like the—and I don't mean this in a demeaning way, but he's sort of like our

Energizer bunny. He's just always plugging away there. He's always there, and I thank him for that.

I always tell the people that work around me, in good times and bad, that reality is composed more or less in equal parts of what happens and how you react to it, because we can't control everything that happens, but we can always control how we react. This guy is always reacting in the right way, and I thank you. And we're in good shape today and well poised for this millennial election year.

I want to thank all the other officers of the DNC, the former officers who are here, especially the three new co-finance chairs who are here: Carol Pensky, Joel Hyatt, and Joe Cari, all long-time friends of mine, and I thank you for your willingness to do this.

I will be brief tonight for two reasons: You've heard me give a speech or two before. And secondly, if I'm not careful, I'll blow what little I haven't revealed about my State of the Union Address, and I don't want to do that. Let me try to just say a few things that I hope you will remember and carry with you when you leave tonight and wake up tomorrow.

First of all, I want you to know that I am profoundly grateful for the support and the friendship I have received from so many of you in this room who have been with me and Hillary and Al and Tipper all along the way, in good times and bad.

Secondly, I want you to know that I am also very grateful for the success America has enjoyed during my tenure and the fact that we were able to end the 20th century and begin the 21st on such a high note. Most of the credit belongs, as it always does, to the American people, without regard to party, people who just get up every day and dream their own dreams and take care of their own families and obey the law and pay their taxes and make this country hum.

But it really does matter what tools they have to build their dream. It really does matter whether the conditions in which they live and labor and raise their children help or thwart those dreams. And that is why politics matter. That is why ideas matter.

I was so glad that Mayor Rendell said what he did. I don't know how many times I've said that in the last 4 months. I actually find myself watching these debates—and I tried to watch the debates, no offense, that the other party

was having, too, but I think ours are more interesting because our guys actually know a lot of things so they have something to say in these things. [Laughter] And it really is fascinating to me to listen to them talk. I think that's great.

But underneath all the specifics, the Democratic Party has been transformed and in the process has helped the transforming of America over the last 7 years. When we celebrated over the millennial New Year's the great achievements of the 20th century, for the world and for the United States and the triumph of freedom, it is easy to forget that 7 years ago two guys that worked for the Philadelphia Inquirer, in Mayor Rendell's hometown, in 1992 wrote a best-selling book, the title of which was, "America: What Went Wrong?" And it swept the country. I read it through twice, underlined it.

Why was that a best-selling book? Because we had an unusual combination of high unemployment, social decline—that is, exploding welfare and crime rolls and all the other indicators—political gridlock in Washington, and after 12 years of trying, the Republicans had finally succeeded in discrediting the Government of this country. They told us how sorry it was. It took 12 years, and they just about convinced people. So there we were in quite a fix: economic distress, social decline, political gridlock, and a discredited Government.

And at least to someone like me, sitting out in the country a long way from Washington, it appeared that the debates that were going on here were like a broken record. Over and over and over again, you know, there was a prescribed Democratic position and a prescribed Republican position. There was the prescribed liberal position and a prescribed conservative position. And everybody was put in these little boxes, and they lobbed their rhetorical artillery across a no-man's land at each other. And not much happened, but it was enough to fill the airwaves at night. And I thought to myself, you know, if I ran my State like that, we'd never get anything done, and we'd just be in a ditch. If people ran their businesses like that, we'd have 20 percent unemployment. If people ran their families like that, the divorce rate would be 100 percent. It was just crazy. It was like we were stuck in this sort of over and over and over again way of doing things.

So I said to the American people, "I have an idea. I'm a Democrat by heritage, instinct,

and conviction. But I think we're living in new times; we have to have new approaches. We've got to be willing to try new ideas. We've got to be willing to break out of old patterns. But we ought to be anchored in the fundamental ideas that every American should have opportunity, but every American should be a responsible citizen, and that all of us are part of a community, and whenever the least of us is in trouble, the rest of us are lessened. And no one should be shut out of this community just because they're not like the rest of us, as long as they're willing to show up every day, obey the law, and be good citizens. And beyond that, we ought not to rule out anything; we ought to be willing to try new ideas.

"And the first thing we've got to do is get this country out of debt. But we can't pretend that you can do it by calling for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget and then never do anything about it. You either have got to raise taxes or cut spending or do both." Somebody said, what was the single new reform I brought to Washington? I think it was arithmetic. [Laughter] We brought arithmetic back to Washington.

Anyway, the rest is history. But I want you to understand that this idea—we proved, for example, that the progressive party, or the liberal party, if you will, could run the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years—not the conservative party, the progressive party—and that we could do it and still double our investment in education and training because we've given you the smallest Government in 37 years; we've eliminated hundreds of programs; we've cut out 16,000 pages of Federal regulations. We got rid of stuff that nobody ever comes up to me and tells me how much they miss. I'll give anybody here \$5 if before I walk out of here tonight, you can come up and say, "I really miss this regulation," and tell me what it was; or, "I really wish you hadn't gotten rid of that program." And I got rid of hundreds of them, so just come tell me one. Tell me how you yearn for its return. [Laughter]

So we said, "Why should we choose between investing in education and science and technology and the environment and health care and getting rid of the deficit? Let's do both. Why should we choose between tougher punishment or better prevention to lower the crime rate? Why don't we do both? Why should we choose between improving the environment and grow-

ing the economy, especially with the present state of development of technology and energy? Let's do both."

And the results, I think you'll all agree, have been pretty good. And it's not just about economics. Twenty million people have been able to take a little time off from work without losing their jobs when there is a sick parent or a baby is born under the family leave law, a bill vetoed in the previous administration, vetoed because it was supposed to be so bad for business. Almost a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers haven't gotten a handgun because of the Brady bill, a bill vetoed in the previous administration because it was supposed to undermine our freedom to keep and bear arms. Ninety percent of our kids immunized against serious diseases for the first time. And I could go on and on.

Now, the first thing I want you to go out and tell people is—I used to say when I was at home, "When you find a turtle on a fencepost, the chances are it didn't get there by accident." We have worked hard to modernize our party and to modernize our country. And we don't claim credit for every good thing that went on in this country, but we did establish the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. And that's what we believe the role of the National Government is in the 21st century.

And the second thing, elections are always about tomorrow. I said on New Year's Eve that as long as our dreams outweigh our memories, we can be forever young. And that is the destiny of this country. And so what Americans have to think about is, in '92 we had economic distress, social decline, political gridlock, discredited Government; 2000, we've got the strongest economy in history. The social fabric is clearly on the mend. We have developed as a nation a new consensus, even though sometimes you can't tell it here in Washington, for a progressive politics that is fiscally responsible but socially concerned. And the credibility of the Government's ability to do its job has been restored. And for the first time, all these things have happened, and we are not paralyzed by an internal crisis or an external threat.

So the big issue about—if the 20th century was about freedom and its triumph, the beginning of the 21st century is about whether we will use this wisely. What are we going to do now? And that's what I want you to focus on all year long. When you get tired of coming

to these things and calling somebody else to help our party, when you get weary or some little bump in the road occurs in these elections, I want you to remember we didn't get here by accident. You brought us here—all those times you wrote checks you'd just as soon not have written, all those nights you went to those dinners when you had rather stayed home and watched a movie, all those times you've showed up at some public event because you wanted to be loyal.

This is about ideas and change, and the people's lives have changed. And we are in a position never before existent in my lifetime to write the future of our dreams for our children. What I always hoped we could do in my tenure as President is turn this country around and get us moving in the right direction, so that our children would literally have a chance to build the future of their dreams.

And so the big question for us now is, what are we going to do with this magic moment? Are we going to indulge ourselves in it, pretend that the elections don't matter, take some sort of short-term benefit that may or may not help us get there? Or are we going to say, "Thank you, God, for giving us this moment. Give us the wisdom to use it well and try to honestly say, now what are the big opportunities and the big problems that are out there staring us in the face, and what in the world are we going to do about it?"

And for the next year I'm going to do my best to finish the unfinished business of the last Congress, from the Patients' Bill of Rights to sensible gun legislation, to hate crimes and employment nondiscrimination legislation, to trying to extend the life of Medicare and get a sensible prescription drug benefit for our seniors—75 percent of them don't have it today. I'm going to try to chart the long-term direction that I want America to go in. And then I'm going to have as ambitious a program for what we can do in the next year as I have ever offered the American people in the State of the Union, because I think they hired us to show up for work.

People keep telling me, "Well, it's election year, you know." And I say, "Well, we're all drawing a paycheck, aren't we?" It's election year, and then people who aren't in the election want to use that as an excuse not to go to work or not to get anything done. I don't understand that. I think we ought to get more done

this year because we're not running. I don't understand that.

But hear me well, now. As Democrats we have two obligations that you must shoulder. We must be competitive in this campaign. We must be determined not to be so out-spent we can't be heard, and we must never forget that our job, since we are governing, is to do good things for the American people, including good things with our friends in the Republican Party whenever they're willing to work with us, and if they're not, to the best of our ability on our own. So just remember, you've got a lot to be proud of; you've got a good story to tell.

But the American people now have to decide whether they think this turtle got on the fencepost by accident and where they want to go with this magic moment in the future. And what I really care about is thinking that all this stuff we've labored to do the last 7 years can be used together to sort of liberate the energy, the imagination, the heart, the spirit of America to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity around the world; to give all the poor people in this country who are willing to work a chance to live the American dream; to give everybody a world-class education; to bring health insurance to the people who can't afford it now; to deal with these big challenges.

You can make your own list, but just remember the most important thing. If you look at where we are now compared to where we were then, we got there because we had good ideas, rooted in good values, with a real vision. If you look at where we are now, compared to where we can go, and you understand that the sky is the limit, you begin to appreciate the importance of this election.

Joe and Ed talk about how I show up at the drop of a hat, even though I'm not running for anything. There is a reason. I have never forgotten, a day I was here, for whom I was working. I have never been under the illusion that I was anything other than the hired hand of the American people. And it's contract time again. And they're going to give a lot of employment contracts this year, from the White House—in Joe's terms, from the White House to dogcatcher. Just once in my life I hope I meet the Democratic nominee for dogcatcher some day. There have been days where there is not much difference in that and the White House. [Laughter]

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Anyway, it's contract time again. And if you believe in what we've done, if you believe in why you drug yourselves out in good weather and bad and when you weren't feeling good and you worked all these dinners and receptions, if you believe in why you wrote all those checks and did all those things, remember, it's contract time again, and the people have to decide again. And if we blew this decision, we wouldn't be the first people to blow a decision just because things were so good. How many times have you made a mistake in your life because things were going along so well, you thought there were no consequences to what you did or what you decided on any given day?

This is a momentous election. The American people have been well served by our party. They need to be well served by our voices and by our continued service. I'll do my part; you'll do yours; we'll have the biggest celebration yet in this millennial year.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 p.m. in the North Hall at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Phoebe Snow; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Carol Pensky, Joel Hyatt, and Joseph A. Cari, Jr., finance cochairs, Democratic National Committee; and authors Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency Regarding Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 19, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2000, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 1999.

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration on January 23, 1995, of a national emergency has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities with the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process, and which

are hostile to United States interests in the region.

Such actions threaten vital interests of the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. On August 20, 1998, I identified four additional persons, including Usama bin Ladin, who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to deny any financial support from the United States for foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 20. The notice of January 19 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Launching the Agenda for Higher Education and Lifetime Learning January 20, 2000

Thank you very much, Nina, for being exhibit A for the announcement that we're here for today. Thank you, Secretary Riley, for your leadership in every aspect of education and especially in this one.

I thank Secretary Slater for coming. I suspect he's here for two reasons. One is, Rodney Slater grew up in a county that, when I was Governor, was one of the 10 poorest counties in America. And he happened to be a good football player and was able to go to college in Michigan and play football. And he, later in his career, became an officer at a university in our home State. So he also is exhibit A for why every child should be able to go to college.

I want to thank Representative Rush Holt for being here. He is not only a former distinguished professor at Princeton, but he has a task force on access to higher education in his congressional district. And the people who live in his district actually are among those who will be most benefited if this entire proposal passes, as we hope it will.

In their absence, I want to thank Congressman Ford and Senator Olympia Snowe, who had been very, very strong on this issue. And the two people I want to thank most, obviously, are Senator Schumer and the First Lady, who lobbied me relentlessly on this for the better part of a year. If you've ever been lobbied by either one of them, you know—[laughter]—it's sort of like, are you going to say yes now, or put yourself through all this misery and say yes later? But it's been very interesting. I'll say more about it in a moment. [Laughter]

We know when we open the doors to college, we open the doors to opportunity. When we make college more affordable, we make the American dream more achievable. That's why we're all here today. I'm glad there are so many young people here today. They're probably sorry that they're not really getting out of school; they could have gotten out of school anyway—[laughter]—but I'm glad you all came and waited.

Some in Congress, I note, are saying that because this is an election year, we really shouldn't try to do anything for the American people. We're here today to give perhaps the

most powerful example for why we should reject that view. Nothing, not a national election or a Washington snowstorm, should get in the way of making a college education more affordable for all Americans. [Applause] Thank you. Students can't put off their growing up for a year; families can't put off going to work for a year; and neither should we.

Today is a happy day for me. This is my seventh anniversary as President of the United States. I am profoundly grateful for the long way we have come as a nation in these last 7 years, that today we have the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest unemployment and welfare rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in over 40 years. I am grateful that we are coming together, that we have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates we have ever recorded, that we have the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years, and that in the last couple of years we have finally begun to see a reversal in the increase in inequality of incomes of working people, which was going on for nearly three decades.

So the family of America is growing stronger, and that is fundamentally a tribute to the hard work and adaptability of the American people. It has also been helped along the way by our hard-won economic strategy of increasing trade, getting rid of the deficit, and investing in the education of our people and in the economy in which they will live.

More than ever, with globalization and the information-based economy, investing in the minds of our people is the most important thing we can do to assure our continued success as a nation. But that has been the American policy for quite a long time now. The land grant college system was established under Abraham Lincoln; the GI bill after World War II; the Pell grants in the 1970's; and the HOPE scholarship in 1997. We have made education and access to higher education a bipartisan national priority for quite a long while.

You heard the other stories that were told. I was sitting here thinking, I was the first person

in my family to go to college. And I remember when I was accepted to Georgetown—rather late, I might add, in the year. [Laughter] And they gave me a \$500 scholarship, for which I was very grateful. And I think the tuition back then was about \$6,000, which 37 years ago, -6 years ago, seemed like all the money in the world to me. And I was literally guilt-ridden when I went off to college to think of the burden I was imposing on my family. And I remember we had a family meeting about it. I remember my high school guidance counselor called me in the office and said I was nuts, that I'd pay it back many times over in the future. But it bothered me a lot.

And then later, as I stayed in school and went on to law school, I was able to do it all because I had the help of scholarships and loans and jobs. And if I hadn't had that help, there's no way in the world I would be standing here today. I know that.

And because of the changes in the financial costs of higher education that Senator Schumer talked about and because of the changes in the economy, it's even more important that we do more today, not only for individual students but for the health and well-being of the American system. So that's why we're here.

You have already heard that we have been working on this hard for 7 years. We've more than doubled college aid in those 7 years, increasing Pell grants by more than 50 percent, rewriting the student loan program to make it easier and cheaper to get student loans, and then importantly, to let students pay off their loans as a percentage of their income, so there would never be an incentive for people who had those loans to drop out of school for fear that they could never repay them anyway.

We established AmeriCorps, which now has allowed 150,000 of our fellow citizens to serve in their communities and earn some money to go to college. We've expanded the work-study program from 700,000 to a million work-study slots. We've allowed families to save more in their IRA's and then to withdraw the money tax-free if it's being used to pay for a college education. And of course, as Secretary Riley said, we created the \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tax credit to make 2 years of high school after education through a community college just as universal as a high school education is today.

That HOPE scholarship tax credit and the lifetime learning tax credit, which helps families

pay for the last 2 years of college, graduate schools, or going back to school or to a training program, were designed to open the doors of college to all, and to recognize that in this economy, learning must go on for a lifetime. And it's working.

Today—listen to this—today, 67 percent of high school graduates will be enrolling in college next fall. That's an increase of 10 percent just since 1993. But we know we haven't truly succeeded in opening the doors of college to all if you mean everybody who wants to should be able to go to a 4-year school and stay—and stay—until they finish.

Parents all across the country are genuinely stretched. And parents in a surprisingly wide range of income groups are stretched because of the loan eligibility, the Pell grant eligibility limits, and other things. So today what we're attempting to do is to launch an agenda for higher education and lifetime learning for the 21st century that will make college more affordable for more families and, in the process, genuinely open the doors of college to everybody.

But we also want to encourage more people to stay in college once they go. And we want to do more to guide young people, starting in their middle school years, to be thinking about college so that if they can't afford it, they'll be able to get in and go.

First, the centerpiece of this budget for the coming year will be a landmark \$30 billion college opportunity tax cut to help millions of middle class families pay for college. It will give families a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 in tuition costs, providing as much as \$2,800 in much-needed tax relief. And as Senator Schumer said, this has never been done before.

Now, let me tell you how this works. I am for this, and I believe it's the right thing to do. But all of you need to know that we think there's a pretty strict limit on what the total aggregate tax cuts I can propose and sign into law is. I had to veto one last year, because I thought it was too big. Why? Because the main thing that's brought us all along is the strength of our economy. And that requires us, in my judgment, to keep this budget balanced, to keep running surpluses, and to get this country out of debt over the next 15 years for the first time since 1835.

So as you might imagine, one of the things that we have to do, we have these huge, fascinating debates at this time every year about

what does or doesn't go in the administration's budget. And that's where the arm-twisting from Senator Schumer and the First Lady came in. And they made the compelling argument—and you heard Chuck say he and Olympia had this bill in the Senate—that there was no benefit we could give to middle class people that would benefit more families more than this one and no benefit we could give to families that would benefit America more than this one.

So again I say, we know this idea has bipartisan support, even in Washington. And I'll bet you'd have to take a magnifying glass to find anybody out in the country who is against it, once I can explain that it won't affect our ability to balance the budget and pay off the debt.

So this is the core. This has never been done before by our country. And when you take this, plus what we've done with the HOPE scholarships, with the other lifetime tax credits, with the Pell grants, with the work-study slots, and with the changes in the student loan program, we will really be able to say, everybody who wants to go to college can go. It is important that it pass, and I want to ask all of you to help me to pass it in this session of Congress.

Nina talked a little about her situation, but she was too modest to tell you that she's on the dean's list, so that helps her qualify for additional scholarship aid. But her father works overtime when he can. Her mother works two jobs. Now, what does all this mean to her? For her family in their income group, with the HOPE scholarship, the new college opportunity tax cut would translate into a \$4,300 tax break for her family by the time her brother, George, enters college. That's real money. That will make a difference to her family, and it will make a difference to America.

This plan, I say again, is important for families, but it's also important for the state of our economy. We give tax relief today for businesses that invest in new plants and equipment. In an economy that runs on brainpower, we ought to give tax credits and tax cuts for people that invest in that brainpower. With this action we are much closer toward taking the worry out of paying for a child's college education. We're another step forward toward helping the middle class with a targeted tax cut. And we're another step forward again in saying that we have literally opened the doors of college to all.

I am also pleased to announce that we will increase Pell grants to up to \$3,500, and that

will benefit nearly 4 million Pell grant recipients. And that's important.

Now, for all of you who are in higher education—this is the second thing I want to say that's important—the second element of our plan is to strengthen our efforts to help Americans stay in college. We have really good numbers now, and it's going to get better with this—with the number of young people going to college. But the dropout rate is way, way too high, given the needs of the economy and the benefits to young people in staying and getting their degrees.

One-third of the lowest income students drop out of college, and less than half of them earn degrees within 5 years. Our budget will establish the college competition challenge grants to reduce the dropout rate and improve the chances of success for nearly 18,000 of these students. We're also going to expand the successful TRIO program to help even more students stay in college. We will launch a dual degree initiative to expand opportunities for students at minority institutions to allow about 3,000 minority students to earn a degree in fields where minorities today are woefully under-represented.

The third and final part of our higher education agenda is focused on helping young people get on the right track to college and to stay there. We need to encourage more students at an early age, to get them excited about academic achievement and to give them a sense that they actually can go to college and get a degree and have the life of their dreams.

We passed an initiative we called GEAR UP, which does just that. It reaches out to middle school students who are at risk, using college students to mentor them, to encourage them to set high expectations, to stay in school, to study hard, to take the right courses to go to college, and to make sure they know exactly what kind of aid they would qualify for, so they didn't decide when they're 12 or 13 or 14 that they won't be able to afford to go.

Our budget will double the number of students who can participate in GEAR UP to include 1.4 million young people. Many of them come from families where they would never entertain the prospect of going to college and where the message they get now—on the street, in the school—is that because of their circumstances, they won't be able to make it. We're giving them the exact reverse message, that they will absolutely be able to make it.

And young people in universities all across America who have participated in mentoring these kids deserve the thanks of a grateful nation. We're going to double this program, and I hope you'll help us pass that as well.

One more aspect of this is our youth opportunity grants, under the leadership of Secretary Herman at Labor and the Youthbuild initiative at HUD. These things are working, again, to reach young people who otherwise too often get let out and left behind.

Taken together, these steps will provide families with the college relief they need, students with the support they need, our economy with the skilled work force we need, and our communities and our Nation with the better citizens we all need.

People who decide to invest in their futures through education are taking the long look ahead, making sacrifices today for rewards to-

tomorrow. That is the challenge we face today as a nation. We have, for the first time in my lifetime, economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, the absence of serious crisis at home or paralyzing threat from abroad. All those conditions have not existed at one point in my lifetime. And it is imperative that we take the long look ahead. There is no better way to make the most of this magic moment than by helping all Americans make the most of their God-given abilities.

Thanks for being here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to student Nina McLaughlin, who introduced the President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

January 20, 2000

Israel-Palestinian Peace Talks

President Clinton. Let me just say I am delighted to have Chairman Arafat back in the White House. As all of you know, I am absolutely committed to seeing a comprehensive peace agreement involving the Palestinians and the Israelis, committed to doing whatever I can to achieve that. The resolution of the issues between Palestinians and Israelis is at the core of the comprehensive effort that we all want to make for peace throughout the Middle East, and we have to work through them.

As in any process like this, there must be inevitable and difficult compromises. No one can get everything that either side wants. But I'm convinced we can get there, and I'm convinced that Chairman Arafat is proceeding in great good faith, and so I'm glad to see him, glad he's here.

Q. Mr. President, is it possible for these talks to be completed by the deadline for the framework agreement? And if not, would you support extending it?

President Clinton. Well, I think that will have to be worked out between the two sides, and

specifically between Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak. And they will work that out. I think the main thing I want you to know is that I'm convinced it's possible for them to reach a comprehensive peace in a reasonably short period of time. And I'm going to do whatever I can to facilitate it.

Q. Chairman Arafat, so far you've got promises and no action. How optimistic are you, sir, about the implementation of the accords?

Chairman Arafat. First of all, a few days ago we did receive the 5 percent of the territories according to the Sharm al-Sheikh agreement. And within 2 weeks we will receive the 6th percent. And this is something that Prime Minister Barak and I agreed to 24 hours, 48 hours before arriving in the United States.

There is no doubt that there will be difficulties along the way. These are expected difficulties. But there is also determination that we have to reach the comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, not only on the Palestinian track but also on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, as well.

And here I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Clinton for all the efforts that he's exerting on the Syrian track, the Lebanese track, and of course, on our Palestinian track.

Q. Mr. Chairman, what do you think of the President's remark, which was said earlier at the State Department—so it must be U.S. policy, we're hearing it all over town now—that nobody can expect 100 percent, that there has to be some compromise. You know, we've just had an experience with Syria insisting on 100 percent, and the talks are now suspended. Will you settle for less than 100 percent of your demands?

President Clinton. I don't agree with that, by the way, that characterization of the question in the Syrian-Israeli talks.

Q. Okay.

Chairman Arafat. The negotiations is the best way. This is what happened with Egypt; this is what happened with Jordan; and this is what will happen with Syria, as well as Lebanon; and also it happened with the Palestinians with the help of President Clinton.

Q. Missing the deadline of February, will that inevitably mean the missing of the deadline of September, too, or will you work not to do that?

President Clinton. I don't think anything is inevitable here. I think that both these leaders and these parties are absolutely committed to resolving this in the most expeditious possible way. So I think we should always let them speak

for themselves and make their own decisions, and I'll do my best to be helpful.

Q. [*Inaudible*—comprehensive peace in the Middle East in that one year?

President Clinton. Well, we certainly could have, and I'll be disappointed if we don't, because we have the leaders who can do it, the issues are clear—even if they're difficult, they're clear. And I certainly think we could have it, and I'm going to do everything I can, every day I've got, to try to achieve it.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, when can we expect talks on the Syrian tracks to be resumed?

President Clinton. I think they'll both have something to say about that before long. I think they'll keep working right along. This is not—you shouldn't overreact to what has been said about this. I think they're both completely determined to get this resolved in an appropriate way. And I think they'll have things to say about it as we go along here. But don't read too much into this. Actually, the parties have a framework for making these decisions that's more clear and more bridgeable than I would have thought by now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on James and Sally Barksdale's Pledge to the University of Mississippi *January 20, 2000*

Hillary and I applaud James and Sally Barksdale for their dedication and leadership on behalf of the cause of literacy. Their generous pledge of \$100 million to the University of Mississippi will provide schoolchildren in that State—especially those in the most needy schools—with access to new reading programs,

train teachers in reading education, and promote efforts to target and help students struggling to learn to read. Their generosity is an example of the extraordinary role philanthropy plays in providing a better future for our children, families, and country.

Statement on Senator Bob Kerrey's Decision Not To Seek Reelection January 20, 2000

I have said before of Senator Bob Kerrey that he is always willing to be on the cutting edge of change. But the change he announces today is a bittersweet one for his family, his colleagues in the United States Senate, and his constituents in Nebraska.

Our Government and Nation are better because of Bob Kerrey's public service. I first got to know him when we served as Governors in the 1980's, when we shared a passion for education reform, farm problems, and deficit reduction.

In the Senate, Bob Kerrey provided pivotal leadership to turn our economy around by getting rid of the deficit. His creativity, political courage, and farsightedness have kept him at

the forefront of the fight for educational excellence, entitlement and tax reform, a stronger military, and a modern intelligence capability. His leadership of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and recruitment of new blood and funds helped shape a party that is firmly focused on the future and prepared to do well in this year's elections.

As Senator, Governor, Medal of Honor recipient, Bob Kerrey served our Nation above and beyond the call of duty. "If I added to their pride of America, I am happy," said Carl Sandburg. By that measure, Senator Kerrey should be happy, indeed. Hillary and I wish him well as he embarks on a new chapter in his remarkable life.

Remarks at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California January 21, 2000

Thank you so much. Dr. Moore, President Baltimore; to the faculty and students at Caltech, and to people involved in NASA's JPL out here. I want to thank Representatives Dreier, Baca, and Millender-McDonald for coming with me today and for the work they do in your behalf back in Washington. I want to thank three members of our Science and Technology team for being here: my Science Adviser, Neal Lane; Dr. Rita Colwell, the NSF Director; and my good friend, the Secretary of Energy, Bill Richardson, who has done a great job with our national labs to keep them being innovators in fields from computational science to environmental technology.

One person who would have liked to have been here today, and I can tell you thinks that he would be a better representative of our administration on this topic, is the Vice President. When we took office together, the fact that I was challenged scientifically and technologically was a standing joke. [Laughter] And he wants all of you to know that he's campaigning all over the country with a Palm 7 on his hip. [Laughter]

He wants you to know that he loves science and technology so much, he's not even angry that Caltech beat out Harvard for top spot in the U.S. News rankings this year. [Laughter] I think it has something to do with the relative electoral votes of California and Massachusetts. [Laughter]

But before I came out here, I told Dr. Moore and Dr. Baltimore that it was a real thrill for me to meet Dr. Moore, that even I knew what Moore's law was, and that before the Vice President became otherwise occupied, we used to have weekly lunches, and I'd talk to him about politics, and he'd give me lectures about climate change. [Laughter] But we once got into this hilarious conversation about the practical applications of Moore's law, like it explains why every cable network can double the number of talk shows every year that no one wants to listen to. [Laughter] And so it's a real thrill for me to be here. [Laughter]

Actually, I come with some trepidation. An 8-year-old child met me at the airport, and she and her brother came with their father, who is a friend of mine, and she brought me a letter from her third grade class. And the letter had

all these questions: What was your favorite book when you were in the third grade? What did you collect then? What do you collect now? And one of the questions was, are you ever nervous when you're speaking before large audiences? And the answer—and I was writing all these answers so we could type up a letter—I said, “Not usually.” But I mean, I'm sort of nervous here today. [Laughter]

And I told somebody I was nervous, one of the wags back at the White House with a sense of humor, and he said, “Well, you know the Einstein millennial story, don't you,” trying to help me get unnerved. I said—[laughter]—so I said, “No.” You always learn to be patient in the face of other people's jokes. It's one of the great social skills that an American can develop. [Laughter]

So I said, “No.” And he said, “Well, God decides to give America a millennial gift, and the gift is to send Einstein back to Earth for a few days to talk to ordinary folks, because he was the greatest brain of the last millennium. And they have the first meeting in a nice little hall like this. And it's absolutely packed, and these three big, burly guys push their way to the front, shoving everyone else to the side. So Einstein politely takes them first, and he says to the first guy, ‘Well, what's your IQ, young man?’ And he said, ‘240.’ He said, ‘Wonderful, let's talk about how I thought up the theory of relativity.’ And they have a terrific conversation. The second guy, he says, ‘What's your IQ?’ He said, ‘140.’ He said, “Let's talk about globalization and its impact on climate change.’ And they had a terrific conversation. And the third guy kind of hung his head, and he said, ‘What's your IQ?’ And he said, ‘40.’ And Einstein said, ‘Oh, don't worry. You can always go into politics.’” [Laughter]

I want you to know, though, in preparation for this day I've been spending a lot of time trying to get in touch with my inner nerd. [Laughter] And my wife helped me, because she's been having these Millennium Lectures at the White House to discuss big things. And the other night, she had Vint Cerf, who was one of the founders of the Internet, and Eric Lander, who's helped to develop many of the tools of modern genome research. And that really got me thinking, and I want to say some more serious things about that in a moment. And then my staff challenged me to actually order Christmas gifts over the Internet. And I

did that. And while doing that, I learned that with just a click of a mouse, I could actually order—and I did this, I'm embarrassed to say—I ordered Arkansas smoked ham and sausage delivered to my door. [Laughter] So I think the 21st century has more for me than I had originally thought. [Laughter]

As all of you know, Albert Einstein spent a lot of time here at Caltech in the 1930's. And 3 weeks ago, Time magazine crowned him the Person of the Century. The fact that he won this honor over people like Franklin Roosevelt and Mohandas Gandhi is not only an incredible testament to the quantum leaps in knowledge that he achieved for all humanity but also for the 20th century's earth-shaking advances in science and technology.

Just as an aside, I'd like to say because we're here at Caltech, Einstein's contributions remind us of how greatly American science and technology and, therefore, American society have benefited and continue to benefit from the extraordinary gifts of scientists and engineers who are born in other countries, and we should continue to welcome them to our shores.

But the reason so many of you live, work, and study here is that there are so many more questions yet to be answered: How does the brain actually produce the phenomenon of consciousness? How do we translate insights from neuroscience into more productive learning environments for all our children? Why do we age—the question that I ponder more and more these days. [Laughter] I looked at a picture of myself when I was inaugurated the first time the other day, and it scared me to death. [Laughter] And so I wonder, is this preprogrammed, or wear and tear? Are we alone in the universe? What causes gamma ray bursts? What makes up the missing mass of the universe? What's in those black holes, anyway? And maybe the biggest question of all: How in the wide world can you add \$3 billion in market capitalization simply by adding “.com” to the end of a name? [Laughter]

You will find the answers to the serious questions I posed and to many others. It was this brilliant Caltech community that first located genes on chromosomes and unlocked the secrets of chemical bonds and quarks. You were the propulsive force behind jet flight and built America's first satellites. You made it possible for us to manufacture microchips of ever-increasing complexity and gave us our first guided

tour on the surface of Mars. With your new gravitational wave observatory, you will open an entirely new window on the mysteries of the universe, observing the propagating ripples which Einstein predicted 84 years ago.

Today I came here to thank you for all you're doing to advance the march of human knowledge and to announce what we intend to do to accelerate that march by greatly increasing our national investments in science and technology.

The budget I will submit to Congress in just a few days will include a \$2.8 billion increase in our 21st century research fund. This will support a \$1 billion increase in biomedical research for the National Institutes of Health; \$675 million, which is double the previous largest dollar increase for the National Science Foundation in its entire 50-year history; and major funding increases in areas from information technology to space exploration to the development of cleaner sources of energy.

This budget makes research at our Nation's universities a top priority, with an increase in funding of more than \$1 billion. University-based research provides the kind of fundamental insights that are most important in any new technology or treatment. It helps to produce the next generation of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs. And we intend to give university based research a major lift.

The budget supports increases not only in biomedical research but also in all scientific and engineering fields. As you know, advances in one field are often dependent on breakthroughs in other disciplines. For example, advances in computer science are helping us to develop drugs more rapidly and to move from sequencing the human genome to better understanding the functions of individual genes.

My budget supports a major new national nanotechnology initiative worth \$500 million. Caltech is no stranger to the idea of nanotechnology, the ability to manipulate matter at the atomic and molecular level. Over 40 years ago, Caltech's own Richard Symonds asked, "What would happen if we could arrange the atoms one by one the way we want them?" Well, you can see one example of this in this sign behind me, that Dr. Lane furnished for Caltech to hang as the backdrop for this speech. It's the Western hemisphere in gold atoms. But I think you will find more enduring uses for nanotechnology.

Just imagine, materials with 10 times the strength of steel and only a fraction of the weight; shrinking all the information at the Library of Congress into a device the size of a sugar cube; detecting cancerous tumors that are only a few cells in size. Some of these research goals will take 20 or more years to achieve. But that is why—precisely why—as Dr. Baltimore said, there is such a critical role for the Federal Government.

As I announced yesterday, this budget also includes an historic initiative to make higher education more affordable. I am well aware of the fact that I would not have become President of the United State without loans and grants and jobs that helped me get through college and law school, and that more and more, given the cost of higher education, a higher and higher percentage of our students need more of all those things. This has been a virtual obsession for me ever since I became President. I was determined to leave office saying we had opened the doors of college to all Americans.

We have come a long way, by changing the student loan program to make it less expensive and to give young people more options for paying off their loans, including as a percentage of their income when they leave school. We've increased the number of work-study grants from \$700,000 to \$1 million. We've dramatically increased the Pell Grant program. And the HOPE scholarship tax credit and the lifetime learning tax credits we adopted in 1997 last year alone had almost 5 million beneficiaries in institutions of higher education in the United States.

Yesterday I proposed that, for the first time, we make college tuition tax deductible and that we do it in a way that would benefit even more people on more modest incomes so that they could get the same 28 percent benefit even if they're in the 15 percent tax category. I think this is very important.

The budget contains another increase in Pell grants, special initiatives to help minority students get into science and engineering and graduate, special efforts—that is, basically a test program for several thousand students now—to try to do something about the extraordinarily high dropout rate from college.

Now, over two-thirds of the high school graduates are actually going to go into college this year. That's an increase of over 10 percent in the last 7 years. That's quite a large increase

in a short time. But the dropout rate has increased correspondingly. We want to know why. Is it for financial reasons? Is it because people weren't prepared? Could they all be just idiosyncratic personal reasons? And we intend to do everything we can with a very large test group to see what we can do to turn this situation around.

And finally, we're going to double the size of our GEAR UP program to 1.4 million young people. That's the program where people in universities and college all across America mentor middle-school kids who are at risk to try to help them develop the skills and the belief that they can go to college and simultaneously to tell them and their parents exactly what they can expect in the way of aid under current law if they do go, so they will know. Many people still don't know that the barriers to their going on to college have been removed. So I hope you will also support this part of our budget, because the young people of our country and their families need it.

In addition to announcing our new research budget and our efforts to make colleges more affordable, I'd like to try to achieve one other mission here today. First, I want to take a step back to acknowledge that we have not done a good enough job in helping all Americans to understand why we need very, very large investments in science and technology.

Far too many of our citizens think science is something done by men and women who are in white lab coats behind closed doors that somehow leads to satellite TV and Dolly the sheep, and it's all a mystery. It is our responsibility to open the world of science to more of our fellow citizens, to help them understand the great questions science is seeking to answer, and to help them see how those answers will actually affect their lives and their children's lives in profoundly important and positive ways.

First, we have to make sure Americans understand the contributions science and technology are making right now to the present level of economic growth, something Dr. Baltimore referred to. For example, because of our early investments in the Internet, America now leads the world in information technology, an industry that now accounts for a third of our economic growth although only 8 percent of our work force, that generates jobs that pay 80 percent more than the private sector average.

If you look at that, what does that mean to ordinary people, and what does it mean to the nature of the economy we're living in? I have never told the American people that we had repealed the ordinary laws of supply and demand or the business cycle. But we have stretched them quite a lot.

In February, next month, we will have the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, outstripping even those that required full mobilization for war. Now, part of that is because we have pursued, I believe, sound policies: to get rid of the deficit; to start running surpluses, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years; to keep our markets open, with 270 trade agreements; to argue, as I have, that not only exports are benefited by open markets, we also benefit from the imports, because they're a powerful brake on inflation and allow us to continue to grow.

But the real reason this thing keeps going on and on and on is that—all we did in the Government was to set the conditions and provide the tools for the American people to succeed. The real reason is the exponential growth in information technology and how it is rifling through every other sector of our economy and reinforcing the material science revolution, which preceded it by a few years but which continues to the present day.

When I became President, there were only 50 sites on the World Wide Web—50. When I became President—that seems like a long time ago to the students, but the rest of you will know—[laughter]—it's just like yesterday. There are now over 50 million. Think of it. In 7 years, from 50 to over 50 million. It is changing everything about the way we work and live and relate to each other.

I was in Northern California a few weeks ago with a lot of really fascinating young people who work with eBay. A lot of you have probably bought things, maybe you've even sold things on eBay. But for example, one of the things I learned is that in addition to the employees of eBay, there are now 20,000 people whose primary source of income is buying and selling on eBay. They do it for a living. And several of them, not an insubstantial number of them, were on welfare before they found a way to bring their entrepreneurial skills to bear by trading on eBay. It has changed everything.

So we have to say to people, if you like the fact that we have the lowest unemployment and

welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest single-household poverty rate in 46 years, you have to understand that all that, at least in large part, is because of the ability of the discoveries of science and technology to rifle through our ordinary lives. And it is very, very important that all of us do a better job of that.

I have proposed in this budget a 36 percent increase in information technology research alone, so that researchers will be able to tackle a wide array of other challenges. How do we find, precisely, the piece of information we're looking for in an ever-larger ocean of raw data? How do we design computers that are usable by everyone including people with disabilities?

One of the most fascinating relationships I've developed—we were talking on the plane ride out here about one of the great things about being President is nearly anybody will come to talk to you—once, anyway. [Laughter] And we were talking about all the people I had been privileged to meet in the last 7 years. You know, I have developed quite a good personal friendship with Stephen Hawking, who, as all of you know, has lived longer with Lou Gehrig's disease, as far as we know, than any person who's ever lived—partly, I am convinced, because of not only the size of his brain but the size of his heart.

But it is fascinating to see what technology has permitted this man to do. Just a few years ago, he could have had the biggest brain in the world and no one could have known it because it could not have gotten out. He has no speaking capacity, almost no movement left. He can just move his thumb and hold in his hand this remarkable little tracer that goes through a whole dictionary of words that he has, that he runs through with rapid speed. He picks the word he wants, puts the sentences together, and then an automated voice tells you what he just said.

How can we make it even easier for him? How can we make it even easier for other people? This will be a huge issue. Make no mistake about it, the liberation of Americans with disabilities is also in no small measure the product of the revolution in science and technology.

There are also other uses. I read the other day that manufacturers are soon going to introduce a refrigerator that can scan the bar codes

of empty packages and expired goods—[laughter]—and order new groceries for you over the Internet. [Laughter] Now, everybody who's ever poured out a carton of bad milk will love this. [Laughter] You don't have to smell your bad milk anymore. It won't be long before the computer will refuse to order what's bad for you—[laughter]—and only pick items off Dean Ornish's diet. And then we'll all be in great shape. [Laughter]

The second thing I think we have to do is, let Americans know how investments in science and technology, broadly stated, will allow us to lead longer, healthier lives. Everybody knows now that you can put money into cancer research—and thank God we've discovered two of the genes that are high predictors of breast cancer, for example, in the last couple of years—but we need for more Americans to understand why we need a broad research agenda in science and technology, for the health of Americans.

In the 20th century, American life expectancy went from 47 years to almost 77 years, thanks to penicillin and the development of vaccines for many childhood diseases. We were talking the other day about the impact—I'm old enough to remember the first polio vaccine. And I remember how our mothers herded us in line and made us stand there waiting for our shot. And it was like they were all holding their breath, praying and hoping that we would get our shot before we got polio. It's something that young people today can hardly imagine, but it hung like a cloud over the families of my parents' generation. Now, we have this incredible life expectancy. Today, the average American who lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of 83—already. And we are clearly on the cusp of greater advances.

Later this year, researchers expect to finish the first complete sequencing of the genome—all 3 billion letters and 80,000 genes that make up our DNA code. Since so many diseases have a genetic component, the completion of this project will clearly lead to a revolution in our ability to detect, treat, and prevent many diseases. For example, patients with some forms of leukemia and breast cancer soon may receive sophisticated new drugs that elegantly actually target the precise cancer cells with little or no risk to healthy cells. That will change everything.

Our new trove of genomic data may even allow us to identify and cure most genetic diseases before a child is even born. Most people

just take it as a given now that within the next few years, when young mothers bring their babies home from the hospital, they will bring along a genetic map of their children's makeup, what the problems are, what the challenges are, what the strengths are. It will be scary to some extent, but it also plainly will allow us to raise our children in a way that will enhance the length and quality of their lives.

But it's important to recognize that we never could have had the revolution in the genome project without the revolution in computer science as well, that they intersected. Research at the intersection between biomedical research and engineering will also lead to amazing breakthroughs. Already, scientists are working on—we've seen it on television now—an artificial retina to treat certain kinds of blindness and methods of directly stimulating the spinal cord to allow people who are paralyzed to walk. Now, you think of that.

Last year, for the first time, to give you an idea of the impact of technology on traditional medical research, last year, for the first time, medical researchers transplanted nerves from the limbs to the spine of a laboratory animal that had its spine severed and achieved movement in the lower limbs for the first time. That had never happened before.

Now, because of advances in the intersection between science and engineering, we may not have to keep working on that. We may actually be able to program a chip that will stimulate the exact movements that were prevented by the severing or the injuring of a spine. And all the people that we have seen hobbled by these terrible injuries might be able to get up and walk. Because there was medical research, yes, but there was also research on the engineering, nonbiological components of this endeavor. We have to do a better job of explaining that to the American people.

Third, advances in science and technology are helping us to preserve our environment in ways that preserve more sustainable and more widespread economic growth. And that is very important.

Let me just give you an example. Not far from here in Southern California, a couple years ago the Department of Energy, working with the National Home Builders and HUD, helped to construct a moderate and low income housing community with glass in the windows that keeps out 4 or 5 times as much heat or cold and

lets in even more light. And that, coupled with the latest insulation technology and the latest lighting in the house, enabled the houses to be marketed to people of modest incomes, with the promise that their electric bills would average 40 percent below what they would in a home of that size built in the traditional manner. I can tell you that after 2 years, the power bills are averaging 65 percent less. And we can't build enough houses for the people that want them.

The Detroit auto show this year is showcasing cars that, I'm proud to say, were developed as part of our partnership for new generation vehicles that the Vice President headed up, and we started way back in '93. We brought in the auto workers and the auto companies and we said, "Look, instead of having a big fight about this, why don't we work together and figure out how to use technology to dramatically increase mileage." And a lot of you are probably familiar—they're using fuel-injection engines, which cuts a lot of the greenhouse gas emissions; some using developed mixed-fuel cars that start on electricity, switch to fuel after you reach a certain stage, and then go back to electricity when you slow down back to that speed, because 70 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions are used in starting and stopping cars.

And there are all kinds of other things being developed. But this year the Detroit auto show has cars making 70, 80 miles a gallon, that are four-seater cars, that will be on the market in a couple of years. You can buy Japanese cars this year on the market that get about 70 miles to the gallon, but they're small two-seaters. Last year I went and saw cars that are 500 to 1,000 pounds lighter than traditional cars and score at least as well on all the damage tests, again because of the revolution in material science, with composite materials being used in the cars.

And the big thing that's coming up in this area is, before you know it, I believe we will crack the chemical barriers to truly efficient production of biomass fuels. One of the reasons you see this whole debate—in the Presidential campaign, if you're following it, you know the big argument is, is it a waste of money to push ethanol or not, if it takes seven gallons of gasoline to make eight gallons of ethanol. But they're on the verge of a chemical breakthrough that is analogous to what was done when crude oil could be transferred efficiently into gasoline. And when that happens, you'll be able to make

eight gallons of biomass, not just from corn, but from weeds, from rice hulls, from anything, for about one gallon of fuel. That will be the equivalent therefore, in environmental terms, of cars that get hundreds of miles a gallon. And the world, the environmental world, will be changed forever. And that's—one-third of our greenhouse gas emissions are in transportation.

Now, I just want to kind of go off the script a little to hammer this home, because big ideas in science matter. And once you make a big breakthrough, then thousands and thousands of things follow that have immense practical significance. But you must also know and believe that being in the grip of a big idea that is wrong can be absolutely disastrous.

So today, in Washington and in much of the world, there is a debate that goes something like this: The overwhelming evidence of science is that the climate is warming at an unsustainable rate due to human activity. And then there's this old idea which says, "Well, that's really too bad, but a country can't grow rich or stay rich and sustain a middle-class lifestyle unless every year it puts more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than it did the year before. And you certainly can't drastically cut them and maintain your level of wealth."

Our administration spent hundreds of thousands of dollars last year complying with requests to appear before a House subcommittee that believes that our passion about climate change is some sort of subversive plot to wreck the American economy. [Laughter] Either that or—you know, I've been reading too many kooky books or something. [Laughter] They think it's just crazy. Why? Because they can't face the fact that we would do anything to hurt the American economy, and they really believed it would. So I would argue to you that here is a place where we're in the grip of an idea that is wrong.

Our efforts to get India and China and other big countries that will soon surpass us in greenhouse gas emissions to cooperate with us, not in regulation but in new technologies to help them grow rich differently, always keep running up against the barrier of suspicious officials who believe somehow this is kind of an American plot to keep them poor. Why? Because they're in the grip of an idea that isn't right anymore. It is simply not true that to grow rich, you have to put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

So again, I say we have to do a better job of explaining the contribution that science and technology can make to saving the planet and allowing us to still have prosperous lives and, I would argue, to allow us to have more prosperous lives and better lives that would otherwise be the case, certainly within 40 to 50 years, if we don't act and act now. This is profoundly important.

Finally, I think we have to do a better job of having an open debate about the responsibilities that all these advances and discoveries will clearly impose: The same genetic revolution that can offer new hope for millions of Americans could also be used to deny people health insurance; cloning human beings; information technology which helps to educate children and provide telemedicine to rural communities could also be used to create disturbingly detailed profiles of every move our citizens make on line.

The Federal Government, I think, has a role to play in meeting these challenges as well. That's why we've put forward strict rules and penalties to limit the use and release of medical records; why we've worked with Congress to ban the cloning of human beings, while preserving our ability to use the morally and medically acceptable applications of cloning technology, which I believe are profoundly important; why we're working with the Internet industry to ensure that consumers—consumers—have control over how their personal information is used.

It's up to all of us to figure out how to use the new powers that science and technology give us in a responsible way. Just because we can do something doesn't mean we should. It is incumbent, therefore, upon both scientists and public servants to involve the public in a great debate to ensure that science serves humanity—always—and never the other way around.

On this campus nearly 70 years ago, Albert Einstein said, "Never forget this, in the midst of your diagrams and equations: concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors." Today, at the dawn of this new millennium, we see for all of you, particularly the young people in this audience, an era of unparalleled promise and possibility. Our relentless quest to understand what we do not yet know, which has defined Americans from our beginnings, will have more advances in the 21st century than at any

other time in history. We must be wise as we advance.

I told you earlier that the First Lady sponsored a Millennium Evening with Vint Cerf and Professor Lander. One of the most interesting things he said about his genomic research confirmed not other scientific research but the teachings of almost every religion in the world. He said that, genetically, we are 99.9 percent the same. And he said, furthermore, that the genetic differences among individuals within a given racial or ethnic group are greater than the differences between groups as a whole, suggesting that we are not only our brothers' and sisters' keepers but, in fundamental genetic ways, we are our brothers and sisters.

And I leave you with this thought. I think the supreme irony of our time is that I can come here as President and have the high honor of discussing these unfathomable advances wrought by the human intellect that have occurred, and the even greater ones yet to occur, in a world where the biggest social problem is the oldest demon of human society: We are still afraid of people who aren't like us. And fear leads to distrust, and distrust leads to dehumanization, and dehumanization leads to violence.

And it is really quite interesting that the end of the cold war has marked an upsurge in ethnic and racial and tribal and religious hatred and

conflict around the world and that even in our own country we see countless examples of hate crimes from people who believe that others are different and, therefore, to be distrusted and feared and dehumanized.

You have the power to put science and technology at work advancing the human condition as never before. Always remember to keep your values at the core of what you do. And tell every one of your fellow citizens, and indeed, people with whom you come in contact all across the world, that every single scientific advance confirms over and over again the most important facts of life, our common humanity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. at Beckman Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Gordon Moore, chair, board of trustees, and David Baltimore, president, California Institute of Technology; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research; physicist Stephen W. Hawking; and Dean Ornish, founder, Preventive Medicine Research Institute, and author of several health and diet books. The President also referred to JPL, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Statement on the Geneva Protocol on Child Soldiers

January 21, 2000

Today the United States joined a consensus in Geneva on the text of a protocol that addresses the problem of child soldiers. I am very pleased with the final result, and I look forward to the early adoption of the protocol by the United Nations.

The forcible recruitment of very young children—some no more than 9 or 10 years old—into an increasing number of civil wars and other conflicts shocks the conscience and shames humanity. By addressing forced recruitment and the conduct of armed rebel groups, this agreement strikes at the heart of the problem of child soldiers. Countries that become parties to the protocol would prohibit the use

of soldiers under 18 by non-state forces and would cooperate in rehabilitating and reintegrating child soldiers into society.

The protocol also deals in a realistic and reasonable way with the issue of minimum ages for conscription, voluntary recruitment, and participation in hostilities by national armed forces. The protocol would establish an 18-year minimum age for compulsory recruitment; require parties to raise their minimum age for voluntary recruitment to an age above the current 15-year international standard; and require parties to take all feasible measures to ensure that armed forces personnel who are not yet 18 do not take a direct part in hostilities.

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This protocol is an important advance for human rights. At the same time, it fully protects the military recruitment and readiness requirements of the United States. I am committed to a speedy process of review and signature and to working with the Senate on this historic achievement to protect the world's children.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, adopted on January 21 by a working group of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Statement on Indications of a Third Consecutive Budget Surplus *January 21, 2000*

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. The tough choices we made on deficit reduction have turned a deficit of \$290 billion in 1992 into a surplus of \$124 billion in 1999—the largest surplus in history and the second consecutive surplus in more than 40 years. The latest financial numbers from the Department of the Treasury indicate that we are on track this year to

reach a third consecutive annual budget surplus. In the last 2 years we have paid down more than \$140 billion in debt, and these numbers confirm that we are continuing to pay down even more debt. I remain committed to maintaining our strategy of fiscal discipline to keep our economy strong and pay down the debt by 2015 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa *January 21, 2000*

Dear _____:

I am pleased to submit the fifth annual report on the Administration's Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa, as required by section 134 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act. The past year has seen the broadening and deepening of our economic relations with Sub-Saharan Africa as we pursue common objectives under the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa and set a course for the 21st century.

For the first time in history, a U.S.-Africa Ministerial meeting was held in Washington in March 1999. The event was attended by 83 ministers from 46 Sub-Saharan countries, as well as representatives from 4 north African nations, the heads of 8 African regional organizations, and 8 members of my Cabinet and 4 agency heads. The Ministerial resulted in the *Blueprint for a U.S.-Africa Partnership for the 21st Century*, a document setting forth common perspectives and plans for U.S.-Africa cooperation on

a series of important issues, including the integration of African states into the global economy, regional integration, development assistance, sector issues including investment, debt, and agriculture, and the broader issues of human resource development, HIV/AIDS, transnational threats, and conflict resolution. We will continue to build on this blueprint in the coming year.

The legislative cornerstone of our Africa trade policy is the African Growth and Opportunity Act. I am pleased that this legislation has been approved by both chambers of Congress, and I look forward to final approval by the Congress of this historic legislation early this year.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act will add further impetus to our Nation's bipartisan efforts to enhance economic growth and strengthen U.S. trade with and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

My Administration continues to be guided by the conviction that economic development in

Sub-Saharan Africa will benefit both Africans and Americans. As highlighted in the attached report, the United States has made significant progress in supporting sustainable growth and expanded trade in Africa through a series of successful initiatives, focused on increased economic engagement, enhanced market access, technical assistance in implementing economic reforms, trade missions, development assistance, debt relief, and support for the region's integration into the multilateral trading system.

My Administration will continue working with the Congress, the private sector, the countries of Africa, and our other trading partners to implement the policies and programs contained in this report. We have charted the course and

look forward to an even stronger, mutually beneficial U.S. partnership with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; and Bill Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means.

The President's Radio Address

January 22, 2000

Good morning. In just a few days, I will report to the American people and the Congress on the State of the Union, and I'll propose new ways to meet the many challenges of this exciting new century. One of the most important challenges we have is strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Today I want to give you a progress report on our efforts to do just that, through our ongoing fight against fraud, waste, and abuse in the Medicare system.

For more than 30 years now, Medicare has helped us fulfill one of our most fundamental obligations, to protect the health of older Americans. But when I became President, Medicare was projected to go bankrupt by 1999. Since I took office, we have made tough choices to strengthen Medicare. We've extended the life of the Trust Fund until at least 2015, with better management not only of Medicare but of the economy and by waging a sustained campaign against Medicare fraud.

Medicare fraud and waste are more than an abuse of the system; they're an abuse of the taxpayer. By overbilling, charging for phony procedures, and selling substandard supplies, Medicare cheats cost taxpayers hundreds of millions a year. That's why we've assigned more Federal prosecutors and FBI agents than ever to fight this kind of fraud, and why we've invested in new tools to investigate and prosecute these

crimes. All told, our efforts have prevented the wasteful spending of an estimated \$50 billion, and aggressive enforcement has recovered nearly \$1.6 billion for the Medicare Trust Fund.

Today I'm releasing two reports that show just how effective this fight against fraud has been. Americans can be proud. The first report shows that in 1999 we recovered nearly half a billion dollars in fines and settlements and returned three-quarters of that to the Medicare Trust Fund. The second report, on Medicare integrity, shows our success in catching fraudulent claims and preventing \$5.3 billion worth of inappropriate payments in the last year alone. So when it comes to prosecuting fraud and abuse, we're doing more than filing cases; we're also winning convictions. In the last year, convictions in health care fraud cases shot up by a fifth, for an increase of more than 410 percent since I became President.

Just this week the Department of Justice won another important victory for Medicare beneficiaries. A health care company had been bilking Medicare by sending patients for needless tests and procedures. The more tests providers ordered, the more kickbacks they got in return—lavish dinners, yacht trips. Federal prosecutors took the company to court and won the largest such settlement in history, recovering nearly half a billion dollars.

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The more cases we win, the more criminals we convict, the clearer the message becomes: Medicare fraud is a serious crime with serious consequences.

Though our efforts are stronger than ever, Medicare contractors still pay false claims totaling in the billions. That is simply unacceptable. So today I'm announcing a new initiative to crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare. My balanced budget for 2001 will create a team of Medicare fraud fighters—one in the office of every Medicare contractor in America—and take other new steps to ensure that our response to fraud is coordinated and quick. The budget also funds new technologies to track false claims.

I urge Congress to make these investments and to give Medicare the authority to bid competitively for contractors who administer the

program, as well as for services provided directly to beneficiaries.

Medicare is vital to the health of our Nation. It's too important ever to be compromised. If we take these steps to reform and strengthen Medicare, and if we modernize it with a voluntary prescription drug benefit, then we will adapt a program that has worked in the past to the needs of the future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:26 p.m. on January 21 at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Los Angeles, California

January 22, 2000

Thank you very much. I am, first of all, delighted to be here. I want to thank Irwin and Lynne for putting this luncheon together on short notice, and I thank all of you for coming. I thank Gray and Sharon Davis for being here to share this moment with us and for their long-time friendship not only to the Deutchs but to Hillary and me.

The first person who told me that Gray Davis was the most underrated politician in America was my wife. [*Laughter*] She's got a pretty good feel for those things. And I congratulate you on your success, and even more on the substance of what you have fought for and achieved. It's one thing to win elections and be popular; it's another thing to do the right things. You're doing the right things now. I admire you, and I thank you for it. It's very important.

I thank Joel Hyatt for becoming one of our co-finance chairs. A lot of you don't know him as well as I do because he hasn't been in California very long. But he founded a remarkable company called Hyatt Legal Services, which swept the Northeast and provided affordable legal services for real people, many of whom could never afford to come to an event like this, and made him a famous character because

he was on television all the time. And he was also prominent in Ohio Democratic politics, where his father-in-law, Howard Metzenbaum, was our United States Senator. And he is a wonderful guy. So he's out here now, and I want you to take care of him. Make him look good by helping him raise money for the Democratic Party.

I want to thank Jane Harman for being willing to serve in Congress again and for being there before. Our economic plan in 1993, which passed by a single vote in both Houses—or, as the Vice President says, "Whenever I vote, we win"—[*laughter*]—but it passed by a single vote in both Houses, really sparked this astonishing economic recovery we've had. And so there's a real sense in which Jane Harman can say, "If it hadn't been for me, it wouldn't have happened." [*Laughter*] And I think she is one of the ablest people that I have served with, with the Congress, and one who most embodies the philosophy that I have tried to get our party and our country to embrace. So thank you, Jane Harman, for being willing to do this.

And of course, I want to thank the Women's Leadership Forum for this and for all the countless events we've had around the country, mobilizing a whole group of people, many of whom never have been involved in national political affairs before. So thank you, and thank all of you for coming.

Now, I want to just make a couple of points about what has previously been said by Janice and Mayor Rendell, who we're very lucky to have, because he was a fabulous mayor of Philadelphia and always made sure the Clinton-Gore ticket carried Pennsylvania, which is a not inconsiderably important thing in the business we're in. [Laughter]

Number one, I am very grateful for the chance that Hillary and I and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have had to serve these last 7 years. I celebrated my seventh anniversary as President the day before yesterday, and I'm very grateful for that and for the progress that our country has made. I am grateful that it's about more than economics. Our country is beginning to come together more. We have the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years; the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded; the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years; the lowest overall poverty rate in more than 20 years; the highest homeownership in history; cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. We tripled the number of toxic waste sites we cleaned up from the previous 12 years. We set aside more land—a lot of you mentioned that to me today—we set aside more land in perpetuity to protect, in the continental United States, than any administration in our history except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

Over 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law, take a little time off from work without losing their jobs to take care of a newborn or a sick parent. About 5 million people have now claimed the HOPE scholarship tax credit that's designed to open the doors of college to all Americans for at least 2 years. We've had about half a million people haven't been able to buy handguns because they have criminal backgrounds, because of the Brady bill. A lot of people are alive because of that. And I could go on. Ninety percent of our kids were immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of the United States. And our country has been a force for peace and freedom around

the world, from Bosnia and Kosovo to Northern Ireland, to the Middle East, to our efforts to try to help African nations resolve their difficulties. And I could just go on and on. I am very grateful for where we are now, especially when I remember where we were in 1992. And I hope that's one of the reasons you're here today.

But the second thing I would like to say is that in my lifetime, which thankfully continues to lengthen—even though I don't like it—[laughter]—I tell this story all the time. A 6-year-old girl was one of the—a friend of ours spent some time with us over Thanksgiving weekend. He brought his kids up there. They've got four little kids, and the second youngest is a 6-year-old girl. And she looked up at me and she says, "Well, how old are you, anyway?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "Oh, that's a lot." [Laughter] The kid should be in the movies. [Laughter]

And it is, but it gives you the benefit of memory. In February, next month, in just a few days, this will become the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, including those which, for example, embraced the Second World War, when we had to be fully mobilized. Nothing like this has ever happened before. Part of it is the explosion in information technology, much of which came out of California. Part of it is our success in exporting our culture and ideas around the world, a lot of which comes out of California. But part of it is the environment and conditions and tools we established when we changed the whole direction of the country and got us out of debt, and still continued to invest more in education and in making our streets safer and our air cleaner and our children healthier.

Now, in my lifetime we have never had the following conditions all in the same place at the same time. We have never had so much economic progress, social progress, political self-confidence as a nation—I say "political," as citizens we're pretty confident—with the absence of an overwhelming or paralyzing domestic crisis or foreign threat. We'll always have security threats, but there is nothing—this is not the cold war; this is not the Vietnam war. This never happened. The last time we had an economy that in the terms of that age was about this good was in the early sixties, and it came apart with riots in the streets and the paying for the Vietnam war, paying for it in cash and paying

for it in blood and politics. We have never had a time like this.

One of my friends said to me this morning when we were talking, he said, "You know, the problem is, things are going along so well, nobody wants to talk about this; people aren't really obsessed with this election." And I guess what I want to say to you is, you should be, because there is an enormous opportunity here and therefore an enormous responsibility to make the most of what is truly a magic moment that coincidentally fits with the changing of the century and the millennium. But I'm just telling you that a time like this doesn't come along very often, where all the social indicators are getting better; the economy is booming and becoming more widely shared; we are not paralyzed by a domestic crisis or a foreign threat; we have the ability to chart the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this election is all about.

If the whole 20th century could be fairly characterized as the triumph of freedom over depression and want, over nazism and fascism, over communism, then the question for the 20th century would be whether that freedom is wisely used. For the first time in all history, more than half the people of the world live under governments of their own choosing. But over a billion people in this old world live on less than \$2 a day. There are a lot of challenges out there.

So I say to you, you know, I'm not running for anything. The reason I'm here is because I worked like crazy to turn this country around, to make sure people believed America could work, just so we would be in this position and it would be an era of colossal proportions. If we treated this like an ordinary election, a ho-hum deal—how many times—everybody in this room who is over 30 can cite at least one time in your life when you got in trouble and made big mistakes because you thought things were going so well that you didn't have to think about tomorrow. You didn't have to make any tough decisions; you could be sort of self-indulgent; you could get distracted because everything is going so well, nothing could go wrong. If you live long enough, that will happen to you; that's human nature. [Laughter] It's just a question of whether you live long enough. Sooner or later everybody makes that mistake in some way or another.

Well, countries are no different from individuals and families and businesses. So the test is whether freedom will be wisely used. What will we make of this magic moment?

Gray said we've taken some issues off the table for the Republicans. I think there is a reason for that. Until 1992, the political debate was always an either/or proposition in Washington. There was a Democratic proposition, a Republican proposition, a liberal proposition, a conservative proposition. And everybody got put in their little boxes, and they lobbed their verbal bombshells across the great divide at each other. Nothing ever happened, but at least we could understand who the players were. The only problem was, nobody lived like that, the way Washington talked.

And so we said, the Vice President and I did, "Look, give us a chance, and we won't say Government is the problem or the solution. We'll say the Government should be the partner of the American people, if the role of Government is to establish the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. We won't say that Government can guarantee opportunity to everybody, but we'll say Government should provide opportunity to every responsible citizen, that you have to do your part. And we will say that we should have a community of all Americans." And it's worked. So that's the first point I want to make. It's worked.

But all it's done is to bring us to the point now where we can face these big challenges. I'll just mention a few of them. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] At present retirement rates, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Are we going to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit for the 75 percent of the seniors who can't afford it themselves, or not? Big question. And how are we going to do it to make sure that when the baby boomers retire, we don't bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids? Huge question.

Example number two. We have the largest number—Los Angeles knows this—we have the largest number of schoolchildren in our history and the most diverse. The good news is that in an increasingly globalized society, it means America is the best positioned big country in

the world for tomorrow. This diversity is our meal ticket to tomorrow, but only if we can figure out how to make sure these ever more diverse kids all get a world-class education. No one has ever done it before; no other society has ever had to do it before. Universal educational opportunity for people, without regard to race or income in this kind of environment—no one has ever tried to do anything of this dimension before.

Example number three. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and that's good. But anybody who believes America is safe enough, please stand. Just the accidental death rate of children by guns in this country—just the accidental death rate of children by guns—I want you all to listen to this—is 9 times higher than the accidental gun death rate of the next 25 largest industrial economies combined.

So I say, we now know—you know, in '92 a lot of people didn't believe the crime rate would ever go down again. So we got a lower crime rate. We know we can do this—sensible gun legislation, preventive things, get the kids involved in positive things, put enough police on the street—do the things that work. I think as a nation we ought to set a goal that America is going to be the safest big country in the world in the next 10 years, and we're going to keep going until we do it so that every child can feel safe again. We can do this. You don't have to doubt it anymore.

Now, those are just three examples. And I could give you lots more. I'll give you just one or two more, just so you can think about it. America grew rich in an industrial economy and is now becoming even wealthier in a post-industrial, information-technology economy. The industrial economy was powered by energy, translated into electricity, primarily, and into gasoline. It made factories work, moved cars and trucks around, made trains run, with the help of coal—coal and oil, turned into these things.

Now, in the industrial economy, in order to get richer you had to burn more energy. And if the energy you burned was based on oil and coal, you put into the air more greenhouse gases. That's what causes global warming, a big issue in the world today and huge for your children and grandchildren. I believe America is in a position to prove that for the first time in history a country can grow rich and build a middle class and actually improve the environment and put fewer greenhouse gases into the

atmosphere, because the economy has changed, the technology has changed. And that's very important for your kids. Do you know why? Because until climate change came along, every environmental problem was reversible.

So, for example, a lot of us who used to go to Japan, 20, 25 years ago, can remember when workers in Japan would wear masks, surgical masks to work, riding their bicycles. And now the air is cleaner than it is in many American cities, in Tokyo. That's just one example. Every environmental problem was reversible. A lot of you remember when you could strike a match on a Great Lake in America and start a fire—[laughter]—and a lot of them are very clean now, though we've got a new initiative to do even more. The climate change, it's reversible, but not for a long time. Once that stuff gets in the air, it hangs around and continues to warm the climate for 100 years.

So we've got to figure out how to prove, not only to Americans but to people all over the world, that I'm right—[laughter]—you can grow the economy, get rich, and improve the environment. The Detroit auto show this year has four-seater cars that will be commercially available very soon, get 70 and 80 miles a gallon. There is a modest income housing project in the Inland Empire, not far from here, built in cooperation with HUD, the Energy Department, and the Home Builders a couple years ago. I went out there for the announcement, and we told these lower income working people if they moved into this housing project, because we had new lighting that was more efficient, new insulation that was more efficient, and glass that let in more heat—that kept out more heat and cold and let in more light, that their power bills would go down an average of 40 percent. They've gone down an average of 65 percent.

If you've been following the Presidential campaign, you know in Iowa there is a lot of talk about ethanol. And that's because people grow corn. But let me tell you what the big issue is. The big issue is, today you can make ethanol efficiently but not real efficiently. It just takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make about 8 gallons of ethanol. That's why there's a fight about it. But scientists, in projects funded by us, are on the verge of breaking the chemical barriers to the efficient transformation of not just corn but all kinds of biomass—rice hulls, field grasses—into fuel. When that happens, it will have the same impact that turning crude

oil into gasoline had 100 years ago. And you will be able to make 8 gallons of biomass fuel with one gallon of gasoline. Which means that, in effect, when you get the next generation of cars, if they run on ethanol, you'll be getting the equivalent of 500 miles a gallon.

This is going to happen within your lifetime. Within just a few years, young mothers will bring home their babies from the hospital with genetic maps that will tell them all the possible things that can go right and wrong in their lives and how to plan to lengthen and strengthen their children's lives. And most of my friends in the medical field that study this believe that early in the new century young mothers will bring home babies with a life expectancy of 100 years. In America today, people over 65 have a life expectancy, on average, of 83. So this is an exciting time. But you can see, we've got all these new challenges. And I'll just mention one last one.

I know you all maybe get tired of me talking about this, but I think it is the supreme irony of our age that we're talking about unlocking the mysteries of the human gene and finding out what's in the black holes in the universe and driving cars that get 100 miles a gallon. But the biggest problem of human nature is the oldest problem of human society: people's fear of people who are different from them. You think about it. What have we done with the end of the cold war? What has it wrought? It's like it took this big old lid, this metal lid off all these long-simmering, festering fears and hatreds all around the world. So you've got Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, trouble again brewing in Burundi and Africa. You've got, obviously, the Middle East and Northern Ireland. You've got less well known ethnic and religious conflicts in western China, a long way from CNN coverage—all over the world.

And here in America you have this upsurge of hate crimes: James Byrd in Texas, Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the Jewish community school here in Los Angeles, and then the Filipino postal worker who was murdered. And then the guy who went on a rampage who said he belonged to a church in the Middle West that believed not in God but did believe in white supremacy, so he kills an African-American basketball coach, a young Korean Christian coming out of school, and a bunch of other people, just because they were the wrong ethnic or racial or religious group.

And it's very interesting, isn't it, that all these really ugly, primitive things and the dominant problems of—are the world's inability to get rid of things come from the fact that we have a tendency, first of all, to be afraid of people who are different from us. Then we distrust them, and then it's not a big step to dehumanize them, and then once you do that, you can justify killing them. It's a sort of a slippery slope. And this trust thing is such a problem. I don't know how many times we've been right up to the edge in a lot of these peace processes I've worked in the last 7 years, and then some hang-nail will develop. And when you strip away all the rhetoric, it is, "I just don't know; I don't know if I can hold hands with this person and jump off this diving board." [Laughter]

And I want you to think about that. Because I believe building one America, whether it's in specific things like passing the "Employment and Non-Discrimination Act" or the "Hate Crimes Act" or just demonstrating that we can work together across the lines that divide us, in some ways is more important than all the other stuff that I've worked on. The American people nearly always get it right. This is a great country with a bunch of brainpower and a bunch of energy and a bunch of wealth. And the truth is, if we can get this right, if we can figure out how to let go of all of our accumulated resentments, we're going to do just fine.

So, number one, the country is better than it was 7 years ago. And it's not an accident. And it has something to do with the fact that we did the right things. Number two, we should be thinking about the big challenges before us—and they are significant—and not be dumb enough to think we can relax and sleep our way through this election season.

And the last point I want to make is this, not in any hateful way. There is a significant difference between the two parties and the two candidates, which will manifest itself in all kinds of ways. The next President—I appointed two members to the Supreme Court; in all probability, the next President will appoint more. And you saw the headline Mayor Rendell held up. There is absolutely no question in my mind that whether *Roe v. Wade* is preserved or scrapped depends on what happens in the Presidential race, and to pretend otherwise is naive in the extreme. It's not whether your compassion is good or bad; it's what you believe. And

we ought to tell the American people what we really believe and let them decide.

And I appreciate Governor Bush being candid enough to say he didn't believe in *Roe v. Wade*. In another article a couple weeks ago, he said the two Justices on the Supreme Court he most admired were Justices Scalia and Clarence Thomas. I think this is good. [Laughter] No, no, this is a good thing. People should say what they think. And we shouldn't be hateful about it; we shouldn't be mean; we don't have to get in the—but we should make sure that everybody knows where everybody else is coming from in this deal. And it's not helpful to go around with your head in the sand and pretend that there are no consequences here.

I believe we ought to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. I think one of the reasons we're cooking right along here is that we've gone from running up debt to paying debt off. We've even paid some of our debt off early this year, for the first time in history, ever. And that keeps interest rates down lower for the rest of you and enables us to have more broadly shared access to capital and to keep things going. So even though I am a Democrat, I'm going to recommend at the State of the Union we spend more money on education and health care, the environment. I want to keep running some surpluses and keep paying this debt down and not fool with the Social Security portion of the surplus so we can get out of debt for the first time.

If we adopt the tax cut that the leading candidate in the other party has proposed, it won't happen. And all of us will get money out of it; I mean, you'll all be happy for a month or two. But it's a bad deal. We won't have the money we need to continue to improve education, and we will not be able to manage this economic situation, and we will never get this

country out of debt over the next 10 to 15 years. So there are real consequences here.

So again I say, I'm glad you're here. But when you leave here, I want you to leave with a renewed sense of citizen activism. I want it to be beyond writing checks. And if somebody asks you how come you were there, I want you to be able to tell them, "Number one, it's better than it was 7 years ago, and they had specific ideas, and they implemented them, and it worked. Number two, we've got to think about what the big challenges of the future are. And number three, there is a real difference between the two parties." And we don't have to be bad-mouthing each other and throwing rocks at each other and saying terrible things about each other. We can just have an honest discussion about that. That's one thing I do hope our new self-confidence will allow us to have, a less acrimonious, less hateful election, but it should be no less intense. So I ask you all of that.

You know, most of us have been blessed, or we wouldn't be here today. Our grandchildren's generation should never forgive us if we walk away from our responsibility to do what is necessary in this millennial election, so that they will be living the future of their dreams.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Grille Room at the Regency Club. In his remarks, he referred to brunch hosts Irwin and Lynne Deutch; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Joel Hyatt, finance cochair, and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; former Rep. Jane Harman of California; Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks Announcing the Equal Pay Initiative *January 24, 2000*

Thank you. Well, first of all, I think Sharon was a little apprehensive coming out here because she doesn't do public speaking for a living. But I thought she was magnificent, and I thank her for it. I want to thank Secretary Herman

for her leadership on this issue and Secretary Shalala and our EEOC Chair, Ida Castro, who is here.

We have a number of Members of Congress who are here, and I would like to acknowledge

their presence, because this will be a bipartisan effort. I thank—we'll start down here—Congressman Eliot Engel from New York, Congressman Jim McGovern from Massachusetts, Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher from California, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton from the District of Columbia, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson from Texas, Representative Rosa DeLauro from Connecticut, Representative Ted Strickland from Ohio, Representative Connie Morella from Maryland, and Representative Albert Wynn from Maryland. Thank you all for coming.

I'd also like to thank Donna de Varona for being here. She was the World's Cup organizing chair last year—and herself a great athlete—and she's now working with General McCaffrey and the Olympics Committee to try to make sure that the Olympics in Sydney and all future Olympics are properly conducted in every conceivable way. Thank you very much for being here; we're delighted to see you.

I want to thank Michelle Akers for coming here and telling the story of her life and her family's. I think all of us who saw the Women's World Cup final—and I had the privilege of being there, much to the dismay of my wife and daughter, I had the privilege of going—[laughter]—were truly overwhelmed by the experience. It was one of those just excruciatingly exciting moments. Grown people of both genders were weeping in our group.

And afterward, you may remember that Michelle took quite a blow and was hurt. And I saw her walking through the stadium after the game, and I went up to her and I said, "You're my favorite because you can take a punch, and I know something about that." [Laughter] And so I am delighted that she was able to come here and be with us today and delighted that she has both continued to fight for the interests of women athletes and never forgotten about the experience of her own mother.

You heard Michelle talking about the role of Title IX. Whenever something really magnificent happens, like that World Cup final, it's a tribute to—it's not just a moment. In that moment, you see years and years and years of hard work and determination and victory and disappointment—all the things people go through—that is all lost in the glory of the moment. And something no one ever thinks about is, how did these people get this opportunity? What

kind of framework was there so that they got to develop their talents and live their dreams?

Well, that's what Title IX is all about. And we've had the honor, Hillary and I have, of having big events here at the White House to celebrate Title IX, and that wonderful HBO series on the history of women and sports, which I hope you've all seen—if you hadn't, you ought to make arrangements to do so. But if you were thinking about the application of the principle of Title IX to the workplace, and you think about Sharon Long's heroic story—and how many people like her there have been; how many countless people like her there have been, who didn't stand up and fight like she did—then you have to view the Equal Pay Act as Title IX for the playing field of life. That's why I'm glad both these women are here today.

We want to make sure that in every field of endeavor, everyone knows that those who work hard and play by the rules will have the chance to make the most of their abilities. This is about the value of work, the values of our country. It's about whether people can truly have a chance to choose the life they will lead. And for women, increasingly, it's about whether they'll have the chance to succeed both at home and at work.

That's what the family leave law was all about. Twenty million people have now taken advantage of that, to take some time off and not lose their jobs when there's a baby born or a sick parent. It's what the earned-income tax credit and the minimum wage and the child care efforts and the strengthened pension coverage that these Members of Congress have worked with me on over these last few years are all about. And so today, because there's still a big need, as you have heard, we want to take new steps this year to reward work, to strengthen pay, and to make equal pay a reality for all Americans.

First of all, I want to propose a \$27 million equal pay initiative, which will be part of my budget, to expand opportunities for women and to do more to end wage discrimination. If Congress agrees, we'll be making the largest investment ever to promote equal pay. There's never been a better time to take on this challenge. We have the strongest economy in generations, more than 20 million new jobs, next month the longest economic expansion in American history.

Working women have had a big role in this economic expansion. You heard Secretary Herman detailing that in just the last year. And women are sharing in the progress. Listen to this. Even though we have a higher percentage of women in the work force than ever before, the female unemployment rate is now the lowest since the end of World War II; the lowest female household poverty rate, female-headed household poverty rate we have ever recorded; wages for women up 25 percent since 1992. The pay gap has narrowed by about half since the Equal Pay Act was passed back in 1963.

But that means that we've still got half to go, after 37 years. And 25 percent is a lot of money. You heard—Secretary Herman gave you her grocery store analogy. How would you like to show up for work every day, but only get to take home three out of every four paychecks? If someone tried to do that, there would be riots in the street; but if you get paid 75 percent for the same kind of work, it's as if you were only picking up three paychecks, instead of four, in four pay periods.

The average woman has to work, therefore, an extra 17 weeks a year to earn what a similarly-qualified man in the same kind of job makes. And even after you make adjustments—and that's why I thought what Sharon said was so important today, to hammer home this point. Yes, some of this can be explained by differences in education, experience, and occupation. But even after you make all those adjustments, there is still a very significant gap. As women get older, the gap gets wider. And it is widest, regrettably, for women of color. African-American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men; Hispanic women, just 55 cents.

Now, this is not just a women's issue. And I appreciate the fact that we have five women Members of Congress and four men here. I'm the son of a working mother, the grandson of a working grandmother, the husband of a working wife, and my daughter plans to follow suit. I've joked, every time I do an event like this, that the first time in our entire marriage that I made more money than Hillary was when I became President—[laughter]—and all I'm really doing is trying to give other men the privilege of riding on the same gravy train I did all these years. [Laughter]

But it's not a women's issue. If a woman with a family is being denied equal pay for

equal work, then her husband suffers, her children suffer, the family dynamic suffers. You think about how much time you spend at work every day. You can't go to a workplace and feel like you're getting the shaft and not have it have an impact that goes even beyond economics on your home life. And I'm glad—Sharon has her husband and family members here today. They all pay. Everybody pays. So this is a big issue in that sense.

I'd also like to point out that it's a much bigger economic issue, even than the paycheck. Why? Because if you make less, then you have less going into your Social Security account, and you'll earn less in your Social Security check. Because if you make less, you're far less likely to be able to have your own retirement plan. And if you do have one, it'll be smaller.

The average woman who is about to retire—keep in mind the pay gap is 75 percent—the average woman who is about to retire, if she even gets a pension in the first place, can expect only about half the pension benefits of the average man who retires. So the pay gap leads to an even bigger retirement gap. And this is something we have to think about more and more and more. And again, it's not just a women's issue.

The poverty rate among elderly women is about twice the poverty rate for people over 65, generally. The number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. Americans today who are 65 years old already have a life expectancy in excess of 82 years. And women live a few years longer than men, on the average. This is a huge deal, with implications for our entire society, even for families where women do not experience discrimination in the workplace. They, too, will be affected in an aging society where more and more retirees are women who are severely disadvantaged.

So today we want to close those gaps. First, I propose \$10 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to train more than 1,000 EEOC enforcement personnel to identify and respond to wage discrimination. This would be, believe it or not, the first time the EEOC has ever received funding for this kind of training. The resources will also be used to educate employers and workers about their responsibilities and their rights under the law.

I made this request last year, and Congress failed to pass it. I again implore Congress to do the right thing and pass this funding. And

I hope you will help us do this. If we train enough people to spot the problems early and work on them aggressively, the EEOC can help give us more stories like Sharon Long's, without the waiting time.

Second, another important way to close the wage gap is to open new opportunities. So we propose a \$17 million investment in the Department of Labor, to include resources to expand opportunities for women in nontraditional jobs. We're making headway in the construction industry. We're also going to put a special focus on the jobs of the future in the high-tech industry. Today—listen to this—men outnumber women by more than two to one in many high-tech occupations. These are among the highest paid jobs in our economy, paying on average almost 80 percent above the average jobs. Now, that's another element of the digital divide. We need to close the divide in employment and expand opportunities for women in these kinds of jobs.

Third, and finally, we need to clearly send the message that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity. So once again I ask the Congress to pass the "Paycheck Fairness Act" sponsored by Representative DeLauro and Senator Tom Daschle. Pass it. It's a good bill. There is no excuse not to pass it. We plainly need to strengthen the law. We've had the other Equal Pay Act on the books since 1963, and we've still got a 25 percent gap. The evidence is there. We should have been able to eliminate this problem after 37 years, and we have to do more.

Again, I say—and I thank, particularly, Representative Morella for being here—this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue; it's a family

issue, and it's an American issue. It's about what kind of country we want our children to grow up in. I am delighted that these young women in the soccer team have come here as a team. And it must be a great thrill for them to see Michelle Akers, and I hope it spurs them to greater achievement in athletics and in academics. Most of them won't be professional soccer players. Most of them will be in the work force.

We do not want them to grow up and have children in a country which still has not solved this problem. And we can do better. Again I say that the same rules that apply on the playing field ought to apply in life. People who work hard and play by the rules ought to be rewarded, and rewarded in proportion to their contribution, not their gender.

This is a time of enormous promise. As I always say when I urge greater action to bring economic opportunity to poor areas that have been left behind, if we can't deal with this issue now, at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when in the wide world will we ever get around to dealing with it?

I thank the Members of Congress for their commitment. I thank you for being here. I ask you to help us bear down and act, now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Sharon Long, who introduced the President; and Michelle Akers, member, 1999 Women's World Cup U.S. championship team. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92-318, the Education Amendments of 1972.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Campaign Financing

January 24, 2000

The Court's opinion is a victory for democracy. The American people know that our political system needs to be fixed, and today's decision sets the stage for further reform. For years, I've challenged Congress to pass legislation that would ban the raising of unregulated soft money, address backdoor spending by outside

organizations, and strengthen public discourse. Now I am again asking Congress to restore the American people's faith in their democracy and pass real reform this year.

Statement on the Death of Bob Squier January 24, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened by the death of Bob Squier. Bob was a valued adviser, a good friend, and a fine man. His loyalty, talent, and, above all, his perseverance helped Vice President Gore and me craft a winning reelection campaign in 1996 when many had counted us out. I owe him much.

Throughout the course of his career, Bob was a pioneer in the art of modern communications. With his documentary films, his pathbreaking political commentary, and his work for progressive candidates, Bob helped make policy and politics understandable and exciting for millions of Americans. Our thoughts and prayers tonight are with Prudy, his sons, and grandchildren.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China January 24, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On November 15th of last year, my Administration signed an historic trade agreement with the People's Republic of China. Bringing China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the strong terms we negotiated will advance critical economic and national security goals. It will open a growing market to American workers, farmers, and businesses. And more than any other step we can take right now, it will draw China into a system of international rules and thereby encourage the Chinese to choose reform at home and integration with the world. For these reasons, I will make it a top priority in the new year to seek congressional support for permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) with China.

A Good Deal for America

This agreement is good for America. It is important to understand the *one-way nature of the concessions* in this agreement. China has agreed to grant the United States *significant new access* to its market, while we have agreed simply to maintain the market access policies we *already* apply to China by granting it permanent NTR. China's commitments are enforceable in the WTO and include specially negotiated rules. In the event of a violation, the U.S. will have the right to trade retaliation against China.

China's comprehensive market-opening concessions will benefit U.S. workers, farmers and

businesses. On U.S. priority agricultural products, tariffs will drop from an average of 31% to 14% in January 2004. China will expand access for bulk agricultural products, permit private trade in these products, and eliminate export subsidies. Industrial tariffs on U.S. products will fall from an average of 25% in 1997 to an average of 9.4% by 2005. In information technology, tariffs on products such as computers, semiconductors, and all Internet related equipment will decrease from an average of 13% to zero by 2005. The agreement also opens China's market for services, including distribution, insurance, telecommunications, banking, professional and environmental services. Considering that our farmers and workers are the most productive in the world, this agreement promises vast opportunities for American exports.

Prior to the final negotiations, Democrats and Republicans in Congress raised legitimate concerns about the importance of safeguards against unfair competition. This agreement effectively addresses those concerns. No agreement on WTO accession has ever contained stronger measures against unfair trade, notably a "product-specific" safeguard that allows us to take measures focused directly on China in case of an import surge that threatens a particular industry. This protection remains in effect a full 12 years after China enters the WTO and is stronger and more targeted relief than that provided under our current Section 201 law.

The agreement also protects against dumping. China agreed that for 15 years after its accession to the WTO, the United States may employ special methods, designed for nonmarket economies, to counteract dumping.

Moreover, Americans will, for the first time, have a means, accepted under the WTO, to combat such measures as forced technology transfer, mandated offsets, local content requirements and other practices intended to drain jobs and technology away from the U.S. As a result, we will be able to export to China from home, rather than seeing companies forced to set up factories in China in order to sell products there. The agreement also increases our leverage with the Chinese in the event of a future trade dispute. As a member of the WTO, China must agree to submit disputes to that body for adjudication and would be much less likely to thwart the will of the WTO's 135 members than that of the United States acting alone.

Under WTO rules, we may—even when dealing with a country enjoying permanent NTR status—continue to block imports of goods made with prison labor, maintain our export control policies, use our trade laws, and withdraw benefits including NTR itself in a national security emergency.

Promoting Reform in China and Creating a Safer World

Of course, this trade agreement alone cannot bring all the change in China we seek, including greater respect for human rights. We must and will continue to speak out on behalf of people in China who are persecuted for their political and religious beliefs; to press China to respect global norms on non-proliferation; to encourage a peaceful resolution of issues with Taiwan; to urge China to be part of the solution to the problem of global climate change. And we will hold China to the obligations it is accepting by joining the WTO.

We will continue to protect our interests with firmness and candor. But we must do so without isolating China from the global forces empowering its people to build a better future. For that would leave the Chinese people with less access to information, less contact with the democratic world, and more resistance from their government to outside influence and ideas. No one could possibly benefit from that except for the most rigid, anti-democratic elements in China itself. Let's not give them a victory by

locking China out of the WTO. The question is not whether or not this trade agreement will cure serious and disturbing issues of economic and political freedom in China; the issue is whether it will push things in the right direction. I believe it will.

WTO membership will strengthen the forces of reform inside China and thereby improve the odds that China will continue and even accelerate its gradual progress toward joining the rules-based community of nations. In the last 20 years, the Chinese have made giant strides in building a new economy, lifting more than 200 million people out of absolute poverty and creating the basis for more profound reform of Chinese society. But tens of millions of peasants continue to migrate from the countryside, where they see no future, to the city, where not all find work. China's economic growth has slowed just when it needs to be rising to create jobs for the unemployed. That is one reason the WTO agreement is a win-win for both nations. China faces critical social and economic challenges in the next few years; WTO membership will spur the economy and, over time, will help establish the conditions to sustain and deepen economic reform in China.

In the past, the Chinese state was employer, landlord, shopkeeper and news-provider all rolled into one. This agreement obligates China to deepen its market reforms, empowering leaders who want their country to move further and faster toward economic freedom. It will expose China to global economic competition and thereby bring China under ever more pressure to privatize its state-owned industry and accelerate a process that is removing the government from vast areas of China's economic life. The agreement will also give Chinese as well as foreign businesses freedom to import and export on their own and sell products without going through government middlemen. And in opening China's telecommunications market, including to Internet and satellite services, the agreement will expose the Chinese people to information, ideas and debate from around the world. As China's people become more mobile, prosperous, and aware of alternative ways of life, they will seek greater say in the decisions that affect their lives.

The agreement obliges the Chinese government to publish laws and regulations and subjects pertinent decisions to review of an international body. That will strengthen the rule of

law in China and increase the likelihood that it will play by global rules as well. It will advance our larger interest in bringing China into international agreements and institutions that can make it a more constructive player in the world, with a stake in preserving peace and stability, instead of reverting to the status of a brooding giant at the edge of the community of nations.

Many courageous proponents of change in China agree. Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, says that "the participation of China in the WTO would . . . serve to bolster those in China who understand that the country must embrace the rule of law." Chinese dissident Ren Wanding said upon the agreement's completion: "Before, the sky was black; now it is light. This can be a new beginning."

As I have argued to China's leaders many times, China will be less likely to succeed if its people cannot exchange information freely; if it does not build the legal and political foundation to compete for global capital; if its political system does not gain the legitimacy that comes from democratic choice. This agreement will encourage the Chinese to move in the right direction.

The Importance of Permanent Normal Trade Relations

In order to accede to the WTO, China must still complete a number of bilateral negotiations,

notably with the EU and others, and also conclude multilateral negotiations in the WTO Working Party. These negotiations are proceeding.

The United States must grant China permanent NTR or risk losing the full benefits of the agreement we negotiated, including special import protections, and rights to enforce China's commitments through WTO dispute settlement. If Congress were to refuse to grant permanent NTR, our Asian and European competitors will reap these benefits but American farmers and businesses may well be left behind.

In sum, it lies not only in our economic interest to grant China permanent NTR status. We must do it to encourage China along the path of domestic reform, human rights, the rule of law and international cooperation. In the months ahead, I look forward to working with Congress to pass this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on the Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget and an Exchange With Reporters

January 25, 2000

The President. Hello.

Q. Good morning.

The President. I think it's just afternoon. [Laughter] I'm glad you all got here; I thought school was canceled today. [Laughter]

Seven years ago, when I came to Washington, our Nation was burdened with a \$290 billion annual deficit, and our national debt had quadrupled in 12 years. Interest rates were high and growth was low. Vice President Gore and I set our Nation on a new path of fiscal responsibility, opening markets, investing in our people and

new technologies. We passed strong deficit reduction packages in both 1993 and in 1997 and made tough choices in each and every budget. This put the Nation on a course of fiscal discipline, while continuing to invest in our people and our future.

Last year I asked the Congress to use every single dollar of our Social Security surplus to pay down the debt and to use the interest savings from that debt reduction to lengthen the life of Social Security.

Now we see the results of the last 7 years: the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years; last year's surplus of \$124 billion, the largest in our history. The latest numbers from the Treasury indicate the surplus for this year will be even larger. In just the last 2 years, we've already paid down \$140 billion of the national debt. Through unprecedented debt buybacks in the last few weeks, we're able to finance the debt on the most favorable possible terms.

Over the last 2 years, there have been repeated efforts to push us off the path of fiscal discipline, with large and irresponsible tax cuts. Because we've resisted these efforts, our debt is \$1.7 trillion less this year than it was projected to be back in 1993. Now is not the time to let up on a strategy that is plainly working.

Today I am announcing that because of the choices we have made, the budget I will submit for 2001 accelerates the date that we will be able to pay off our debt to 2013, 2 years earlier than we had originally planned. We will do this by protecting Social Security funds and dedicating the interest savings to Social Security, allowing us, in addition to paying off the debt, to extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050.

We will also be able to make Medicare secure now, through 2025. And we will be debt-free for the first time since 1835, when our Nation just had 24 States and fewer than 15 million people. Our children and their children will not inherit the crippling burden of interest payments that we faced 7 years ago.

What does this mean for Americans in their daily lives? Already, the debt reduction means that American families pay, on average, \$2,000 less per year on their home mortgages, \$200 less on a loan for school or for a car. This new initiative will help even more with loans and credit card payments. Debt reduction helps everyone by getting the Government out of competition for loans, which makes interest rates lower overall. More investment, more jobs, higher wages for Americans result.

It makes us much more competitive in the global economy and less vulnerable to shocks elsewhere. It helps other nations which really need to borrow the money to get their economies going, and, in turn, they will be better trade partners with us.

All of this is good news. But as I have said over and over again, there is no room for com-

placency. We got here by making hard choices and sticking to a strategy that works, that builds opportunity and reinforces responsibility.

I remain committed to that strategy. I ask the Republican majority in Congress to put politics aside and join me. We've got so much work to do in the weeks ahead to make sure that we seize this historic opportunity.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

I also, before I take your questions, and because of the remarkable weather you can see outside, would like to say just a word about relief for the thousands of families that are struggling with increased heating bills and cold this winter. We've been monitoring the situation daily, and based on the most recent data it is clear that a release of emergency funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is warranted. Therefore, today I am directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expedite the release of LIHEAP funds to Alaska and States in the Northeast which have experienced the greatest hardship. These funds will help keep more American families safe and warm this winter, and we'll get them out there just as quickly as we possibly can.

Q. How much?

The President. I don't know yet. We're working on it. We'll put it out as quick as we know.

Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, why isn't it right for the next President and the next Congress to put forward such a long-term plan as you're doing today?

The President. Why isn't it right?

Q. Yes, why shouldn't—Senator Lott says it ought to be for the next President and the next Congress to do programs like this. This is a very long-term initiative that you're putting forward today.

The President. You mean the debt relief?

Q. That's exactly right.

The President. Well, I think they ought to follow it. But you've got to understand, even if we commit to this path, since every year the Congress will meet, they'll have to recommit to it. But it will be much easier—what we could do is derail them. If we had adopted, for example, the tax cut last year, we would have stopped that.

What we're doing, by taking this position, is maximizing the choices that the next Congress

and the next President will have. Except—on the Social Security thing, on debt relief. On Social Security, what I propose will take Social Security from 2034 to 2050. That is well beyond the life of most baby boomers. I would like to take it out 75 years. But I presume, based on what happened last year, that we won't be able to get enough bipartisan agreement to do that. So there will be plenty for the next President and the next Congress to do. And they will have to do that, because the life expectancy is going to go up so exponentially.

And we've already gotten Medicare out 25 years—keep in mind, Medicare was projected to go broke last year, when I took office. Now we've got it out to 2025. I think that it is appropriate to add the voluntary prescription drug benefit, and to take it out a little further by taking some of the reforms that all of us apparently agree on, based on the Medicare Commission that had heavy involvement by Senate Republicans and Democrats. And the Finance Committee's going to take that up. So there will be plenty for America to do next year and the years beyond. There always will be.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Iowa Caucuses

Q. Mr. President, what do you—what's your read on the results from Iowa? Were you surprised by the margins on both the Democratic and the Republican side? Can you give us your take?

The President. Well, I think the Republican race was about as I thought it would be. And I think that the Vice President had a terrific victory last night in Iowa—and, I think, all the more impressive because he and Senator Bradley, I thought, both ran very substantive campaigns, very idea-oriented campaigns, and had that whole series of debates, which I think served the people very well. And I think he should be very proud of that, his strong effort. And I was very pleased to see that. But I don't have any real analysis of what happened in the insides of either one of the campaigns because I didn't follow it that closely.

Q. Well, you've been through this. I mean, as they go into New Hampshire, how does it affect the dynamic there?

The President. I think it's a plus, but I agree with what the Vice President said last night, it's important not to overread it. The people of New Hampshire are very independent. They

want to make a good choice. They understand that to some extent the choice they make affects the choices that the country has after the New Hampshire primary. And I think that you'll see all the candidates there really bearing down and trying to reach the voters, which is what they ought to do.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, are you inclined to sign or veto any possible bill out of Congress that would grant Elian Gonzalez U.S. citizenship? And do you think it was a good idea for the two grandmothers to come here to meet with Congress, or are you concerned that might further politicize the process as you—[inaudible].

The President. Well, first, I have done my best, as all of you know, to handle this in a nonpolitical way and to make the judgments for which the law provides. The judgment that the law provides for the INS to make is whether the father can properly be declared the guardian of the child, since the mother was, unfortunately, killed.

And the case is now in court, and I would like to see—at a minimum, I would like to see this court case played out before the Congress takes action. I think we ought to try to let the legal system take its course.

I understand that the strong feelings that exist in this country about the Castro government complicates this. And I know that that little boy has some relatives in this country who feel very strongly about that. And I guess his grandmothers, in coming up here, were reacting to what they thought about the extent to which the case had already been politicized.

More than anything else, I wish that somehow—I mean, no one can really know for sure, I suppose, what terrible and probably not fully conscious burdens that child has already sustained because he lost his mother and because now he's being competed for in a way that is unusual for a 6-year-old child. And I know that—maybe it's just because I'm not running for anything, but I just somehow wish that whatever is best for this child could be done. And I know there are people who genuinely disagree about that, because plainly he would have more economic opportunity in this country. But all the evidence indicates that his father genuinely loved him and spent a great deal of time with him back in Cuba.

So I think that—you know, what I have tried to do is to set up a circumstance where the people who were in a position to know the most and be the least influenced by whatever the political considerations are would at least have the maximum opportunity to wind up doing what was right for the child. I hope that somehow we can still find a way to do that.

Q. For better or worse though—if I could follow up—for better or worse, though, politics is a reality in this situation.

The President. Yes, it is.

Q. Could you possibly veto any bill that would grant Elian Gonzalez U.S. citizenship?

The President. I have not decided what to do, and I wouldn't rule that out. I just haven't decided what to do.

Let me just say for the moment, if you take it out of the combustible, emotional nature of our relationship with Cuba and particularly the Cuban-American community in south Florida's relationship with Cuba, and you think about the issue, one of the things that I think we all need to think about is, this could happen again. I mean, this sort of thing could happen again, because you have so many people coming to our shores from all these different countries and then shifting governments, shifting policies within countries. And what we do need is an analysis of whether we have the tools to maximize the chance that the kids involved and the families involved will be treated fairly, based on the merits of, particularly, the best interests of the child.

And I think, again—I'm happy to talk to anybody about this and really try to think this through. I'm just trying to minimize the politics of it, because I think if you take this one decision out of context—it's not just Cuba, and it's not just this little boy. There are likely to be a lot of these things in the future as immigration flows increase, as upheavals increase elsewhere, and as we know more and more about what goes on in other countries.

This is something that ought to be thought about. But in my—I suppose I have tended to think of this child more from a point of view of a parent than anything else, and I wish I knew more about the facts even than I do, because I just—this poor kid has already lost his mother, and whatever happens, I'm sure he's going to carry certain burdens into his early adolescence that most of us did not carry. And somehow, whatever happens, I just hope it turns out to be best for him. He's a beautiful child.

Yes.

2000 Election

Q. Mr. President, in his victory statement yesterday, Governor Bush seemed to be throwing down the gauntlet against you. He seemed to be kicking off his major campaign against you. What do you have to say about that, and do you have a rebuttal? Are you going to do anything about it?

The President. Well, I have, I guess, two responses. One is, this campaign is between the candidates and the American people, and they will evaluate all claims and charges, and they usually get it right. That's why we're all still around here, after 224 years. They almost always get it right. And so I'm going to leave most of that to them.

Now, it is an unusual claim that we ought to somehow reject an approach that has given us the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment, welfare, and crime rolls in 30 years, not to mention the benefits of the family and medical leave law and the Brady law, which were vetoed in the previous administration. And I agree that the tax program he's proposed might well undo a lot of that, and he can make the claim that that's the basis on which the campaign ought to proceed. But I don't really want to get into an argument with him. He ought to—I think that ought to be something between him and the other candidates and the American people.

But I do think it's an unusual thing to say that what we really ought to do is change what has given us an unprecedented level not just of economic prosperity but of social progress and social cohesion, restored credibility of Government, proof that ideas really can matter to move the people forward. I think that that's a pretty hard argument to make.

Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, what's your projected surplus for the new budget, and doesn't that allow room for at least a modest tax cut?

The President. Well, yes. First of all, I'm not—you will see—I think the Congressional Budget Office, I believe, when they're going to propose what they think, I think they will show you what the difficulty here is, because my understanding is, they're going to give you options. They will show you—that is, they'll

show you—like every projected surplus, it depends on what you think the so-called baseline is.

We believe that there has been greater growth, and there will be a larger surplus than we thought. But we believe—and I intend to propose, as I did last time, a set of tax cuts that I think are targeted to the middle class, targeted to sustain our economic growth, targeted to help lower income people and areas move into the middle class, that will keep America's economic expansion going.

But I think the most important thing—I will say again, the most important thing is to keep our fiscal discipline, to keep paying down the debt, to get the country out of debt, to keep the interest rates down. Keep in mind, this is saving the average family \$2,000 a year on home mortgage costs. We're—next month, we'll have the longest economic expansion in history, and long-term interest rates are lower now than they were in the bad economy of 1991—I mean, 1992. They're lower.

So yes, we can have tax cuts. And yes, every year, and including next year when I'm not here and the years ahead, we can evaluate what the situation is. But I do not believe we should have very big tax cuts that will explode in the second 5 years of a 10-year period and that ignore what the real investment needs of the country will be.

And that's what I think of this so-called baseline. You know, to use the '97 baseline and spending caps, when they were totally shredded last year, as a basis for estimating how you should spend everything else on a tax cut, means you're going to get back in deficit problems—just for example.

So yes, we can have a tax cut. It ought to be modest. It ought to be targeted. It ought to be in the context of fiscal discipline. It ought not to explode in the second 5 years in a much bigger trajectory than it takes in the first 5 years.

And again I say—one of you mentioned about decisions that could be made in the years ahead. You can always make those decisions. If things keep getting better, then you can do more. But you should always do it with an eye, in my judgment, toward conservative economic policies and toward always understanding that those things are easy to do, but they're difficult to undo if times get tough.

Yes.

Indian Airlines Flight 814 Hijacking

Q. Mr. President, do you now have reason to believe that the Pakistani Government may have been involved in that airplane hijacking?

The President. No, we don't. We do not, no. I guess the simplest thing I can tell you is that we do not have evidence that the Pakistani Government was in any way involved in that hijacking; we don't.

State of the Union Address

Q. Mr. President, on the State of the Union, we know how pumped up you get for the State of the Union, and I was wondering, considering that this is your last one, whether there's also a sense of bittersweet, that it's a bittersweet moment, too.

The President. No, it's not bittersweet; it's nostalgic. One of the wonderful Navy stewards who works for me said this morning, he said, "I can't believe we've been doing this for 7 years." [Laughter] And the time flies when it's a busy time and you're absorbed—excuse me—absorbed in what you're doing.

I don't feel bittersweet; I do feel some nostalgia. And I think it's something I'm very much trying to fight off, because I think the important thing is to keep the attention of the country focused on the future and to keep my attention and the attention of the administration focused on the future and the energy level very high. So I am working with that in mind, and I've worked very hard on the speech, and I'm still working on it.

Bipartisanship on the Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, you have a long list of things that you'd like to do. You've been rolling them out for the last couple weeks. There are things that weren't done last year. Realistically, what are the chances of any real bipartisan agreements with the Republican Congress?

The President. I think that we have some significant chance of getting some of the substantive issues through, the Patients' Bill of Rights, the minimum wage, the gun reforms, the Brady background checks at the gun shows. I think that there is a better than 50–50 chance that a lot of the investments I have recommended will eventually prevail. And I am immensely hopeful about the new markets initiative, which is more than twice as big in this budget as it was last time, largely because there is a lot of bipartisan support for it, beginning

with the Speaker of the House. So I'm very, very hopeful. You know, there's a part of that that has a special initiative for the Mississippi Delta, I believe, Senator Lott will support.

So I'm hopeful. I'm going to do everything I can to get as much done as I can for the American people, and I'm quite hopeful.

Super Bowl XXXIV

Q. Mr. President, we think we know how the Vice President feels, but what's your pick for the Super Bowl and why? *[Laughter]*

The President. He can say and get in no trouble, can't he, because he's from Tennessee. I'm not going to pick one. But I'll tell you this, I've followed it this year very closely. There were two great games last Sunday. And what I thought was going to happen 2 weeks ago I'm no longer so sure will.

Q. Can you say what?

The President. I don't think you can tell which one of them will win. You've got one that's a very powerful defensive team, Tennessee, with a capacity for real offense. And then you've got the most powerful offensive team playing against them, that was stymied last Sunday and played better defense than I thought they could. So I don't think you can predict which one of them is going to win this race.

Q. Will you send a play to one of the coaches? *[Laughter]*

The President. Would I what?

Q. Send a play to one of the coaches?

The President. No, I think they're perfectly capable of doing that without me. That's kind of like this campaign. You all want to get me involved in it, but I think the Vice President, Senator Bradley, Governor Bush, and Senator McCain, they can all do this without me. They're doing fine.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Q. Is your wife going to win?

The President. I think so. I think she's done a good job with this, and she's getting into it. I certainly hope she does. I think it will be a good thing for New York and a good thing for our country.

Colombia

Q. Mr. President, in regards to the Colombian aid package, are you worried at all about sending arms down to a country who is now in a civil

war and there's no real guarantee about who will be in power even in the next 3, 4 years?

The President. Well, I wouldn't go that far. I think, for one thing, we want to try to preserve and strengthen democracy in Colombia. It's a very old democracy that's under the greatest stress perhaps in its history. And there's always a risk, when you go out on a limb to try to save a neighbor and help people to help themselves, that it won't work.

But I think that—I believe the risks and the investment is something that we ought to do. And again, I believe that there will be significant bipartisan support here. I'd be surprised if we don't have large numbers of Republicans and Democrats supporting this. And I think we're going into this with our eyes wide open.

One of the things that we have to do is to try to help them gain some measure of control over their own country again. And if you look at Colombia, sort of the intersection of the narcotraffickers and the political rebels, you see a picture of what you might see much more of in the 21st century world, with sort of the enemies of nation-states forming networks of support across national borders and across otherwise discrete interests, like narcotraffickers, organized criminals, and political terrorists, weapons dealers.

So this will be an interesting test run for what I predict to you not only our Nation but others in our position will have to face over the next two decades. And it is something, again, I'm going to work very hard to build a bipartisan consensus on this, to take this out of politics, because I believe that this is not only something we should do for our friend and neighbor and the country that is either the production or transit point for about 80 percent of the cocaine that gets dumped in this country; but also, if you will, a test run for the kind of challenges that my successors and our people will face in the years ahead.

Thank you.

Iowa Caucuses

Q. Did you miss being in Iowa? I'll bet you did.

The President. A little bit. I did. I love it there. They've been good to me. But I was interested in it. It's interesting to me to watch it unfold and watch how the decisions they make—which is why I don't want you guys to get me into it. This should be their campaigns,

and they should make the decisions. And we should trust the people. They'll get it right. They always do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bill Bradley;

Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999; Juan Miguel Gonzalez, Mariela Quintana, and Raquel Rodriguez, Elian's father and grandmothers; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. Indian Airlines Flight 814, from Kathmandu to New Delhi, was hijacked on December 24, 1999.

Interview With Jim Lehrer of PBS' "NewsHour" January 26, 2000

State of the Union

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, welcome.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Lehrer. Can we assume, sir, that tomorrow night in the State of the Union, you're going to declare the state of the Union to be in pretty good shape?

The President. It's in good shape. And I'm very grateful. But I'm also going to challenge the Congress and the country to make it better.

Mr. Lehrer. The things that are good about this country right now, how much of that do you believe you deserve credit for?

The President. Well, I think most of the credit, as always, goes to the American people. This is a country where citizenship is the most important job anybody can have, and I think we should start with that. I think the Members of Congress who have worked with us deserve a lot of credit. But if you look at where we are now, compared to where we were 7 years ago, I think the fact that we got rid of the deficit and are running surpluses; the fact that we changed the philosophy of the National Government on welfare, on crime; the fact that we have formed unprecedented partnerships with people in the private sector to deal with all kinds of social problems—teen pregnancy, which is down, adoptions, which are up; the fact that we have protected more land than any administrations in the country's history, except those of the two Roosevelts—I think that those things are things that our Government did.

I also believe that people have a lot more confidence now, that we can actually do things as a nation. In '92 we didn't just have economic distress and social decline. We had this political gridlock and discredited Government. The na-

tional Republicans had badmouthed the Government for 12 years, and they'd done a pretty good job of convincing America that it couldn't do anything. Now we have cut the size of Government by over 350,000. It's the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was here, and it really works to empower people and to create these partnerships.

So I think that we have played a role in the recovery of the economy and in the improvement of the situation with crime, with welfare, with education. We've opened the doors of college to virtually all Americans. And I think all these things count for something. And of course, our country has been a great force for peace and freedom around the world. And I'm very grateful for the chance we've had to—all of us—to serve here.

President's Historical Legacy

Mr. Lehrer. Do you believe that history is going to give you credit for all those things you've just enumerated?

The President. Well, I think that's up to the historians. I think that history will be very much more—that people who do serious histories of this administration will be amazed at the amount of energy and effort that went into the wide variety of areas that we worked in. And I think that it will show that in virtually every area we had progress, from helping to reduce poverty to improving the plight of our children, to creating an environment with the reform of telecommunications, the reform of banking, and getting rid of the deficit and major investments in science and technology, to this exploding new economy. I think it will show that we helped America to make this major transition into a new economy and an era of globalization.

Mr. Lehrer. Are you worried about what the historians are going to write about you?

The President. No, I can't control that. But I think time will tend to accelerate the positive and put what negative there is into proper perspective. And I feel quite comfortable about that. But the main thing is, I don't think too much about it because I know that the only thing I can do to impact on it is to do the right thing today by the American people.

I mean, my philosophy has been, ever since I got here, is that in the modern political world, the most important thing you can do is get up and go to work and concentrate on your job and always keep thinking about tomorrow. And all the pressures that operate on you are designed to prevent you from doing that, to hobble you, to distract you, to divide you, to get you to obsess about what somebody said or wrote or is doing.

And so my whole theory has been from the beginning that if we could start and give first 4 years and then 8 years of unbridled, concentrated effort, no matter what else happened, the American people would be all right. And that's really all I hired on to do, is to try to help them do better.

Mr. Lehrer. Let me read what the New York Times said in its lead editorial on Monday. They're talking about you, your legacy, and your Presidency as you go into this last year. It said, "historians are beginning to categorize Mr. Clinton as a politician of splendid natural talent and some significant accomplishments who, nonetheless, missed the greatness that once seemed within his grasp." What's your reaction to that "what might have been" kind of thing?

The President. I think that—well, first of all, I think it's not productive to talk about what might have been. But I think if you—the question is how you keep score, what is this time like, how will you measure it? The time that this is most like is the turn of the last century. Did we manage the transition of America in the new economy and an era of globalization well, or not? I think the answer is, we did. Did we make social progress? Did we actually change the way we approach social issues? If the issue is crime, welfare, national service, the answer is, we did. Were we good stewards of the environment? We were. And then, what were the forces you stood against, and what did you stop? And if you look at the forces we stood against from 1994 forward and what

we stopped, I think the answer is, what we did was, A, successful, and B, good for America. And then, did we work with contending forces when we could to reach common agreement? I think the answer is, we did.

So I believe that, first of all, there is no such thing as history, because this is still going on. We shouldn't worry about that. You know, in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years—I got a book the other day on President Nixon's Presidency, and then I got one a week afterward on President Kennedy's Presidency that are still being written. I just read a new book, a great book, on Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency. And I think the further away you get from it, the more perspective you get and the more you're able to look at all the evidence.

So all of us—frankly, my view is not much better than the New York Times' on this. Neither one of us really can properly evaluate how this will be viewed in the light of history. I think that we have, given what we could have accomplished within the framework of possibility that was there and the job that was there before us, I think we've done pretty well. But all I can tell you is, I've worked every day, and I did the best I could, and I'm going to let the historians make their judgment after I give it one more hard year.

President's Agenda for Last Year in Office

Mr. Lehrer. All right, let's talk about the one more hard year. Is there one particular thing that you really want to do before you leave this office?

The President. Well, there are many things that I really want to do before I leave this office. Obviously, I'm still heavily engaged in the search for peace in the Middle East. But whether we can do that or not depends—

Mr. Lehrer. What's the problem there, Mr. President? Particularly Syria and Israel, what's the problem?

The President. I think the main problem is they haven't talked in a long time. There's still a fair measure of distrust. And the decisions which have to be made will require of both parties actions which will cause difficulty for them with some constituencies in their country. But let me say, I'm convinced that both the leaders of Syria and Israel want peace, and I'm convinced that substantively they're not that far apart. So we have a chance to do that.

But you asked me what I wanted to do. That's something I would like to be involved in if they want to do it. I'm prepared to do whatever I can.

I want to continue to do everything I can to protect the natural treasures of this country. I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with climate change. And I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with what I think will be the biggest security challenges of the 21st century.

I believe—you know, all the attention today is on whether we can develop a missile defense and, if so, whether we can deploy it without falling out with the Russians and our friends and other countries who question this. But the likeliest threat, in my view, is brought on by the intersection of technology and the likelihood that you'll have terrorists and narcotraffickers and organized criminals cooperating with each other, with smaller and smaller and more difficult to detect weapons of mass destruction and powerful traditional weapons. So we've tried to lay in a framework for dealing with cyberterrorism, bioterrorism, chemical terrorism. This is very important. Now, this is not in the headlines, but I think it's very, very important for the next 10 or 20 years. I think the enemies of the nation-state in this interconnected world are likely to be the biggest security threat.

And then, of course, you know the things that are really close to my heart: I'm going to try to get a lot done in education, in health care, in bringing opportunity to poor people and reducing poverty in this country.

Health Care

Mr. Lehrer. What about health care? What is it that you would like your legacy to be on health care?

The President. Well, I wish I could have given health insurance to all Americans, because I still think it's inexcusable that we are the only advanced country in the world that doesn't do that. But I feel good about many of the things we have done, in medical research, in letting people keep their health insurance when they change jobs, in providing much more preventive screening for older people with illnesses or potential illnesses, and of course, in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

So I'm going to focus now on what I think I can get done this year. I want to try to increase the number of people with health insur-

ance dramatically by letting the parents of children in the Children's Health Insurance Program buy into it, by letting people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare. And I want to have another big investment in biomedical research.

Education

Mr. Lehrer. Now, what about education? What mark can you leave in this next year on education?

The President. Well, let's—first of all, if you look at what we have done—we've already helped almost all the States to develop higher standards. And we've got—test scores in reading, math, and college entrance exams are up.

Mr. Lehrer. And you feel you've done that? You feel the administration has done that?

The President. No, I—I think our administration has contributed to it. No, the people that did it were the kids and the parents and the teachers. But I think, consistent with our philosophy, which is to be a catalyst for new ideas and to be a partner to help people achieve it, there's no question we've had an impact.

Now, one thing we've had a really direct impact on is we've done more than any administration ever has to open the doors of college to everyone we—with big increases in Pell grants; the direct student loan program, which lets people borrow money at less cost and pay it off at a percentage of their income. We've got a million work-study grants. We've got AmeriCorps, 150,000 young people there. And the HOPE scholarship tax credit and the lifetime tax credit really means people have no excuse for not going to school.

Now, I have also proposed this time, for the first time in history, that we make college tuition tax deductible, up to \$10,000 a year, which will mean that we have guaranteed access to 4 years of college for all Americans. I think that is a huge achievement. Since I became President, the number of—the percentage of high school graduates going to college has gone up to 67 percent. That's an increase of 10 percent. But we need for everybody to be able to go. And so I think that this will be a major achievement.

Now let's go back to the beginning. The next big challenge, besides making—this is the last piece, making college universally available. The next big challenge is to make sure that everybody's diploma means something. And we've been working on this all along, starting

in early childhood, the increases we made in Head Start. We now have 1,000 colleges sending mentors into grade schools to make sure kids learn to read by the third grade. And I think we've increased the emphasis on that—you probably noticed that Jim Barksdale gave \$100 million to the University of Mississippi, to do nothing but focus on how we can teach grade school kids to read. This is a huge deal; it's great.

So what else do we need to do? I think we need a national strategy to turn around failing schools or shut them down. I think we need to institutionalize reform with more charter schools. And I think we ought to make preschool available to everybody. And everybody that needs it ought to have access to after-school. I think if you get those things done, and we continue to train the teachers, especially in how to use the computers as you hook up all the schools to the Internet, I think you're going to see really big, continuing improvements in education.

Mr. Lehrer. But you can't do all that this next year, can you?

The President. Sure we can. We can—no, but we can take big steps toward it. If you look at the whole history of our country—I read something President Johnson said the other day, and he got through Medicare and the Medicaid and the first steps of major Federal aid to education. He talked about how most of our big progress comes in deliberate, discrete steps. And if you take enough steps in the right direction, you turn back around, you see you've come quite a long way.

So what I'm going to try to do in my speech tomorrow night is to outline what I think the long-term goals for the Nation in the 21st century should be and then what steps I think we can realistically hope to achieve in this year and urge the Congress to join me in it.

Bipartisanship on the Legislative Agenda

Mr. Lehrer. Now, you're doing this, of course, in a Presidential election year. In whose interest is it to help you do this, in terms of simple politics of getting it done, to help you improve your legacy or get things done before you leave office?

The President. Well, first of all, it's in none of their interest to help me improve my legacy. That's not why they should do it. It is in their interest to do the job they were hired to do,

which is to help the people they represent. And I think the people that they represent, whether Republicans or Democrats, would find it amazing that someone could suggest they ought to take a year off. I mean, anybody who wants to take a year off ought to give up their paycheck and say, "I'm sorry. I'm not going to work this year, but I'm not going to take your money."

Secondly, in a more mundane way, it is clearly in the interests of all the people in Congress to do things that are good for America, because the American people will appreciate it. I think it helps the Democrats, but I don't think it hurts the Republicans—I mean, a bunch of them have to run next time, too. And people are going to know—want to know, what did you do last year?

If you look, it's quite interesting. We had a very good year in '96, where I had to veto the welfare reform bill twice because the Republicans wouldn't agree with me to guarantee child care and health care and more nutrition and medical care and transportation for the welfare families. And then they did it at the end, and we got this big welfare reform. And now we've got 7 million fewer people on welfare. In '98 we passed a lot of very important legislation at the end, because it was election year.

So what you might see in terms of Congress now is not an enormous amount of activity at the beginning, although I do believe there's a good chance we can fairly early pass my proposal to help Colombia fight off narco-trafficking and preserve its democracy and work with its neighbors along the border. And I think there's a good chance they'll pass the China trade—normal trade relations bill; I hope that's true. But I think at the end of the year, when people will be held accountable by the voters, I think there's a chance we'll get quite a lot done. We did in '96. We did in '98. I think we will this year.

2000 Elections

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, what do you make of Governor Bush's comment the other night after he had won the caucuses in Iowa? He said, this is the beginning of the end of the Clinton era, and everybody in the room cheered.

The President. Well, they would. [Laughter] I think if he were—I think if he said that he would reverse what we were doing, I think he would. And I think that's the choice before the

American people. I mean, he's offered a \$1.4 billion tax cut. And the only thing I'd ask the American people is to remember, you know, we've now had 20 years of experience. We tried it their way for 12 years, and they quadrupled the national debt. And when I took office, we had high unemployment, a massive deficit, a huge debt, and totally neglected our domestic affairs. We had rising crime, rising welfare rolls, all the social indicators going the wrong way.

Now, we've tried it our way for 7 years. We've got the biggest surpluses in history, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. We can get this country out of debt now in 13 years—out of debt for the first time since Andy Jackson was President in 1835. And all the social indicators are going in the right direction.

So it seems to me that he was being honest with the people, that he said that he will reverse this course. And I do think the American people ought to vote for change in this election, because things are changing so fast around us in this globalized world, we have to keep changing. The issue is: Are we going to build on what works or revert to what didn't? And that's what I think the issue is.

Assessment of the Administration

Mr. Lehrer. You've given kind of your definition of the Clinton era, and he has his. Now, what he is—the interpretation of what he's talking about is that it's just a continuation of what all the Presidential candidates have mentioned to some degree, that Republicans like Governor Bush, more than the Democrats, but even Vice President Gore and Senator Bradley have said about returning the Presidency back to a nobler office, to words like promising to restore dignity and respectability, decency and trust to the Presidency. They're talking about you, aren't they, Mr. President?

The President. Well, first of all, I made one mistake. I apologized for it. I paid a high price for it, and I've done my best to atone for it by being a good President. But I believe we also endured what history will clearly record was a bogus investigation, where there was nothing to Whitewater and nothing to these other charges, and they were propagated, and tens of millions of dollars were spent, and we got a clean bill of health on that.

And in terms of trust, let me just tell you a story. I went back to New Hampshire for the seventh anniversary of the New Hampshire

primary in 1991—or the eighth anniversary, excuse me, last year—in 1992—so it was the seventh anniversary. I went back there last year. And it was raining, and there were children standing in the rain and people standing in the rain. And the thing that meant the most to me—not the Democratic Party event, just going around, because they heard the campaign in the most detail—was people saying, you know, “We're so much better off now, but the thing that really matters is, you did exactly what you said you would do.”

And it seems to me that all of us in life, we can spend all of our time pointing our finger at other people and saying we're better than they are, or we can work as hard as we can on our own character, on our own lives. And if we're in public life, we need to tell people what we're going to do and then we need to do it. And if we don't do it, it ought to be because we tried and couldn't.

I think that's what people know about me and this administration. We laid out the most detailed set of commitments anybody ever had in '92. We've accomplished virtually everything we set out to do. What we haven't accomplished, we tried and failed to accomplish. And even there, in the health care area, we made a lot of progress. And people know that.

So I'm satisfied that the American people will make a judgment in this election based on what's best for them and their families, on whatever factors they choose. They're in control again. We're back into the biggest job interview in the whole world. And whatever they decide and however they decide it, I think they'll get it right. They nearly always do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you get angry, though, when somebody like Alan Keyes said recently, “We are coming to the end of the most disgraceful, the most immoral Presidency in the history of this country”?

The President. No, because he's a far right-winger who probably thought *Iran-contra* was a good thing for America. And you know, there's just no evidence to support it. I mean, you know—so it doesn't make me mad at all. How could you take that seriously? This is about—one of the things that I had to learn when I moved to Washington is, before I ever got angry at anybody—anything anybody said, was to ask myself whether it was about the subject they were discussing or whether it was really about power.

And I remember once, I had a conversation with a Republican Senator in the middle of the D'Amato hearings when he was trying to convince people, or at least the Republican Senators were, that my wife had done something wrong in this Whitewater thing, which was totally absurd. And so I asked this Senator, I said, "Do you think either one of us did anything wrong? Not illegal, just wrong, even wrong?" And he started laughing. He said, "You've got to be kidding." He said, "Of course you didn't do anything wrong. That's not the purpose of this. The purpose of this is to convince the American people you did. It's all about power."

Now, I made a mistake. I acknowledged it. I've done my best to atone for it. But all this broad-brush stuff, you know, people see that for what it is. And when I'm criticized now, I try to remember Benjamin Franklin's admonition that our critics are our friends, for they show us our faults. So, you know, I'm just trying to be a better person and a better President every day. I don't know what else to do. And I'm trying not to let this stuff get in the way.

Again let me say, the job of a President is to have a vision and a strategy and pursue it; to show up every day and, insofar as possible, to think about the American people and their welfare, and to not think about himself. The environment in which a President operates is designed to prevent him from doing that—as much as possible, to make him torn up and upset, full of recriminations and anger, and have his attention divided.

So what I've tried to do is to create a frame of mind and a climate around here with our people, so we could do our job. I hope I've succeeded. I think the results speak for themselves.

Impeachment and Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. Difficult question on a matter of history that I feel compelled to ask you, Mr. President. We sat, you and I, 2 years ago almost to the day, and I—it was the day that the Monica Lewinsky story broke in the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times. And I—and you denied that you had had an improper sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. In retrospect, if you had answered that differently right at the beginning, not only just my question but all those questions at the beginning, do you think there would have been a different result

and that, in fact, you might not have even been impeached?

The President. I don't know. I don't know. I just don't know. I wish I knew the answer to that, but I don't. But the thing I regret most, except for doing the wrong thing, is misleading the American people about it. I do not regret the fact that I fought the Independent Counsel. And what they did was, in that case and generally, was completely overboard. And now rational retrospectives are beginning to come out, where people have no connection to me, talking about what an abuse of power it was and what a threat to the American system it was. And I'm glad that our people stuck with me, and that the American people stuck with me, and I was able to resist what it was they attempted to do.

But I do regret the fact that I wasn't straight with the American people about it. It was something I was ashamed of and pained about, and I regret that.

Mr. Lehrer. There was another interview that we did before that, in which I asked you if you agreed with Susan McDougal that Kenneth Starr was out to get you. And your answer was interpreted by Mr. Starr and others that, "well, the facts speak for themselves," is what you said. There have been many facts since then. That interview was even before 2 years ago. Do you think the facts have spoken on that?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I mean, it's not even close anymore. Everybody knows what the deal was. And more and more, there will be people who didn't have a vested interest in trying to promote some view they had previously taken who will evaluate this and come to the same conclusion.

And as I said, even though I'm sorry about what I did and sorry about the developments there, I really felt, once the last chapter of this played out, that I was defending the Constitution and the Presidency. And I feel that more strongly today.

I think they knew for a long time there was nothing to Whitewater. They knew it was a bunch of bull. They had no evidence. In fact, if even the law we had, or the one we had before the independent counsel law had been in place, there never would have been a special counsel because it didn't meet the standard. The only reason I agreed to ask Janet Reno to appoint one in the first place was I really believed that the people that were talking about it wanted

to know the truth, and I knew that they'd just look into Whitewater and find out it was a big bunch of bull and go on. And what I found out was that a lot of the people who wanted it didn't want to know the truth. And they wanted somebody that could hang on until they could find something that they could find about me or Hillary.

But they knew for a long time. You know, they knew before 1996 that there was nothing to it, which is why they had to get rid of Mr. Fiske and get Mr. Starr in there, so it would drag past the '96 election. And I think history will show that, too. So I'm relaxed about that, and I don't spend much time thinking about it.

Again, to me, I had to make amends to the American people, and to my family and to my friends and my administration. I've done my best to do that. Now, the only way I can do that is just keep looking toward the future, to stay excited, to stay upbeat, and to stay focused. And that's what I'm trying to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you have moments, private moments, of pleasure and satisfaction knowing that if, in fact, there was a conspiracy to run you out of office, it didn't work, you're still sitting in the Oval Office?

The President. I don't spend much time thinking about it like that. You know, maybe when I'm gone I will. I'm grateful that for whatever reason, my friends and my family stayed with me; the American people stayed with me. I believe I defended the Constitution against a serious threat. I'm sorry I did something wrong, which gave them an excuse to really go overboard. I'm very sorry about that. But mostly what I try to do is to focus on trying to be a better President, trying to be a better person, trying to be a better husband and father, just trying to do the things that I can do.

You know, you can't—none of us ever gets ahead in life, I don't think, by taking big satisfaction in victories or looking down on other people or keeping our anger pent up. One of the things I learned in this whole deal is you've got to let all that go. Life will always humble you if you give in to your anger or take some satisfaction that you defeated somebody or some satisfaction that, well, no matter how bad I am, at least I didn't do this, that, or the other thing. Life will always humble you. And I have just tried to be grateful and to keep serving and to just worry about myself and not think about

other people—I mean in terms of whether you're doing right or wrong. That's all I can do.

But I'm actually—what I feel every day is just, I'm just happy. My family was all here at Christmas. We had this fabulous Christmas. My administration, I've been fortunate by having all these people stay with me. The ones that leave are going off to do exciting things. And we've got—I feel that when I took office, the country had so many problems in it. It's like we've turned it around now, and we're going in the right direction. And now we've got a chance to really dream big dreams for our children. And that's a great thing to be doing in your last year in office—it's great—and not only to dream those dreams but actually take some big steps toward achieving them. So I'm just happy. I just—you know, I can't be mad or—it's hard for me to think about all that stuff. It just happened. I've come to terms with it, and I'm just trying to go on.

President's Future Plans

Mr. Lehrer. When this next year is over, you'll leave office, and you'll be the youngest former President since Teddy Roosevelt. You'll be in your fifties. You'll still have a lot of time and energy. Are you worried about that at all, about staying connected?

The President. No, I'm excited about it. No, no, I'm so excited about it. I have—I mean, I'm worried I'll have to go back to learning basic things. You know, I'll—but I'm excited about that, too, driving a car, shopping for food, paying the bills when the house—the pipes freeze, you know, all that kind of stuff. You've got to go back to living your life like an ordinary person. I think that's good.

But Theodore Roosevelt had an interesting life when he left office. And I—of course, I've said this many times; I think President Carter has basically set the standard for what Presidents should do in terms of his public service at home and around the world. And that shows you that there's just worlds of possibilities out there. I'm very excited about it.

There are all kinds of things that I'll have to do. Of course, I'll have to make a living, and I hope I'll have to make a living to support a wife who's continuing our family's tradition of public service. But—

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Lehrer. Do you think she's going to win?

The President. I do, yes. I do.

Mr. Lehrer. Why? Why do you think so?

The President. Well, I think they're both very strong, formidable people and strong, formidable candidates. You know, you get all these elections, where you've got to bad-mouth one candidate to like another, and you'd think I'd certainly be there in the race involving my wife. But the truth is, the mayor and Hillary are both strong, formidable people. They have impressive achievements in their lives that relate to public service.

But I think that she's much better suited for the work of a Senator and this whole legislative process. And I think that the passions of her life, 30 years of work and achievement in education and health care and the challenges that children and families face, and the whole philosophy she has about community are more consistent with where New York is today and what they need in the future.

And so that's why I think she'll win, not because I think he's the bad guy or something, because I think they're both very strong people. But I think that New York will believe that, in the end, that what she represents and where she wants to go and what her skills are and what she knows and cares most about is a little

closer to where they are than what he—his whole approach. And I think she'll win.

So I'll have to worry about that. But once I figure out how to support my wife's public service—she's supported mine for many years—and fulfill my other family obligations, I want to find a way, through the center I'm going to build in Arkansas, with my library, and in other ways, to be a public servant. You don't have to be an elected official to be a public servant. You can be a servant in other ways. And I can help others and do things, and that's what I want to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Jim Barksdale, managing partner, the Barksdale Group; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic Presidential candidate; Republican Presidential candidate Alan Keyes; former Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato; Susan McDougal, White-water investigation defendant; former Independent Counsel Robert B. Fiske, Jr., and his successor, Kenneth Starr; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces for Stabilization of Areas of the Former Yugoslavia

January 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of July 19, 1999, I provided further information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), which began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in sup-

port of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1247 of June 18, 1999. The mission of SFOR is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key areas and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the process of being

reduced from approximately 6,200 to 4,600 personnel. In the second half of 1999, all NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR in efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have sustained no combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and

Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 27.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union *January 27, 2000*

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans:

We are fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. Never before has our Nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis and so few external threats. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity and, therefore, such a profound obligation to build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams.

We begin the new century with over 20 million new jobs; the fastest economic growth in more than 30 years; the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record; the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years; and next month, America will achieve the longest period of economic growth in our entire history. We have built a new economy.

And our economic revolution has been matched by a revival of the American spirit: crime down by 20 percent, to its lowest level in 25 years; teen births down 7 years in a row; adoptions up by 30 percent; welfare rolls cut in half, to their lowest levels in 30 years.

My fellow Americans, the state of our Union is the strongest it has ever been.

As always, the real credit belongs to the American people. My gratitude also goes to those of you in this Chamber who have worked with us to put progress over partisanship.

Eight years ago, it was not so clear to most Americans there would be much to celebrate in the year 2000. Then our Nation was gripped by economic distress, social decline, political gridlock. The title of a best-selling book asked: "America: What Went Wrong?"

In the best traditions of our Nation, Americans determined to set things right. We restored the vital center, replacing outmoded ideologies with a new vision anchored in basic, enduring values: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. We reinvented Government, transforming it into a catalyst for new ideas that stress both opportunity and responsibility and give our people the tools they need to solve their own problems.

With the smallest Federal work force in 40 years, we turned record deficits into record surpluses and doubled our investment in education. We cut crime with 100,000 community police and the Brady law, which has kept guns out of the hands of half a million criminals.

We ended welfare as we knew it, requiring work while protecting health care and nutrition for children and investing more in child care, transportation, and housing to help their parents go to work. We've helped parents to succeed at home and at work with family leave, which 20 million Americans have now used to care for a newborn child or a sick loved one. We've engaged 150,000 young Americans in citizen service through AmeriCorps, while helping them earn money for college.

In 1992, we just had a roadmap. Today, we have results.

Even more important, America again has the confidence to dream big dreams. But we must not let this confidence drift into complacency. For we, all of us, will be judged by the dreams and deeds we pass on to our children. And on that score, we will be held to a high standard, indeed, because our chance to do good is so great.

My fellow Americans, we have crossed the bridge we built to the 21st century. Now, we must shape a 21st century American revolution of opportunity, responsibility, and community. We must be now, as we were in the beginning, a new nation.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight . . . it should be the growing Nation with a future that takes the long look ahead." So tonight let us take our long look ahead and set great goals for our Nation.

To 21st century America, let us pledge these things: Every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. Every family will be able to succeed at home and at work, and no child will be raised in poverty. We will meet the challenge of the aging of America. We will assure quality, affordable health care, at last, for all Americans. We will make America the safest big country on Earth. We will pay off our national debt for the first time since 1835.* We will bring prosperity to every American community. We will reverse the course of climate change and leave a safer, cleaner planet. America will lead the world toward shared peace and prosperity and the far frontiers of science and technology. And we will become at last what our Founders pledged us to be so long ago:

* White House correction.

One Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

These are great goals, worthy of a great nation. We will not reach them all this year, not even in this decade. But we will reach them. Let us remember that the first American Revolution was not won with a single shot; the continent was not settled in a single year. The lesson of our history and the lesson of the last 7 years is that great goals are reached step by step, always building on our progress, always gaining ground.

Of course, you can't gain ground if you're standing still. And for too long this Congress has been standing still on some of our most pressing national priorities. So let's begin tonight with them.

Again, I ask you to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights. I ask you to pass commonsense gun safety legislation. I ask you to pass campaign finance reform. I ask you to vote up or down on judicial nominations and other important appointees. And again, I ask you—I implore you to raise the minimum wage.

Now, 2 years ago—let me try to balance the seesaw here—[laughter]—2 years ago, as we reached across party lines to reach our first balanced budget, I asked that we meet our responsibility to the next generation by maintaining our fiscal discipline. Because we refused to stray from that path, we are doing something that would have seemed unimaginable 7 years ago. We are actually paying down the national debt. Now, if we stay on this path, we can pay down the debt entirely in just 13 years now and make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

In 1993 we began to put our fiscal house in order with the Deficit Reduction Act, which you'll all remember won passages in both Houses by just a single vote. Your former colleague, my first Secretary of the Treasury, led that effort and sparked our long boom. He's here with us tonight. Lloyd Bentsen, you have served America well, and we thank you.

Beyond paying off the debt, we must ensure that the benefits of debt reduction go to preserving two of the most important guarantees we make to every American, Social Security and Medicare. Tonight I ask you to work with me to make a bipartisan downpayment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust

Fund so that it will be strong and sound for the next 50 years.

But this is just the start of our journey. We must also take the right steps toward reaching our great goals. First and foremost, we need a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every single child can learn. Because education is more important than ever, more than ever the key to our children's future, we must make sure all our children have that key. That means quality preschool and after-school, the best trained teachers in the classroom, and college opportunities for all our children.

For 7 years now, we've worked hard to improve our schools, with opportunity and responsibility, investing more but demanding more in turn. Reading, math, college entrance scores are up. Some of the most impressive gains are in schools in very poor neighborhoods.

But all successful schools have followed the same proven formula: higher standards, more accountability, and extra help so children who need it can get it to reach those standards. I have sent Congress a reform plan based on that formula. It holds States and school districts accountable for progress and rewards them for results. Each year, our National Government invests more than \$15 billion in our schools. It is time to support what works and stop supporting what doesn't.

Now, as we demand more from our schools, we should also invest more in our schools. Let's double our investment to help States and districts turn around their worst performing schools or shut them down. Let's double our investments in after-school and summer school programs, which boost achievement and keep people off the streets and out of trouble. If we do this, we can give every single child in every failing school in America—everyone—the chance to meet high standards.

Since 1993, we've nearly doubled our investment in Head Start and improved its quality. Tonight I ask you for another \$1 billion for Head Start, the largest increase in the history of the program.

We know that children learn best in smaller classes with good teachers. For 2 years in a row, Congress has supported my plan to hire 100,000 new qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades. I thank you for that, and I ask you to make it 3 in a row. And to make sure all teachers know the subjects they

teach, tonight I propose a new teacher quality initiative, to recruit more talented people into the classroom, reward good teachers for staying there, and give all teachers the training they need.

We know charter schools provide real public school choice. When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. Today, thanks to you, there are 1,700. I ask you now to help us meet our goal of 3,000 charter schools by next year.

We know we must connect all our classrooms to the Internet, and we're getting there. In 1994, only 3 percent of our classrooms were connected. Today, with the help of the Vice President's E-rate program, more than half of them are, and 90 percent of our schools have at least one Internet connection. But we cannot finish the job when a third of all our schools are in serious disrepair. Many of them have walls and wires so old, they're too old for the Internet. So tonight I propose to help 5,000 schools a year make immediate and urgent repairs and, again, to help build or modernize 6,000 more, to get students out of trailers and into high-tech classrooms.

I ask all of you to help me double our bipartisan GEAR UP program, which provides mentors for disadvantaged young people. If we double it, we can provide mentors for 1.4 million of them. Let's also offer these kids from disadvantaged backgrounds the same chance to take the same college test-prep courses wealthier students use to boost their test scores.

To make the American dream achievable for all, we must make college affordable for all. For 7 years, on a bipartisan basis, we have taken action toward that goal: larger Pell grants, more affordable student loans, education IRA's, and our HOPE scholarships, which have already benefited 5 million young people.

Now, 67 percent of high school graduates are going on to college. That's up 10 percent since 1993. Yet millions of families still strain to pay college tuition. They need help. So I propose a landmark \$30 billion college opportunity tax cut, a middle class tax deduction for up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs. The previous actions of this Congress have already made 2 years of college affordable for all. It's time make 4 years of college affordable for all. If we take all these steps, we'll move a long way toward making sure every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed.

We also need a 21st century revolution to reward work and strengthen families by giving every parent the tools to succeed at work and at the most important work of all, raising children. That means making sure every family has health care and the support to care for aging parents, the tools to bring their children up right, and that no child grows up in poverty.

From my first days as President, we've worked to give families better access to better health care. In 1997, we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP—so that workers who don't have coverage through their employers at least can get it for their children. So far, we've enrolled 2 million children. We're well on our way to our goal of 5 million.

But there are still more than 40 million of our fellow Americans without health insurance, more than there were in 1993. Tonight I propose that we follow Vice President Gore's suggestion to make low income parents eligible for the insurance that covers their children. Together with our children's initiative—think of this—together with our children's initiative, this action would enable us to cover nearly a quarter of all the uninsured people in America.

Again, I want to ask you to let people between the ages of 55 and 65, the fastest growing group of uninsured, buy into Medicare. And this year I propose to give them a tax credit to make that choice an affordable one. I hope you will support that, as well.

When the baby boomers retire, Medicare will be faced with caring for twice as many of our citizens; yet, it is far from ready to do so. My generation must not ask our children's generation to shoulder our burden. We simply must act now to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

My budget includes a comprehensive plan to reform Medicare, to make it more efficient and more competitive. And it dedicates nearly \$400 billion of our budget surplus to keep Medicare solvent past 2025. And at long last, it also provides funds to give every senior a voluntary choice of affordable coverage for prescription drugs.

Lifesaving drugs are an indispensable part of modern medicine. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five of our seniors now lack dependable drug coverage which can lengthen and enrich their lives. Millions of older Americans, who need prescription drugs the most, pay the high-

est prices for them. In good conscience, we cannot let another year pass without extending to all our seniors this lifeline of affordable prescription drugs.

Record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving but a difficult and often very expensive choice. Last year, I proposed a \$1,000 tax credit for long-term care. Frankly, it wasn't enough. This year, let's triple it to \$3,000. But this year, let's pass it.

We also have to make needed investments to expand access to mental health care. I want to take a moment to thank the person who led our first White House Conference on Mental Health last year and who for 7 years has led all our efforts to break down the barriers to decent treatment of people with mental illness. Thank you, Tipper Gore.

Taken together, these proposals would mark the largest investment in health care in the 35 years since Medicare was created—the largest investment in 35 years. That would be a big step toward assuring quality health care for all Americans, young and old. And I ask you to embrace them and pass them.

We must also make investments that reward work and support families. Nothing does that better than the earned-income tax credit, the EITC. The "E" in the EITC is about earning, working, taking responsibility, and being rewarded for it. In my very first address to you, I asked Congress to greatly expand this credit, and you did. As a result, in 1998 alone, the EITC helped more than 4.3 million Americans work their way out of poverty toward the middle class. That's double the number in 1993.

Tonight I propose another major expansion of the EITC: to reduce the marriage penalty, to make sure it rewards marriage as it rewards work, and also to expand the tax credit for families that have more than two children. It punishes people with more than two children today. Our proposal would allow families with three or more children to get up to \$1,100 more in tax relief. These are working families; their children should not be in poverty.

We also can't reward work and family unless men and women get equal pay for equal work. Today the female unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 46 years. Yet, women still only earn about 75 cents for every dollar men

earn. We must do better, by providing the resources to enforce present equal pay laws, training more women for high-paying, high-tech jobs, and passing the "Paycheck Fairness Act."

Many working parents spend up to a quarter—a quarter—of their income on child care. Last year, we helped parents provide child care for about 2 million children. My child care initiative before you now, along with funds already secured in welfare reform, would make child care better, safer, and more affordable for another 400,000 children. I ask you to pass that. They need it out there.

For hard-pressed middle income families, we should also expand the child care tax credit. And I believe strongly we should take the next big step and make that tax credit refundable for low income families. For people making under \$30,000 a year, that could mean up to \$2,400 for child care costs. You know, we all say we're pro-work and pro-family. Passing this proposal would prove it.

Ten of millions of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. As hard as they work, they still don't have the opportunity to save. Too few can make use of IRA's and 401k plans. We should do more to help all working families save and accumulate wealth. That's the idea behind the Individual Development Accounts, the IDA's. I ask you to take that idea to the next level, with new retirement savings accounts that enable every low and moderate income family in America to save for retirement, a first home, a medical emergency, or a college education. I propose to match their contributions, however small, dollar for dollar, every year they save. And I propose to give a major new tax credit to any small business that will provide a meaningful pension to its workers. Those people ought to have retirement as well as the rest of us.

Nearly one in three American children grows up without a father. These children are 5 times more likely to live in poverty than children with both parents at home. Clearly, demanding and supporting responsible fatherhood is critical to lifting all our children out of poverty. We've doubled child support collections since 1992. And I'm proposing to you tough new measures to hold still more fathers responsible.

But we should recognize that a lot of fathers want to do right by their children but need help to do it. Carlos Rosas of St. Paul, Minnesota, wanted to do right by his son, and he

got the help to do it. Now he's got a good job, and he supports his little boy. My budget will help 40,000 more fathers make the same choices Carlos Rosas did. I thank him for being here tonight. Stand up, Carlos. [Applause] Thank you.

If there is any single issue on which we should be able to reach across party lines, it is in our common commitment to reward work and strengthen families. Just remember what we did last year. We came together to help people with disabilities keep their health insurance when they go to work. And I thank you for that. Thanks to overwhelming bipartisan support from this Congress, we have improved foster care. We've helped those young people who leave it when they turn 18, and we have dramatically increased the number of foster care children going into adoptive homes. I thank all of you for all of that.

Of course, I am forever grateful to the person who has led our efforts from the beginning and who's worked so tirelessly for children and families for 30 years now, my wife, Hillary, and I thank her.

If we take the steps just discussed, we can go a long, long way toward empowering parents to succeed at home and at work and ensuring that no child is raised in poverty. We can make these vital investments in health care, education, support for working families, and still offer tax cuts to help pay for college, for retirement, to care for aging parents, to reduce the marriage penalty. We can do these things without forsaking the path of fiscal discipline that got us to this point here tonight. Indeed, we must make these investments and these tax cuts in the context of a balanced budget that strengthens and extends the life of Social Security and Medicare and pays down the national debt.

Crime in America has dropped for the past 7 years—that's the longest decline on record—thanks to a national consensus we helped to forge on community police, sensible gun safety laws, and effective prevention. But nobody, nobody here, nobody in America believes we're safe enough. So again, I ask you to set a higher goal. Let's make this country the safest big country in the world.

Last fall, Congress supported my plan to hire, in addition to the 100,000 community police we've already funded, 50,000 more, concentrated in high-crime neighborhoods. I ask your continued support for that.

Soon after the Columbine tragedy, Congress considered commonsense gun legislation, to require Brady background checks at the gun shows, child safety locks for new handguns, and a ban on the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. With courage and a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President—[laughter]—the Senate faced down the gun lobby, stood up for the American people, and passed this legislation. But the House failed to follow suit.

Now, we have all seen what happens when guns fall into the wrong hands. Daniel Mauser was only 15 years old when he was gunned down at Columbine. He was an amazing kid, a straight-A student, a good skier. Like all parents who lose their children, his father, Tom, has borne unimaginable grief. Somehow he has found the strength to honor his son by transforming his grief into action. Earlier this month, he took a leave of absence from his job to fight for tougher gun safety laws. I pray that his courage and wisdom will at long last move this Congress to make commonsense gun legislation the very next order of business. Tom Mauser, stand up. We thank you for being here tonight. Tom. Thank you, Tom. [Applause]

We must strengthen our gun laws and enforce those already on the books better. Federal gun crime prosecutions are up 16 percent since I took office. But we must do more. I propose to hire more Federal and local gun prosecutors and more ATF agents to crack down on illegal gun traffickers and bad-apple dealers. And we must give them the enforcement tools that they need, tools to trace every gun and every bullet used in every gun crime in the United States. I ask you to help us do that.

Every State in this country already requires hunters and automobile drivers to have a license. I think they ought to do the same thing for handgun purchases. Now, specifically, I propose a plan to ensure that all new handgun buyers must first have a photo license from their State showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course, before they get the gun. I hope you'll help me pass that in this Congress.

Listen to this—listen to this. The accidental gun rate—the accidental gun death rate of children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. Now, technologies now exist that could lead to guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them. I ask Congress to

fund research into smart gun technology to save these children's lives. I ask responsible leaders in the gun industry to work with us on smart guns and other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands, to keep our children safe.

You know, every parent I know worries about the impact of violence in the media on their children. I want to begin by thanking the entertainment industry for accepting my challenge to put voluntary ratings on TV programs and video and Internet games. But frankly, the ratings are too numerous, diverse, and confusing to be really useful to parents. So tonight I ask the industry to accept the First Lady's challenge to develop a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier for parents to understand and enforce.

The steps I outline will take us well on our way to making America the safest big country in the world.

Now, to keep our historic economic expansion going, the subject of a lot of discussion in this community and others, I believe we need a 21st century revolution to open new markets, start new businesses, hire new workers right here in America, in our inner cities, poor rural areas, and Native American reservations.

Our Nation's prosperity hasn't yet reached these places. Over the last 6 months, I've traveled to a lot of them, joined by many of you and many far-sighted business people, to shine a spotlight on the enormous potential in communities from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, from Watts to the Pine Ridge Reservation. Everywhere I go, I meet talented people eager for opportunity and able to work. Tonight I ask you, let's put them to work. For business, it's the smart thing to do. For America, it's the right thing to do. And let me ask you something: If we don't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it?

So I ask Congress to give businesses the same incentives to invest in America's new markets they now have to invest in markets overseas. Tonight I propose a large new markets tax credit and other incentives to spur \$22 billion in private-sector capital to create new businesses and new investments in our inner cities and rural areas. Because empowerment zones have been creating these opportunities for 5 years now, I also ask you to increase incentives to invest in them and to create more of them.

And let me say to all of you again what I have tried to say at every turn: This is not a

Democratic or a Republican issue. Giving people a chance to live their dreams is an American issue.

Mr. Speaker, it was a powerful moment last November when you joined Reverend Jesse Jackson and me in your home State of Illinois and committed to working toward our common goal by combining the best ideas from both sides of the aisle. I want to thank you again and to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you. This is a worthy joint endeavor. Thank you.

I also ask you to make special efforts to address the areas of our Nation with the highest rates of poverty, our Native American reservations and the Mississippi Delta. My budget includes a \$110 million initiative to promote economic development in the Delta and a billion dollars to increase economic opportunity, health care, education, and law enforcement for our Native American communities. We should begin this new century by honoring our historic responsibility to empower the first Americans. And I want to thank tonight the leaders and the members from both parties who've expressed to me an interest in working with us on these efforts. They are profoundly important.

There's another part of our American community in trouble tonight, our family farmers. When I signed the farm bill in 1996, I said there was great danger it would work well in good times but not in bad. Well, droughts, floods, and historically low prices have made these times very bad for the farmers. We must work together to strengthen the farm safety net, invest in land conservation, and create some new markets for them by expanding our programs for bio-based fuels and products. Please, they need help. Let's do it together.

Opportunity for all requires something else today, having access to a computer and knowing how to use it. That means we must close the digital divide between those who've got the tools and those who don't. Connecting classrooms and libraries to the Internet is crucial, but it's just a start. My budget ensures that all new teachers are trained to teach 21st century skills, and it creates technology centers in 1,000 communities to serve adults. This spring, I'll invite high-tech leaders to join me on another new markets tour, to close the digital divide and open opportunity for our people. I want to thank the high-tech companies that already are doing so much in this area. I hope the new tax incentives I have

proposed will get all the rest of them to join us. This is a national crusade. We have got to do this and do it quickly.

Now, again I say to you, these are steps, but step by step, we can go a long way toward our goal of bringing opportunity to every community.

To realize the full possibilities of this economy, we must reach beyond our own borders to shape the revolution that is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and individuals and economies and cultures: globalization. It's the central reality of our time.

Of course, change this profound is both liberating and threatening to people. But there's no turning back. And our open, creative society stands to benefit more than any other if we understand and act on the realities of interdependence. We have to be at the center of every vital global network, as a good neighbor and a good partner. We have to recognize that we cannot build our future without helping others to build theirs.

The first thing we have got to do is to forge a new consensus on trade. Now, those of us who believe passionately in the power of open trade, we have to ensure that it lifts both our living standards and our values, never tolerating abusive child labor or a race to the bottom in the environment and worker protection. But others must recognize that open markets and rule-based trade are the best engines we know of for raising living standards, reducing global poverty and environmental destruction, and assuring the free flow of ideas.

I believe, as strongly tonight as I did the first day I got here, the only direction forward for America on trade—the only direction for America on trade is to keep going forward. I ask you to help me forge that consensus. We have to make developing economies our partners in prosperity. That's why I would like to ask you again to finalize our groundbreaking African and Caribbean Basin trade initiatives.

But globalization is about more than economics. Our purpose must be to bring together the world around freedom and democracy and peace and to oppose those who would tear it apart. Here are the fundamental challenges I believe America must meet to shape the 21st century world.

First, we must continue to encourage our former adversaries, Russia and China, to emerge

as stable, prosperous, democratic nations. Both are being held back today from reaching their full potential: Russia by the legacy of communism, an economy in turmoil, a cruel and self-defeating war in Chechnya; China by the illusion that it can buy stability at the expense of freedom.

But think how much has changed in the past decade: 5,000 former Soviet nuclear weapons taken out of commission; Russian soldiers actually serving with ours in the Balkans; Russian people electing their leaders for the first time in 1,000 years; and in China, an economy more open to the world than ever before.

Of course, no one, not a single person in this Chamber tonight can know for sure what direction these great nations will take. But we do know for sure that we can choose what we do. And we should do everything in our power to increase the chance that they will choose wisely, to be constructive members of our global community.

That's why we should support those Russians who are struggling for a democratic, prosperous future; continue to reduce both our nuclear arsenals; and help Russia to safeguard weapons and materials that remain.

And that's why I believe Congress should support the agreement we negotiated to bring China into the WTO, by passing permanent normal trade relations with China as soon as possible this year. I think you ought to do it for two reasons: First of all, our markets are already open to China; this agreement will open China's markets to us. And second, it will plainly advance the cause of peace in Asia and promote the cause of change in China. No, we don't know where it's going. All we can do is decide what we're going to do. But when all is said and done, we need to know we did everything we possibly could to maximize the chance that China will choose the right future.

A second challenge we've got is to protect our own security from conflicts that pose the risk of wider war and threaten our common humanity. We can't prevent every conflict or stop every outrage. But where our interests are at stake and we can make a difference, we should be, and we must be, peacemakers.

We should be proud of our role in bringing the Middle East closer to a lasting peace, building peace in Northern Ireland, working for peace in East Timor and Africa, promoting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and in

Cyprus, working to defuse these crises between India and Pakistan, in defending human rights and religious freedom. And we should be proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces and those of our allies who stopped the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, enabling a million people to return to their homes.

When Slobodan Milosevic unleashed his terror on Kosovo, Captain John Cherrey was one of the brave airmen who turned the tide. And when another American plane was shot down over Serbia, he flew into the teeth of enemy air defenses to bring his fellow pilot home. Thanks to our Armed Forces' skill and bravery, we prevailed in Kosovo without losing a single American in combat. I want to introduce Captain Cherrey to you. We honor Captain Cherrey, and we promise you, Captain, we'll finish the job you began. Stand up so we can see you. *[Applause]*

A third challenge we have is to keep this inexorable march of technology from giving terrorists and potentially hostile nations the means to undermine our defenses. Keep in mind, the same technological advances that have shrunk cell phones to fit in the palms of our hands can also make weapons of terror easier to conceal and easier to use.

We must meet this threat by making effective agreements to restrain nuclear and missile programs in North Korea, curbing the flow of lethal technology to Iran, preventing Iraq from threatening its neighbors, increasing our preparedness against chemical and biological attack, protecting our vital computer systems from hackers and criminals, and developing a system to defend against new missile threats, while working to preserve our ABM missile treaty with Russia. We must do all these things.

I predict to you, when most of us are long gone but some time in the next 10 to 20 years, the major security threat this country will face will come from the enemies of the nation-state, the narcotraffickers and the terrorists and the organized criminals who will be organized together, working together, with increasing access to ever more sophisticated chemical and biological weapons. And I want to thank the Pentagon and others for doing what they're doing right now to try to help protect us and plan for that, so that our defenses will be strong. I ask for your support to ensure they can succeed.

I also want to ask you for a constructive bipartisan dialog this year to work to build a consensus which I hope will eventually lead to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

I hope we can also have a constructive effort to meet the challenge that is presented to our planet by the huge gulf between rich and poor. We cannot accept a world in which part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy and the rest live on the bare edge of survival. I think we have to do our part to change that with expanded trade, expanded aid, and the expansion of freedom.

This is interesting: From Nigeria to Indonesia, more people got the right to choose their leaders in 1999 than in 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. We've got to stand by these democracies, including and especially tonight Colombia, which is fighting narcotraffickers, for its own people's lives and our children's lives. I have proposed a strong 2-year package to help Colombia win this fight. I want to thank the leaders in both parties in both Houses for listening to me and the President of Colombia about it. We have got to pass this. I want to ask your help. A lot is riding on it. And it's so important for the long-term stability of our country and for what happens in Latin America.

I also want you to know I'm going to send you new legislation to go after what these drug barons value the most, their money. And I hope you'll pass that as well.

In a world where over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day, we also have got to do our part in the global endeavor to reduce the debts of the poorest countries, so they can invest in education, health care, and economic growth. That's what the Pope and other religious leaders have urged us to do. And last year, Congress made a downpayment on America's share. I ask you to continue that. I thank you for what you did and ask you to stay the course.

I also want to say that America must help more nations to break the bonds of disease. Last year in Africa, 10 times as many people died from AIDS as were killed in wars—10 times. The budget I give you invests \$150 million more in the fight against this and other infectious killers. And today I propose a tax credit to speed the development of vaccines for diseases like malaria, TB, and AIDS. I ask the private sector and our partners around the world to join us in embracing this cause. We can save

millions of lives together, and we ought to do it.

I also want to mention our final challenge, which, as always, is the most important. I ask you to pass a national security budget that keeps our military the best trained and best equipped in the world, with heightened readiness and 21st century weapons, which raises salaries for our service men and women, which protects our veterans, which fully funds the diplomacy that keeps our soldiers out of war, which makes good on our commitment to our U.N. dues and arrears. I ask you to pass this budget.

I also want to say something, if I might, very personal tonight. The American people watching us at home, with the help of all the commentators, can tell, from who stands and who sits and who claps and who doesn't, that there's still modest differences of opinion in this room. [Laughter] But I want to thank you for something, every one of you. I want to thank you for the extraordinary support you have given, Republicans and Democrats alike, to our men and women in uniform. I thank you for that.

I also want to thank, especially, two people. First, I want to thank our Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen, for symbolizing our bipartisan commitment to national security. Thank you, sir. Even more, I want to thank his wife, Janet, who, more than any other American citizen, has tirelessly traveled this world to show the support we all feel for our troops. Thank you, Janet Cohen. I appreciate that. Thank you.

These are the challenges we have to meet so that we can lead the world toward peace and freedom in an era of globalization.

I want to tell you that I am very grateful for many things as President. But one of the things I'm grateful for is the opportunity that the Vice President and I have had to finally put to rest the bogus idea that you cannot grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time.

As our economy has grown, we've rid more than 500 neighborhoods of toxic waste, ensured cleaner air and water for millions of people. In the past 3 months alone, we've helped preserve 40 million acres of roadless lands in the national forests, created three new national monuments.

But as our communities grow, our commitment to conservation must continue to grow.

Tonight I propose creating a permanent conservation fund, to restore wildlife, protect coastlines, save natural treasures, from the California redwoods to the Florida Everglades. This lands legacy endowment would represent by far the most enduring investment in land preservation ever proposed in this House. I hope we can get together with all the people with different ideas and do this. This is a gift we should give to our children and our grandchildren for all time, across party lines. We can make an agreement to do this.

Last year the Vice President launched a new effort to make communities more liberal—livable—[laughter]—liberal, I know. [Laughter] Wait a minute, I've got a punchline now. That's this year's agenda; last year was livable, right? [Laughter] That's what Senator Lott is going to say in the commentary afterwards—[laughter]—to make our communities more livable. This is big business. This is a big issue. What does that mean? You ask anybody that lives in an unlivable community, and they'll tell you. They want their kids to grow up next to parks, not parking lots; the parents don't have to spend all their time stalled in traffic when they could be home with their children.

Tonight I ask you to support new funding for the following things, to make American communities more liberal—livable. [Laughter] I've done pretty well with this speech, but I can't say that.

One, I want you to help us to do three things. We need more funding for advanced transit systems. We need more funding for saving open spaces in places of heavy development. And we need more funding—this ought to have bipartisan appeal—we need more funding for helping major cities around the Great Lakes protect their waterways and enhance their quality of life. We need these things, and I want you to help us.

The greatest environmental challenge of the new century is global warming. The scientists tell us the 1990's were the hottest decade of the entire millennium. If we fail to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, deadly heat waves and droughts will become more frequent, coastal areas will flood, and economies will be disrupted. That is going to happen, unless we act.

Many people in the United States, some people in this Chamber, and lots of folks around the world still believe you cannot cut greenhouse gas emissions without slowing economic

growth. In the industrial age, that may well have been true. But in this digital economy, it is not true anymore. New technologies make it possible to cut harmful emissions and provide even more growth.

For example, just last week, automakers unveiled cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon, the fruits of a unique research partnership between Government and industry. And before you know it, efficient production of bio-fuels will give us the equivalent of hundreds of miles from a gallon of gasoline.

To speed innovation in these kind of technologies, I think we should give a major tax incentive to business for the production of clean energy and to families for buying energy-saving homes and appliances and the next generation of superefficient cars when they hit the showroom floor. I also ask the auto industry to use the available technologies to make all new cars more fuel-efficient right away.

And I ask this Congress to do something else. Please help us make more of our clean energy technology available to the developing world. That will create cleaner growth abroad and a lot more new jobs here in the United States of America.

In the new century, innovations in science and technology will be key not only to the health of the environment but to miraculous improvements in the quality of our lives and advances in the economy. Later this year, researchers will complete the first draft of the entire human genome, the very blueprint of life. It is important for all our fellow Americans to recognize that Federal tax dollars have funded much of this research and that this and other wise investments in science are leading to a revolution in our ability to detect, treat, and prevent disease.

For example, researchers have identified genes that cause Parkinson's, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer. They are designing precision therapies that will block the harmful effect of these genes for good. Researchers already are using this new technique to target and destroy cells that cause breast cancer. Soon, we may be able to use it to prevent the onset of Alzheimer's. Scientists are also working on an artificial retina to help many blind people to see and—listen to this—microchips that would actually directly stimulate damaged spinal cords in a way that could allow people now paralyzed to stand up and walk.

These kinds of innovations are also propelling our remarkable prosperity. Information technology only includes 8 percent of our employment but now accounts for a third of our economic growth along with jobs that pay, by the way, about 80 percent above the private sector average. Again, we ought to keep in mind, Government-funded research brought supercomputers, the Internet, and communications satellites into being. Soon researchers will bring us devices that can translate foreign languages as fast as you can talk, materials 10 times stronger than steel at a fraction of the weight, and—this is unbelievable to me—molecular computers the size of a teardrop with the power of today's fastest supercomputers.

To accelerate the march of discovery across all these disciplines in science and technology, I ask you to support my recommendation of an unprecedented \$3 billion in the 21st century research fund, the largest increase in civilian research in a generation. We owe it to our future.

Now, these new breakthroughs have to be used in ways that reflect our values. First and foremost, we have to safeguard our citizens' privacy. Last year we proposed to protect every citizen's medical record. This year we will finalize those rules. We've also taken the first steps to protect the privacy of bank and credit card records and other financial statements. Soon I will send legislation to you to finish that job. We must also act to prevent any genetic discrimination whatever by employers or insurers. I hope you will support that.

These steps will allow us to lead toward the far frontiers of science and technology. They will enhance our health, the environment, the economy in ways we can't even imagine today. But we all know that at a time when science, technology, and the forces of globalization are bringing so many changes into all our lives, it's more important than ever that we strengthen the bonds that root us in our local communities and in our national community.

No tie binds different people together like citizen service. There's a new spirit of service in America, a movement we've tried to support with AmeriCorps, expanded Peace Corps, unprecedented new partnerships with businesses, foundations, community groups; partnerships, for example, like the one that enlisted 12,000 companies which have now moved 650,000 of our fellow citizens from welfare to work; part-

nerships to battle drug abuse, AIDS, teach young people to read, save America's treasures, strengthen the arts, fight teen pregnancy, prevent violence among young people, promote racial healing. The American people are working together.

But we should do more to help Americans help each other. First, we should help faith-based organizations to do more to fight poverty and drug abuse and help people get back on the right track, with initiatives like Second Chance Homes that do so much to help unwed teen mothers. Second, we should support Americans who tithe and contribute to charities but don't earn enough to claim a tax deduction for it. Tonight I propose new tax incentives that would allow low and middle income citizens who don't itemize to get that deduction. It's nothing but fair, and it will get more people to give.

We should do more to help new immigrants to fully participate in our community. That's why I recommend spending more to teach them civics and English. And since everybody in our community counts, we've got to make sure everyone is counted in this year's census.

Within 10 years—just 10 years—there will be no majority race in our largest State of California. In a little more than 50 years, there will be no majority race in America. In a more interconnected world, this diversity can be our greatest strength. Just look around this Chamber. Look around. We have Members in this Congress from virtually every racial, ethnic, and religious background. And I think you would agree that America is stronger because of it. *[Applause]*

You also have to agree that all those differences you just clapped for all too often spark hatred and division even here at home. Just in the last couple of years, we've seen a man dragged to death in Texas just because he was black. We saw a young man murdered in Wyoming just because he was gay. Last year we saw the shootings of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Jewish children just because of who they were. This is not the American way, and we must draw the line.

I ask you to draw that line by passing without delay the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act" and the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." And I ask you to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Finally tonight, I propose the largest ever investment in our civil rights laws for enforcement, because no American should be subjected to discrimination in finding a home, getting a job, going to school, or securing a loan. Protections in law should be protections in fact.

Last February, because I thought this was so important, I created the White House Office of One America to promote racial reconciliation. That's what one of my personal heroes, Hank Aaron, has done all his life. From his days as our all-time home run king to his recent acts of healing, he has always brought people together. We should follow his example, and we're honored to have him with us tonight. Stand up, Hank Aaron. *[Applause]*

I just want to say one more thing about this, and I want every one of you to think about this the next time you get mad at one of your colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This fall, at the White House, Hillary had one of her millennium dinners, and we had this very distinguished scientist there, who is an expert in this whole work in the human genome. And he said that we are all, regardless of race, genetically 99.9 percent the same.

Now, you may find that uncomfortable when you look around here. *[Laughter]* But it is worth remembering. We can laugh about this, but you think about it. Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths have always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we should do more than just tolerate our diversity; we should honor it and celebrate it.

My fellow Americans, every time I prepare for the State of the Union, I approach it with hope and expectation and excitement for our Nation. But tonight is very special, because we stand on the mountaintop of a new millennium. Behind us we can look back and see the great

expanse of American achievement, and before us we can see even greater, grander frontiers of possibility. We should, all of us, be filled with gratitude and humility for our present progress and prosperity. We should be filled with awe and joy at what lies over the horizon. And we should be filled with absolute determination to make the most of it.

You know, when the Framers finished crafting our Constitution in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin stood in Independence Hall, and he reflected on the carving of the Sun that was on the back of a chair he saw. The Sun was low on the horizon. So he said this—he said, “I've often wondered whether that Sun was rising or setting. Today,” Franklin said, “I have the happiness to know it's a rising Sun.” Today, because each succeeding generation of Americans has kept the fire of freedom burning brightly, lighting those frontiers of possibility, we all still bask in the glow and the warmth of Mr. Franklin's rising Sun.

After 224 years, the American revolution continues. We remain a new nation. And as long as our dreams outweigh our memories, America will be forever young. That is our destiny. And this is our moment.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:18 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; Pope John Paul II; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research, who spoke at the eighth White House Millennium Evening.

Remarks to a United States Conference of Mayors Breakfast Reception January 28, 2000

Thank you, and good morning, and welcome to the White House. I hope most of you are more awake than I am. *[Laughter]* But I will try—I had some remarks here that said that I wanted to amplify on my remarks last night,

and I don't think that I will use that word. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank my good friend Wellington Webb—talking about getting 81 percent of the vote in Denver. You know, Denver has that

sort of characteristic western independence. I always thought if anybody was in a position to get that much vote, there would be enough to say "None of the above" to keep that from happening. [Laughter] So it's quite a tribute to him.

Mayor Coles, Mayor Morial. I want to thank Mayor Scholz from Quincy, Illinois. He is hosting me when we leave here. And there are 20,000 people in the cold out there, so you can be sure I'll give a shorter speech today.

I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, Secretary Slater and Secretary Cuomo, General McCaffrey, Mickey Ibarra. I want to thank Ben Johnson from our Office of One America, Lynn Cutler, and there may be many others here. But we love having the mayors here, because this is sort of a grass-roots operation.

And one of the things that I really worked hard to do—one of my mayors and my neighbor and friend, Pat Hays, from North Little Rock, Arkansas, is here. You know, to be Governor of Arkansas is like being mayor of kind of a nice size city. [Laughter] People accept—they expect you to run the store. And when they show up, they expect you to be there. And when they call, they expect you to return the call. And if they've got a problem, they expect you to send somebody to see to it. And if you don't, pretty soon you're looking for another job. [Laughter]

We've really tried to create an atmosphere around here where all the people who work here, particularly people who never worked for elected officials before—the White House really wouldn't function without all these bright young people that come here and work, but many of them have not had the opportunity ever before in their lives to work for elected officials. And we try to make sure that they all remember, no matter what's going on around here, for whom we're working and what our mission is. And so when you come here and talk to us, it reminds us of that, and we're grateful.

I have so many friends in this group. I can't help mentioning one, because he was a former member of my Cabinet, Lee Brown, the mayor of Houston. I'm glad to see you, and thank you for all you did for me and all you're doing for Houston.

I wanted to just make a couple of points briefly today. First, I wanted to mention some of the things that were mentioned in the State

of the Union. Secretary Slater talked about high-speed rail, airline traffic—you know, I am committed, more than anything else, to improving commercial airline traffic this year, because in a year I'll be on it. [Laughter] And I want you to know I am on the job here. I probe every person who comes to see me about, was there a delay, was there a cancellation. You know, I am on this case. [Laughter]

I want to make in a nutshell the point I tried to make last night, when I quoted that wonderful line from President Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of the last century, that young people with a future always take the long look ahead. We have all this good economic news. This morning we got some more good news, that our economy grew at an annual rate of 5.8 percent in the last 3 months of 1999. That's the fourth year in a row we've had growth of over 4 percent, with inflation the lowest in 30 years, 7 years of consecutive double-digit business investment growth. That's the longest investment growth on record. So this unbelievable recovery marches on.

Now, for everybody in this room that's more or less my age or a little older—you know, I was talking to some of my friends last night after the speech, and I said, "Look, the reason I feel so passionately that we should, A, take the long look ahead, and really say to ourselves, 'This country's in good shape now. What do we know now, right now, are the inevitable challenges and the great opportunities facing us over the next 10, 20, 30 years, and why don't we now set the goal of meeting them, and then outline a plan to get there?'"

So I was reminding people last night. I said, "You know, when I finished high school in 1964, we had—the country had been through President Kennedy's death, and it was very traumatic. But we still had very low unemployment. We had very good growth. We had almost no inflation. We still thought we could deal with the civil rights needs and demands and imperatives of our country in an orderly and legal way and the country wouldn't come apart. And you know, we had this sense that we could get there."

And within 2 or 3 years, the country was coming apart at the seams. A President, Lyndon Johnson, who passionately believed in civil rights, found his ability to make advances crippled by the controversies he faced over the war in Vietnam abroad and the civil rights crisis at home. And our country then went from turmoil

to turmoil to turmoil. And it's taken us 35 years to get an economy that is, frankly, even better than it was then, to have the advances we have in building our one America, and to be in this position again.

Now, anybody that's ever lived long enough knows two things: Number one, no condition, good or bad in life, lasts forever; that makes life interesting and challenging. The principle of surprise is always there. And when you pass an opportunity, you don't know how long you're going to have to wait for it to come around again. And the second thing that anybody that's over 30 years old has learned, one way or another, is that sometimes you make the worst mistakes in life when you think things are going along so well you don't have to worry about what you're doing, where you're going, whether to plan, and whether to make hard decisions—nobody who's lived any length of years who can't remember a time in personal, family, business, or public life, when mistakes were made and opportunities were missed because things were going well.

And that's why I tried to speak to the American people with such passion last night. We have waited a long time for our country to be in a position, because of our prosperity, to reach across party lines and regional and racial and all the other lines that divide us, to try to say, "Okay, here we go. We're starting a new century. Now, it doesn't matter whether you're a Republican or a Democrat. We are going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years, and a lot of us hope to be among them. You can't avoid that. It doesn't matter what your politics are. We've got the largest group of kids we ever had; they're from the most diverse backgrounds they've ever been. It's a meal ticket to the future if they all get an education, and if we can get rid of poverty among our kids." And I could go on and on.

That's what I was trying to say last night. That is what you live every day. You get hired to show up and do something. But the further away you move from the grassroots, the more likely politics is to shift from deeds to words, partly because we're such a long way away from people we're trying to support and to empower. So you mayors, you can make a difference here. We don't want to miss this moment.

And as I said last night, something else that you all know: No great goal is reached in a

single step, but if you take steps toward that goal, you make a lot of progress.

You all remember the story of the guy that had a mild heart attack, and it made him kind of goofy. And he went to the doctor, and the doctor said, "You think you could walk 3 miles a day and get well? You know, you could really help yourself a lot." And he said, "Well, I'll sure try." So he called him in a week, and he said, "Well, Doc, I made it for a whole week. I walked 3 miles every day." And he said, "But, honestly, I don't know what to do." And he said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, I'm 21 miles from home, and I don't know anybody here." [Laughter] You get a long way going step by step.

So I want you to think about that today. And very briefly, let me ask your help on one or two things. I know that you saw the President of Colombia, who used to be one of your colleagues, and I'm sure General McCaffrey has talked to you about that, so I won't deal with that. But let me just mention one or two things.

We've got to take this school construction issue seriously. Now, there is some—to be fair, there's more than politics here. Some Members of the Congress are genuinely reluctant to see the United States Government get involved in this issue because it has always been a State and local issue, and for some of our States, including mine when I was Governor, an entirely local issue. And we were—I think we had the third highest percentage of our school budget funded at the State—of any State in the country when I was Governor.

But the problem is you've got these kids that are just pouring out of a lot of these schools. I've been to schools with a dozen trailers—a dozen—outside. You've got all these other schools, literally—I've been to schools that were too decrepit to wire for the Internet. And what I would like to do is to really see us jump-start this effort. And I know—you know what always happens. If we put some money in, then others are encouraged, and more people do it, and you get this thing going. And basically, to be able to do these kind of more urgent repairs on 5,000 schools a year and then actually build or dramatically modernize 6,000 others, it would spark a whole wave of this across the country.

There's lots of evidence that young children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, get a very bad signal if they show up at a school where the windows are broken or they have

to be boarded over, and it's dark, and the paint is always peeling, and they can't get what other kids can do. I think this is a big deal, and I'd like to ask you to help us on that. I also hope—[*applause*—]—thank you.

I feel very strongly that it's—we're going to keep wiring these classrooms, and a lot of you have benefited from the E-rate program. But we've got to do more to train the teachers, because we've got to make sure we can make the most of it. That's very important. I hope you'll help me—I know this is quite popular in most of your communities—once again, double the after-school and the summer school programs. It makes a big difference.

And if you have one of these GEAR UP programs in your community, you know that it's working quite well. We send college students in to mentor middle school kids who are disadvantaged, at risk, and we not only mentor them, we begin to tell them when they're 12, 13, 14 years old, what the present package of student aid is so they all know. A lot of these kids have no other earthly idea all the things that have been done in the last 5 years to increase scholarships and loans and work-study programs and all this. If we can actually convince them that the money will be there for them to go, that's a powerful incentive for them to learn more and to stay in school and begin to aspire, to take their own long look ahead. So I want to ask you to help us on that.

Secondly, I ask you to help us pass this new markets legislation and to increase the number of empowerment zones and to increase the EITC. One of the things that I didn't mention last night—I think that Secretary Cuomo has pioneered so many good things, but one thing I want to mention in particular are these housing vouchers that we use to help low income people move closer to their place of work. We've now done 110,000 of them; in this budget we can more than double that. And I'd like to ask your help on that.

Now, there are a lot of other things, and I'm sure Andrew went over the things in the HUD initiative, but there are a lot of great things that we can do to be better partners with you. But there are some things you can also do to be good partners with us; I'll just mention two. Because, again, we have a chance to dramatically cut poverty in America among our children. Child poverty is at a 21-year low;

we can get it much, much lower. It's still unconscionably high in America.

And I'd just like to mention two things, if I might. Number one, we have a ton of working people in America who are eligible for the earned-income tax credit who don't know it and don't claim it. Mayor Daley has launched an outreach program in Chicago because last year in Illinois he found in the State that \$300 million in these credits went unclaimed to low income working people. Try it. See if you can get the data for your community, and let these working people know that they can do it.

The second thing I'd like to say is, we set up the Children's Health Insurance Program to be designed and run by the States in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. So it took us a while to get it up and going, but last year we went from 1 to 2 million kids enrolled in a year. It took us a year and a half to get up to a million, and it was very frustrating, but now these programs are kicking in and we're up to 2 million. The money is there to insure 5 million kids.

You heard me say last night that I wanted to follow the Vice President's suggestion to let the working parents of these low income kids buy into the program. But they'll never get there if they don't have their kids enrolled in the first place, and they don't know that. So anything you can do, with all the organization and mechanisms and outreach that you have, to help us to get the enrollment in the CHIP program up, I would be profoundly grateful. It's very important. We've got to go from 2 to 5 million kids. If we go from 2 to 5 million kids, then you're looking at about 6½ million parents, we estimate, that we could enroll. And if we got that many enrolled, we'd have a quarter of all the uninsured in America would be covered by insurance. It would be a dramatic achievement.

But it is in the nature of these things that you've got to reach out and do the enrollment. And because we're a free and open society and a very mobile one, these things tend to be difficult.

I also hope that you can convince—we found in State after State that there are a lot of working people who somehow feel that this would signal that they were going on welfare or going back to welfare, and they don't want to do that. And we need to send the right kind of signal out here about what this is, that these things

were done by their National Government because they want to work. And if they want to work, they're entitled to raise their children out of poverty and to have these basic supports.

There's also a bigger problem in enrollment in many places where people whose first language is not English. And the mayors are in a unique position to help us with that. So I would ask you to, when you go home, think about whether you can—you know, get the information from either the Federal or the State Governments on enrollment in the child health program and in the EITC, and whether there's anything you can do to alert more of your people to their eligibility and get them to claim it. I think it would be a very good thing.

Third thing I want to say—I've got to do this, because I blew it twice last night—we are going to build more livable communities. [Laughter] That was weird. In my whole life, I've never mispronounced that word before last night. [Laughter] See what I'm saying? The element of surprise is always there. [Laughter]

Denver's done a lot of work on the livable community issue with regard to brownfields, cleaning up around Stapleton Airport. And this is an issue, in different ways, for most of you. So again, I ask you to help us pass this. This is the sort of thing that really ought to be not a partisan issue either. So many communities are worried about preserving some sense of balance and harmony in transportation and saving some green space as development proceeds apace, or overcoming some environmental eyesore. And so I would like to ask you to help. I think it's very important.

Last night I also proposed to create a permanent endowment to protect lands across the country as part of our lands legacy initiative. Half the fund would be dedicated to State and local conservation efforts, and we would have a—listen to this—a tenfold increase in the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program and a significant increase for our Urban and Community Forestry program. This is very important to me.

When Rodney and I were back home in Arkansas and we had terrible economic problems in the Mississippi Delta, we picked the 11 hardest hit counties, and we spent endless hours out there doing grassroots meetings. It was astonishing the number of little towns that said to us, "Yes, we're having trouble economically, but we're most worried about our kids. Can't

you give us some help with recreation?" And we developed this sort of basic blueprint plan for little city parks that even very, very small towns could build. And we set up this—what would today look like a tiny grant program. And we were flooded with all these—I mean little towns, 200 people, 300 people, 500 people, you know—asking for this money, because they had nothing to do for their children.

So this urban initiative is a very important part of this lands legacy matter to me, because in the biggest urban neighborhoods, you still have the same issue. And parents want their children to have something positive to do, even before they want another job in the neighborhood. So I hope you'll help me pass this. And again, this is something that I hope will be way beyond partisanship this year. It's a small part of the budget, with a big benefit for your folks back home.

Wellington mentioned the crime initiative. We know the Brady bill works. We know it does. The gun death rate is at a 30-year low, criminal gun death rate—30-year low. And we need to extend it to check at the gun shows, which occur mostly in rural areas and the urban flea markets, where people who couldn't get a gun at a registered store can get it. We do need to strengthen enforcement, because about one percent of our gun dealers do most of the damage to the law, insofar as gun dealers are doing it.

And we need to add the 50,000 more police. You know, you all have done a wonderful job with this community policing program, and I thank you for it. We're coming back with another 50,000, and we're going to try to get the second round of appropriations for it this year. And we're trying to concentrate these forces in the areas of highest crime.

But I will say again, you know, when I got here—and this is not me; this is all of you who did this, all we tried to do was give you the tools to do it, but—if I had come here 7 years ago and given a speech to you and said, "Look, here's what my goal is: we're going to make America the safest big country in the world," you would have said, "That poor deluded guy. We're in for a long ride"—[laughter]—because people weren't even sure we could make the crime go down, much less stay down. But we've had 7 years in a row now, and it keeps going down, because you know what to do. Your police departments know what to do. You know what to do. And if you know

what to do and if we've proved we can get crime down, then we don't have any excuse to stop until this country's the safest big country in the world. So I ask you to help us with that.

And finally I want to make a serious remark, although I was more serious than you know about the airline remark I made earlier. [*Laughter*] I want you to help us get these investments in advanced transportation technology. What I said last night was true. A lot of you probably read about the cars at the Detroit auto show that are getting 70 and 80 miles a gallon, dual-fuel cars, direct fuel-injection engines. They're using more and more composite materials to design cars now that are 500 to 1,000 pounds lighter but do the same on damage tests as steel cars. It's a remarkable thing.

And it is true—I wanted to explain what I said last night—this biofuel issue, not just ethanol made from corn, but you'll soon see fuels can be made from rice hulls and other agricultural byproducts or even grass fields. And essentially, what these scientists—the problem now is that the conversion ratio is not great: It takes 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol. I mean, you're ahead but not much. And they're working on breaking the chemical barriers to efficient conversion, which was how we got gasoline from crude oil. It's the same sort of thing. The scientists that are working on this estimate that pretty soon they'll have a breakthrough that will allow them to make 8 gallons of ethanol or other biofuel with 1 gallon of gasoline. Now, if you've got a car getting 70 miles a gallon, that means you're getting 560 miles a gallon, if it can run on ethanol.

So we have a chance to completely rewrite the transportation future of America, to dramatically reduce the one-third of our greenhouse gases that come out of transportation and do it without some crippling regulation or some astronomical tax. But we've got to have the money to do this research.

We built a—well, we worked with the Home Builders, Andrew, and with the Energy Department and others, to build a housing development, the Inland Empire in San Bernardino, right on the rail line coming out of L.A. And we told—for very low income working people, we said, “If you buy a house here, we will guarantee you that your average power bills will be 40 percent lower than they would in a house of the same size anywhere else.” And after 2

years, the average power bills are down 65 percent, because of the new lighting, because of the new windows, because of the new insulation. I mean, this thing is going—but we've got to have the money to do the research.

So that's a long way from being mayor, funding somebody's research, but it will change your lives and your ability to do your job if you'll help us. And it's especially important in high-speed rail. I do think, for reasons I don't entirely understand—maybe people have been caught in traffic jams—we've got a little more support for it than we did when I showed up here. I mean, I had Members of Congress come up to me and say, “You're from Arkansas. Why do you care about high-speed rail?” And I said, “Well, I might want to go somewhere else someday.” [*Laughter*] “I might want to travel around.” But really, we're getting more support. And I ask you for your help on this.

Finally, let me say—a couple of you mentioned this to me going through the line, so I just want to reiterate. For the last several States of the Union, I always save whatever I have to say about one America until the end because it's the most important to me. And if somebody said to me today, “Well, Mr. President, your time is up on this Earth, and you're not going to get to finish, but we'll give you one wish,” I wouldn't wish for the continued economic expansion; I wouldn't wish for even giving everybody health insurance or anything. I'd wish to make America one America, because the American people will figure out how to solve everything else if we can have the right kind of relations toward one another.

You heard me tell that story—I got the Congress to laughing last night when I referred to what Dr. Lander, the distinguished geneticist from Harvard, said about all people being genetically 99.9 percent the same. I just want to give you one more thing to think about because we've got a pretty diverse group here. Lander said that not only are we 99.9 percent the same, but that if you were to take 100 people each and 4 different race groups—like 100 African-Americans, 100 Hispanics, 100 Irish, 100 Jewish-Americans—the genetic differences among individuals within the group are greater than the genetic differences between the groups as a whole.

I mean, it's really quite stunning. The different skin color, the different characteristics that we've all developed over many thousands

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of years for all kinds of reasons are literally contained in one-tenth of 1 percent of our genetic make-up. And it's a statistic that I've put out there on purpose, because I think you could tell—the Members of Congress, a lot of them, were shocked to hear that. [Laughter] They thought there was a Republican gene and a Democratic gene. [Laughter] And whichever party they were in, they were glad they got the right chip, you know. [Laughter]

And so I hope—you can make a lot of jokes out of this, and you can have a lot of fun with it, and the more you laugh, the more you get it. [Laughter]

So I ask you to remember that and to remember that you have people in this White House

who believe in you and what you're doing, wish you well, and want to help.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor H. Brent Coles of Boise, ID; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; Mayor Charles W. Scholz of Quincy, IL; Mayor Patrick Henry Hays of North Little Rock, AR; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Remarks to the Community in Quincy, Illinois

January 28, 2000

Thank you very much. I think I should begin by thanking you all for waiting in this cold weather all morning. Your welcome to me has been so warm, I don't care what it's doing outside; inside, it still feels like Florida to me here. I thank you very much.

I want to begin by thanking your mayor, who flew in here with me today; and your fine Congressman, Lane Evans; our two United States Senators, Senator Durbin and Senator Fitzgerald; Congressman Shimkus; Congressman Hulshof. Thank you all for being here. Let's give them a big hand here today. [Applause] Didn't Kayt do a good job? [Applause] All I can tell you is that when I was her age, I could not have given a speech anywhere near that good; so she's well on her way.

I want to thank all the people that gave us our music: the Quincy High School Band, the Quincy Park Band, the Quincy Notre Dame Marching Band. Thank you all very much. I want to thank all the people who are here today who represent State and local government and the people of this community, the police officers, business leaders, day care providers, AmeriCorps members, and other public servants, the students, the teachers, all represented up on this stage today. And of course, "Mr. Quincy" there, thank you very much, sir, for being here.

Ladies and gentlemen, last night when I gave the State of the Union Address, I was fulfilling a requirement of the United States Constitution that requires the President to report every year on the state of the Union. Then I wanted to come out today to the heartland of America to say what that was all about. Maybe we ought to change the Constitution, Senators and Congressmen, to require the President to come to Quincy the day after the State of the Union Address every year.

You know, I never will forget the night I actually did talk to the mayor and Senator Paul Simon, who was not pretending to be me, and you were going through that horrible flood. And I monitored your progress, and this community became a symbol of hope and what people can do when they pull together. I loved hearing the mayor today again recount the rich heritage of your city, the Lincoln-Douglas debate, the Underground Railroad, the sanctuary offered so long ago to those fleeing religious persecution.

I loved driving here from the airport today and remembering the bus tour that Vice President Gore and Hillary and Tipper and I took in 1992 through so much of this part of America, and I saw so many of the same pictures all along the way: young children out with their signs; people saying, "My birthday's August the

19th, too”; some people like my dog; some people like my cat; some people like them and don’t like the President very much. The whole day was wonderful. It was a wonderful thing.

And I think that what you show here today and every day is that when we join hands and join hearts, we can climb any mountain and turn back any tide. That is what our Nation has proved these last 7 years. And as I look out here on all of you, I see fresh evidence of what I said last night, folks: The state of our Union today is the strongest it has ever been, thanks to you.

If you saw the speech last night, you know that I quoted President Theodore Roosevelt, one of my favorite predecessors. He’s the last sitting President to come to Quincy. I don’t know what the others were thinking about. [Laughter] But Roosevelt had a great quote at the dawn of the last century, which was a time that has a lot of parallels to our present-day experience. He reminded us that “a growing nation with a future must always take the long look ahead.” And what that means is, you know, when you folks were worried about the flood taking your town away, everybody concentrated and went to work. And then when you had all the problems and you needed the ferry and the mayor said the river was 6 miles wide, everybody concentrated and went to work. Sometimes people get in trouble not when times are tough but when times seem to be so good people think they don’t have to do anything, they don’t have to worry, they don’t have to work together.

And what I want to tell you is, never in my lifetime have we had the combination of economic prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis or external threat. And I know from my experience that we should be using this time wisely to deal with the long-term challenges and seize the long-term opportunities that the children of Kay’s generation will have to deal with in the new century, and that’s what I want the American people to support.

I want you to support us in saying we made a mistake to quadruple the debt of the country. Now we’re paying off the debt. Let’s stay at the job until America is debt-free for the first time since 1835. The number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. The baby boomers must not—we must not—impose the burden of our enormous numbers in retirement on our children. That means we need to take the interest savings

from paying down the debt, put it in the Social Security Trust Fund, take it out to 2050. Then the baby boomers’ retirement will not impose a burden on our children and our children’s ability to raise our grandchildren.

We need to make sure every child in this country starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed and has access to a college education. Now, I just want to mention one of your schools, because I hear people all the time saying, “Aw, the President acts like we can turn schools around; that’s not true.” Well, it is true. I believe all children can learn. I believe all schools can work.

Washington Elementary School, here in Quincy, a few years ago was in trouble. Today, it’s one of the best performing schools in your school district because you’ve got a good principal, community involvement; you’ve got money from our program to reduce class size with more teachers, to expand after-school programs. And now you’ve got a successful situation. I’m telling you, I only wish Washington, DC, worked as well as Washington Elementary School. And I want to thank the principal, Terry Mickle, for being with us today. Let’s give her a hand. [Applause]

So, what I’ve asked the Congress to do is to invest more in Head Start, invest more in these after-school and summer school programs, invest more in helping more schools turn themselves around, and to give the American people, for the first time, a tax deduction for the cost of college tuition, to open the doors of college.

The other thing that I hope we can do is to give more families the tools to succeed at home and work, to lengthen the life of Medicare for 25 years, to give people on Medicare the right to a voluntary prescription drug program. Too many of our senior citizens need this medicine and cannot afford it; it’s the difference in what kind of life they can have. And I hope you will support our efforts to achieve that.

There’s just one other issue I want to mention today, because it affects a lot of people in this neighborhood. A few years ago, before I ran for President, I had the honor of coming to southern Illinois, to Senator Simon’s hometown of Makanda, because I was head of something called the Lower Mississippi River Delta Development Commission. And I found that the counties in southern Illinois had unemployment rates as high as they did in the Mississippi Delta and the South, where I came from.

One of the things that really bothers me about this astonishing economic recovery of ours is that not everybody has participated in it. And I think all Americans will support us in saying that this is the best time we'll ever have—with unemployment low and growth high—to go into these inner cities, into these small rural towns, into these Native American reservations and help turn their economies around and give people who are doing well incentives to invest there, to start businesses there, to put people to work there. If we don't do this now, we will never get around to it. We can bring free enterprise and hope to people who have never had it.

We also have to recognize, as I said last night—and I want to emphasize here, in this part of America—that the farmers of this country by and large have not participated in this economic recovery, because they've had floods, they've had droughts, and after the economies in Asia collapsed, farm prices went in the cellar. And for the last 2 years, we have seen in Washington, at the end of every congressional session, everybody scurrying around trying to come up with enough money to give to the farmers to keep thousands upon thousands upon thousands from going out of business.

The freedom to farm bill, in bad times—the so-called freedom to farm bill could become a freedom to fail bill if we don't make some changes in it. And so I say here, in a town where most people are not farmers but where we're in a part of America where most people come from farming stock, I want you to support us in trying to change the farm law in Washington so that farmers in America who work hard and are the most efficient in the world can make a decent living out here. And I hope you'll help us.

We have to provide income assistance when farm prices and farm incomes fall. We have to stay, and keep, with the same loan rates for the USDA commodities at the 1999 levels, so we won't drive them down even lower. We've got to make it easier for farmers to help build up our environment. You know, if they conserve land, we ought to help them do that. And when prices are low, that's a good, cheap way to guarantee they can make a decent living and we don't drive them even lower with overproduction.

We ought to give them a better crop insurance program, which increases the subsidy we give to help people buy crop insurance. You know, a lot of times when you see at the end of the year, and Congress has to give a lot of money to farmers, it's because they can't buy insurance the same way businesspeople up and down this street can buy insurance against theft, or the building burning down. And we need to help farmers with that.

So I want to ask you to support our efforts to help the farmers. If we're going to be one community here, we have to reach across—racial lines, yes, and religious lines, yes, but also to people who don't do what we do for a living, don't live like we do every day—they live in rural areas; we live in towns; they live in big cities. We've got to understand that we're a strong country when we all work together and we give everybody a chance to rise.

I remember when you were going through this flood here. I would go to big cities on the east coast or the west coast, and I would say, "They need your help. It's going to cost a lot of money. It's going to be partly your money; they're part of your country." And people in cities that couldn't find Quincy on a map would cheer, because they knew they were part of your American family. If we can keep that attitude in good times, America is going to do fine.

But I ask you—it's getting cold, and I want to let you go, but you just remember—if you don't remember anything else I said today, you remember how you were in the flood. And remember that when you have the chance of a lifetime to do good, you cannot be lulled into complacency.

You have a chance—we all do—to give our children a debt-free America, with world-class education, that takes care of our seniors, that brings opportunity to people who haven't had it, that seizes the challenges of a new era. And we ought to take that opportunity. We owe it to children who will follow us 50 years from now. And I will do all I can to honor the spirit, the values that I have seen in this wonderful park today.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in Washington Park. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor

Charles W. Scholz of Quincy; Quincy Junior High School freshman class president Kayt Norris, who introduced the President; community activist and

philanthropist Joe Bonansinga, known as “Mr. Quincy”; and former Senator Paul Simon.

Statement on the Resignation of Senior Adviser to the President for Policy and Strategy Douglas B. Sosnik *January 28, 2000*

It is hard to believe that in just a few weeks Doug Sosnik will be leaving the White House. As happy as I am for Doug and his wife, Fabiana, that he is taking on an exciting new challenge with the National Basketball Association, I am not looking forward to his departure, because he has been such an important part of virtually everything we have worked on over the past 6 years.

Doug has that increasingly rare attribute—a “passion for anonymity”—and a self-deprecating style that has made him perhaps the least known, most influential person in our community.

What is known about Doug is certainly true: He has been an invaluable source of policy and political advice for me and my staff, a wise and steady counselor, and a reliable yet not too successful player of hearts.

What is not so well known about Doug is his sense of history and of the moment; his humor and skill at bringing people together, cutting through the clutter and getting things done; his desire to mentor young and new staff members, many of whom have Doug to thank not only for helping them join this administration but for helping them succeed as well.

An expert in the combative world of politics, Doug represents what is best about politics—a recognition that the root of the word is “people” and doing good things for people is what it’s all about.

He would never say it about himself but, to borrow a phrase from his new life, I hope that more people coming into careers in public service will “be like Doug.”

The President’s Radio Address *January 29, 2000*

Good morning. Two nights ago, in my State of the Union Address, I asked the American people to heed the advice of President Theodore Roosevelt at the dawn of the last century and take “the long look ahead”—the long look ahead to the great challenges we face and the great opportunities we can seize in the 21st century. That requires us to set new goals for our Nation and take the right first steps to achieve them.

We must ensure that every child begins school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed. We must help every family succeed at home and at work—and that no child is raised in poverty. We must make America the world’s safest big country, lead the world toward shared

peace and prosperity and to the far frontiers of science and technology. And we must do all this while maintaining the fiscal discipline that brought us to this rare and promising moment we enjoy.

Seldom in our Nation’s history, never in my lifetime, have we enjoyed so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis or so few external threats, with 20 million new jobs, the fastest economic growth in 30 years, the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest minority unemployment rates on record, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, and next month, the longest economic growth in our history.

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It's important to remember how this happened. It began in 1993 with a new economic plan that cut the deficit while making investments in our people and our future. When deficits fell, interest rates came down, mortgage payments came down, lower car and student loan payments resulted. There was greater business investment, more jobs, more economic growth. So this fiscal discipline has moved us from record budget deficits and high unemployment to record budget surpluses and unimagined economic strength. Now is not the time to change course.

In the well of the House of Representatives 2 nights ago, I challenged Congress to move forward on important priorities without giving up this fiscal discipline. If we will stay this course, we can pay the country's debt off, for the first time since 1835, over the next few years.

Today I am pleased to announce that congressional leaders from both parties and both houses of Congress have accepted my invitation to come to the White House next Tuesday to discuss how we can move forward together.

Let me say again, first and foremost, I hope we can agree on my plan to pay down the debt entirely over the next 13 years and make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835, and then to use the benefits of debt reduction to preserve Social Security and Medicare and specifically to make a bipartisan downpayment on Social Security

reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust Fund. That'll keep it strong and sound for 50 years and take in the lifespan of the baby boom generation.

We also ought to agree to reserve a third of the surplus to further reduce the debt so we have the resources in the future to protect Medicare. I want to dedicate nearly \$400 billion of this projected surplus to keep Medicare solvent past 2025 and to add a voluntary prescription drug benefit.

And as I said a couple of nights ago, we can't forget the unfinished business of the last Congress. They need, still, to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights, commonsense gun safety legislation, campaign finance reform, hate crimes legislation, a raise in the minimum wage.

The state of our Union is the strongest it's ever been. This gives us the opportunity and the responsibility of a lifetime to shape the future of our dreams for our children. Our chance to do good has never been so great. Let us join together to seize this moment.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:41 p.m. on January 28 in Suite 180 at the Granite Bank Gallery in Quincy, IL, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the World Economic Forum and a Question-and-Answer Session in Davos, Switzerland January 29, 2000

President Clinton. Thank you very much. President Schwab, I think that it is an indication of the importance of the topic and the importance of the World Economic Forum that you have so many leaders from around the world here today. I see, just scanning the audience, the President of Colombia, the President of South Africa, Chairman Arafat, the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey, and a number of other leaders.

We have here with me today the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Sec-

retary of Commerce, the Secretary of Energy, and our Trade Ambassador. There's no one home in Washington to take care of things. [Laughter] We have a large delegation from the United States Congress here; leaders from all over the world in business, public life; the leader of the American union movement, John Sweeney, whom I know has spoken to you.

So I think that maybe the presence of all these distinguished people in the crowd is evidence of the importance of our being here and

shows, in my mind, one of the things we need to determine to do as a people.

The World Economic Forum has been at it, as you pointed out, for 30 years now. The thing that I have appreciated most about your deliberations is your consistent focus on the future. For example, you spotted the networking of society before the Internet was out of its infancy. Both Vice President Gore and my wife, Hillary, have spoken here, and I am glad, even though I am late, to finally get in on the act. [*Laughter*]

Your theme, “New Beginnings: Making a Difference,” it seems to me, is the right theme. What I want to ask all of you to think about today is, what does making a difference and new beginnings mean in an era of globalization? What are the opportunities? What are the obligations? What are the hazards? What new beginnings will make a positive difference? And, perhaps the most difficult question of all, do we have the institutional and organized mechanisms to make them?

As we know, in many ways the global economy was almost as integrated as it is today 100 years ago. But after World War I, leaders in the United States and Europe made what all now recognize were false and shortsighted choices. Instead of partnership, they chose protectionism and isolationism. And for decades, globalization went in reverse, with utterly disastrous consequences.

After the second war, the leaders were given a second chance. This time it was clear that what was at stake was not simply the return of prosperity but the defense of freedom. They chose the path of economic and political partnership and set the stage for 50 years of growth across the globe. No one can seriously argue that the world would be a better place today if they had reverted to the old isolationism.

So today, at the start of a new century, the entire world, not simply Europe and the United States and the wealthiest nations of Asia, the entire world finds itself at a crossroads. Globalization is revolutionizing the way we work, the way we live, and perhaps most important, the way we relate to each other across national boundaries. It is tearing down doors and building up networks between nations and individuals, between economies and cultures.

The obvious consequence is that we are growing ever more interdependent, driven to be part of every vital network, understanding we cannot build our own future without helping others to

build theirs. Today, we know that because of scientific and technological advance, we can change the equation between energy use and economic growth. We can shatter the limits that time and space pose to doing business and getting an education.

But the openness and mobility, the flexible networking and sophisticated communications technologies that have made globalization what it is, so totally consuming—all these factors have also made us more vulnerable to some of our oldest problems.

Terrorism, narcotraffickers, and organized criminals, they can use all this new technology, too, and take advantage of the openness of societies and borders. They present all of us with new security challenges in the new century. The spread of disease; ethnic, racial, tribal, religious conflicts, rooted in the fear of others who are different—they seem to find ways to spread in this globalized era. And the grinding poverty of more than a billion people who live on less than a dollar a day and live for a year on less than what it costs to stay in a nice hotel at night—they, too, are part of the globalized world. A few of us live on the cutting edge of the new economy; too many of us live on the bare edge of survival, without the means to move up.

Those who wish to roll back the forces of globalization because they fear its disruptive consequences, I believe, are plainly wrong. Fifty years of experience shows that greater economic integration and political cooperation are positive forces. Those who believe globalization is only about market economics, however, are wrong, too. All these new networks must lead to new arrangements that work for all, that work to spur growth, lift lives, raise standards, both around the world and within nations.

Now, leaders from business, government, and civil society, therefore, must come together to build a future that can unite, not divide, us. We must recognize, first, that globalization has made us all more free and more interdependent. Those of us who are more fortunate must be more responsible and work harder to be good neighbors and good partners. The United States has a special responsibility in that regard, because we have been so fortunate in our history and so very fortunate over the last decade.

I came here today in the hope that by working together, we can actually find a way to create the conditions and provide the tools to give

people on every continent the ability to solve their own problems, and in so doing, to strengthen their own lives and our global economy in the new century.

I would like to make just a few points. First, I think we have got to reaffirm unambiguously that open markets and rules-based trade are the best engine we know of to lift living standards, reduce environmental destruction, and build shared prosperity. This is true whether you're in Detroit, Davos, Dacca, or Dakar. Worldwide, open markets do create jobs. They do raise incomes. They do spark innovation and spread new technology. They do—coupled with the explosion of international communications through the Internet, which is the fastest-growing network in history. For example, when I became President 7 years ago, there were only 50 pages on the World Wide Web. Today, there are over 50 million—in 7 years. Trade broadens the frontiers of possibility for all of those who have access to its benefits and the tools to claim them.

As I said a couple of days ago in my State of the Union Address, for me there is only one direction forward on trade, and that is to go on with what we're doing, recognizing that this is a new and very different world, that the idea that we would be better off with less trade, with less rule-based trade by turning away from our attempts to find international ways within which we can work together, I think is dead wrong.

Now, having said that, what does that mean? Well, for me, it meant that when, first our neighbors in Mexico and then our friends in Asia were in turmoil and crisis, the United States had to keep our markets open, even though it led to record trade deficits. For me, it means it's very important to get China into the World Trade Organization, to ensure that China's markets are open to us—even as we have our markets open to China—and to advance peace and stability in Asia and increase the possibility of positive change in China.

The changes in our markets are only beginning. You know, people have been trading goods across borders as long as there have been borders. But communications technology and the Internet are expanding trade in unprecedented ways many of you understand better than I. Today, everything from data processing to security monitoring to stockbrokering and advanced degrees can be bought and sold all over the

world. E-commerce creates enormous potential for growth anywhere, and it will continue to do so if we can resist the temptation to put up barriers to this important part of our new economy.

Trade is especially important, of course, for developing nations. Listen to this—this is something that I think people from the developing nations who oppose the WTO should think about—from the 1970's to the early nineties, developing countries that chose growth through trade grew at least twice as fast as those who chose not to open to the world. The most open countries had growth that was 6 times as fast.

Think about what Japan or the nations of southeastern Europe were like 50 years ago. They were poor, largely rural societies. Today, they are prosperous global leaders, in no small measure because of trade. Look at South Korea, Mexico, or Thailand, which built their growth on openness. Even after the recent traumas of financial crises, their national incomes are still more than double the 1970 levels, when they were more closed. And their gains in literacy, education, and life expectancy are truly extraordinary, far outpacing countries that chose not to open to the world.

Certainly, many of the people who have questioned the wisdom of open trade are genuinely concerned about the fate of the poor and the disadvantaged, and well they should be. But they should ask themselves, what will happen to a Bangladeshi textile worker or a migrant from the Mexican countryside without the prospect of jobs and industry that can sell to foreign as well as domestic consumers? What happens to farmers in Uruguay or Zimbabwe, in Australia, Europe, the United States, if protectionism makes it impossible to market products beyond their borders? How can working conditions be improved and poverty be reduced in developing countries if they are denied these and other opportunities to grow, the things that come with participation in the world economy?

No, trade must not be a race to the bottom, whether we're talking about child labor, basic working conditions, or environmental protection. But turning away from trade would keep part of our global community forever on the bottom. That is not the right response.

Now, that means, it seems to me, that we must face another challenge. The second point I want to make is that developing countries will only reap the benefits of integration in the world

economy if the industrialized countries are able to garner enough domestic support for policies that are often controversial at home. It is easier for us to gather here, in vigorous agreement—and I'm glad you brought Mr. Sweeney over so we could have an occasional voice of occasional disagreement.

But most of us here agree with everything I just said. Why? Well, we have seen and personally felt the benefits of globalization. But convincing our publics to go along, to go for greater integration in a rule-based system which might require them to change further and might require some of them, unlike most of us, to change what they do for a living, remains a challenge.

How shall we meet it? In the United States, we must overcome resistance to our groundbreaking trade agreements with Africa and the Caribbean Basin—even though if they both pass, their impact on our economy will be very small, while their impact on the African nations that participate and those in the Caribbean will be very large indeed. I am determined to pass both measures this year, and I think we'll succeed, but it's an indication of what kinds of problems every country faces.

Indeed, you probably have noted this, but one of the most ironic and, to me, disappointing consequences of our unprecedented prosperity, which has given us over 20 million new jobs in my country in the last 7 years, is that it seems to me that protectionist sentiment, or antitrade sentiment at least, is greater now than it was 7 years ago when I took office, in the United States Congress. I want to talk a little about that today and how it relates to what's going on in other countries. But we all have an obligation to work through that, nation by nation.

Part of what countries have to do is to be able to point to what other countries are doing and to say, "Well, look what they're doing; we ought to do this. We ought to do our part." That means we are significantly affected in the United States by the policies of Europe, Japan, and other wealthier countries. I think for its part, Europe should put its agricultural subsidies on the table. If even one-third of the world's subsidies and tariffs in agriculture were eliminated, the poorest developing countries that could export would gain more than \$4 billion in economic benefits every single year.

We can also, I must say, do better in the developed countries if we are able to make a more forceful case for the value of imports. None of us do this enough, and I must say, I haven't done this enough. We all go around talking about—every time we talk about trade agreements in our countries, we always talk about how many jobs will be created at home because we're opening markets abroad, and we make ourselves vulnerable to people who say, "But it may not reduce the trade deficit, and look how big it is."

So I just want to say, I wish everyone here would look at yourselves and ask yourselves if you are wearing anything made in a country other than the country where you live.

There are benefits to imports. We don't just do a favor to developing countries or to our trading partners in developed countries when we import products and services from them. We benefit from those products. Imports stretch family budgets. They promote the well-being of working families by making their dollars go further. They bring new technology and ideas. They, by opening markets, dampen inflation and spur innovation.

In a few days, we will have the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States. I am convinced one of the reasons that it will happen is that we have kept our markets open, even in tough times, so that there has always been pressure to keep inflation down as we continue to generate jobs and growth. I am convinced of it. And those of us in wealthier countries need to make the case that even when we have trade deficits, if we're growing jobs and we're gaining ground and the jobs are growing in areas that pay better wages, we are getting the benefits of imports. I think all people in public life have been insufficiently willing to say that. And we must do more.

The third point I would like to make is that we simply cannot expect trade alone to carry the burden of lifting nations out of poverty. It will not happen. Trade is essential to growth in developing countries, but it is not sufficient for growth in developing countries. Sustained growth requires investment in human capital, education, health care, technology, infrastructure. Particularly in an economy that runs more and more on brainpower, no investment pays off faster than education. The international community has set 2015 as a target for giving every child access to basic education. I'm asking our

Congress for more funding to help nations get more children out of work and into school. I hope others in the public and private sectors will join us.

Each year in the developing world, we see millions of lives lost and billions of dollars lost—dollars that could be spent in many more productive ways—to killer diseases like AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Last year in Africa, AIDS killed more people—10 times more—than all the wars did. We have the technology to find vaccines for those diseases. We have medications that can lengthen and improve the quality of life.

But let's face a fact. The pharmaceutical industry has no incentive to develop products for customers who are too poor to buy them. I have proposed a tax credit to say to our private industry, if you will develop these vaccines, we'll help to pay for them. I hope the World Bank, other nations, and the corporate world will help us in meeting this challenge. If we could get the vaccines out to the people who need them in time, we could save millions and millions of lives and free up billions of dollars to be invested in building those lives, those societies into strong, productive partners, not just for trade but for peace.

We can also help countries help themselves by lifting their crippling burden of debt, so they'll have more to invest in their people and their future. The Cologne debt initiative commits us to reducing the foreign debt of the world's poorest and most indebted nations by as much as 70 percent. Last fall I pledged that the United States would forgive 100 percent of the debts those countries owe to us. This year I will work to fund our share of the multilateral debt relief. I am pleased that so many others have made similar pledges and look forward to the first countries benefiting from this initiative very soon. If we keep working on this, expanding it, and we all pay our fair share, we can turn a vicious cycle of debt and poverty into a virtuous cycle of development and trade.

The last point I'd like to make on this is that I think the developed countries who want an open trading system that has the trust and confidence of developing countries should also contribute to indigenous trade, which may not be directly related—excuse me, indigenous economic development, which may not be directly related to trade. Just for example, the United States Agency for International Development

each year funds about 2 million microenterprise loans in poor communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

I will never forget going to small villages in Senegal and Uganda and seeing people who had gotten their first business loan—sometimes as small as \$50—show me their businesses, show me the people they were doing business with in their villages, who had also gotten such loans. I'll never forget the man in Senegal who was this designated village accountant, making me wait outside his front door while he went into his house to bring me back all of the accounts he had carefully kept for the last month, to prove that the money we were investing was being spent wisely.

Does this have any direct impact on international trade? Of course not. Did it make that society stronger? Did it make the economy stronger? Did it increase the stability and long-term prospects of the nation? Of course it did. So I believe we should all be thinking about what more we can do on the indigenous economic development issues.

The President of Colombia is here. I've asked the Congress to pass a very ambitious program to try to help Colombia deal with the narcotraffickers and the guerrillas and all the problems that he faces—perhaps the oldest democracy in Latin America. But one part of it is for economic development. It is one thing to tell people they should stop growing crops that can be turned into drugs that can kill our children, and quite another to tell people, if you do this, by the way, here's a way to support your children.

And so I think that we can never lose sight of the fact that if we want to build an integrated economy with more and more trade, we have to build an economy from the grassroots up in places that want to have a balanced, stable society.

The fourth point I would make is that developed and developing countries alike must ensure that the benefits of trade flow widely to workers and families within our nations. Industrialized nations must see that the poor and those hard hit by changes are not left behind. And all nations need to ensure that workers have access to lifelong learning benefits, they can move between jobs without being unemployed for too long and without having their standard of living dropped.

We have to work with corporate leaders to spur investment also in the people and places that have been left behind. We have to find the new markets within our own Nation. For example, I will tell you something that might surprise many of you. The national unemployment rate in the United States is 4.1 percent. On many of our Native American Indian reservations, the unemployment rate is about 70 percent. In isolated rural areas in America, the unemployment rate is sometimes 2, 3, 4 times as high as the national average. So we have not figured out how to solve this. When you have these eyesores in a country, when the development is not even, they can easily become the symbols with which those who do not want us to open our markets more and build a more integrated world can use to defeat our larger designs, even if they're right.

And as I said to the American people in Congress a couple of nights ago, we in the United States, I think, have a terrifically heavy responsibility to reach out to our poor communities, because we've never had an expansion this long, and if we can't help our people now, we will never get around to it. I am convinced that even though this has nothing directly to do with trade, if we succeed, we will build more support for a more integrated global economy.

Leaders of developing nations have their responsibilities as well, to narrow the gap between rich and poor by ensuring that government institutions are open and accountable, honest and effective, so they can get foreign investment, have widely-shared growth, uproot corruption, and solve social problems. There is a limit to what wealthy nations can do for people who will not take the necessary steps to make their own societies work. Even in this heyday of global free enterprise, many people suffer not because their governments are too strong but because their governments are too weak.

Fifth, since globalization is about more than economics, our interdependence requires us to find ways to meet the challenges of advancing our values without promoting protectionism or undermining open trade. I know that the words "labor and environment" are heard with suspicion in the developing world when they are uttered by people from the developed world. I understand that these words are code for "rich-country protectionism."

So let me be as clear as possible on this. We shouldn't do anything to stunt the economic

growth and development of any developing nation. I have never asked any developing nation, and never will, to give up a more prosperous future. But in today's world, developing countries can achieve growth without making some of the mistakes most developed countries made on worker protection and the environment as we were on our path to industrialization. Why is that? Why can they get richer without doing the same things we did? And since, when countries get richer, they lift labor standards and clean up the environment, why do we care? I think there are two answers to that.

First, the reason they can do it is that the new economy has produced scientific and technological advances that absolutely disprove the old ideas about growth. It is actually now possible to grow an economy faster, for example, with a sensible environmental policy and by keeping your kids in school instead of at work, so that you build more brainpower to have more rapid, more long-term, more balanced growth.

Secondly, we all have an interest particularly in the environmental issue, because of global warming, because of greenhouse gas emissions, and because it takes somewhere between 50 and 100 years for those emissions to go away out of our larger atmosphere. So if there is a way for us to find a path of development that improves, rather than aggravates, the difficulties we have with climate change today by reducing rather than increasing greenhouse gases, we are all obligated to do it.

That is why, after the Kyoto Protocols, I recommended to all the advanced nations that we engage in emissions trading and vigorous investment of new technologies in developing countries, with an absolute commitment to them that we would not ask them to slow their economic growth.

We will see within the next few years automobiles on the streets all over the world that routinely get somewhere between 70 and 90 miles a gallon. In South America, many countries run on ethanol instead of gasoline. The big problem is that the conversion is not very good; it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol. Within a matter of a couple of years, scientists almost certainly will unlock the chemical block that will enable us to produce 8 gallons of fuel from farm products or grasses or even farm waste like rice hulls, for 1 gallon of gasoline. When that happens, you will see people driving cars that effectively

are getting 400 or 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline.

These things are before us. All these technologies should be disseminated as widely as possible, as quickly as possible, so that no nation gives up any growth to be a responsible environmental partner in the world.

And on the human development side, I will say again, the globalized economy prizes human development above all else. It is in the long-term and the short-term interests of developing countries not to abuse their workers and to keep their children in school.

Now, do we have all the answers to this? No, partly because the circumstances and the possibility, even for trade engagement, from nation to nation vary so much; but partly because we don't have more forums like this within which we can seek common understandings on worker rights, the environment, and other contentious issues.

We have suggested that the Committee on Trade and the Environment be invited to examine the environmental applications of WTO negotiations in sessions where developing countries form the majority. We cannot improve cooperation and mutual understanding unless we talk about it. That is our motivation—that is our only motivation in seeking to open a discussion about the connections between labor and trade and development, in the form of a new WTO working group.

And I will say this again, the consequence of running away from an open dialog on a profoundly important issue will be—it won't be more trade; it'll be more protection. The consequence of opening up a dialog and dealing honestly with these issues will show that in the new economy, we can have more growth and more trade with better treatment for people in the workplace and more sensible environmental policies. I believe that. You have to decide if you believe that.

My experience in life—and I'm not as young as I used to be—let me just say, at Thanksgiving a 6-year-old daughter of a friend of mine asked me how old I was. She looked up at me and she said, "How old are you, anyway?" And I said, "I'm 53." She said, "That's a lot." [*Laughter*]

Well, it looks younger every day to me. But I have lived long enough to know this: In the words of that slogan that people my daughter's age always use, denial is not just a river in

Egypt. [*Laughter*] And the more we hunker down and refuse to devote time systematically to discussing these issues and letting people express their honest opinion, the more we are going to fuel the fires of protectionism, not put them out. We have to make some institutional accommodation to the fact that this is a part of the debate surrounding globalization.

Now, I feel the same way about labor standards. And there is a win-win situation here. Let me just give you one example. We had a pilot program through our Agency for International Development, working with the garment industry in Bangladesh to take children out of factories and put them back in schools. The program got kids to learn and actually boosted garment exports and gave jobs to adults who would otherwise not have had them.

We can do more of this if we lower the rhetoric and focus more on results. Common ground means asking workers in developed countries to think about the future of workers in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. It means governments finding the courage to rise above short-term political interest. It means corporations taking responsibility for the effects of their actions, whether they're in an African delta or a New York highrise. It means a new, more active idea of corporate responsibility, stepping up to the plate to pay for vaccines or educate a new generation of workers in another country as a part of the globalization economic strategy.

Finally, let me say that the lessons from our history are clear: We will—we must—support the rules-based system we have, the WTO, even as we seek to reform and strengthen it.

I think those who heard a wakeup call on the streets of Seattle got the right message. But those who say that we should freeze or disband the WTO are dead wrong. Since World War II, there have been eight separate rounds of multilateral trade negotiations, hundreds of trade agreements signed. What's happened? Global trade has increased fifteenfold, contributing to the most rapid, sustained, and, yes, widely shared growth ever recorded.

There is no substitute for the confidence and credibility the WTO lends to the process of expanding trade based on rules. There's no substitute for the temporary relief WTO offers national economies, especially against unfair trade and abrupt surges in imports. And there is no

substitute for WTO's authority in resolving disputes, which commands the respect of all member nations. If we expect public support for the WTO, though—I'll get back to my main point—we've got to get out of denial of what's happening now.

If we expect the public to support the WTO the way I do—and I think almost all of you do—we have to let the public see what we're doing. We have to make more documents available, faster. We have to open dispute panel hearings to the public. We have to allow organizations and individuals to panel their views in a formal way. And we all have to play by the rules and abide by the WTO decisions, whether we win or whether we lose.

Let me be clear. I do not agree with those who say we should halt the work of the WTO or postpone a new trade round. But I do not agree with those who view with contempt the new forces seeking to be heard in the global dialog. Globalization is empowering people with information, everywhere.

One of the most interesting things I did on my trip to China was visit an Internet cafe. The more people know, the more opinions they're going to have; the more democracy spreads—and keep in mind, more than half the world now lives under governments of their own choosing—the more people are going to believe that they should be the masters of their own fate. They will not be denied access. Trade can no longer be the private province of politicians, CEO's, and trade experts. It is too much a part of the fabric of global interdependence.

I think we have to keep working to strengthen the WTO, to make sure that the international trade rules are as modern as the market itself, to enable commerce to flourish in all sectors of the economy from agriculture to the Internet. I will keep working for a consensus for a new round, to promote development, to expand opportunity, and to boost living standards all around the world. We will show flexibility, and I ask our trading partners to do the same.

But I would like to just close by trying to put this dilemma that you've all been discussing, and that was writ large in the streets of Seattle, in some context. Now, keep in mind, arguably a lot of the demonstrators in Seattle have conflicting objectives themselves, because of the interests that they represented. The thing they had in common was, they felt that they had

no voice in a world that is changing very rapidly. So I want to make two observations in closing.

Number one, we should stop denying that there is in many places an increase in inequality, and we should instead start explaining why it has happened and what we can do about it. Every time a national economy has seen a major change in paradigm, in the beginning of the new economy those that are well-positioned reap great gains; those that are uprooted but not well-positioned tend to suffer an increase in inequality.

In the United States, when our economy, the center of our economy moved from farm to factory 100 years ago—and many people left the farm and came to live in our cities; and many people from your countries came to our shores and were living in unbelievably cramped conditions in tenement houses in New York City and elsewhere, working long hours, breathing dirty air—there was a big increase in inequality, even though there was an increase in wealth, in the beginning. Why? Because some people were well-positioned to take advantage of the new economy, and some people weren't.

But then political and social organizations began to develop the institutions which would intermediate these inequalities. And the economy itself began to mature and disperse the benefits more broadly, and inequality went down. When we saw, beginning about 20 years ago in most advanced economies, a shift from the industrial economy to the digital economy, in many places there was an increase in inequality. In our country, we had a 25-year increase in inequality, which seems to have halted and been reversed only in the last 2 to 3 years.

So a part of this is the change in the paradigm of the global economy which puts a huge, huge, huge premium on education, skills, and access to information technology, which is even more burdensome to developing economies seeking to come to grips with these challenges.

Now, having said that, it should be obvious to all that the last thing in the world we want to do is to make the global economy less integrated, because that will only slow the transition to the digital economy in the poorest countries or in the poorest neighborhoods of the wealthy countries.

The answer is to look at what happened in the transition from the agricultural economy to the industrial economy, develop a 21st century version of that, and get it done much, much

faster—not to run to the past but not to deny the present.

The second point I'd like to make is this. We have a well-developed WTO for dealing with the trade issues. We don't have very well-developed institutions for dealing with the social issues, the environmental issues, the labor issues, and no forum within which they can all be integrated. That's why people are in the streets; they don't have any place to come in and say, "Okay, here's what I think, and here's the contribution I have. Here's the beef I have. How are we going to work all this out?"

That's why you're all here talking about it. That's why you've got a record crowd here. And we all know this intuitively. So I think if I could offer any advice, there are—there's thousands of times more experience and knowledge about all these things in this room than I have in my head. But I do understand a little bit about human nature and a little bit about the emerging process of freedom and democracy. We have got to find ways for these matters to be dealt with that the people who care about them believe are legitimate. And we cannot pretend that globalization is just about economics and it's over here, and all these other things are very nice and we will be very happy to see somebody over here somewhere talk about them. You don't live your life that way. You don't wake up in the morning and sort of put all these barriers in your head and—you know, it's all integrated.

It's like I say, we've got the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority here. We're working very hard to find a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We can't find that peace if we say, "Well, here's what we're going to do on these difficult issues and, oh, by the way, there's economics, but it's over here and it doesn't have anything to do with it." We have to put all these things together.

So I ask you, help us to find a way, first, to explain to the skeptics and the opponents of what we believe in why there is some increase in inequality as a result of an economic change that is basically wonderful and has the potential, if we make the changes we should, to open possibilities for poor people all over the world that would have been undreamed of even 10 years ago. And second, find a way to let the dissenters have their say and turn them into constructive partners. If you do that, we will continue to integrate the world economically and in terms of political cooperation.

We have got a chance to build a 21st century world that walks away not only from the modern horrors of terrorists and bio- and chemical terrorism and technology but away from ancient racial, religious, and tribal hatred. Growth is at the center of that chance. It gives people hope every day. But the economics must be blended with the other legitimate human concerns. We can do it—not by going back to the past but by going together into the future.

Thank you very much.

World Economic Forum President Klaus Schwab. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, we have just time for one or two questions. But before raising these issues, Mr. President, I can tell you and the applause has shown you what support you have for your plea for an open, rules-based trading system and for globalization. But at the same time, what we take home and what suddenly will influence our discussions very much over the next days, I think we have—and we are all aware here in this hall—that we have to change our attitudes and that we have to create this human and social dimension to globalization. It's in our own interest. And your speech, I think, will be reminded and will be translated into the necessary action.

Now, Mr. President, just two questions. The first one: In your reference to free trade and the WTO, you didn't mention China. And my question is—

President Clinton. Yes, I did.

President Schwab. You mentioned it?

President Clinton. I did, but I don't have—I speak with an accent, so—[laughter]

President Schwab. No, no. [Laughter]

President Clinton. I did, but I—

President Schwab. The question which I would like to raise is, will you actually rally the support in your country and internationally to get China integrated into the WTO?

President Clinton. I think so. In the United States, in the Congress, there are basically two blocks of people who oppose China's accession to the WTO. There are those who believe we should not do it because even though—everyone has to recognize, if you look at our trade deficit with China, everyone recognizes it's huge, by far the biggest part of our trade deficit. Everyone recognizes that we have kept our markets open to China and that if we had greater access to Chinese markets, it would be a good thing for us. So no one could seriously argue that—

the openings from agriculture and for other opportunities are massive, and that it would mean more to the United States than any other country since we buy—we're about 22 percent of the world's economy, and every year we buy between 33 and 40 percent of all China's exports, and we have a major, major trade deficit.

So on the economic argument, the people who are against it say, "Yes, that may be true, but if you put China in the WTO, it's basically a protectionist country, and then America will never get any real action on labor and environmental standards and all that because China will thwart every reform we want." That's what people say.

Then, there is another group of people that don't want to vote for it because of the actions the Chinese have taken to try to preserve stability at the expense of freedom. They believe that even if China's economy has grown more open, political crackdowns, crackdowns against the Falun Gong and others have gotten more intense, more open, and that it puts the lie to the argument that integrating China into the international system will lead to a more open, more democratic, more cooperative China. Those are basically the two arguments that will be made.

Those both raise serious issues, but I think it would be a mistake of monumental proportion for the United States not to support China's entry into the WTO. I believe that because, again, my experience is that you're almost 100 percent of the time better off having an old adversary that might be a friend working with you, even when you have more disagreements and you have to stay up a little later at night to reach agreement, than being out there wondering, on the outside wondering what you're doing and being absolutely sure whatever it is, it's not good for them.

So I believe that having them in the WTO will not only pad the economic benefits for the United States and other countries I mentioned but will increase the likelihood of positive change in China and, therefore, stability throughout Asia.

Let me say, you know, China and Russia both are still going through big transitions. The Russian economy is coming back a little better than most people think it is. No one knows what China and Russia will be like 10 years from now for sure, and you can't control it, unless you're Chinese or Russian; but you can control

what you do. And I don't know about you, but 10 years from now, whatever happens, I want to know that I did everything I could to increase the chance that they would make good choices, to become good, constructive neighbors and good, constructive partners in the global community.

You know, we don't agree with the Russian policy in Chechnya, but we've gotten rid of 5,000 nuclear weapons, and we got our soldiers working together in the Balkans. So I think the argument—we've got to try to have these big countries integrated, for the same reason we have to keep trying to work with India and with Pakistan to resolve those difficulties and get them fully integrated.

At every turn, we have to ask ourselves—we cannot control what other people do; we can only control what we do. But when all is said and done, if it works out well or it works out poorly, we want to know that we have done everything we possibly could to give people a chance to make good decisions. And that's what drives me, and that's why we're going to do everything we possibly can—under the leadership of Secretary Daley, who's going to coordinate our efforts to implement the agreement that our Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky, negotiated—we're going to try everything we can to get China permanent trading status so we can support their entering the WTO. And my guess is that we'll do it. But it's going to be a big fight, and you can watch it with interest and, I hope, with support. Thank you.

President Schwab. Mr. President, you mentioned debt relief in your speech, and you also mentioned it in your State of the Union message. Do you think the G-7 are really doing enough in this respect?

President Clinton. No, I don't. But if we do—I'm trying to focus on doing what we promised to do. And again, let me tell you what the debate is. We had an intense effort, in the last session of Congress, to pass what the Congress was finally, at the end of the session, good enough to do, and do on a bipartisan basis—I want to give credit to the Republicans, as well as the Democrats, who voted for this—to support our forgiving 100 percent of our bilateral debt for the poorest countries. And we're going to have another intense debate to support our contributions to the multilateral debt reduction effort, which is even more important.

The debate at home—basically, the people who are against this are old-fashioned conservatives who think when people borrow money they ought to pay it back, and if you forgive their debt, well, then, no one else will ever loan them money, because they'll think they'll have to forgive their debt, too. There's something to that, by the way. There's something to that. In other words, when we get into negotiations of whether debt should be rescheduled or totally forgiven, there are many times—when I have confidence in the leader of a country and I know they're going in the right direction, I would almost always rather forgive it, assuming I could get the support in Congress to do so.

But we do have to be sensitive to the way the world investor community views all these things, so that when all is said and done, countries that genuinely will have to continue to borrow money can get the money they need. But with that caveat, I favor doing more and more than the Cologne debt initiative. But my experience is, we do these things on a step-by-step basis. We already have broadened the Cologne debt initiative, and we're going to broaden it again. And I think if we get the Cologne debt initiative done and it works and people see that it works, then we can do more.

But it is really—it is quite pointless, it seems to me, to keep these poor countries trapped in debt. They're having to make debt service payments, which means that they can't educate their children, they can't deal with their health care problems, they can't grow their economy, and therefore they can't make any money to pay their debts off anyway. I mean, it's a totally self-defeating policy we've got now.

So I would like to see us do as much as possible, but at the same time, I want to remind you of another point I made. A lot of countries suffer not because they have governments that are too strong; they suffer because they have governments that are too weak. So we have to keep trying to build the governance capacity for countries so, when they get their debt relief, then they can go forward and succeed. So I don't think you should forget about that, either.

All of us have a real obligation to try to help build capacity so our friends, when they get the relief, can make the most of it.

President Schwab. Mr. President, to conclude our session, you have in front of you the 1,000 most influential business leaders. What would

be your single most important wish towards them at this moment?

President Clinton. My most important wish is that the global business community could adopt a shared vision for the next 10 to 20 years about what you want the world to look like, and then go about trying to create it in ways that actually enhance your business, but do so in a way that helps other people as well.

I think the factor about globalization that tends to be underappreciated is, it will only work if we understand it genuinely means interdependence. It means interdependence, which means we can—none of us who are fortunate can any longer help ourselves unless we are prepared to help our neighbors. And we need a more unifying, more inclusive vision. Once you know where you're going, it's a lot easier to decide what steps to take to get there. If you don't know where you're going, you can work like crazy, and you would be walking in the wrong direction. That's why I think this forum is so important.

You need to decide. The business community needs to decide. You may not agree with anything I said up here today. But you have to decide whether you really agree that the WTO is not just the province for you and me and the trade experts. You have to decide whether you really agree that globalization is about more than markets alone. You have to decide whether you really agree that free markets—even in an age of free markets, you need confident, strong, efficient government. You have to decide whether you really agree that it would be a good thing to get the debt off these countries' shoulders if you knew and could require that the money saved would go into educating children and not building weapons of destruction. Because if you decide those things, you can influence not only the decisions of your own government but how all these international bodies, including the WTO, work.

So the reason I came all the way over here on precious little sleep, which probably undermined my ability to communicate today, is that collectively, you can change the world. And what you are doing here is a mirror image of what people are doing all over the world. This is a new network.

But don't leave the little guys out. You know, I come from a little town in Arkansas. I was born in a town of 6,000 people, in a State that's

had an income just about half the national average. I've got a cousin who lives in Arkansas. He's a small-business man—he works for a small business—who two or three times a week plays chess on the Internet with a guy in Australia. Now, they've got to work out the times; how they do that, I don't know. But the point I want to make to you is, he thinks he knows as much about his life and his interests and how he relates to the Internet and the world as I do. He thinks he knows just as much about his interests as his President does, who happens to be his cousin.

So we need these networks. And you are in an unbelievably unique position. So my one wish

for you—you might think I'd say China or this or that and the other—it's nothing specific: Develop a shared vision. When good people with great energy have shared vision, all the rest works out.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. in the Plenary Room at the Congress Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey; and John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO.

Statement on Debt Reduction

January 31, 2000

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. By making the tough choices necessary to turn record deficits into record surpluses, we are now in a position to start paying down the debt. According to the latest numbers from the Department of the Treasury, we will pay down \$152 billion in debt in the 3 months from April to June—the largest debt paydown in our Na-

tion's history. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have repaid approximately \$300 billion in debt. If we continue on this path of fiscal discipline, we can pay off our national debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. This will keep interest rates low and investment high and lead to savings on everything from mortgages to student loans for working families across America.

Statement on Action To Resolve the Impasse Over Armed Forces Training on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

January 31, 2000

Today I am announcing a course of action to resolve the impasse over United States Armed Forces training on Vieques. This course will give the people of Vieques the right to determine the future of the island while assuring that our training needs are met. I have received a letter from the Governor of Puerto Rico endorsing this course.

I am issuing two directives. They provide that between later this year and early 2002, there will be a referendum held on Vieques, in which the people of Vieques will be asked to choose between two alternatives. If they choose the first alternative, the Navy will cease all training on

Vieques and leave the island by May 1, 2003. If they choose the second, training will continue on Vieques on terms that will be presented at least 3 months before the vote.

During the period leading up to the vote, training done on Vieques will be limited to non-explosive ordnance—meaning there will be no live fire—and the Navy and Marine Corps will cut in half the amount of time they will spend training to no more than 90 days per year, which is what we need to meet our training needs. I will also implement measures to meet the health, safety, environmental, and economic concerns of the people of Vieques, and I will ask

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Congress to begin transferring title to land on the western quarter of the island to Puerto Rico.

I believe this plan will help resolve the impasse over Vieques in the fairest possible way, because it will meet our training needs while giving the people most affected by this deci-

sion—the people who actually live on the island—the ability to choose for themselves the future of their island.

NOTE: The memorandums are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the France-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation

January 31, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of France on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Paris on December 10, 1998. I transmit also, for the Senate's information, an explanatory note agreed between the Parties regarding the application of certain provisions. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty is enclosed.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes: obtaining the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and items of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and rendering any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 31, 2000.

Message to the Congress on the New NATO Strategic Concept

January 31, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including by section 1221(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65), I hereby determine and certify that the new NATO Strategic Concept imposes no new commitment or obligation on the United States. Further, in accordance with section 1221(c) of the Act, I transmit herewith the attached unclas-

sified report to the Congress on the potential threats facing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 31, 2000.

Message to the Congress on the United States Air Force Operating Location Near Groom Lake, Nevada
January 31, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 6001(a) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) (the "Act"), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6961(a), notification is hereby given that on September 20, 1999, I issued Presidential Determination 99-37 (copy enclosed) and thereby exercised the authority to grant certain exemptions under section 6001(a) of the Act.

Presidential Determination 99-37 exempted the United States Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake, Nevada, from any Federal, State, interstate, or local hazardous or solid waste laws that might require the disclosure of classified information concerning that operating location to unauthorized persons. Information concerning activities at the operating location near Groom Lake has been properly determined to be classified, and its disclosure would be harmful to national security. Continued protec-

tion of this information is, therefore, in the paramount interest of the United States.

The determination was not intended to imply that in the absence of a Presidential exemption, RCRA or any other provision of law permits or requires the disclosure of classified information to unauthorized persons. The determination also was not intended to limit the applicability or enforcement of any requirement of law applicable to the Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake except those provisions, if any, that would require the disclosure of classified information.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 31, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 1.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Latvia-United States Fisheries Agreement
January 31, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Latvia extending the Agreement of April 8, 1993, Concerning Fisheries Off the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended (the "1993 Agreement"). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes at Riga on June 7 and Sep-

tember 27, 1999, extends the 1993 Agreement to December 31, 2002.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Latvia, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 31, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 1.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Ratification of
World Intellectual Property Organization Treaties
January 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by the second proviso of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaty and the World Intellectual Property Organization Performances and Phonograms Treaty, passed by the Senate on October 21, 1998, I transmit herewith the first report on the status of the ratification of those treaties and related matters.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 1.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange
With Reporters
February 1, 2000

The President. Let me say I am delighted to have the congressional leadership here today—a good day for them to come, because today all of us as Americans celebrate the month where we mark the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States. It's an expansion that was earned by the American people through hard work, high technology, open markets, fiscal discipline, and one that I think we can all be justifiably proud of, but we ought to be determined to continue to deepen, to improve.

I also am looking forward to working in what will be a fast-paced congressional year, because of all the other things that are going on this year. But I think if we work together, we can get a lot done. And I am hoping that among other things, that the areas where there's already been some expressed interest in working together, like continuing to pay down the debt, working on bringing economic opportunities to our new markets, saving Social Security, that these things will see some real progress.

As all of you know, we have some unfinished business that I'd like to see dealt with. I hope we can allocate the interest savings from debt reduction to lengthen the life of Social Security. I hope we can reach agreement on a Medicare reform package which includes prescription drugs but also some reforms. I hope we can

pass a Patients' Bill of Rights and see some action on the gun legislation and the minimum wage and a few other things.

But I think we can really get some things done. And I just want to say to all of you, I am committed to working with you in looking for positive avenues to cooperate, and I think we'll find some.

Mr. Speaker.

Q. Mr. President—

Speaker J. Dennis Hastert. Oh, I think there's—

The President. We'll let them speak, and then we'll take your questions.

[*At this point, Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert, Senator Trent Lott, Senator Thomas A. Daschle, and Representative Richard A. Gephardt made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, no one mentioned gun control—30,000 people are killed every year by guns—

The President. I think I did mention that.

Q. —and even the safety locks on children. What is this, that you can't get this through?

The President. Well, I'm not sure we can't. It passed the Senate, and we've got it in the

House, and I hope we can pass it. You can ask the House leaders more about that. But I intend—I think I mentioned it. If I didn't, I certainly meant to mention it in my opening remarks. And I intend to work hard to try to pass it.

Senator Lott. The juvenile justice bill is actually in conference between the House and Senate. And some of those provisions will at least be a part of the consideration of that legislation.

Q. Are you predicting it will pass?

Senator Lott. Oh, no, I'm not predicting. I'm stating—

Q. Why not? [Laughter]

Senator Lott. Because it hasn't been completed yet. But it is in conference, and the conferees will be working on it.

Alaska Airlines Flight 261

Q. Do you have any comment on the Alaska Airlines crash in California?

The President. Well, it's a terrible, tragic thing, of course. But you know, we have a real—well-established procedure here for how these tragedies are handled, through the established authorities. And I think before I make any substantive comment, we have to let them do their job.

But it was a very sad thing. And I, like most Americans, I suppose, I was watching it on television, and the helicopters were out there soon after the tragedy occurred. It's a very sad thing.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, you talked to Tony Blair about the difficulties in carrying out the Good Friday accord. Could you describe what you two said and what you think the U.S. can do?

And secondly, what has India done to convince you to travel there, despite its lack of progress on nuclear proliferation?

The President. Well, let me answer the first question. I spoke to Tony Blair; I spoke to Gerry Adams. We've been in constant contact with the Irish and the British Governments, and I had a good meeting with David Trimble a few days ago.

The thing is at such a point now that I think that any public comments I make on the merits at this moment might do more harm than good. We are heavily involved in trying to get the Good Friday accords implemented and get the present process supported. It's working great; these joint institutions are working well. New

investment is going into Northern Ireland. The people have voted for a peace process that united people with differences, believe it or not, more profound than the ones that are represented around this table. And it's working. And it would be a tragedy if it were derailed. But in order to keep it going, everybody's going to have to honor the terms of the agreement. And so we're working on that now, and I think that's all I should say now.

India-U.S. Relations

Q. And on India?

The President. I'm going because it's the biggest democracy in the world, and I think we haven't been working with them enough. Just as I believe we have to engage China that has a political system very different from ours, we have to engage India that makes decisions sometimes we don't agree with, but is a great democracy that has preserved their democracy, I must say, against enormous odds. And we have an enormous common interest in shaping the future with them, and I'm looking forward to it.

I think it's unfortunate that the United States has been estranged, or if not estranged, at least it's had a distant relationship with the Indians for too long.

New Hampshire Primaries

Q. Who's going to win the primaries?

Q. What about the primary? What would you tell New Hampshire voters today?

Q. Any predictions?

The President. I don't need to tell them anything, because one of the things about New Hampshire voters is, they all make up their own mind after an exhaustive inquiry. If there's any place in the world where people are actually well prepared to make their own decisions, it's there.

It's a wonderful place, you know. Of course, I love it. They've been very good to me. But it's a great system. I know some people say, well, it's not totally representative of the rest of the country. But, you know, I think people running for office—the Speaker and I were talking about this at the beginning—people running for offices like ours that have millions and millions of constituents shouldn't be able to get there just over, with all respect, television and the mass media. They ought to have to go out and sit down with people in their homes, in their coffee shops, in their places of business,

and let them ask questions and talk to them and be sized up.

I think it is a great exercise. And I've enjoyed watching it unfold for the first time in three elections where I'm not involved. But it's really been quite wonderful.

Q. Who's going to win? [Laughter]

The President. They'll decide that tonight.

Q. Did you talk to the Vice President? Did you talk to the Vice President?

The President. I haven't talked to him in the last 48 hours. But I talk to him, you know, frequently. I haven't talked to him in the last 48 hours, but I've talked to others associated

with the campaign. They're all up there working hard. That's all you can do up there. Nobody knows how the people of New Hampshire are going to vote. You've just got to go up there and work your heart out and hope it comes out.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; and Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Videotaped Address to the People of Puerto Rico on Efforts To Resolve the Impasse Over Armed Forces Training on Vieques Island February 1, 2000

My fellow citizens, last April there was a tragic accident at the Navy range on Vieques. I deeply regret the loss to the family of David Sanes and the suffering of others injured on that day.

That accident focused attention on the long-standing concerns of the island about training operations there. It led to a strong view in the Commonwealth that the Navy should end its training on Vieques. I understand why many people feel that way.

At the same time, as Commander in Chief, I must do all I can to ensure that our service men and women get the very best training possible. I know you understand that. Many Puerto Ricans have served with real distinction in our Armed Forces. You have never turned your back on your duty to share in the defense of our country.

For more than 50 years, Vieques has been a central part of our training for the Atlantic Fleet. The reason this is such a difficult issue is because right now there are no alternative sites that provide the same combined training opportunities.

For the past 9 months, we've been working closely with Governor Rosselló and Resident Commissioner Romero-Barceló to find a solution that meets our training needs and addresses fairly the concerns of the people of Vieques. Today I'm announcing a course of action that will give

the people of Vieques themselves the right to determine the future of the island, while at the same time assuring that our training needs are met.

Between later this year and early 2002, the people of Vieques will vote. In that vote, the people of Vieques will be asked to choose between two alternatives. If they choose the first alternative, the Navy will cease all training on Vieques and leave the island by May 1, 2003. If they choose the other alternative, training will continue on Vieques on terms that will be presented in detail at least 3 months before the vote.

I believe this is the best way to resolve the impasse over Vieques because it gives the people most affected by this decision, the people who actually live on the island, the right to determine for themselves which course of action we should take. In the meantime, until that vote is held, we're taking several other steps to ensure that our service men and women get the training they need, while addressing the needs of Vieques.

First, during the period leading up to the vote, I am ordering the training done on Vieques will be limited to nonexplosive ordnance, meaning there will be no live fire. I am also directing the Navy and Marine Corps to cut in half the amount of time they will spend training. In 1998 our troops trained for

182 days on Vieques; this year they will be authorized for 90 days.

Second, to address the problems caused by past training, we will implement measures to meet the health, safety, environmental, and economic concerns of the people of Vieques. Measures we will implement include positioning Navy ships to reduce noise; development of a new ferry pier and terminal; creating a new commercial fishing area; temporary compensation for fishermen; expanding and improving roads; a bioluminescent bay preservation program; a job training program for young people; providing land to extend the airport runway; and a public health service study.

Third, I will also ask Congress to begin transferring title to land on the western quarter of the island to Puerto Rico.

In the event that the residents of Vieques vote to continue training on the island, in recognition of the burden such training places on the community, we will increase the investment we make to meet infrastructure and development needs. In the event that they vote for an end to training, we will dispose of the land through the normal Federal process.

To make this solution work, I need your help. I understand the deeply held views people have on this issue. I understand that for many residents the accident exacerbated old wounds about the effect the training was having on your quality of life. They reflect a distrust that, unfortunately, has been building for decades.

As a Defense Department panel found, we have not always been good neighbors on Vieques. But I believe this plan will help resolve the impasse over Vieques in the fairest possible way, because it gives the people most affected by the decision the ability to choose for themselves what the future of their island will be.

I hope I can count on the cooperation of all the people of Puerto Rico to implement the measure I have outlined, to allow the training of our troops to continue in a responsible and much more limited manner during this period, while addressing the long-time concerns of the residents of La Isla Nena.

I want to thank Governor Rosselló for his unceasing effort to work out a resolution to this difficult impasse. Puerto Ricans and the people of Vieques have contributed greatly to our Nation's security. I am very grateful for that. And I hope all of us can work together with our Congress and with the government and Governor of Puerto Rico to implement this plan.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 6:15 p.m. on January 31 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was embargoed for release until 5 p.m. on February 1. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Pedro Rosselló and Resident Commissioner Carlos A. Romero-Barceló of Puerto Rico. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on the Crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 *February 1, 2000*

In times of tragedy, the American people pull together as one and offer their prayers and solace to those in need. Today our Nation prays for the men and women who were aboard Alaska Airlines flight 261 and for their families and friends.

Since last evening, the United States Coast Guard has been on the scene engaged in search and rescue operations. The National Transportation Safety Board's Go Team arrives this morning, and a joint command center is being established at the Port Hueneme Naval Center.

Underlying all these efforts is a strong and heroic determination to save lives and to find out exactly what went wrong, so that lives can be saved in the future. Throughout this difficult day and in the days and weeks to come, we will keep the passengers and crew of flight 261 in our thoughts, and let us hope that God's mercy will shine on them and their families.

Statement on Export Controls on High-Performance Computers and Semiconductors *February 1, 2000*

In July 1999, I announced reforms to the administration's export controls on high-performance computers (HPC) and semiconductors that were intended to strengthen America's high-tech competitiveness and maintain controls necessary to protect our national security. At that time, I directed my national security and economic advisers to review HPC technology advancement every 6 months and to provide me with recommendations to adjust our HPC export controls if warranted.

Today, based on the recommendations I have received from agencies as a result of their review, I am announcing additional reforms to U.S. export controls on HPC's. This decision reflects my commitment to a control system that will enhance U.S. national security by implementing controls on computer exports that are effective and enforceable.

I have decided to raise the licensing threshold for HPC exports to Tier 2 countries. I have decided also to raise the licensing threshold for Tier 3 countries and the threshold above which proposed exports to Tier 3 countries must be

notified to U.S. Government export control agencies, and to adjust the Tier 3 country grouping. The administration will continue its policy of maintaining a lower threshold for military end-users than civilian end-users. Export control agencies will examine the benefits of maintaining a civil/military differential in the course of their next review of HPC levels. Due to the ever-increasing rate of technological change, agencies will review control levels by April 2000 to determine if further changes are warranted.

The changes to the pre-export notification threshold and the Tier 3 country group require congressional review period of 6 and 4 months, respectively, before they can go into effect. I will continue to work with the Congress to pass legislation that would reduce these periods to one month, so that we can keep up with the rapid pace of technological change. I also will work with Congress to explore longer term solutions to how we control exports of items like computers and microprocessors when they become widely available commodities.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Greece-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty *February 1, 2000*

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Hellenic Republic on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on May 26, 1999.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes taking testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and other items; locating and identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings relating to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification. The White House,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON February 1, 2000.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Revision of the United States Arctic Research Plan *February 1, 2000*

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the provisions of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984, as amended (15 U.S.C. 4108(a)), I transmit herewith the sixth

biennial revision (2000–2004) to the United States Arctic Research Plan.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 1, 2000.

Remarks at Frank W. Ballou Senior High School *February 2, 2000*

Thank you. Now, all of you sitting out here in this audience, you know, some of us speak in public for a living; others don't. I thought Darnell was terrific. Didn't you think he did a good job?

I am so glad to be here today with all of you at Ballou Senior High School. I thank the band for playing for us earlier today. I thought you all did a great job. And I thank Dr. Durham and Dr. Bridges for welcoming me here and for giving me a track-and-field jacket, which I will wear happily. I thank the students who met me.

I want to say a special word of thanks to the chairman and CEO of America Online, Steve Case, and for Epic Learning's president, David Stirling. I thank them for what they said here today and for the commitment they have to giving you and young people like you all over this country a chance to live your dreams by making sure you have access to the technological future that ought to be within reach of every American. They don't have to do this; they're doing this because they know it is the right thing to do. And I thank them for being here.

I want to talk a little today about what our job is in the Government, what my job as Presi-

dent is, what Washington's job should be to make sure that we can have more stories like the ones I saw from the students today that Darnell introduced me to. And I want to thank all the students that showed me what they were doing to either repair or to work with computers. But nothing that the President proposes that costs any money can be done unless the Congress goes along. And there is an enormous amount of interest in the United States Congress today in both parties, in both the Senate and the House, to do something about this.

And there is a big delegation from Congress here, so I want to introduce them. I'd like to ask them to stand, and I hope you will express your appreciation to them: First of all, Senator Bob Bennett, from Utah, who headed our Y2K efforts in Congress—thank you, sir; Congresswoman Maxine Waters, from California; Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, from Texas; Congressman Bill Jefferson, from Louisiana; Congressman Adam Smith, from Washington; Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, from California; Congressman David Wu, from Oregon; and your Representative in Congress, Eleanor Holmes Norton. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Did I miss anybody? And I want to thank your wonderful Mayor, who was once a member of our administration, Mayor Anthony Williams. Stand up, there. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

I want to just mention a couple of other people. First of all, thank you, Superintendent Ackerman, for welcoming me. I want to thank Harris Wofford, who is the head of the AmeriCorps program and VISTA. The AmeriCorps[®]VISTA volunteers are working to help solve this problem of the digital divide all over America. They're young people who are going back into our schools, going back into our community, helping people who otherwise wouldn't have a chance, and earning some money themselves for college. Some of you might want to consider joining AmeriCorps when you get out of high school.

Stand up, Senator Wofford. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

I want to thank Angela Lee from AT&T and Julie Evans from NetDay for the work they have done to help connect all of our schools to the Internet. I want to thank three people in our administration: Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser, who has worked so hard on this; Secretary Daley, who is speaking in Harlem on this issue today; and I want to thank Vice President Gore for reasons I'll say in a moment, but he had a great deal to do with what we have been able to accomplish over the last 6 years.

I just got a wonderful tour from Darnell and a chance to learn how technology is enhancing your educational mission. And as Steve Case said, it will only increase when you become one of these power-up sites. I learned every freshman is taking a computer literacy class. I learned students are going on-line to get help with their homework and learn what they need to do to prepare for college. I learned that you can chat in foreign languages with people around the world and work on projects with scientists from our Naval Research Lab.

I was particularly pleased to learn about Epic Learning's long-term commitment to help students toward certificates in high-tech careers and about the way companies like 3M, AT&T, and Cisco, along with the AFL-CIO, are working to give you additional hardware, software, and teacher training.

One thing that I think may be a downside from the students' point of view—it occurred

to me when I was driving through the snow today—is that once we get everybody wired, you'll still have to go to school even when you can't get here, because you can just go on the Internet. [*Laughter*] But I think it's worth the sacrifice to give you a better future.

I wanted to say to you—to give you some examples. When we talk about bridging the digital divide, what do we mean? We mean that everybody ought to have access to a computer; everybody ought to have access to the Internet; everybody ought to know how to use it; and then we ought to make it possible for people to make the maximum use of it. I want to just give you some examples of what this incredibly profound change in our society has wrought in individual lives.

Victor Shen is a high school junior in Whittier, Alaska. He dreams of becoming a professional mathematician, but he lives in a small school in our largest but most rural State. So his school doesn't offer college-level calculus. His town is so remote that he's cut off from the whole rest of the world for several months every winter. But he will soon have the chance to take the classes he needs to pursue his dream of becoming a mathematician by getting on-line. It wouldn't be there.

It ought to be there for every person like him, in every rural area and every inner-city neighborhood in the entire United States of America. There are lots of Victor Shens out there. There are people in this high school who could become professional mathematicians, professional scientists. There are people like you in every community in this country. No one should be shut out of this.

Listen to this. Two years ago a man named Clinton Johnson lost his little bakery on 125th Street in Harlem in New York City. He had no savings to support his wife and two children. But he found a community technology center near his home, learned HTML code, and got himself a good job as a web developer.

Dale O'Reilly, a grandmother of two from Medford, New Jersey, was diagnosed 9 years ago with Lou Gehrig's disease. Now, even though she can no longer move or speak, a special laptop computer allows her to give voice to her thoughts, and she continues to write newspaper articles for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

The areas in America with the highest unemployment are our Native American reservations.

I visited last year the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the home of the Oglala Sioux. The unemployment rate there is over 70 percent. We're all looking for new ways for them to find things to do. They have very gifted artists and crafts and making Native American products. This year I ordered Christmas gifts from the Pine Ridge Reservation over the Internet. They would never be able to market their products across this Nation—never, ever. They wouldn't have the money to do it. But because they have a webpage, people like us can find them and help them to build their dreams.

And before we came out here, I was talking to Steve about—I spent some time a few months ago with the executives of eBay out in Northern California. Some of you may have found eBay on the net. It's a trading site. And the company's going like crazy, because people love to buy and sell things. It's like an old-fashioned community like the farmers' market used to be in my hometown on Saturday morning. And people buy and sell all kinds of things on eBay. There are now over 20,000 Americans making a living, not working for eBay but buying and selling on the site, and many of them used to be on welfare. They found a way through the net to empower themselves through their minds to have a different future.

Now, this is just the beginning. We have only scratched the surface. Imagine what it will be like when every single child in this country can just stretch a hand across a keyboard and pull up every book ever written, every painting ever created, every symphony or jazz piece ever composed; when high-speed wireless networks bring distant learning and telemedicine to every rural area in this country; when even the smallest business can compete worldwide just because they have access to people across the world through the net.

This is the future we are trying to build. In 1994, when Vice President Gore and I sponsored the first NetDay to begin to hook all of our schools and all of our classrooms up to the Internet, only 3 percent of the classrooms in America were wired. Since then, the public and private sectors, through generous grants, through NetDays, volunteer work, and through the steep discounts that schools can get in access charges, thanks to the so-called E-rate which the Vice President pioneered—since then, we've gone from 3 percent of our classrooms connected to over half of our classrooms connected.

And 90 percent of the schools in the United States today have at least one connection to the Internet. That's a big step forward, and I'm proud of that.

But as you have already heard, there is still a big digital divide in this country. And it runs through income first. Low income families are far less likely to have access to the Internet and computers. There is also, for reasons we don't entirely understand, there is a separate racial and ethnic component to it. Among low income families, African-American and Hispanic families are less likely than other low income families to have computers and to be hooked up to the Internet.

We also know that people who live in rural areas, regardless of their race, are far, far less likely to own computers and to be wired to the net—even though they, in some ways, need it more than anybody else because of their physical isolation—and that this is most pronounced in Indian country in the United States.

Eventually this digital divide will deprive businesses of the workers they need. That's why I was so glad to see people training here to learn how to use and to repair computers. It could also widen inequality in our society between people, based on who's connected and who's not.

Now, at a time when our country has the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, we must close the digital divide. We have worked too hard to turn this country around and to get it going in the right direction to let all this generation of young people wind up with greater inequality, when we have a chance to have greater equality of opportunity in America than ever in our history.

Some of you may know that I have been going around America holding what I call new markets tours, to make the argument that with all the prosperity of the country, now is the time to recognize and be honest about the fact that not every community has felt the economic prosperity of the last few years and that it is our obligation to bring economic opportunity to all the neighborhoods and all the rural areas and all the Indian reservations, where they don't know there has been a recovery because it hasn't changed their lives. If we don't do it now, we will never get around to doing this. Now is the time to do it.

In April I am going to lead one of these new markets tours, focused only on this issue, closing the digital divide. What can we do to have the kind of stories I saw in your classroom today in every classroom and every neighborhood, among every group in every community in the United States? And I've asked Congress to help me. And I want to talk a little bit about what I think our job is.

First of all, we ought to have a goal. I believe in having big goals. If you have big goals and you work towards them, even if you don't quite get there, you look around and you find you've come a long way. If you don't have big goals, you don't get much done. What should our big goal be? Our big goal should be to make connection to the Internet as common as connection to telephones is today. That's what our big goal ought to be.

And I think we should start by making sure that every community has a technology center that serves not just young people but adults as well. [Applause] Yes, you can clap for that. That's all right. I don't want to take credit for this. We started doing this 2 years ago because Congresswoman Maxine Waters from California, who is here today, who was then chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, brought this idea to our attention. She said, "You ought to have community technology centers everywhere for the adults, for the people who aren't in the schools. They need access to this, too."

These centers were working so well that we tripled our investment in them last year. And I have given Congress a budget that will triple our investment in them again so we can have 1,000 community centers with computers serving the adults of America who otherwise would not have access to them. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Waters, and I hope we can pass it.

Second, we want to join with the private sector to bring more computers and Internet access into the homes of low income people. Public-spirited members of the high-tech community have already helped us—pledged to help us on this. I know of at least two places in America where there is a serious program, thanks to the private sector, not only to hook up all the classrooms but to give more low income students' parents computers in their homes and make sure they know how to E-mail the school and keep working back and forth on the homework, on the progress of life in school.

In one of these districts in particular, in New Jersey, where a lot of the students are first-generation immigrants whose parents' main language is not English, there has been an explosion in student performance, in part because the net has enabled the parents who are working all day, who are busy, who hardly have enough money to support their children, but because they're connected, they can be directly involved through E-mail in their children's education. It made a big difference. And we need to recognize that as much as we can do with the community centers, which we ought to do now, eventually we're going to have to give home access to low income people just like the rest of us have, and I think we should be working on it.

Third thing I want to do is to ask Congress to give private companies a couple of billion dollars—that's a lot of money—in tax incentives to get them to build and support these community technology centers, donate quality computers, and provide computer training.

Fourth, I want to do more to give—this is a big issue—I bet you notice this here; I bet some teachers know this—we must do more to give quality technology training to all of our new teachers in America, to make sure they're as good with computers as they are with textbooks. You can have all the computers in the world, and if the kids know more about it than the teachers—which is often the case, at least if they're as technologically challenged as I have been in my life—we'll be behind.

Why should we expect teachers who did not grow up in the computer age to just know everything they should know to teach the kids everything they can teach to maximize this? We should do more. We owe it to the teachers of this country to give them all the training they need to maximize all this hardware and software that we're doing our best to put at their fingertips, and at the use of their students.

Next thing we need to do is bring high-speed networks to underserved communities. Businesses are looking for high-speed Internet access when they consider new sites. One of the problems I've got in trying to convince people that—even with tax incentives—they ought to go to isolated areas is they don't have high-speed Internet access, and time is money. So it's very important to do that.

And finally, we want to triple our investment in our Commerce Department's Technology Opportunity Program, to create innovative applications of technology for all low income communities. For example, we want to have health information systems that raise childhood immunization rates in inner cities. We want to have mentoring for at-risk youth that can be done via the Internet. We believe there are a lot of things that can be done to lift the lives of low income people and to bring benefits to them that normally aren't there, if we just think about it and we give people the tools who live in these communities to think about it and find ways to maximize their future.

It would be a terrible irony of our time if these tools, these information revolutionary tools that are breaking down barriers all over the world—and I'll just give you one more fact. When I became President—now, to the kids, this seems like a long time ago, but for the adults, it won't be—when I became President 7 years and 2 weeks ago, there were 50—50 sites on the World Wide Web—50. Today, there are over 50 million. And it's the fastest growing means of communication in history by far. Nothing even comes close.

And as a result, I told somebody the other day—you know, I come from a small town in rural Arkansas, and I've got a cousin that plays chess once or twice a week with a guy in Australia. I mean, it's unbelievable. This is the kind of thing that's going on. This tool is breaking down barriers between nations and cultures and enabling us to come together, and it's opening up all these wonderful opportunities. It would be a tragedy if we allowed this instrument that is also breaking down barriers to build up new barriers to people living their dreams, simply because they didn't have access to it. That's what this whole thing is about.

There are kids in this gym today, who in a former time might never have been able to even think about getting an education in some sort of esoteric technology or scientific subject, that will see something on the web that will spark your interest and that you will then be able to pursue, that could change your whole life. It would be wrong for you not to have that opportunity.

There are people here today who will understand that they can use this tool to make a

living and to create economic opportunity in this part of Washington, DC, that's never been there. It would be wrong for you not to have that opportunity.

There are people here today who can find out information about things that already exist. I saw—one young woman was looking at the questions she should ask in going to college. Every one of you should know that already on the books, we have passed tax credits, scholarships, and loans so that at least 2 years of college is affordable to everybody in America now—I don't care how poor you are. And if the Congress passes the legislation before them now, 4 years of college will be affordable to everybody in America—I don't care what your income is. You need to know that.

And it will be tragic if this instrument, that has done more to break down barriers between people than anything in all of human history, built a new wall because not everybody had access to it. That's what this whole deal's about.

Steve Case and I were talking—when Darnell was up here talking and he said, “You know, I'm not little anymore,” and he did that sort of, oh, shucks, routine, you know? [Laughter] I told Steve Case, I said, “Boy, he is really good.” [Laughter] And Steve said, “Yes, I'm glad I don't have to follow him.” [Laughter] I want every American to have a story like Darnell's. And this tool means that we don't have to give up on anybody. We don't have to leave anybody behind. We can all go forward together in the most exciting age this country has ever known. And we're here to tell you we will do our best to make sure you go.

And I want to close, as Mr. Case did, by saying, it doesn't matter what technology you put before you—to the students—if you don't do your part. You've still got to be able to read. You've still got to be curious enough to want to learn. You've still got to be disciplined enough to be willing to work. But if you get your heart and your mind engaged, there should be no barrier to letting you live your dreams tomorrow. And we're going to do our best to take the barriers down.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Darnell Curley, teacher, and Wilma Durham and Art

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Bridges, co-principals, Frank W. Ballou Senior High School; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Arlene Ackerman, superintendent, District of Columbia Public Schools;

Angela Lee, director of government affairs for the District of Columbia, AT&T; and Julie Evans, chief executive officer, NetDay.

Statement on the Retirement of Representative Bruce F. Vento *February 2, 2000*

I was saddened to learn that Representative Bruce Vento has been diagnosed with lung cancer and will retire from Congress at the end of the year. Since he was first elected to Congress in 1976, Bruce Vento has served the people of his Minnesota district with great distinction. A true champion of the environment, he has steered into law more than 300 bills protecting our natural resources. He has also been a tireless advocate in combating homelessness.

Bruce Vento has made a significant contribution to his country, not only as a United States Congressman but also as a Representative to the Minnesota State House and as a science and social studies teacher for 10 years. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues in the House of Representatives and his constituents in Minnesota. Hillary and I wish he and his family the best as they work to fight this terrible disease. We look forward to his continued public service even after he retires from Congress.

Message on the Observance of Lunar New Year, 2000 *February 2, 2000*

Warm greetings to all those celebrating the Lunar New Year. I am delighted to join you in welcoming 4698, the Year of the Dragon.

This ancient and joyous festival, marked by parades, dancing, music, and feasting, celebrates the miracle of life, the promise of a new year, and the blessings of family, friends, and community. It also reminds us of the many contributions that Asian Americans bring to our national life and of the many ways in which their customs, history, and traditions have enriched our country's cultural heritage.

Asian Americans play a key role in all segments of our society, from the scientists who have helped to build our national defense and

to power our unmatched technological progress to the artists whose talents grace our literature, stage, and screen. America is strengthened by these contributions, and we must work to ensure that Asian Americans are afforded every opportunity to be active and equal participants in our national life.

As people across America and around the world mark the beginning of a new lunar cycle, Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for health, happiness, prosperity, and peace in the new year.

BILL CLINTON

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Egypt-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation
February 2, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Cairo on May 3, 1998. I transmit also a related exchange of diplomatic notes for the information of the Senate. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty is enclosed.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes taking the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records and items of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 2, 2000.

Remarks at the National Conference of State Legislatures Dinner
February 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Representative Mannweiler, thank you for that fine introduction—reminding me of my days as Governor, which, on some days up here, have looked pretty good. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you for meeting me when I came in, along with your president-elect, Senator Jim Costa; vice president, Senator Steve Saland; my longtime friend Representative Dan Blue, your immediate past president; John Phelps; Bill Pound. I brought with me my Assistant for Relations with State and Local Governments, Mickey Ibarra, Matt Bennett, and others from the White House. And I want to tell you, I'm delighted to be here on your 25th anniversary.

One of the most impressive things that I found out in preparing to come here tonight is that more than 260 Members of the United States Congress are former State legislators and NCSL members. And I see a number of them

out here tonight of both parties. I'm almost tempted to finish my State of the Union Address. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you for two things: first of all, for working with us to try to get the right balance between the Federal Government and State and local governments. And your president talked a lot about that; there's no need in my repeating it. But when I came to Washington, I felt very strongly that the National Government should actually do a lot more in some areas but that we should proceed in a different way, and that because of the size of the deficit, which was then \$290 billion and projected to be over \$400 billion this year, we were going to have to find a way to increase our investment in education and cut the size of the deficit, shrink the size of the Government, and forge more partnerships with State government and with local government.

So we did what your president said, with the unfunded mandates. But we also worked out the partnership in welfare reform, which many people said would never work and result in terrible injustice to children. And as all of you know, it hasn't worked that way. We have about 7 million fewer people on welfare and 2 million fewer children in poverty, the lowest poverty rate among children in more than 20 years. The only thing I would say is, I hope all of you will fully spend all those TANF funds to make sure that we actually are doing right by the kids as we move their parents from welfare to work. But it has been, by any measure, a uniquely successful partnership between the National Government and the States and our private sector friends who've been hiring people from welfare to work. And I thank you for that, because it's enabled us to be more active in so many areas, with the smallest Federal Government in 40 years.

The Federal Government is now as small as it was, in terms of employment, when Dwight Eisenhower was spending his last year in the White House. And yet we are more active than ever, in part because we're trying to strike the right balance.

The second thing I want to thank you for is your trust for representative democracy initiative—you mentioned that a little bit, Mr. President—to help educate young people about government, democracy, the value of public service. I think that sometimes our young people believe either that government is not a good thing to be involved in; that people unlike them get involved in it; or that if they did get involved, what they did wouldn't make any difference. And nothing could be further from the truth.

We're around here as a nation after more than 224 years now because more than half the time, more than half the people turned out to be right on the really big issues. There is no place in the world that is a better example of what free people can do when they work together.

And if you look at the obstacles we've overcome in more than 200 years, I frankly think that a lot of this fashionable cynicism is a kind of a self-indulgent arrogance that has no place in America. And I respect what you do. I thank you for what you do. I believe in it. And I want the young people of this country to understand exactly how the system works, because that's why they're enjoying the benefits of free-

dom and prosperity they are today. So I thank you for that initiative, and I hope you'll bear down on it.

America has come a long way, and the whole nature of governance at the State and national level has come a long way since you got started 25 years ago. Twenty-five years ago, in 1975, IBM came out with a new computer; it weighed 50 pounds and cost about \$9,000. Americans were watching "M^AS^H" and "All in the Family." "Jaws" was on the silver screen—now being replayed on cable, I might add. John Denver and Elton John were the top stars. The Steelers had just defeated the Cowboys in Super Bowl X.

Well, a lot has changed. A lot has changed in just the last 7 years. Seven years ago, when I first spoke to the NCSL, there were 50—50 sites—webpages on the World Wide Web. Today, there are over 50 million, in only 7 years.

In the last 7 years, our scientists have discovered the genes that are high predictors of breast cancer and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. They're now actually experimenting with gene therapies to block the defective genes at the source so they can never replicate themselves, so that people can be treated for cancer without breaking down the rest of their bodies. Phenomenal things have happened, and the speed of change is accelerating.

Seven years ago, I felt that America was the best positioned country in all the world to take the plunge into the 21st century but that we had put off making hard choices for too long. And I said—I'd like to quote what I said then—that "we have to keep pace with the economic changes going on in the world by decreasing the deficit, lifting the skills and wages of workers, opening opportunities for people who work hard and play by the rules."

Seven years ago, we had a roadmap to take us in that direction. Today, we can all be pleased by the results. I did some interviews yesterday, with three major newspapers and with BusinessWeek, and they all asked me who was really responsible for the longest economic boom in American history. And I said, "Well, a lot of people. That's the way it is in a democracy."

You have to give credit to all those American industries that restructured in the painful years of the 1980's.

You have to give credit to the American workers, who acquired enormous employment in the

1990's and, unlike any previous economic expansion, understood the international economy and did not make excessive wage demands so that they would bring on inflation and kill the recovery.

And you have to give credit to the high-tech sector in America, which is 8 percent of our employment, 30 percent of our growth, and technology is rifling through every other part of the economy. One of the reasons most economists didn't predict that we could grow this far, grow this fast, have unemployment this low without inflation, is that nobody figured out how to measure the productivity gains from the explosion in information technology.

You have to give credit to Alan Greenspan.

You have to give credit, in my view, to my predecessors, as well as to our administration, because we fought for open markets. And we don't still have a consensus in America on what the right trade policy ought to be. But I'm telling you, I'd be very surprised if there's a person in this audience that's not wearing something that was made in another country. And imports have given us more consumer choice at lower prices, and they have helped to keep inflation down, which is critical to keeping the growth going.

But one big thing that really mattered was that we took office committed to getting rid of this deficit. And the minute we announced the plan to do it, interest rates dropped, investment went up, and we've had an investment-led, private sector-led boom because we got rid of the deficit. The Federal Reserve responded, and Chairman Greenspan deserves a lot of credit, because traditional economics said, "You better stop this economic recovery, because nothing can go on this long; America's going to be consumed by inflation." But he had the courage to look at the evidence, over the arguments of the past, to see that something fundamentally different was going on in our economy.

And you've all seen it manifested in your State treasuries. And now, every time the legislature meets, you're beset with what I would call high-class problems. [Laughter] Are you going to spend this money on colleges, on elementary and secondary education, on the environment; are you going to give tax cuts? What are you going to do with this money? Listen, for 10 years I had the other problems. These are high-class problems. [Laughter]

So I am grateful, and I think there's plenty of credit to go around. But one of the things we know about the National Government is that if we don't do our part, everything else can be thwarted. The main purpose of the National Government is to—beyond protecting the national security of America—is to establish the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives, to be a catalyst for new ideas, and to be a good partner with you, with local governments, and with the private sector. And we have tried to do that.

And as a result of everybody doing their jobs, over 20 million more Americans have jobs. And we have the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years. And that is a good thing.

But I just want to ask you the same question I asked the Congress and the country at the State of the Union Address: Now what? What are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? What are you doing with it back home?

You know, my experience—and I think anybody over 30 in this audience tonight can identify with this—is that sometimes you make the worst mistakes in life when things are going so well, you think nothing bad can happen. There's hardly a person that's lived very long that can't remember a time in his or her life when things were just perking along and you just did not want to think about the hassles of what lay just ahead. And so it was easy to just break your concentration, become diverted, maybe even become a little self-indulgent, and not to think about those things that were plainly out there.

And so what I've been trying to say to all of us is, without regard to our party or our philosophy or our differences, we ought to be able to agree on what's up the road, because some things are indisputable. We know the number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] And we know it's going to change everything.

We know that we've already got the biggest and most diverse group of children in our schools we have ever had. And we know, therefore, educating them to world-class standards is a greater challenge, and yet it's more important than ever. We know that.

We have known for a decade, now, that if you want to have a job with prospects of moving

on and doing better, even a high school education is not enough. You need to have at least 2 years of post-high-school education. And we ought to open the doors of college to every American. We know that. This is not something that's debatable. These are things we know.

There are a lot of other things that I'd like to just mention to you, but the main point I want to make, more than any other, that I would urge on you in your work, is that in my lifetime we have never had the opportunity or the responsibility we now have to shape the future of our dreams for our children. This is the last time we should pick to be lackadaisical, to be blase, to do what seems to be easiest at hand, instead of taking what Theodore Roosevelt called the long look ahead, and saying, "What are the big challenges? What are the big opportunities for the 21st century?"

We should work together to make sure every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed. We should work together to open the doors of college to all. We should work together to make sure every disadvantaged kid in this country has a mentor when he or she gets to middle school, that can help them learn, help them get through those tough years, and prove to them they can go on to college if they'll stay in school and do what they should do.

We should work together to bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind. That's what our new markets tour is all about. Today I was with two heads of big on-line companies, talking about bridging the digital divide in our schools. If we can't bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind, from our poor rural areas to our inner cities to our Indian reservations, if we can't do that now, when will we ever do it?

We know right now that a higher and higher percentage of parents are going to be working while they're raising their children. And we ought to know, if we've been paying attention, that most of them are having a hard time doing it, even the ones that are making a pretty good living, and that America has fewer supports to help people to succeed both at work and in raising their children than in other advanced countries. Now, we know that now.

Now, we also know that we need to find a way to balance work and family that doesn't mess up the jobs machine that brought us to

the dance we're enjoying today. So we need to focus on that. It's a huge deal.

We know there are still too many children in this country that are born in poverty and that we are so wealthy we no longer have an excuse for that. We can find a way to lift all of our children out of poverty, and we ought to do that. Every kid at least ought to have a decent start in life. These are things that we know right now.

We know that there are even more people without health insurance than there were when I tried to fix the problem and failed in 1993. One of my friends in Congress said the other day, he said, "You know, they told me way back in '94, when we voted on it," he said, "They told me if I voted for the President's health care plan, the number of uninsured people would go up." And he said, "Sure enough, that's what happened. I voted for it, and the number of people who are uninsured went up." [*Laughter*]

So I decided to come back and ask the Congress to do specific things. We've had a lot of bipartisan support for letting people keep their health insurance when they change jobs; for making sure things like mammographies and tests for prostate cancer are covered in Medicare. And the Congress, on a bipartisan basis, a majority of both parties in both Houses, in 1997, in the Balanced Budget Act—which kept our recovery going—provided the Children's Health Insurance Program that you are running, that you have more than doubled children's enrollment in, in the last year, going from 1 to 2 million children. The money's there to insure 5 million, especially if you get the kids that are Medicaid-eligible into Medicaid. So I urge you to bear down on that.

And I'm trying to get another option for you that will allow parents to get into the Children's Health Insurance Program that covers their children. If we did that, we could cover 25 percent of all the uninsured people in America, and those that are most needing of it, lower income working people and their kids.

So these are things we know. We know now we can get crime down, something we didn't really know 7 years ago. Most people didn't really think we could drive the crime rate down. It's gone down 7 years in a row, partly because of the economy but partly because law enforcement is better at what they do now, and communities are smarter about working with law

enforcement—the 100,000 police, all the preventive strategies for our kids. The Brady bill's kept half a million people with criminal records from getting handguns. I hope we can take the next steps on that, because I believe we can make America the safest big country in the world. And I think we ought to set a big goal there. If we know we can get crime down, then we don't just have to keep wringing our hands about it and hoping something happens. If we know we move in the right direction—it goes down every year—why don't we set a goal worthy of the American people?

Wouldn't it be nice if kids could walk to school again without fear? If you could send your kid to the city park again without worrying? Wouldn't it be nice? I am telling you, it is possible. But we have to have the discipline to do it. And unless we set a goal and go forward, we won't reach it.

I believe we know something else that I want to emphasize. I believe we know that we can grow the economy and improve the environment. I believe we know we can meet the challenge of global warming by reducing greenhouse gases and grow the economy. But it won't happen by accident. And I don't think we should do it with huge energy taxes and onerous regulations. I think we should use the science and technology we now have to rifle the improvements in the new economy throughout this country until we have proved it.

Let me just give you one example. I was out, a couple years ago, in California, in what's called the Inland Empire, east of Los Angeles, an industrialized area on the end of the rail line out there, where they had built a low income or low to moderate income housing development that the Energy Department, HUD, and the Home Builders participated in—an unusual political alliance. The Home Builders is not the most Democratic organization in America.

But I loved working with those guys. They were terrific. You know what, they went out there, and they built lower income housing with good insulation, the most up-to-date lighting that kept out 4 or 5 times as much heat and cold—windows, I mean, the most up-to-date windows—and the most modern lighting; otherwise low-cost housing. And they said to the prospective buyers, “If you move into these houses, we'll guarantee you that your average utility bill will be 40 percent less than it would be in a house with this much floor space in any other

part of California.” After 2 years, the utility bills are averaging 65 percent less. And that's just one example.

So I say to you, this can't all be done at the Federal level. We don't have to do this with regulation and taxes. But we do have to do it. And we ought to have a bipartisan consensus—this will generate jobs—that we're going to continue to improve our own environment, and we're going to continue to fight the problem of climate change by generating jobs in a whole new sector of the economy. There's a \$1 trillion market out there worldwide. It could keep this economic growth going another 5 years, if we actually get serious about it.

And there are lots of things you can do at the State level. I see my good friend, Congressman from Iowa out there, Congressman Boswell. We were working on the development of biofuels. You know, they always have a big fight in every election in Iowa about ethanol. And the politicians go to Iowa and say they're for ethanol and maybe hope the people on the coasts aren't watching. *[Laughter]*

Now, why is that? Because you do actually gain something out of ethanol, but it's not very efficient right now. I've supported it for 20 years, so I can say this. I believe in it. But it takes about 7 gallons of fuel to make 8 gallons of ethanol. Scientists are now working on cracking the molecular challenge, and when they do, they'll be able to make about 8 gallons of ethanol with 1 gallon of gasoline. When you put that with the Detroit auto show cars that are coming out right now, getting 70 or 80 miles a gallon, it'll be like getting hundreds of miles for a gallon of gasoline.

This is something that is right ahead of you. And every State ought to be examining, right now, what you can do to be on the forefront of that, to work with us. And I'm telling you, the rewards will be immense. The energy revolution has the capacity to do for the American economy in the next 10 years what the digital revolution has done for it in the last 10 years, if we make the most of it.

Now, the last thing I want to say is this. If the good Lord came to me tonight and said, “I know you're having a lot of fun being President, but I've decided that your time is up, and you can't finish your term. But I'll be like a genie; I'll give you one wish for America.” I would not wish for any of the things I've just said. I would wish for America that we

could somehow purge ourselves of our fear and mistrust and hatred of our fellow citizens who are different from ourselves.

If you were following these events in the press, you know that we've hit a little bit of a rough patch in the Irish peace process, something I've worked on ever since I got here, that we're struggling to try to resolve the remaining differences between the Israelis and the Syrians in a very difficult environment, which saw the death of three Israeli soldiers just a couple of days ago; that we continually fight to restrain the consequences of tribal conflicts in Africa and the awful religious and ethnic wars that have gripped Bosnia and Kosovo. And you can be very proud that your country has tried to ease these burdens elsewhere.

But even here at home, you see in place after place the resurgence of hate crimes or just old-fashioned bigotry. And it's as if there's something deep within the human psyche; it's almost the oldest problem of human society. We feel comfortable with our crowd, and we don't feel comfortable with people that aren't like us. And the easiest way to tell whether somebody's like us or not is to look at what color they are. And the next easiest way is you find out whether they've got an accent or what their religion is. In Washington, it's what political party you belong to. [Laughter] Not so bad out in the States, I hope.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, the most important fact I learned last year was from a geneticist, an expert in the human genome named Eric Lander who's a professor at Harvard, who Hillary had to the White House for a lecture. And the last thing he said was that we are genetically 99.9 percent the same. The thing that I didn't say in the State of the Union that I also want you to know, which drives the point home, is that Dr. Lander also said that if you took a bunch of people in various ethnic groups and you put them in different groups—like if you put a lot of northern Europeans over here, 100 northern Europeans, and 100 Hispanics, and 100 Asians, and 100 Africans—listen to this—he said that the genetic differences among individuals within each group would be greater than the genetic differences between the groups.

Now, that is very important for us to know, because it means that science is approaching what religion has always taught, that we are all the children of God. You remember what

Einstein was asked, when he was asked—what Einstein said? He was asked if he believed in God. He said, “Nothing this complicated could have happened by accident,”—[laughter]—“nothing this well-balanced, nothing this harmonic. Nothing this—this just couldn't have happened by accident.”

It's very interesting to see that the far reaches of science are now telling us what religion has always taught, that the most important fact of life is our common humanity.

Most people run for the State legislature because they're close to the people they represent. You are constantly looking for ways that effectively bring people together, that reconcile competing claims, that allow people to move forward. That is the spirit that I keep trying to hammer home here in Washington. The further you get away from the people, the easier it is to try to be effective by dividing people, because you're afraid your folks can't see you, and you can't always touch them, and you're a lot more likely to get that 15 seconds on the evening news if you're cutting somebody a new one than if you've got your hands open to shake hands with somebody. [Laughter]

So, I say that to say to all of you to, in your own way, however you can, from whatever your perspective is, you ought to be working on building that one America, too, because it's really easy for people to indulge themselves in fights and falling-outs that they shouldn't have when times are good, because they think there are no consequences to it. There are always consequences. And we will never forgive ourselves if we don't make the most of this opportunity.

I'll just close with this. A young child who is the daughter of a friend of mine, when the family spent some time with Hillary and me and my extended family over Thanksgiving, this 6-year-old girl looked up at me one day and she said, “How old are you anyway?” And I said, “I am 53.” And she said, “Oh, that's a lot.” [Laughter]

It's enough to remember this. I was a young man when we had the longest previous economic expansion in our history, that, in economic terms, lasted from 1961 to 1969. When I graduated from high school in 1964, we had absorbed the awful trauma of President Kennedy's assassination, and we were moving forward trying to advance the cause of civil rights

and lift up the poor. We had low unemployment, low inflation, and very high economic growth. And everybody thought it was going to go on forever. And within 2 years, we had over a half a million people in Vietnam, dividing the country. We had riots in our streets, making people believe that the civil rights issues could no longer be resolved in our legislative halls. We had an alienated citizenry.

And it has taken—I have waited—as an American, not as President, as an American—I have waited 35 years for my country to be back where it was, in terms of opportunity for us to work together, to respect our differences of opinion, to understand nobody's got a monopoly on truth, but to recognize that, my God, there's no place on Earth that's as blessed as we are.

And all that remains is whether we will be wise enough to make the most of it. I ask you to help us be that wise and to do your part.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. in the East Hall at Union Station. In his remarks, he referred to Indiana State Representative Paul Mannweiler, president, California State Senator Jim Costa, president-elect, New York State Senator Stephen Saland, vice president, North Carolina State Representative Dan Blue, immediate past president, Executive Clerk of the Florida House of Representatives John Phelps, staff chair, and William T. Pound, executive director, National Conference of State Legislatures; Matt Bennett, Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research. The President also referred to TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast February 3, 2000

Thank you, and good morning. Senator Mack, Senator Lieberman, Mr. Speaker, Congressman Doyle, other distinguished head table guests, and the Members of Congress and the Cabinet, my fellow Americans, and our visitors who have come from all across the world. Let me thank you again for this prayer breakfast and for giving Hillary and me the opportunity to come.

I ask that we remember in our prayers today a people who are particularly grieved, the men, women, and children who lost their loved ones on Alaska Airlines flight 261.

And let me say to all of you, I look forward to this day so much every year, a little time to get away from public service and politics into the realm of the spirit and to accept your prayers. This is a special year for me because, like Senator Mack, I'm not coming back, at least in my present position. And I have given a lot of thought to what I might say today, much of it voiced by my friend of 30 years now, Senator Joe Lieberman, who did a wonderful job for all of us.

The question I would hope that all of my fellow citizens would ask themselves today is: What responsibilities are now imposed on us

because we live at perhaps the greatest moment of prosperity and promise in the history of our Nation, at a time when the world is growing ever more interdependent? What special responsibilities do we have?

Joe talked about some of them. We—I sometimes think in my wry way, when Senator Mack referred to his cousin, Judge Arnold, a longtime friend of Hillary's and mine, as being on his far right and that making it uncomfortable, I laughed to myself. That's why Connie wanted him on the bench, so he would get one more Democrat out of the public debate. [Laughter] But I wonder how long we'll be all right after this prayer breakfast. I wonder if we'll make it 15 minutes or 30 or an hour. Maybe we'll make it 48 hours before we'll just be back to normal.

So I want to ask you to think about that today: What is underneath the fundamental points that Senator Lieberman made today? For us Christians, Jesus said, the two most important Commandments of all were to love the Lord with all our heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The Torah says that anyone who turns aside the stranger acts as if he turns aside

the most high God. The Koran contains its own powerful version of the Golden Rule, telling us never to do unto others what we would not like done to ourselves.

So what I would like to ask you in this, my last opportunity to be the President at this wonderful prayer breakfast: Who are our neighbors, and what does it mean to love them?

His Holiness John Paul II wrote us a letter about how he answered that question, and we are grateful for that.

For me, we must start with the fact that “neighbors” means something different today in common language than it did when I was a boy. It really means something different in common language than it did when I became President, when there were 50 websites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are over 50 million, in only 7 years. So that we see that within our borders we are not only growing more diverse every day in terms of race and ethnic groups and religion, but we can talk to people all across the world in an instant, in ever more interesting ways that go far beyond business and commerce and politics.

I have a cousin who is from the same little town in Arkansas I am, who plays chess a couple of times a week with a man in Australia, 8,000 miles away. The world is growing smaller and more interdependent. And I guess the point I would like to make to you today is, as time and space contract, the wisdom of the human heart must expand. We must be able to love our neighbors and accept our essential oneness.

Now, globalization is forcing us to that conclusion, so is science. I’ve had many opportunities to say in the last few months that the most enlightening evening I had last year was one that Hillary sponsored at the White House where a distinguished scientist and expert in human genome research informed us that we are all genetically 99.9 percent the same and, furthermore, said that the differences among people in the same racial group genetically are different, are greater—the individual differences among people in the same racial and ethnic groups are greater than the differences from group to group.

For some that is reassuring; for some that is disturbing. When I said that in the State of the Union, the Republicans and Democrats both laughed uncomfortably. [Laughter] It seemed inconceivable. But the truth is that modern science has taught us what we always

learned from ancient faiths, the most important fact of life on this Earth is our common humanity. Our faith—I love what Representative Doyle said—our faith is the conviction of things unseen. But more and more, our faith is confirmed by what we know and see.

So, with all the blessings we now enjoy, what shall we do with it? If we say, “Okay, we accept it, God, even though we don’t like it every day, we are one with our brothers and sisters, whether we like them or not all the time. We have to be bigger. Our hearts have to grow deeper. Time and space contract; help us to expand our spirits,” what does that mean?

We know we can’t build our own future without helping others to build theirs. But many of us live on the cutting edge of a new economy, while over a billion people live on the bare edge of survival. And here in our own country, there are still too many poor children and too many communities that have not participated in our prosperity.

The Christian Bible says that Jesus warned us that even as we do it unto the least of these, we have done it unto our God. When times are tough and all of our fellow citizens are having a hard time pulling together, we can be forgiven if we look at the welfare of the whole. Now the welfare of the whole is the strongest it has ever been, but people within our country and beyond our borders are still in trouble, people with good values, people with the values you have held up here today, people who would gladly work. We dare not turn away from them if we believe in our common humanity.

We see all over the world the chorus of denial about our common responsibility for the welfare of this planet, even though all the scientists say that it is changing and warming at an unsustainable rate, and all great faiths have reminded us of our solemn obligation to our earthly home.

Even more troubling to me, our dazzling modern world is witness to a resurgence of society’s oldest demon, the inability to love our closest neighbors as ourselves if they look or worship differently from the rest of us. Today, the Irish peace process is strained by a lack of trust between Republican Catholics and Protestant Unionists. In the Middle East, with all its hope, we are still having to work very hard to overcome the profoundest of suspicions between Israeli Jews and Palestinian and Syrian Arabs.

We have people here today from the Indian subcontinent, perhaps the most dangerous place in the world today because of the tensions over Kashmir and the possession of nuclear weapons. And yet, when people from the Indian subcontinent come to America, they do better than nearly anybody because of their family values, their work ethics, and their remarkable capacity, innate capacity, for absorbing all the lessons of modern science and technology.

In Bosnia and Kosovo, Christians thought they were being patriotic to cleanse their lands of Muslims. In other places, Islamic terrorists claim their faith commands them to kill infidels, though the Koran teaches that God created nations and tribes that we might know one another, not that we might despise one another.

Here at home, we still see Asians, blacks, gays, even in one instance last year, children at a Jewish school, subject to attacks just because of who they are. And here in Washington, we are not blameless, for we often, too, forget in the heat of political battle our common humanity. We slip from honest difference, which is healthy, into dishonest demonization. We ignore, when we're all hyped and in a fight, all those Biblical admonitions we profess to believe: that "we all see through a glass darkly"; that, with Saint Paul, we all do what we would not, and we do not do what we would; that "faith, hope, and charity abide, but the greatest of these is charity"; that God says to all of us, not just some, "I have redeemed you. I have

called you by your name. You are Mine," all of you.

Once Abraham Lincoln responded to some friends of his who were complaining really bitterly about politicians who would not support him. And he said to them, and I quote, "You have more of a feeling of personal resentment than I have. Perhaps I have too little of it. But I never thought it paid." Well, we know it doesn't pay. And the truth is, we're all here today because, in God's timetable, we're all just like Senator Mack and me. We're all term-limited.

In my lifetime, our Nation has never had the chance we now have to build the future of our dreams for our children, to be good neighbors to the rest of the world, to live out the admonition of all our faiths. To do it, we will have to first conquer our own demons and embrace our common humanity with humility and gratitude.

I leave you with the words of a great prayer by Chief Seattle. "This we know: All things are connected. We did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it. And whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 a.m. in the International Ballroom at the Hilton Washington Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Judge Richard S. Arnold, U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, Little Rock, AR.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Alan Greenspan as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board

February 3, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate has confirmed the nomination of Alan Greenspan for another term as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Chairman Greenspan's wise and steady leadership has inspired confidence here in America and around the world. He has made a truly remarkable contribution in helping lead our Nation to the longest economic expansion in his-

tory. I look forward to continuing the productive and appropriate relationship that my administration has enjoyed with Chairman Greenspan and the other excellent members of the Federal Reserve Board in working to extend this era of American prosperity. I am hopeful that the Senate will move quickly to confirm the other two nominees to the Federal Reserve Board as well.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Romania-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation February 3, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Romania on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on May 26, 1999. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty is enclosed.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance

available under the Treaty includes taking the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and items of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 3, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Jane Harman February 3, 1999

The President. Let me begin by saying that I'm really here for Sidney. We are running—we are running on the same ticket this year. We're trying to get elected to the congressional spouses caucus. [Laughter] He's my guy, and I'm with him until the end of time, so here we are.

I want to thank Representative—

Audience member. Can't see you.

The President. Yes, can you see me now? I'll step in. How's that?

Audience member. Thank you.

The President. Good. You never saw Jane; she actually was here. I wasn't—[laughter]—you may all think I mimed all those previous speeches.

I want to thank Nancy Pelosi and Brad Sherman and Congressman Baca for being here, and all those who were here before to show their support for Jane. I want to thank my good friend Molly Raiser. I think—Skye was reminding me—I think the fundraiser I had in this house in 1992 was the very first one I had

outside my native State of Arkansas. So we're all heavily indebted to this wonderful home and its occupants.

I want to say that I'm profoundly honored to be here tonight, because Jane Harman is exhibit A of why the Democratic Party is now the true majority party in the United States. She represents a very difficult district, and she is proof you can be pro-family and pro-work. She's proved you can be pro-environment and pro-growth. She's proved you can be pro-labor and pro-business. She's proved that all the things that Republicans used to say about us, that they made votes and got elected time after time—and there are a lot of people in here, including Gerry Ferraro, who have been the victims of these sort of cardboard-cutout, preconceived, bogus campaigns that were run so effectively for more than a decade. They don't work anymore. And one of the things that I feel very blessed to have done, maybe just because I have an accent, is to help liberate the

Democratic Party from its vulnerability to those kind of attacks.

But I'm telling you, Jane Harman proved, in getting elected and staying elected and doing the right things and taking tough votes, that we could build a new majority in this country and that the results would be good.

And I want to say, since she said what she did, I think one of the underappreciated things that all of us, the Democrats, have been able to do in the last few years is, in spite of the economic difficulties that we had to overcome, we've not only produced big budget surpluses; we actually have passed an awful lot of progressive social legislation. There are over 2 million fewer children in poverty. Over 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law. Over 5 million poor people have gone to college with the HOPE scholarship tax credit. I could go on and on and on. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases. Two million kids now have been insured under the Children's Health Insurance Program; by the end of this year, I think it'll be 4.

And that's where America is. This is not a mean-spirited country. This is just a country that wants to help people who are disadvantaged move into the middle class without breaking down middle class economics or values. This is a country that wants everybody to have a chance. And Jane Harman represents that.

And she and Sidney have been great friends of mine. I had—one of the best days I've had as President was the day that Sidney took me through his wonderful factory in California, and I talked to all of his hundreds of employees. And we had a great day.

But I'm here because Jane Harman, to me, represents not just someone who's been my friend and has helped me politically but what the Democratic Party embodies and why we can win in 2000 and in the years ahead.

More important than that is, I want her to win because when I'm gone, I trust her to do the right thing, and that's very important.

You know, I don't feel wistful; I don't even feel particularly sad about having to leave office at the end of my term, even though I love it and I'd probably do it forever if the Constitution didn't stop me. *[Laughter]*

But I do want you to think about this, and I want you to know why I'm going to do—I'm not on the ballot this year, and I am going

to do more events like this than I have ever done in any year. And I have already done more than any previous President has ever done. And I want you to know why: because I think so much of what we've done the last 7 years is to turn this country around, get it going in the right direction, and give the American people the confidence that we can build a more just, a more decent, a more humane society, and play a more constructive role in the world, and still do well. And in fact, the more we do the right things, the better we're likely to do economically. And it's been a big job, turning this huge ship of state around.

Now, as I said in the State of the Union the other night—I don't want to talk about the specifics tonight; I'd just be singing to the choir. But I want you to think about this, and Jack Valenti will identify with it, and so will Lloyd Hand. Our country has had the longest economic expansion in history. Virtually every social indicator is going in the right direction. There is a very high level of confidence that we can do whatever we set our minds to do, and we have the smallest amount of internal crisis or external threat we've had in my lifetime. Never in my lifetime has this happened.

Now, the last time it almost happened was in the early sixties, which was the previous longest economic expansion in our history. When President Kennedy was killed—I disagree with all these people that date the start of American cynicism and all that to the assassination of President Kennedy. That's not true. People are rewriting history. President Johnson did a fine job in taking over, and President Kennedy's family was supportive. And the country rose above that, and we were moving forward.

When I finished high school in 1964, we had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, high expectations, and most people believed that the President and the Congress would find an orderly, legal way to meet the civil rights challenges of this country, to meet our responsibilities in the cold war, and to move on to greater heights. And a lot of people, frankly, just took it for granted and didn't see a lot of the big challenges there in the way that they might—plus which, time and chance intervened.

All I know is, when I finished high school, everybody in America thought we were headed in the right direction, no interruptions ahead. Two years later, we were divided over Vietnam. We had riots in the streets. Trying to meet

both obligations undermined our economy. It has taken us 35 years to get back to the point, as a nation, that we were then.

I'm not saying to you this as a President or a Democrat. As a citizen, as an American, I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position where we could build the future of our dreams for our children and be genuinely good neighbors to people around the world. And we have tools to do it now and the absence of clouds that were not there 35 years ago.

That's why I'm here; that's why I'm going to do more of these things. Because people tend to get in trouble—individually, in families, at work, and as nations—in two kinds of circumstances, and anybody that's over 30 here will identify with both. One is, you tend to do really stupid things when you get mad and hurt and exhausted because you can't sleep, because you're so mad, hurt, and exhausted. The second time when you make a lot of mistakes is when you think things are going so well there are no consequences to what you do, and so you don't have to think and plan and look ahead and deal with the big stuff. That is what we face today. Democracies are great in times of crisis. We were hell on wheels in the Depression. We were great in World War II. We had a remarkable constancy all during the cold war, notwithstanding the fact that we had disagreements over the details.

What are we going to do now with all this? That is the great question. I trust Jane Harman to not let us forget that we're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30

years, to not let us forget that the children of this country are growing more numerous and more diverse, and they'll either be our greatest asset or a big drag on the world we're trying to build. You know, I trust her to deal with these big things that I talked about in the State of the Union Address.

And I trust you to continue to support that. When you go home tonight and you think about how many more times somebody's going to ask you to show up at one of these things this year, you think about how many times you'd rather be doing something else, you think about how tiring this gets, you just remember this, especially those of you that are around my age: We have waited for 35 years. And we must make sure the American people—in this Presidential race, in these congressional races, in everything we say and do—dominate the conviction of America to make the most of this moment.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:54 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Jane Harman, candidate for California's 36th Congressional District, and her husband, Sidney, chief executive officer, Harman International Industries, Inc.; Molly Raiser, member of the board of directors, Coalition for a Democratic Majority, and her daughter Skye; former Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro; Jack Valenti, president, Motion Picture Association of America; and Lloyd Hand, executive committee member, Congressional Economic Leadership Institute.

Remarks on the Report on Commerce in Firearms and an Exchange With Reporters

February 4, 2000

The President. Good morning. Before I leave to go up to the Hill, I'd like to say a few words about an important new report I've just received on how guns flow from the legal firearms market to criminals and to talk about the unprecedented new actions that we're taking to block that flow.

Keeping guns out of the wrong hands has been a priority for 7 years for us, and we have made some real progress with the Brady law,

with the ban on assault weapons, cracking down on illegal gun dealing to young people, with increased Federal prosecutions of gun crimes, and beginning with the directive I issued in 1993, we have nearly quadrupled the number of traces that the ATF performs on guns used in crimes.

With the help of these and other efforts, we've cut gun crime by 35 percent since 1993, and homicide is at its lowest rate in over 30

years. But as I said last week in The State of the Union, no one believes America is safe enough, and it's time we set the proper goal to make our Nation the safest big country in the world.

We can do that by building on our progress and applying lessons learned. Some crucial lessons are captured in this ground breaking new report by ATF, the most comprehensive look at the firearm industry ever done by the National Government. Thanks to its increased tracing of crime guns, the ATF has been able to uncover an astonishing fact: Only one percent of the gun dealers in America sell over 57 percent of the guns used in crime. These findings confirm a pattern that Senator Chuck Schumer has talked about for several months, and I want to thank him for his leadership on this issue.

In response to the findings in this report, I'm pleased to announce today that we're beginning the most aggressive effort ever undertaken to ensure responsible behavior by gun dealers. Dealers whose guns most frequently wind up in criminals' hands will now be subject to intense scrutiny by ATF. All dealers will be required to do a more thorough job of reporting gun thefts. In a moment, Secretary Summers, in a briefing, will explain to you how these and other actions will work in more detail.

The tragic shooting last year in Columbine High School showed us what happens when guns fall into the wrong hands. The actions I've announced today will enable the Federal Government to do a better job in fulfilling our responsibility to reduce gun violence.

Others have responsibilities, too. The gun industry must do its part. As I've said before, there are responsible citizens in that industry, manufacturers and dealers. They can help us to keep the guns out of the wrong hands. And Congress must fulfill its responsibility as well.

As its first order of business this year, I've asked Congress to pass commonsense gun safety legislation to close the gun show loophole, to require safety locks with all new handguns, to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. And again, I repeat my call from the State of the Union that all new handgun buyers be required to have photo licenses from their States showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course.

Congress has a responsibility, too, to provide law enforcement agencies, including the ATF, with the authority and resources they need to

do their jobs. Under current law, ATF can only inspect a gun dealer, no matter how flagrant the problems are—and as I said, one percent of the dealers provide 57 percent of the guns used in crime—under current law, ATF is only permitted to inspect such dealerships once a year.

Today I ask Congress, as I did last year, to remove this restriction, allow ATF to make up to three unannounced visits per year. I also ask Congress to fund my plan to hire 1,000 more Federal and local gun prosecutors, more ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on these illegal gun traffickers and violent gun criminals. And finally, I ask Congress to provide law enforcement with the tools to trace every gun and every bullet used in every crime in America.

When 12 children are dying every day in America because of gun violence, however, we can't wait for congressional action. That's why I'm taking the actions that I have announced today. We've seen the progress we can make when Americans at every level, from neighborhoods to local police departments, to State and Federal Government, take responsibility for fighting crime. Working together, we've brought crime down for 7 straight years. We can keep going until America is the safest big country in the world.

I want to again say how grateful I am to the people who are here: Secretary Summers; Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement Jim Johnson; our ATF Director, Brad Buckles. And as I said, Secretary Summers will talk in the briefing room in more detail after I leave.

Unemployment Rate

Let me just say one final thing before I go. I want to comment on the fact that we have just learned that unemployment last month fell to 4.0 percent, the lowest in three decades. Since 1993, our economy has now created nearly 21 million jobs. Today, strong employment numbers confirm, once and for all, that this is the longest economic expansion in our history.

The milestone is a credit to the American people, to their hard work. It also clearly highlights the need for us to stay on the path of fiscal discipline, overseas markets, investment in our people, that got us to this point. And I thank you very much.

Austria

Q. [*Inaudible*—call the U.S. Ambassador from Austria or take any other specific measures, now that the government includes the Freedom Party?

The President. I have to go up to the Hill. Secretary Albright is going to have an announcement on that today, in just a couple of hours.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. [*Inaudible*—Northern Ireland, sir? Any updates on the situation there?

Q. The process is once again in a crisis.

The President. Let me just say again—I may have more to say about that in the next couple of days—it is at a very pivotal moment, as all of you have reported. We are working very hard

on that. I have spent a lot of time on it; our whole team has.

I think that right now, the less we say publicly, the better. We are working intensely on this. It is imperative that everybody live up to the requirements of the Good Friday accord, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the people of Northern Ireland in both communities. And everybody that's an actor here needs to follow the will of the people. We're working on it.

Q. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House, prior to his departure for the Senate Democratic caucus issues conference at the Library of Congress.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Bob Squier

February 4, 2000

Prudy; to the members of your family; to all of us who were friends of Bob Squier. The Scripture summons us, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." Today we celebrate a man who did not neglect his gift but instead shared it.

We have heard it in the stories of his sons, his partner, his friends, and they have caused us all to flood our minds and hearts with memories of Bob Squier's passion for life, for his family, his work, for politics. Vice President Gore and I, in particular, are the beneficiaries of that passion and of his abundant American optimism.

As has already been said, no matter how dark the night, Bob was always sure the Sun would come up in the morning, and if it didn't, he would still find a way to get a tan. [*Laughter*] This sort of optimism was in rather short supply right after the elections in 1994, and most people thought that there were better investments in American politics than the reelection of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Not Bob Squier. He saw it as sort of a minor challenge. He was there for us, and but for him, we might not be here today. There is something to be said for boundless optimism.

I think we ought to acknowledge, as has already been done, that this was a man whose passion for politics was part of a kaleidoscopic

view of life and a wide range of interests. In addition to his documentaries about our great authors, he was also a pioneer in music television: one of the youngest producers of the Boston Pops on PBS, the executive producer of the first live global satellite TV show featuring the Beatles. He even talked about working years ago with the Rolling Stones, which probably makes him the only person in his line of work in the entire world who could say that he worked with everyone from Keith Richards to Ann Richards. [*Laughter*]

Bob Squier was many things. They have all been described today: a brilliant strategist, incisive commentator, trusted adviser, loyal friend. Above all, though, I think he was a storyteller. He knew how to tell a story, and he knew how to see the story that was being told right before our eyes.

He was very proud of his award-winning documentaries. He saw in the lives of Faulkner, Melville, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald, and in their work, the story of America, just as surely as he saw it in the lives and campaigns of all of us in this hallowed cathedral today with whom he worked. He dug deep into their lives to tell us the story.

For all the politicians here who ever agonized through one more take of a television ad, one

more instruction about how this townhall meeting had to be dealt with, we're not surprised at the details of his attention to his documentaries. He took F. Scott Fitzgerald's only daughter back to places she knew as a child and then interviewed her about her father. He took Robert Penn Warren to Shiloh to talk about Melville's Civil War poem about that battle. He interviewed Hemingway's son Jack as he cast flies in an Idaho trout stream. He even went to Havana and filmed in a boat piloted by Hemingway's former captain, who provided the inspiration for "The Old Man and the Sea."

That's the way he did his politics. It was never about the manipulation of words and images to put something over on the American people. It was always about finding the story and trusting the people to get it right.

He told our story: a couple of farmers in a field holding a sign that said "Hope"; a widow placing a flag on a veteran's grave on a lonely hillside; a worker filled with the pride that comes from the dignity of a job; and as has been mentioned, the light in little Emma's eyes. He used them all to tell our story. Nobody did it better. He made policy understandable, politics exciting, and politicians human. He made the camera disappear.

Bob worked in a profession with one of the shortest half-lives in the world. But to paraphrase one of his heroes, William Faulkner, here in Washington he did not just endure; he prevailed, for over 30 years, not just by putting a notch in the campaign victory belt but putting into office candidates he knew shared his convictions and would fight his fights.

I have to say this on behalf of all of the elected and former elected officials here. There is one thing we all especially found endearing about Bob Squier. He actually liked politicians. [Laughter] And he wasn't ashamed to admit it, even in this age when sort of sanctimonious disapproval of us is the only politically correct

position. He saw people in politics as basically good people who struggled to reconcile personal conviction and popular opinion into a combined force that would lift our Nation to higher grounds.

Bob Squier's work lives on through all of us he lifted, through countless others he mentored and trained along the way. And so, the story of this great storyteller's life in a sense is still being written and will be for a long time to come.

In years to come, students of American politics will study Bob Squier's campaigns, Bob Squier's commercials, Bob Squier's commentaries. Students of our literature will study Bob Squier's documentary films. Those of us who shared this all-too-brief earthly journey with him, we'll be grateful for all that. But I suspect even more, we'll remember a dashing and handsome man with a killer smile, an acid wit, and goodness at the core, a goodness that made even his adversaries like him.

We'll remember that behind the smile visible in his eyes was a steel will, a strong spirit, and a great heart that made our Nation better, because it gave him the strength to nurture the gift that was in him and to share it with us.

Well, Bob, we're giving you a good sendoff today, but not nearly as good as what you gave us. The last campaign is over. The polls have closed. The votes are counted. And you won—big time. Now you're in a place with no talk shows and no term limits. But your spirit will soar forever. Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the National Cathedral. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Squier's widow, Prudence Bergman, sons Mark R. Squier and Robert M. Squier, and granddaughter Emma; William Knapp, partner, Squier, Knapp & Dunn Communications; musician Keith Richards; and former Texas Gov. Ann Richards.

The President's Radio Address

February 5, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we can and must do to help more women get the lifesaving treatment they need to fight

breast and cervical cancer. More than 180,000 American women will be diagnosed with these diseases this year. Each of us has a sister, a

daughter, a friend, or in my case, a mother, who has struggled against them.

These cancers can be treated and cured, if we catch them early and fight them aggressively. But more than 40,000 women will die from breast and cervical cancer this year. Many are women whose cancer was detected or treated too late because they had no health insurance and no hope of paying for treatment. In fact, older women with breast cancer are 40 percent more likely to die from the disease if they're uninsured.

With strong leadership from the First Lady, we've worked hard over the past 7 years to increase free and low-cost cancer screenings and to help women catch these diseases in time. We've expanded the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program to serve hundreds of thousands of women a year in all 50 States. And Vice President Gore has led us to make a dramatic increase in our commitment to cancer research and treatment. But still it's true that, every year, thousands of women are told they have cancer and must cope without insurance.

This is especially troubling, given the stunning progress scientists are making in the fight against cancer. Researchers now can identify genes that predict several kinds of cancers. They're experimenting with therapies that will shut down defective genes so they can never multiply and grow. New drugs and new combinations of drugs will bring hope to those whose cancer has spread or who suffer from the side effects of chemotherapy.

These breakthroughs will make a big difference for some of our most prevalent cancers, like breast cancer, which strikes one in eight American women over a lifetime. But these life-saving new therapies can only help if patients have insurance or other resources that enable them to afford state-of-the-art treatment or any treatment at all.

At a time when we know more about cancer than ever and can fight it better than ever, we must not leave women to face cancer alone. That's why today I'm announcing a proposal to help States eliminate the barriers low income

women face to getting treatment for breast or cervical cancer. The budget I'm sending to Congress on Monday will allow States to provide full Medicaid benefits to uninsured women whose cancers are detected through federally funded screening programs. Too often, uninsured women face a patchwork of care, inadequate care, or no care at all. Many are denied newer, better forms of treatment or wait months to see a doctor.

Judy Lewis was one of the lucky ones. When a screening program detected her breast cancer, she had no health insurance and no money to spare. Fortunately, she found doctors who would treat her, and 17 months later, she's cancer-free. But she and her husband are also \$28,000 in debt, with nothing left for their retirement. That is wrong, and it doesn't have to happen.

This initiative will help women get comprehensive treatment and get it right away. It will make state-of-the-art therapies available to women who need them, not just those who can afford them. And it will free State and Federal dollars to be spent on cancer screening and outreach to women at risk.

This proposal has strong bipartisan support in Congress, led by Senators Barbara Mikulski and Olympia Snowe and Representatives Anna Eshoo and Rick Lazio. It was also strongly supported by the late Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island.

These Senators and Representatives from both parties have put forward legislation to meet our goal, and my budget includes the funds to make it happen. This is an issue that transcends political boundaries, because it touches all of us. Together, we can save lives and bring medical miracles of our time within the reach of every American. We can do it this year, and we ought to do it soon.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:43 p.m. on February 4 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Carl B. Albert

February 5, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened today to learn of the death of Carl Albert. Carl served his country in Congress through three decades, as majority whip, majority leader, and ultimately, Speaker of the House.

Working with President Johnson, he played an invaluable role crafting the greatest effort

America had ever launched against poverty. And as the 46th Speaker, he led the House during a trying time in our Nation's history. Through it all, he kept his gaze focused on the national interest. Carl Albert was a true statesman. Our prayers go out to family and friends.

Remarks on Releasing the Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget

February 7, 2000

Thank you, John. I really appreciate, in particular, the comment about the first draft of the State of the Union. [*Laughter*] If you look at how thick that is, you'll have some idea of how many people, believe it or not, are still mad that I didn't mention their program in the speech. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Secretary Summers, Secretary Slater, Jack Lew, Gene Sperling, Sylvia Mathews, Martin Baily, Bruce Reed, Sally Katzen, all the people from OMB who are here who have worked so hard to put together this budget. I really do appreciate what you've done.

I still get made fun of from time to time as a policy wonk, and that's supposed to be a pejorative term. But I think if you look at the last 7 years, there's a fairly serious argument for the fact that it really does matter what you do and what the specifics are, that Government and public life are more than rhetoric. The reality eventually makes a difference. The specific decisions do count. And that's what this budget is all about.

It is a balanced budget with a balanced approach to our national priorities. It maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down the debt, extends the life of Social Security and Medicare, and invests in our families and our future.

Seven years ago, when I took office, we'd had 12 years of big deficits, a quadrupling of the national debt that had led to high interest rates and low growth. We changed the course with a new economic policy for the new economy, one focused on fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investments in people and potential.

The new economic policy, as now we all know, has helped to create a new economy. Almost 21 million new jobs now; a 4.0 percent unemployment rate last month, the lowest in 30 years; the fastest growth in 30 years; the lowest crime and welfare rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the highest homeownership ever; and the longest economic expansion in our history this month.

The growth has been driven by private sector investment, not public sector spending, as was the case in the previous 12 years. As a share of the economy, it is worth pointing out that Federal spending is now the smallest it has been since 1966, with the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. Federal deficits are last century's news. This year, according to our projections, we'll have three in a row for our surpluses, coming in at about \$167 billion. We're on the way to an achievement that only a few years ago would have been inconceivable, making America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

If you look at the chart behind me, you will see the mountain of debt that built up during the 12 years before I took office and what has already been done to reverse the trend. By the end of this year, we will have paid down the debt by nearly \$300 billion. But you can also see that the debt is still high, far too high.

Now, this is the point where we have the photo op—[*laughter*—and I attempt to show you what our budget does to the debt, eliminating it by 2013. I have practiced this in the back. [*Laughter*] When I did it in the back,

the paint spilled everywhere, and I commented that in every good effort there are still fits and starts. So let me see if I can do it. [Laughter] There is no break here. [Laughter]

There is nothing academic about that chart. Fiscal discipline matters to every single American. When the deficits disappear, interest rates fall; more Americans can then buy homes, retire student loans, start new businesses, create jobs and wealth. Indeed, our economists have estimated that lower interest rates in the last 7 years have already saved the average American about \$2,000 a year in home mortgage payments and \$200 a year in college loan and car payments.

Our budget ensures that the benefits of debt reduction will continue, and that, among other things, they will go to strengthen two of the most important guarantees we make to every American, Social Security and Medicare. It makes a critical downpayment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction attributable to the Social Security taxes to the Social Security Trust Fund. That will keep it strong, solvent, and sound for the next 50 years, which will keep it alive beyond the life expectancy of virtually all of the baby boom generation.

Today we also take in this budget significant steps to strengthen and modernize Medicare. Our budget dedicates about half the non-Social Security surplus to guarantee the soundness of Medicare and to add a long-overdue voluntary prescription drug benefit. When I became President, Medicare was projected to go broke last year, 1999. Today, it's secure until 2015, thanks to the changes that have already been made.

This budget contains further reforms, but all the experts say, with all conceivable reforms, more money will still be needed, because the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. Their life expectancy will increase. We'll have miraculous new developments in medicine which will increase the quality of life, but all these things will add to the costs of health care.

Therefore, I think it is very important that we act now and say we're going to set aside a portion of this surplus for Medicare, so that when the time comes we will have already provided for the costs that we know are coming. We can extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund until at least 2025 and add the voluntary

prescription drug benefit with this amount of dedicated funds.

The budget also provides funds, as I said, to give not only a prescription drug benefit, which more than three in five American seniors on Medicare now lack; it also creates a reserve fund of \$35 billion to protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

This is something that I did not talk about in the State of the Union because I did not know for sure that we would have this money. But I do believe that everybody who's really analyzed this is concerned about two problems. One is that there are a whole lot of seniors—more than half—who don't have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, which at normal costs will lengthen their lives and improve its quality. And the second big problem is, some seniors have absolutely enormous bills that they have no way of paying. And we believe there ought to be some catastrophic provision, so we have set aside some funds to cover that, too, and will attempt to convince the Congress that we ought to do that as well.

The budget also helps to meet our other pressing priorities. It makes historic investments in education, from Head Start to after-school, from school construction to more and better trained teachers. It provides health care coverage for the parents of children in the Children's Health Insurance Program and allows uninsured Americans between the ages of 55 and 65, the fastest growing group of uninsured, to buy into Medicare with a tax credit to help them afford it.

It makes unprecedented investments to speed discoveries in science and technology; funds more police and tougher gun enforcement to keep the crime rate dropping, moving toward our goal of making America the safest big country in the world. It makes critical investments to keep our military the best trained and best equipped in the world. It gives many more investments to what we call America's new markets, from the inner cities to poor rural areas to Native American reservations.

This budget also offers tax cuts to America's working families to help pay for college or save for retirement; to help care for aging or disabled loved ones; to reduce the marriage penalty; to reward work and family with an expanded earned-income tax credit, and with an expanded and refundable child care tax credit.

This budget, in short, makes really strong and significant steps toward achieving the great goals that I believe America should pursue in this new century. It helps us move toward an America where every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed; where parents are able to succeed at home and work, and no child is raised in poverty; where we meet the challenge of the aging of America; where we provide health care to all; where we make America the safest big country on Earth; bring prosperity to the communities and people who have been left behind; pay off our national debt; reverse the course of climate change; keep America leading the world in science and technology and toward peace and prosperity; and

bring our country together, at last, as one America.

This budget takes the right steps toward those goals. I hope it will be well-received in Congress and by the American people. And I thank all of you who worked on it, down to the last detail. The details make the difference, and if we can enact them, they will make all the difference for America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to White House Chief of Staff John D. Podesta, who introduced the President; and Martin N. Baily, Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

February 7, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to ter-

rorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 7, 2000.

Interview With Willow Bay of Cable News Network's "Moneyline News Hour"

February 7, 2000

Economic Prosperity

Ms. Bay. Mr. President, did you ever imagine in your most optimistic of dreams when you first took office, think that you would see a prosperity like the one we have today?

The President. The truth, I guess I didn't, because I never thought about it. I literally never thought about how long the longest expansion was in history. But what I did believe is that there was this enormous, pent-up potential in the American people because of all the

restructuring of industry that went on in the tough years in the 1980's, because of the power of technology which has only grown exponentially since I've been in office, because I thought the American people understood the global economy and were willing to work hard and not make excessive wage demands and get their pay increases as their companies grew—all that turned out to be true.

So I just thought if I could remove the Government-related obstacles to growth by getting

the deficit down and getting interest rates down, that good things would happen. But no, I can't say that I even thought—it never crossed my mind that it would happen.

Ms. Bay. So in your mind, in some ways, was it unleashing a potential that already existed?

The President. Yes. Yes. I think the main role of Government in a global economy like this, and where growth has to come out of the private sector, is to create conditions and give people the tools to do the best they can. And so, to me, the Deficit Reduction Act in '93, the Telecommunications Act, the Balanced Budget Act of '97, saving the surplus, all these things are designed to create the conditions and give people tools. That's why I think all this investment in science and technology and having a lifetime training system is important. And then the American people will do the rest. I think we have the highest percentage of new jobs, nearly 21 million now since 1993, in the private sector of any government—excuse me—any economic expansion in our history. They're almost all, way over 90 percent, private jobs.

Ms. Bay. As you have noted, we have built a new economy. What is the most important thing, most effective thing you can do as President to keep that economy going strong?

The President. I think, stick with the present economic strategy first, keep paying the debt down, keep the interest rates down, keep the confidence up, continue to invest in education and training and science and technology, and do more to expand trade. I think that's the most important thing.

Then I think we have to continue to look for any impediments to continued growth. For example, I think over time the Telecommunications Act and the Financial Modernization Act will help a lot. And I think we have to look for other things. That's why I think this new markets proposal I've made is not going to be valuable just to help poor communities and poor people get investment; I think it will keep growth going without inflation, because it's a new way to bring expansion to areas which haven't enjoyed it.

Ms. Bay. Do you really believe this is a new economy? Because, as you know, many on Wall Street say this is a boom, like others we've seen, and it will come to an end. What in your mind distinguishes it as different, other than its length?

The President. I think there are two things that are different here. First is the role of technology. And let me say, I'm like the people on Wall Street to the extent that I don't pretend that we've repealed the laws of supply and demand, nor do I think we have repealed the potential for human error. So, of course, it could come to an end, and it probably will some day. But what is really distinguishing here is the role of this new high-tech world and the way it ripples through every sector of the economy.

The high-tech economy itself, basically the Silicon Valley type companies, they account for 8 percent of our employment but 30 percent of our growth. That understates their impact because computer technology is going through every kind of work. And the reason the traditional economists, including ours, didn't anticipate this level of growth—that you could get down to 4 percent unemployment without any inflation—is that they underestimated the productivity impact of technology. So I think that's the first thing.

The second thing is, keeping our markets open has not only given us a wider range of consumer choices and more competitive pressures, it's kept inflation down, because if we had a more closed market, then these buildups would not have the outlets they have—whether it's in homebuilding or whatever.

Ms. Bay. Do you worry at all, though, with our enthusiasm about this prosperity, with our genuine excitement over the technological revolution that we're witnessing, that we are convincing folks that this really is a boom without end?

The President. Well, I think that's what Chairman Greenspan is trying to caution against. He's trying to make sure that we don't go so fast we play it out prematurely. And I think that's what he's tried to do in the years we've worked together.

I think it's important not to overpromise, not to overclaim, but I also believe all the evidence is that there's still a lot of creativity left, there's still a lot of room for new investment, there's still a lot of room for growth if we remember the fundamentals: Keep investing in science and technology, keep investing in education and training, keep paying the debt down, and keep the markets open, and keep expanding our markets. I think if you stay with that—obviously something could go wrong, but I think if we're

not overpromising and we're on a steady course, I think we'll continue to have growth.

Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget

Ms. Bay. Your final budget was delivered to Congress today. On the surface, at least, it looks as if you're loosening the reins on spending a bit, revising the spending caps. Why should Americans want their Government to spend a little bit more in 2001?

The President. Well, first of all, the last couple of years we've spent more, and last year the Congress just shredded the spending caps. They just did it by calling certain normal expenditures emergencies. So this is basically a straight-forward budget. I took the spending levels of last year and I said, let's not pretend anymore that we don't want to add at least inflation to education, to medical research, to the environment, to health care. We know we're going to do that. So let's project for the next 5 years that we'll have last year's spending plus inflation, and then we'll argue about the categories of growth.

But I think Americans should want us to invest more. We've cut spending for quite a long while. As a percentage of our economy, Federal Government spending is the lowest it's been since 1966. The size of the Government is the lowest it's been in 40 years. So what we should do, now that we've trimmed down, now that we've got a surplus, we should keep paying the debt down, but we ought to invest more, I believe, in education, in science and technology, in health care, to help parents balance the needs at home and at work. And I think we can afford a modest tax cut, which I also believe is important.

Ms. Bay. You've added some revenue raisers, like closing some corporate tax loopholes—likely to be a rather tough sell in Congress. If you don't accomplish those, do your numbers still work out?

The President. Well, if all the numbers don't work out, we'll have to spend less or have a smaller tax cut. Because to me, the only number that has to work out is we've got to keep paying the debt down; we've got to not jeopardize our ability to take care of Social Security when the baby boomers retire; and we've got to hold back enough money so that Medicare stays stable and doesn't throw the whole budget out of whack or otherwise severely hurt seniors over the next 15 or 20 years.

So, to me, those are the key things, and everything else operates from that framework. So, for example, if they decide not to close some of the corporate loopholes, so we have however much less money that is over a 5-year period, then we'll either have to spend less or we'll have to have a smaller tax cut.

Ms. Bay. John Kasich, chairman of the House Budget Committee, declared your budget dead on arrival. How tough a battle are you likely to face?

The President. Well, that's what they said in '99, and we got most of it; that's what they said in '98, and we got most of it. If our crowd will—the people that agree with me—and they're not confined solely to the Democrats—we have almost 100 percent support, I think, in our party for our budget approach because we believe we should invest more in education; we believe we should invest more in health care. But I think there are also quite a number of Republicans who agree with us. So I think if we just relax and stay tough until the end of the year, we'll do fine, just like we have in the last several years.

Ms. Bay. What are likely to be the most contentious issues?

The President. Well, I think the contents of any tax cut will be contentious. I don't believe the Republicans this year will contest me on the size, because I think they've seen even in their own party that Americans don't want to run the risk of going back to deficits. They know this strategy is working.

But I feel strongly that we should focus the tax cuts on the needs of middle class families, like to pay for college tuition, long-term care for elderly and disabled relatives, expanding the earned-income tax credit for poor people, a genuine easing of the marriage penalty for people in the middle and even in lower middle income groups. But we ought to focus it there. I think they have some different ideas; we'll fight about that.

I think that a lot of them don't support our efforts to put 100,000 more teachers in the classroom, so we're going to fight over that for a third year. But we got it the first 2 years. And of course, they're against, by and large, they're more against the Patients' Bill of Rights than I am. I hope they'll raise the minimum wage, but some of them won't want to. So we'll have plenty to fight about.

Tax Reform

Ms. Bay. Do you think it's likely you'll see an easing of the marriage penalty? I know it's a hot topic of conversation right now.

The President. I do. Because I want to have a genuinely constructive atmosphere, I put a proposal to them on the marriage penalty because I know that's something they've always thought was important, too. And all I asked them to do was to confine their bill to the marriage penalty issue and to give a little relief to people in the lower income of the scale, too.

Their marriage penalty bill, in addition to easing the marriage penalty, has a whole lot of other stuff in it. So if they'll meet me halfway, we'll work something out. I think there's a fair chance we'll get that.

Debt Buybacks and the Bond Market

Ms. Bay. There was an interesting situation last week, caused largely by the surplus. As you know, the Treasury announced plans to buy back some of its debt and reduce the supply of new debt. It caused a fair amount of turmoil in the bond markets. Were you surprised by that kind of reaction in the bond market?

The President. A little bit, only because we had made clear several weeks before that we might want to buy some of our debt in early. If it had been the first time it had ever been mentioned, I wouldn't have been so surprised. And there is a debate going on now about whether it's even a good thing for us to pay ourselves out of debt, because there are some people that believe we have to have enough publicly held debt to establish the bond market, which is a, if you will, a barometer for the overall financial framework of the capital markets.

But my concern is, we financed this expansion privately. There is quite a lot of private debt outstanding; it doesn't look at all troubling today because there is so much private wealth outstanding. But I just don't want to run the risk of the thing getting out of balance. So I think as long as we're growing this way, the Government should continue to pay down the debt. And we have to buy in the bonds to do that.

Ms. Bay. Could or should the Treasury have done anything to manage the bond market more effectively, particularly given that this is unprecedented and likely to be an ongoing concern?

The President. I don't know the answer to that because, as I said, my—unless my memory is totally out of whack here, I think we announced several weeks earlier than that, we plan to buy the bonds in, and some of them would be brought in before term. So I think Secretary Summers is a very smart man and he understands this and he talks to people in the private sector all the time, and I think they'll do it the best way they can.

But just yesterday Chairman Greenspan said again that he thought the best thing that we could do in the executive branch would be to continue to take the debt down, and he hoped Congress would cooperate. So I think we're all—if we're wrong, we're all wrong together, anyway. And I don't think we are.

Information Age Entrepreneurship

Ms. Bay. On a more personal note, you are clearly a believer in this new economy. If you were starting your career today, would you be tempted to start a career on the frontlines of this revolution or—

The President. Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Bay. You would?

The President. Absolutely. It's so exciting. I mean, you talk to all these young people who are out there and have come up with these ideas, and they have access to capital, and they do things. And then when they—a lot of them make a phenomenal amount of money in almost no time, but they also hire people. They're interested in contributing to the strength of society. I never bought this generation X argument; most of these young people really care about the overall health of America. And I think the idea of having an economy that really is running on ideas is a very exciting prospect for the future.

Ms. Bay. Tempted, perhaps, to run a dot-com?

The President. Yes, I would be. If I were starting again, I would be. You know, I'm probably too old to do it now. I'll have to find something else to do in a year, so maybe I'll think about it then. [Laughter] But I'm not sure I'm not too creaky around the edges to do it.

2000 Election

Ms. Bay. Word is they could use some experience in the dot-com world. [Laughter]

Final question. In the middle of this campaign season, Senator McCain is running as an outsider, in part, against you and your legacy. Yet, his economic platform looks surprisingly like Clinton/Gore economic policy. Does that make him a more formidable opponent for Al Gore?

The President. Well, first of all, I think that every person in the last 30 years, including me, when I ran—you always run as an outsider, because more people live outside Washington than inside Washington, and people always think of it as a distant place.

But I think it's both flattering and I think encouraging that Republicans generally have turned away from tax cuts that are so big that they could trouble our economy. And no matter who wins their nomination, there are lots of other differences between our two parties and our candidates that the American people will have a chance to think about.

I think it would be a very good thing if we could establish a bipartisan consensus that we're going to keep paying this debt down; we're going to save Social Security for the baby boom generation; we're not going to allow Medicare to go broke. That would be a good thing, and it would be worthy of—you know, in a global economy, having a common economic policy is part of our national security.

Now, that would be attractive. Then the burden would fall on both the Democrats and Republicans to clarify what the other issues are and what the differences are. So I think, really, it's quite impossible to predict, this early, how this thing will change. It's one of the things I've learned watching Presidential politics over more than half my life now—that they'll change. Once you think you've got it figured out, the American people are still in the saddle, and they'll change it on you.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Ms. Bay. Speaking of politics, congratulations. Mrs. Clinton made it formal over the weekend, announcing her campaign for the U.S. Senate.

The President. She did.

Ms. Bay. Are you really prepared to hit the campaign trail again, and this time as a supportive spouse?

The President. Well, I will do whatever I can to help her. And New York has been very good to me and wonderful to us, to our family, to our administration, to the Vice President. But I think now what they want to do is hear from her. Yesterday was her day. I thought she was terrific. I was so proud of her. I loved her speech and what she said and what she's running on. If I can help her, of course, I will.

But my instinct is that the people of New York want to hear from her directly, and that if I can help her, it will be later in the campaign when we get down to the—longer toward the end and there's fundamental decisions to be made by a relatively small number of voters who might be willing to listen to my arguments—not because it's me but just because I have a microphone.

But people are pretty independent in this country, and they like to make their own decisions. And they're not going to vote for her just because she's my wife, but they might vote for her because we share some values and some approaches to the issues. And they want to make their own judgment about her. I thought she was terrific when she announced. I was so proud of her. And I'll be happy to be a member of the Senate spouses club. I hope I get to be. [Laughter]

Ms. Bay. President Clinton, thank you very much for joining us tonight.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:20 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript was embargoed for release until 7:30 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order To Prohibit Discrimination in Federal Employment Based on Genetic Information February 8, 2000

Thank you very much, and good afternoon. I want to begin by thanking all the people at AAAS for having us here today. My longtime friend Dr. Shirley Malcolm, thank you; and thank you, Dr. Richard Nicholson.

I thank Dr. Francis Collins; what a remarkable statement he made. I was thinking, when he said that line that I'm beating to death now that we're all genetically 99.9 percent the same, that the one-tenth of one percent difference between him and me is all the intellectual capacity for the sciences—[laughter]—regrettably. That's a great thing for people who care about the future of the human genome.

I'm delighted to be joined here by several members of our administration and by three Members of Congress, showing that this is a bipartisan issue; it's an American issue. I thank Representative Louise Slaughter from New York, who was with me yesterday talking to me about this, and Representative Fred Upton from Michigan, and Representative and Dr. Greg Ganske from Iowa. Thank you all for being here. We appreciate you very much and your concern for this.

I thank again all the people in the administration who worked on this, my Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and all the people from OPM and the EEOC and others.

This is really a happy day for me. For years, in our administration, I was a sort of political front person, and now we've got the first election in a quarter-century that I can't be a part of. And people are always coming to me saying, "Oh, this must be a real downer for you, you know, that the Vice President and Hillary, they're out there 7 o'clock in the morning hitting all these coffee shops; you must be"—[laughter]—"how are you dealing with this terrible deprivation?" [Laughter]

And I went out to Caltech the other day to talk about my science and technology budget, and I said, "Well, I'm using this opportunity to get in touch with my inner nerd"—[laughter]—"and to really sort of deal with these things that I have repressed all these years, that I'm really, really trying to get into this." We're laughing about this. But you know, it is truly

astonishing that we are all privileged enough to be alive at this moment in history and to be, some of us, even a small part of this remarkable explosion in human discovery; to contemplate not only what it might mean for us and our contemporaries, in terms of lengthening our lives and improving the quality of them and improving the reach of our understanding of what is going on both within our bodies and in the far reaches of space, but what particularly it will mean for the whole structure of life for our children and grandchildren.

And I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have been involved and who will be involved in that march of human advance in any way. That quest for knowledge has defined what the AAAS has done for, now, more than 150 years.

We are here today, as the previous speakers have said, to recognize that this extraordinary march of human understanding imposes on us profound responsibilities to make sure that the age of discovery can continue to reflect our most cherished values. And I want to talk just a little about that in somewhat more detail than Dr. Collins did.

First and foremost, we must protect our citizens' privacy—the bulwark of personal liberty, the safeguard of individual creativity. More than 100 years ago now, Justice Brandeis recognized that technological advances would require us to be ever vigilant in protecting what he said was civilization's most valued right, the fundamental right to privacy. New conditions, he said, would often require us to define anew the exact nature and extent of such protection. And indeed, much of the 20th century jurisprudence of the Supreme Court has dealt with that continuing challenge in various contexts. So, once again, Justice Brandeis has proved prophetic for a new century.

Today, powerful waves of technological change threaten to erode our sacred walls of privacy in ways we could not have envisioned a generation ago—not just the ways, by the way, we're discussing here today. Will you ever have a private telephone conversation on a cell phone again? Can you even go in your own home

and know that the conversation is private if you become important enough for people to put devices on your walls? What is the nature of privacy in the 21st century, and how can we continue to protect it?

But clearly, people's medical records, their financial records, and their genetic records are among the most important things that we have to protect. Last year we proposed rules to protect the sanctity of medical records; we'll finalize them this year. Soon I will send legislation to complete the job we started in protecting citizens' financial records. Today we move forward to try to make sure we do what we can to protect, in an important way, genetic privacy.

Clearly, there is no more exciting frontier in modern scientific research than genome research. Dr. Collins did a good job of telling us why. And when this human genome project is completed, we can now only barely imagine, I believe, the full implications of what we will learn for the detection, treatment, and prevention of serious diseases. It will transform medical care more profoundly than anything since the discovery of antibiotics and the polio vaccine, I believe, far more profoundly than that.

But it will also impose upon us new responsibilities and, I would argue, only some of which we now know—only some of which we now know—to ensure that the new discoveries do not pry open the protective doors of privacy.

The fear of misuse of private genetic information is already very widespread in our Nation. Americans are genuinely worried that their genetic information will not be kept secret, that this information will be used against them. As a result, they're often reluctant to take advantage of new breakthroughs in genetic testing—making a point, I think, we cannot make too often: If we do not protect the right to privacy, we may actually impede the reach of these breakthroughs in the lives of ordinary people, which would be a profound tragedy.

A Pennsylvania study, for example, showed that nearly a third of women at high risk for inherited forms of breast cancer refused to be tested to determine whether they carry either of the two known breast cancer genes because they feared discrimination based on the results. That is simply wrong. We must not allow advances in genetics to become the basis of discrimination against any individual or any group. We must never allow these discoveries to change the basic belief upon which our Government,

our society, our system of ethics is founded, that all of us are created equal, entitled to equal treatment under the law.

The Executive order I will sign in just a couple of minutes will be the first Executive order of the 21st century to help meet this great 21st century challenge. It prohibits the Federal Government and its agencies from using genetic testing in any employment decision. It prevents Federal employers from requesting or requiring that employees undergo genetic tests of any kind. It strictly forbids employers from using genetic information to classify employees in such a way that deprives them of advancement opportunities, such as promotion for overseas posts.

By signing this Executive order, my goal is to set an example and pose a challenge for every employer in America, because I believe no employer should ever review your genetic records along with your resume.

Because by Executive order I can only do so much, we also need congressional action this year. In 1996 the Congress passed, and I signed, the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, the health insurance portability law, which made it illegal for group health insurers to deny coverage to any individual based on genetic information. That was an important first step, but we must go further.

Now I ask Congress to pass the "Genetic Non-Discrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act" introduced in the Senate by Senator Daschle and in the House by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, who is with us today. What this legislation does is to extend the employment protections contained in the Executive order that I will sign today to all private sector employees as well, and to ensure that people in all health plans, not just group plans, will have the full confidence that the fruits of genetic research will be used solely to improve their care and never to deny them care.

There is something else we should do right away. We must make absolutely sure that we do not allow the race for genetic cures to undermine vital patient protections. Like many Americans, I have been extremely concerned about reports that some families involved in trials of experimental gene therapies have not been fully informed of the risks and that some scientists have failed to report serious side effects from these trials. I support the recent action by FDA and NIH to enforce reporting in patient safety requirements.

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Today I'm asking Secretary Shalala to instruct FDA and NIH to accelerate their review of gene therapy guidelines and regulations. I want to know how we can better ensure that this information about the trials is shared with the public. I want to know whether we need to strengthen requirements on informed consent. If we don't have full confidence in these trials, people won't participate, and then the true promise of genetic medicine will be put on hold. We cannot allow our remarkable progress in genomic research to be undermined by concerns over the privacy of genetic data or the safety of gene therapies. Instead, we must do whatever it takes to address these legitimate concerns. We know if we do, the positive possibilities are absolutely endless.

I said this the other day, but I would like to reiterate—I think maybe I am so excited about this because of my age. I was in the generation of children who were the first treated with the polio vaccine. And for those of you who are much younger than me, you can't imagine what it was like, for our parents to see that—the literal terror in our parents' eyes when we were children, paralyzed with fear that somehow we would be afflicted by what was then called infantile paralysis; and the sense of hope, the eagerness, the sort of nail-biting anticipation when we learned of the Salk vaccine and all of us were lined up to get our shots. Unless you were in our generation, you cannot imagine. And the thought that every other problem that could affect the generation of my grandchildren could be visited with that level of relief and

hope and exhilaration by the parents of our children's generation is something that is almost inexpressible.

We have to make the most of this. And we know, we have learned from over 200 years of experience as a nation, knocking down physical and intellectual frontiers, that we can only spread the benefits of new discoveries when we proceed in a manner that is consistent with our most ancient and cherished values. That is what this day is all about. So to all of you who have contributed to it, I thank you very, very much.

Now I would like to ask the Members of Congress who are here and members of the administration who are here who have been involved in this to come up with me. And all I have to do is write my name. *[Laughter]* That's a pretty good deal. You can write the human genome code, and I'll write my name—*[laughter]*—and that takes full account of the one-tenth of one percent difference in our genetic makeup. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the auditorium at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In his remarks, he referred to Shirley Malcolm, head of the directorate for education and human resources programs, and Richard S. Nicholson, member, board of directors, and executive officer, AAAS; and Francis S. Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to Alfred Rascon

February 8, 2000

The President. Colonel, thank you for that prayer. General Hicks, Secretary Cohen, Secretary West, Secretary Richardson, Secretary Caldera, General Shelton, General Ralston, members of the Joint Chiefs, all the Members of Congress who are here—and we have quite a distinguished array of them. We thank them all for coming. I'd like to ask the Members of Congress who are here to stand so you'll

see how many we have. We're very grateful to you for your presence here. Thank you.

When the Medal of Honor was conceived in 1861, some Americans actually worried that it might be a bad thing, that the medals would be seen as somehow too aristocratic, and that there was no need for them in a genuinely democratic society. Today we award the Medal of Honor secure in the knowledge that people like Alfred Rascon have kept our democracy

alive all these years. We bestow the medal knowing that America would not have survived were it not for people like him, who, generation after generation, have always renewed the extraordinary gift of freedom for their fellow citizens.

Under any circumstances, a Medal of Honor ceremony is an event of great importance. Today it is especially so: for the rare quality of heroism on display that long-ago day in 1966; for the long, patient wait for recognition; for Alfred's decision to devote his life both before and after 1966 to a nation he was not born in.

Alfred Rascon was born in Mexico on September 10, 1945, just 8 days after the formal surrender ending World War II. When he was very young, his parents came to America for a better chance. They ended up in Oxnard, north of Los Angeles. And when Alfred started grade school, he still spoke not a word of English. He grew up near three military bases and fell in love with the Armed Forces. At the advanced age of 7, wanting to do his part to defend America, he built a homemade parachute and jumped off the roof of his house. [Laughter] Unfortunately, in his own words, the chute had a "total malfunction"—[laughter]—and he broke his wrist.

But as usual, he was undeterred. Soon he graduated from high school and enlisted in the United States Army. Appropriately, he became a medic for a platoon of paratroopers, the first of the 503d Airborne Battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade. He explained, "I wanted to give back something to this country and its citizens for the opportunities it had given me and my parents. Those paratroopers who served with me in the reconnaissance platoon knew nothing of my immigrant status. It was never an issue. They simply knew me as Doc."

Alfred's platoon was sent to Vietnam in May of 1965, part of the first Army combat unit there. On March 16th, 1966, they were in Long Khanh Province, helping another platoon that was pinned down by the enemy. In his words, it was "10 minutes of pure hell."

In the middle of an intense firefight, Alfred was everywhere. While attending to a fatally wounded machine gunner, Private William Thompson, he was hit with shrapnel and shot in the hip. The bullet went parallel to his spine and came out by his shoulder. Ignoring his own wounds, he then brought desperately needed ammo to another machine gunner, Private Larry

Gibson. Several grenades then landed nearby. One of them ripped his mouth open. When he saw another land near Private Neil Haffey, he covered him with his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast. Yet another grenade landed near Sergeant Ray Compton, and Alfred covered him, too. Then, barely able to walk, bleeding from his ears and nose, he ran to recover a machine gun that the enemy was about to capture. The extra firepower kept the enemy from advancing, and Alfred Rascon saved his platoon.

Through this extraordinary succession of courageous acts, he never gave a single thought to himself, except, he admits, for the instant when the grenade exploded near his face and he thought, "Oh, God, my good looks are gone." [Laughter] I'm not much of an expert, but I would say you were wrong about that, Captain. [Laughter] You look just fine here today.

On that distant day, in that faraway place, this man gave everything he had, utterly and selflessly, to protect his platoon mates and the Nation he was still not yet a citizen of. Later he said with characteristic modesty, "I did it because I had to do it, and that's all there is to it." He said, "I don't consider myself a hero. Anybody in combat would do the same thing for their buddies and friends. We were all colorblind. We were all different nationalities. The important thing is that we were Americans fighting for America."

I want to stop just for a moment to salute all the other Americans who did that in Vietnam. We want to honor you today, along with Alfred. Many of you were there with him. And I'd like for all of you to stand or, if you can't stand, lift your arms and be recognized. We want to acknowledge you today, please. [Applause]

Alfred Rascon was so badly wounded that day he was actually given last rites. After a long convalescence, he pulled through, and he continued to serve his country. He became a citizen in 1967. He rejoined the Army as an officer. In 1972 he volunteered for a second tour in Vietnam. And in 1983 he began working for the Justice Department. Today, he is the Inspector General of the Selective Service System, helping to make sure that others will be there to defend America as he did.

Looking at his lifetime of service to our Nation, it would be hard to imagine a better definition of citizenship. So I would like to also take a moment, sir, to thank your parents, Alfredo

and Andrea, for teaching their son the values of good citizenship. And we would all like to welcome your wife, Carol, and your children, Amanda and Alan. They must be so very proud of you today. We welcome you here.

Now, here's the story of how we all came here. Alfred Rascon was given a Silver Star for his valor that day in 1966, but the request for his Medal of Honor somehow got lost in a thicket of redtape. His platoon mates persisted, showing as much loyalty to him as he had shown to them. Thanks to them, after 34 years, I am proud to present you with our Nation's highest honor.

Since the creation of the Medal of Honor, roughly one in five of them have been awarded to immigrants. Today, there are over 60,000 immigrants protecting the United States in our military.

Alfred was once asked why he volunteered to join and to go to Vietnam when he was not even a citizen. And he said, "I was always an American in my heart."

Alfred Rascon, today we honor you, as you have honored us by your choice to become an American and your courage in reflecting the best of America. You said that you summoned your courage for your platoon because "you've got to take care of your people." That's a pretty good credo for all the rest of us, as well.

On behalf of all Americans, and especially on behalf of your platoon members who are here today, I thank you for what you mean to our country. Thank you for what you gave that day and what you have given every day since. Thank you for reminding us that being

American has nothing to do with the place of your birth, the color of your skin, the language of your parents, or the way you worship God. Thank you for living the enduring American values every day. Thank you for doing something that was hard because no one else was there to do it. Thank you for looking out for people when no one else could be there for them.

You have taught us once again that being American has nothing to do with the place of birth, racial, ethnic origin, or religious faith. It comes straight from the heart. And your heart, sir, is an extraordinary gift to your country.

Commander, please read the citation.

[At this point, Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal. Mr. Rascon then made brief remarks.]

The President. I want to thank you all again for being here today and invite you to join our honoree and his family in a reception in the State Dining Room at the end of the hall. Thank you very much, and welcome. But don't leave until we have the benediction. [Laughter]

General Hicks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Frank Vavrin, USA (Ret.), Chaplain Corps, 503d Airborne Battalion, who gave the invocation; and Brig. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Deputy Chief of Chaplains. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Rascon.

Statement on the Election of Stipe Mesic as President of Croatia February 8, 2000

I congratulate President-elect Stipe Mesic on his victory in Monday's elections in Croatia. Mr. Mesic's victory is a turning point for Croatia. It brings with it the promise of genuine democracy and a normal life for Croatia's people, stronger ties between our two nations, and greater stability throughout southeast Europe. The people of Croatia have clearly demonstrated their desire to see their country take its rightful place in Europe. The United States will do everything it can to help them reach their destina-

tion. And together we will send a clear message to all the people of the Balkans that a brighter future is within their grasp.

I look forward to working closely with President-elect Mesic, Prime Minister Racan, and the new government in Zagreb.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ivica Racan of Croatia.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception February 8, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, John. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here tonight and for your support for our party. I wanted to just say a few words, and then we'll visit a little.

I did put out the budget yesterday. And I've had a great week. We had the State of the Union, and then I went to Switzerland, to Davos, to the international economic forum, to talk about what I believe our policy ought to be on trade in the 21st century. And before I issued my budget, I got to hear my wife make a great speech on Sunday when she announced for the Senate in New York. I was very proud of her. I thought she did a wonderful job.

Today I took action on another item I discussed in the State of the Union over at the American academy of sciences. I signed the first Executive order of the 21st century, protecting the genetic privacy of all Federal employees and asking Congress to do that for all employees throughout the country. I think that is a very important issue. We're going to have all this huge explosion of knowledge when we finish the mapping of the human genome. And we want people to participate to the maximum possible degree in all benefits that will flow out of that.

And if we expect that, then we're going to have to make sure that they don't lose the right to a job, lose the right to get insurance, lose the right to be considered for promotion because their genetic map shows that they might have some propensity to some problem. We want people to participate in every conceivable way in learning about it so that we can develop blocking gene therapies for all the problems people have.

So this is a very, very exciting time for our country. For me, it's actually rather interesting. For the first time in probably 24 years to see an election season come and go when I'm not on anybody's ballot anywhere—[laughter]—it's rather interesting. I'm having a good time. [Laughter] I feel like the cat that ate the canary some days.

But one of the things I would like to say to all of you that I hope you will keep in mind throughout this year—as you support us, as you

talk to your friends, as you make arguments for our candidates, from the White House to the Senate and the House and the governorships—is that the Democratic Party now has had 7 years of testing our dominant philosophy. And I think it's pretty clear, number one, that it works, and number two, that it's shared by a majority of the American people.

Seven years ago when we began, we just had a roadmap for the future. We said, "Look, we believe that there is a reason the country is suffering from economic stagnation and social division and political gridlock and that Government's been discredited, that we were operating under a philosophy that said Government was the problem, that pitted people against one another, and that was very good about talking about problems like the deficit but not very good about doing anything about it."

And we came to this town—our whole administration did, beginning with the Vice President and me—with a philosophy that said we were going to unify this country, that we were going to try to create opportunity for everybody, challenge everyone to be responsible, and bring everybody together in one community. And we were actually going to try to bring Washington together. I must say, we've had more success in the country than we have in Washington. [Laughter] But still, it's been an exhilarating effort here, and still a challenge every day.

So now we've had 7 years of these results. And I just want to say what I said in the State of the Union Address. I think it is imperative that we not squander this moment under the illusion that because things are going well for this country there are no consequences to what we say, what we do, and what we advocate. We live in a very dynamic world. Things are changing very rapidly. We have never had this kind of opportunity to shape the future.

A few of you in this room are as old as I am. I was telling somebody the other day that when we passed the milestone to having the longest economic expansion in history, the last one that was this long—the next to longest one now—was the one that occurred in the decade of the sixties. And you probably all remember that it played out under the inflationary

pressures of what was then known as guns and butter, the Vietnam war and our obligations at home.

When I graduated from high school in 1964, even though the country was still hurting over President Kennedy's assassination, we had actually come together and lifted ourselves up out of that. And there was this sense that there was nothing we couldn't do. Within 2 years, we had riots in the streets. The country was deeply divided over the war in Vietnam; we had over a half a million people there. Within a couple more years, the economy was in terrible shape. And the politics of division, basically, began to rule our national campaigns.

As an American citizen, I have waited now about 35 years for my country once again to be in a position to basically be a nation of builders and dreamers, where we could shape the future. That's why in the State of the Union Address I said we've got to, number one, remember what brought us to the dance here. We've got to stay with an economic policy that has given us the ability to deal with these things. And I know I'm being criticized somewhat, from the right and the left, for paying the debt down. But we've got to keep this economy going. To do that, we've got to keep interest rates down and confidence sky high. And if you want businesses and individuals to be able to borrow more, then the Government should borrow less. And it will generally tend to be more efficient borrowing.

Number two, we've got to invest in education; we've got to expand health care; we've got to help families balance their roles at home and at work; and we've got to continue to stay in the forefront of science and technology and meeting the new security challenges of the 21st century, especially the challenges of terrorism and biological and chemical weapons. We have to do these things.

But it is within our grasp to shape a future that would have been undreamed of just a few years ago. I believe that the Democratic Party is the right party to lead this country. Even though it's flattering to see the Republicans sort of edging more and more toward our economic policy—I think that's a good thing. I think it would be a great thing for our country if we had a bipartisan economic policy. It's an important part of our national security in the 21st century.

But we still have radically different approaches to things like sensible efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children to matters like making educational opportunity real and available to all, matters like our obligation to make available the access to health care. We've provided—because of the provision that Hillary and I and others fought so hard for in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, we got 2 million more children in poor working families with health insurance today than we had just 2 years ago—2 million more. I made a proposal—and we got funding already, you've already paid for this, you don't have to—we have funding already for 3 million more. But I think now if we bring those children's parents into the program, we could take care of 25 percent of the uninsured people in America, and they're the 25 neediest percent.

The second fastest—big group are people between the ages of 55 and 65 who leave the work force, lose their health care, aren't old enough for Medicare. And you'd be amazed how many people that I grew up with in Arkansas—we're all moving into this age group—who are affected by this. You're talking about a very large number of people. I think we ought to just buy them into Medicare—pay the cost, whatever the real cost is, give them a modest tax credit so it's more affordable.

These are big issues. We've got to keep people coming together, meeting these basic needs if we want to keep people focused on the future. People stop focusing on the future when they have to worry about how they're going to keep body and soul together or when they feel threatened.

So we have to keep the momentum up. And believe me, no matter what we do—and as I said, I would be elated if we wound up with a bipartisan consensus on our economic policy this year—there are going to be profound differences in our responsibilities to each other to build a strong society. And I cannot tell you how strongly I believe that a big part of our economic success has come because we were also doubling our investment in education and training and making it clear to ordinary people, through increases in the minimum wage, the Family and Medical Leave Act, things like this, that we cared about what happened to them and we thought they ought to be a part of America's future.

So you stay with us. Stay with us as we try to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights and the other things we've got on the plate now. And tell people the story, that we had a set of ideas, we had a core philosophy, and it has worked. And we do need to keep changing America, but we don't need to forget what brought us

to this point; we need to build on it. With your help, we will.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John Merrigan, chair, Democratic Business Council.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner February 8, 2000

Thank you so much. I am delighted to be back in this wonderful, wonderful old house that contains a lot of good ghosts. I want to thank Jim and Joe for hosting this event. I thank all of you for coming. Joe, I want to thank you for having my mother out to the track. My mother was convinced that heaven was a race-track—[laughter]—where she would not have to run. [Laughter] And I am delighted to be here with you today.

I want to thank all my friends from Maryland for being here, particularly Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Senator Miller, Speaker Taylor, party chair Wayne Rogers, and all the others who are here. Maryland has been very good to me, to Hillary, and Al and Tipper Gore. It's been one of our best States in both '92 and '96, and also, thanks to truly outstanding leadership, a genuine laboratory for virtually every reform I have advocated for 7 years.

You know, one of the things that you have to constantly reconcile when you're President is, how do you apportion the President's time? And if I just—after a while, if I keep making announcements in the Rose Garden or in the Oval Office or in the White House, there's no picture there, or it's the same picture. So you want to go out, but you don't want to go too far, because otherwise you spend all day going to and from someplace, and you miss a day's work. Well, it was my great good fortune that I happened to be President at a time when Maryland was so superbly led that every good thing in America that was going on anywhere was also going on in Maryland. And I thank all of you for that.

I want to thank Ed Rendell and Joe Andrew and my longtime friend Andy Tobias for their willingness to come in and lead our party and try to get us through a very challenging election year, when we expect to be outspent but not outworked. And we know if we have enough money to get our message out, it won't matter if they have a little more. And I want to thank all of you for making them look a little more successful tonight. We're very grateful to you for that.

And I want to thank Donna Shalala for being here. She is the longest serving and, I believe, by far the most effective Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Today we dealt with one of Donna's issues. I went out to the American Academy of Sciences and signed the first Presidential Executive order of the 21st century, banning genetic discrimination in employment and insurance of Federal employees, and endorsing legislation introduced by Senator Daschle in the Senate and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter from New York in the House to ban genetic discrimination in employment and insurance practices for all employees.

I sort of would like to take that as a little metaphor. That's a future issue, and it's thrilling to me. Why do we even have to worry about that? Because in just a little bit, we'll have an entire map of the sequencing of the human genome. We already know that broken genes and what they look like—that are high predictors of breast cancer. The good news about that is, pretty soon we'll have diagnostic techniques that will either be able to head off the cancer ever developing, with gene therapies that block the destructive development, or diagnose the cancer when it's just a few cells and not after

it has, as it did to my mother and so many others, gone too far.

So we're thinking about this incredible tomorrow. Reminiscent of, I might say, my '92 campaign song, the old Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow," we actually have the luxury of thinking about these things. And it seems well within reach.

I just today, I ran into the chairman of General Motors at a nonpolitical event—I don't want to get him roped into our business—anyway, but I complimented him on the Detroit auto show and on the work that our administration has done under the leadership of the Vice President with the auto companies and the auto workers over the last 7 years in what we call the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. We now have automobiles shown at the Detroit auto show—not small two-seaters; big, roomy four-seaters—that will get 70 to 80 or more miles a gallon, with fuel injection technology that also obviously dramatically reduces harmful emissions, including greenhouse gas emissions.

And we were talking about that, and I was explaining to him the work we're doing with scientists associated with the Department of Agriculture to increase the efficiency of creating ethanol or other fuels from biomass, not just corn but rice hulls, weeds, hay, anything. Right now, the real problem with that is that the conversion ratio is inefficient. And I don't want to get down into the weeds here, but I think you should understand it. [*Laughter*] In other words, the reason that it's a political issue—if you saw Iowa and you saw our candidates, the Vice President and Senator Bradley, arguing about who loved ethanol more—[*laughter*—the reason that's a political issue is that ethanol really is an environmental net plus, but costs more. And it's not a huge net plus yet; that is, it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to produce 8 gallons of ethanol.

The scientists there are working on the same sort of chemical discovery that led to the conversion of crude oil and gasoline. When that happens, they estimate that we'll be able to make 8 gallons of ethanol with one gallon of gasoline. And when you put that with a 70-mile-a-gallon car, you're getting 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline, and the whole future of the planet is changed. The whole future of our ability to deal with climate change and global warming is changed. Everything will change.

So we're dealing with all these real exciting things. And I think that's very good. But what I want to say to you, which has already been said by previous speakers, starting with Mayor Rendell, is the framework within which we will really, seriously pursue these great opportunities will be set by how the American people vote or, if they stay home, how they don't vote in the 2000 elections: Who will be President; who will be in the Senate; who will be in the House; who will be the Governor; what will be the shape of our decision? And it is a hugely important election.

I have spent the last 7 years trying to turn this country around, away from the difficult circumstances we face and the sort of defeatism and political gridlock and negative attitudes about Government that existed at that time. And we are on a roll. But what I want to say to you is, one of the most dangerous times for a great people can be when we're on a roll. Anybody in this room tonight who is over 30 years old can recall at least one time in your life when you got in trouble because you thought things were going so well that it didn't matter whether you concentrated or whether you worked, whether you took on a big challenge you had been meaning to take on. You could just sort of indulge yourself in the moment. There were really no consequences; everything's rocking along fine.

And what I want to say to you is, even though I'm immensely proud of the record that the Vice President and Hillary and Tipper and I, Donna Shalala, our whole administration has been a part of establishing, the whole purpose of it was to bring us to this moment so we could really deal with the big challenges of America in the new century. And a time like this maybe comes along once in a lifetime. And if people make the wrong decisions, or events intervene before they grab hold of their potential, everything can change.

So it really matters whether you have someone who is committed to maintaining our prosperity and bringing economic opportunity to poor people, poor places that haven't had it.

It really matters that—whether we elect people who understand that there are enormous pressures on working parents today to fulfill their responsibilities to their children and their responsibilities at work. And of all the advanced countries in the world, of all the things we do well, we do that less well than nearly any other

place. We need to do more to help people succeed at home and at work.

It really matters whether, now that we've gotten the crime rate down for 7 years in a row, we have someone as President and in the Congress who believes we can make America the safest big country in the world and is willing to keep working to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children.

It matters whether we have someone who believes we can grow the economy and improve the environment. It matters whether we have someone who is committed to keeping America on the forefront of science and technology and to do it in a way that preserves our values by protecting our privacy. These things matter.

And if I might say, two things that we have done which were really different—quite apart from the fact that we had a specific economic policy, a specific crime policy, a specific welfare policy—they were different from previous administrations: We said, "We don't believe Government is the enemy anymore; we tried that for 12 years and it got us in one big ditch. But we don't believe Government is the solution to all our problems. We favor a Government of empowerment and enterprise that establishes the conditions and gives people the tools to solve their own problems." In other words, we had a positive and unifying notion of what our Government could be.

The second thing was that we said, "We don't want to demonize our opponents anymore, and we don't want them demonizing us." We are—we think the biggest problem in the world is that people are still unable to get along with those who are different from them. And they turn their differences into demonization, principally in racial, in religious, tribal ways, religious ways in the United States, in terms of hate crimes and all those ways and also against people because they're gay, and in this town, because people are of different political parties or have different philosophies. Differences of opinion are good; demonization is bad. Our administration knew the difference, and it has made a difference all over the world.

So now, we come to this moment in this house, so I want to tell you a story. It was my great good fortune to be friends with Averell Harriman and with Pamela Harriman. When she died at 77 in Paris by a swimming pool, she was our Ambassador to France, where she had gone as a young woman after World War II.

When he was almost 90, I was spending the night with him one night in the residence next door. And he actually got up—Hillary was there, too—and he got up at 11:45 p.m.—he had already gone to bed—because we were up talking, and he was jealous that we were still up talking. He was 89 years old. So we got him into a conversation about what it was like representing President Roosevelt with Churchill and Stalin. And then, about that time, they also had hired a professor at Georgetown to work with Governor Harriman who had taught me international affairs when I was a student there. So this house has a lot of history to me.

I'd like you to think about this. You've talked about the first time I was around here was when I was in college, the last time we had an economic expansion this robust—that is, the one we just lapped—we just lapped the economic expansion from 1961 to 1969. When I graduated from high school in 1964, President Kennedy had been killed. But the country really had—contrary to all these people who now look back and say that's the beginning of America's long drift into cynicism—that's not true. The American people were heartbroken, but they united as I have never seen them, and they tried to rise above it. And they tried to support President Johnson, and they got—there was a whole new energy behind the civil rights movement and all the things we believe in.

So when I finished high school in '64, we had 3 percent unemployment, big growth, no inflation. Everybody thought we were going to be able to legally resolve our civil rights challenges through the Congress; we'd all do it in a peaceful, positive way. Vietnam was a distant place that we thought would be managed some way or another, and we knew we were standing up against communism. It was the right thing to do.

Four years later, when I graduated from Georgetown, in my last semester, Martin Luther King was killed; Senator Kennedy was killed; President Johnson announced he wouldn't run for reelection; Washington burned; and a politically divisive message called the Silent Majority, but really—the first time, getting into America—"America is divided between 'us' and 'them,'" carried the day.

I want you to know something. I'm not running for anything, but as an American, I have waited more than 30 years for my country once again to be in the position that we lost because

of the tragedies that happened in 1968, because of the riots in the streets, because of the breakdown of the economy, because we squandered our moment. And every one of you that's anywhere near my age who was moved to believe that we could make a difference by the heroes we lost 30 years ago, you must believe that this election—not '92, not '96—this election is the moment when America is back where we were when we lost our way.

Most people don't get a second chance in life as a people. And most of us who are still here are here only because we did get a few second chances. America cannot let this go. That's why you ought to be here and be here for our crowd all the way to November. And

if somebody asks you why you're doing it, you tell them what I just told you: This is the chance of a lifetime, and we better make the most of it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to James D'Orta and Joseph A. DeFrancis, dinner hosts; Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr.; Wayne L. Rogers, chairman, Maryland Democratic Party; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Andrew Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters February 9, 2000

The President. Good morning. Before I leave, I'd like to say just a few words about the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation. A House and Senate conference will take it up beginning tomorrow. My message is simple and straightforward. Congress should seize this moment of opportunity to do what is right for the health of the American family, to seize this moment to stand with doctors, nurses, and patients, to restore trust and accountability in our health care system.

Last fall the House of Representatives passed by a large margin a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. The legislation, sponsored by Congressmen Norwood and Dingell, says you have a right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to see a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of treatment, the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one great harm, and it covers all Americans in all health plans.

Now this bill is in the hands of House and Senate conferees. It reflects the beliefs and represents the needs of the overwhelming majority of the American people, without regard to party. It has the endorsement of over 300 health care and consumer groups. It has the votes of 275 Members of the House of Representatives, in-

cluding 68 Republicans. Although I remain concerned that the conferees on the bill do not share the majority's view, I believe, nevertheless, they have a clear responsibility to ratify these fundamental rights, to put politics aside and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

Americans who are battling illnesses shouldn't have to battle insurance companies for the coverage they need. Passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights for all Americans in all health plans is a crucial step toward meeting our goal in the 21st century of assuring quality, affordable health care to all our citizens. I ask the House and Senate conferees to take the next vital step.

Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what are you doing about the daily bombing of Lebanon?

The President. Well, let me say, we are doing our best to get the peace process back on track. I think it is clear that the bombing is a reaction to the deaths, in two separate instances, of Israeli soldiers. What we need to do is to stop the violence and start the peace process again. We're doing our best to get it started. And we're working very, very hard on it.

Disruption on the Internet

Q. Mr. President, are you monitoring the situation with the hackers who have been disrupting some of the main websites around the country the past few days? Are you monitoring that situation? Is there anything that Washington could possibly do about this?

The President. I don't know the answer to that. But I have asked people who know more about it than I do whether there is anything we can do about it.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, Republicans are considering adding the right to sue in Federal court, just not district court, would that be sufficient, sir, in your opinion?

Q. I couldn't hear that question.

The President. I honestly don't know the answer to that because I haven't ever considered it, and I haven't discussed it. I'd like to have a chance to discuss it. I think any indication that there is movement and that they're trying to get together is hopeful. But I don't want to commit to something I'm not sure I understand the full implications of yet.

President's Trip to South Asia

Q. Have you decided whether to go to Pakistan yet?

The President. We haven't made a decision on the final itinerary yet. I want to make a trip which maximizes the possibilities, not only for constructive partnerships for the United States in the years ahead but, even more urgently, for peace in that troubled part of the world. It has enormous implications for people in the United States and throughout the world—more, I suspect, than most people know. I hope in the time that I have here that we can make some progress because it is something that I remain profoundly concerned about for years and years into the future.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Any telephone calls from Northern Ireland—[inaudible]—can you give us an update, sir?

The President. Well, it's correct that we're working very hard on it. I have some hope that we may find a way through this which would enable every aspect of the Good Friday accord to be realized—that's, after all, what the people of Northern Ireland voted for overwhelmingly—and that could achieve that objective without interrupting the progress so far.

But I have nothing else to report to you except to say that I'm working very hard; the British and Irish Governments are; and I think that the leaders of all the political factions are. I think everyone understands that we're at a very important moment, and we're trying to keep it going. And we have a chance. And I just hope everyone will—everyone—will belly up to the bar and do their part so that we don't have any kind of backsliding or reversal here. We've come too far.

I was quite encouraged that there was universal condemnation of the explosion in Northern Ireland last week. That's a good first step. We just need to keep at it.

Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Is the lawsuit provision still the major stumbling block, at least with the Senate negotiators there, in terms of the Patients' Bill of Rights? You may have asked that, but I couldn't hear.

The President. He did, in a different way. I think so. You're following it so you know there are a few other differences of opinion. But we want universal—first we want to cover all Americans; that's a very important thing. And there has to be some way of enforcing a right, or it's not a right. Otherwise, it's just a suggestion.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for McAllen, TX.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in McAllen,
Texas
February 9, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, how very grateful I am to Jesus and Elvia for having us in their beautiful home; to Alonzo Cantu; and of course, to my good friend Congressman Hinojosa.

I thought it was interesting that he quoted that line from “Casablanca”—[laughter]—my second favorite movie of all time. I like you very much, but I must say I’ve never thought of you in the same breath as Ingrid Bergman before. [Laughter] I’ll have to think about that one.

Let me say to all of you, I—Ben talked about how I have been here now, I guess, three times since I’ve been President. It isn’t a hard sell. If it were up to me, I’d come once a month. If you’ve been following the weather between Washington and New York, where I’m spending most of my time now, you know that it’s a little better down here. I saw the first golf course without snow on it I’ve seen in 3 weeks, today coming in from the airport.

I will be brief because I want to get around and visit with all of you and then speak about what you wish to speak about, but I would like to make a couple of general points. First of all, I came to the valley and to McAllen on the last night of my campaign in 1992; some of you were there. We had a marvelous 24-hour affair. We stopped in nine different communities, and I really wanted to come here. And I said then I wanted the American people to give me a chance to put the people of this country first again over the politics of Washington, which was, I thought, entirely too divisive and too mired in the past. And we brought a new philosophy to try to bring the people together, to try to change the way Government works, to empower people to solve their own problems, to try to bring opportunity to every responsible citizen, and to make a genuine attempt to build a community of all Americans. And our country is growing increasingly diverse with every passing day. In just a decade, for example, there will be no majority race in the entire State of California, our biggest State.

So all these things are important. We talked about how we sent people from the Government

down here to try to help. I think that’s important. I think if we’re going to have one America, we can’t pretend that we’re building one if we only go to the largest places or to the wealthiest places or to the places with the most influence or even to the places where I won the electoral votes. We have to try to bring everybody into the family of America and go forward.

In 1992, when I stopped here, we had high unemployment. Today, we have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded.

We had a great deal of social division in terms of race and income and other ways, and a lot of social problems. Today, we have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, almost 7 million fewer people on welfare, 2 million-plus children lifted out of poverty, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in over 20 years. The college-going rate is up by about 10 percent. And we’ve put empowerment zones all across America, including one in south Texas, to try to give people a better chance to be a part of this new enterprise economy.

So the country, in general, is in the best shape perhaps it’s ever been. And the great question in this election season, which I think I can comment on because for the first time in over two decades I’m not on a ballot anywhere, is after we have done all this work to turn our country around, to get it moving in the right direction, what are we going to do with this opportunity?

And all of you can remember times in your own life—at least all of you that are over 30—when you made a mistake because you thought things were going so well there were no consequences to breaking your concentration, to not thinking ahead, to putting off the tough decisions that you knew were out there. That’s the great challenge to America today: How are we going to make the most of what is truly a magic moment in our Nation’s history?

And as I argued a little more than a week ago in the State of the Union Address, I think the only thing to do is to keep pushing ahead, to bear down, to keep changing along the lines

that have brought us this far, to ask ourselves what are the big challenges still out there, and do our best to meet them. And I just want to emphasize, if I might very briefly, six of those that I think have particular impact on the people of the Rio Grande Valley.

First of all, the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years, and we have to be prepared for that. That means we have to save Social Security; we have to strengthen Medicare; and we ought to add a prescription drug benefit that our seniors can buy at a price they can afford, because over 60 percent of the seniors in America today cannot afford the prescription drugs they need to lengthen and improve the quality of their lives.

Secondly, we have to realize that only in one respect has our social fabric been more strained since 1993: There are more people without health insurance today than there were in 1993. I remember when all the interest groups were arrayed against me and the First Lady when we tried to provide health care coverage for all. They told all those Congressmen that if they voted for my health care plan, the number of uninsured people would go up. Well, every Congressman who voted for it can say "That's right. I voted for Clinton's plan. It didn't pass, and the number of uninsured people went up."

So I'm trying to do something about that. In 1997 we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we got it off the ground, and it was a little slow starting. But last year we doubled the number of people in CHIP, and there are now 2 million children who have health insurance. But there are 3 million more who are eligible, and what I want you to understand—a lot of them are in the Rio Grande Valley—and the thing I want to emphasize is, we appropriated the money. The money is there, and we have to get these children enrolled.

And I also asked the Congress this year to cover the parents of these children, almost all of them working people but on very limited incomes. Cover them. If we covered the parents and children that are income-eligible for the health insurance program for children, we could literally cover 25 percent of all the uninsured people in the United States, and they're the 25 percent that need the coverage the worst. So I ask you to help me pass that.

In addition to that—and I'll bet there are a lot of these people in the valley, as well—the fastest growing group of people without

health insurance are people between the ages of 55 and 65 who take early retirement or change jobs, and their new job doesn't have health insurance for people their age, or they take early retirement, and they don't have any health insurance until they're old enough to get on Medicare.

I have proposed to let them buy into Medicare and to give them a tax credit to make it affordable. This will not in any way weaken Medicare. If anything, it will strengthen Medicare, because we're not taking money out of the Medicare Trust Fund. But if you think about the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people out there today who are, because they're in an age group that I'm rapidly approaching, are not exactly attractive for insurance but are, on average, healthier than people over 65, we need to provide some way for them to get health care and for the health care providers to be reimbursed if they give them health care. And the simplest, easiest thing is to let them buy into the Medicare program.

Let me say a word about education. In the country as a whole, test scores are up; high school graduation rates are up; college-going rates are up. That's the good news. The bad news is there is still a differential in the high school dropout rate that is breathtaking between Hispanic-Americans and the rest of America. And the dropout rate from college, once people go, is very high.

So I have proposed a budget that puts a billion dollars more into Head Start, the biggest increase in a generation; that would provide after-school programs and summer school programs in every troubled school in America where there's a high dropout rate, and we know that makes a big difference. And we passed in '97 the HOPE scholarship, which gives a \$1,500 tax credit for people for the first 2 years of college, and further tax relief for later years, which has effectively opened the doors of college to all Americans, at least to community college.

I have asked the Congress to add to that a tax deduction for up to \$10,000 of college tuition and to make it at the 28 percent rate, even for people in the 15 percent income tax bracket. That would effectively open the doors of 4 years of college to every person in this country. It could change the future of the Rio Grande Valley. And I hope you will help me pass that in this coming session.

I also have made proposals that would enable us to have the funds to help prepare 5,000 schools every year and to do major repairs or build 6,000 more schools. We have a lot of kids that are in overcrowded classrooms, a lot of kids that are in classrooms so broken down they can't even be wired for the Internet. So I hope you will support the education agenda.

In the area of families, I believe that one of the biggest unresolved problems we have today, or just daily challenges, is the challenge that families face when they have to work, particularly when both parents work or when there's a single-parent household and they have children, school-aged children, or even preschool children. So I recommended an expansion in the child care tax credit. I recommended making it refundable for low income people who sometimes spend as much as 25 percent of their income on child care. I recommended a \$3,000 tax credit—that's \$3,000 off your tax bill—to pay for the long-term care costs of people who are caring for elderly or disabled relatives. I think that is a very important thing, and I hope the Congress will finally agree to go on and raise the minimum wage.

The last point I want to make on families and health care is what I made today—we have finally gotten a conference to begin tomorrow on the Patients' Bill of Rights, which I think is very important, to guarantee people the right to see a specialist, the right not to lose their health care coverage or to be required to change doctors in the middle of a treatment, a pregnancy or a cancer treatment, for example. And I think it's important that we pass that.

The last economic point I want to make is that we now have an opportunity that we didn't have in '92, and that is to focus even more sharply on the people and the communities who are still mired in poverty and a high unemployment rate, the people who have not fully participated in this economic recovery.

Now, the empowerment zone program, which is very well-known in south Texas because of the leadership of the Vice President—we've had our big national empowerment zone conference down here in the valley not very long ago last year. But I think it's time to both increase the number of these zones and increase the financial incentives to invest in them. I know you want to get high-tech business in here.

You know, if there is some extra risk or some extra cost by going further away, we ought to

help to defray that, because we will never have a better opportunity—ever—to prove what I believe: that we can bring free enterprise to people and places that have been left behind and that this is a way not only to help the people in those categories, the high unemployment areas in south Texas, this is a way to keep the American economic expansion going with no inflation because we'll be adding new businesses, new workers, new taxpayers, and new consumers all at the same time.

I'm also, as I'm sure you've noticed from the emphasis I've given it for the last year or so, trying to get Congress to pass sweeping legislation that would cover every area of high unemployment in the country, to give people the same incentives to invest to bring new businesses to these areas we now give people to invest to bring new businesses to South America or Asia or Africa. I'm not against helping poor countries overseas. I just think we ought to have the same incentives to invest in poor areas here at home in America. I hope you'll help me pass that new markets legislation.

One big part of that that I'm going to emphasize in a couple of months is closing the so-called digital divide, which would really be helped if you were able to recruit some high-tech companies down here and train people to work in them. Because one thing we know is that when people have access to computers, not just children in the schools but their parents at home or in a community center—and I've proposed establishing 1,000 of them across America to give all adults access to the Internet—we know that innovative people find new ways to improve their lot in life.

For example, probably some of you here have bought or sold something on the website eBay, which is a great trading center. There are now over 20,000 Americans, many of whom were once on welfare, who are now actually making a living—it's their full-time job—trading on eBay. No one would have ever thought of this as a possible opportunity for poor people, as a way to create small businesses.

I've established all these community development financial institutions around the country since I've been President. We're making a lot of microcredit loans. Think about that. Think about being able to loan somebody enough money just to buy a computer with good capacity. They could be fully connected to the Internet, and they figure out how to make their own

living. There are all kinds of options out there, and we ought to leave no stone unturned in trying to get at the heart of this poverty problem and empower every person who has not yet been a part of this prosperity to do well.

Now, here's the last point I want to make. If you were to ask me to put in a sentence what has been behind the change I tried to bring to America the last 7 years, what is behind the philosophy that governs everything I do, it is my belief that everyone counts and everyone ought to have a chance, and we all do better when we help each other, that we really have to build one America, and that the Government isn't the source or the solution to all the problems but is an absolutely imperative partner. We have to create conditions and empower people to make the most of their own lives.

And in that connection, I have to tell you that one of the things that continues to bother me in my efforts to build one America is the problem that I continue to have in the United States Senate in getting judges confirmed—you want to talk to me about judges—particularly judges who come from diverse backgrounds. And there's always a political element in the appointment of judges, and sometimes when the President is of one party and the Senate is of another party, they don't confirm as many of the President's appointees. But there has never been an example like what we've seen of the deliberate slow walk and refusal to have hearings, refusal to vote up or down on judges.

I appointed an El Paso lawyer named Enrique Moreno to serve on the Fifth Circuit. He graduated from Harvard and Harvard Law School. He'd come a long way from El Paso. The American Bar Association said he was well-qualified to be a judge. I had the highest percentage of judges recommended well-qualified by the

ABA of any President since they've been doing the ratings, even though I've appointed more Hispanic, more African-Americans, more female, and a more diverse judiciary in history. And everybody concedes they're less political than my two predecessors. They just show up for work, by and large, and do their job. And I cannot even get a hearing because your Senators won't support it.

I have appointed—I nominated a judge named Julio Fuentes for the Third Circuit and Richard Paez in California. They're supposed to give me a vote on him in March, but that's another thing I wish you would communicate, particularly if you're not a lawyer. You could have more influence in a way if you're not a lawyer. Tell your Senators that when the President appoints a person who worked himself all the way through Harvard Law School out of El Paso, and the ABA says he's well-qualified, and Texas needs the judge, give the man a hearing, and give him a vote. And if they're not for him, have the courage to vote against him. Don't keep killing these things.

I keep telling people in Washington, "We can do our business. We can show up for work. We can make progress, and we can still have elections. There will still be things we honestly disagree about. But we owe it to the American people, without regard to our party or our philosophy, to believe that everybody counts, everybody ought to have a chance, and we'll all do better when we help each other."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Jesus and Elvia Saenz, luncheon hosts; and Alonzo Cantu, member, board of directors, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Rubén Hinojosa in McAllen February 9, 2000

Thank you so much. Well, Congressman, I'm afraid now that this meeting has been opened to the press, if the list you just read is widely published, every other Member of Congress will be angry at me for not doing as well. [Laughter] I want to say a special thanks to your Congress-

man Ruben Hinojosa and Marty, and a happy birthday to his little daughter, Karen. He has really done a wonderful job for you. And he makes it easy to be helpful.

I want to thank Zeke and Livia Reyna for their cohosting this event. And I want to thank

Alonzo and Yoli for having me back in their beautiful little home here. [Laughter] I want you to know I agreed to come to south Texas—the first time I wanted to come to the valley before I had seen this place. So the first time I came out of the goodness of my heart. The second time I came because I wanted to come to this place again. [Laughter]

This is my third trip to the valley as President. And as the Congressman said, the Vice President has been here twice. Hillary was here recently. For all of you who were here I want to thank you, and thank you for giving her such a good hand. We had a great send-off on Sunday when she formally declared her campaign. And I think she's doing very well. I talked to her today, and if you can measure how well you're doing by how hard they attack you, which I've always thought was a pretty good measure—[laughter]—she's a cinch.

So I wanted to say to all of you seriously, there are many friends I have in this crowd today—the county judges, Senator Truan, others—that I have known for a long time. I first came to south Texas and then to the Rio Grande Valley, where I literally fell in love with this place almost 30 years ago now, before a lot of you in this crowd were even born. When I was a very young man, I realized the special quality of the people here, the special quality of the community. And I always thought if I ever had a chance to help, I would do it. You have given me a chance to help, and it's been an honor to do so.

I just want to say a few words as the only politician you'll hear from this year who is not running for anything. [Laughter] I want to talk to you not just as a President but as a citizen of this country. When I came here to this community on the last night of my campaign in 1992, some of you were there, and there was a great feeling of excitement. And we had a huge voter turnout the next day, and the Vice President and I were given a strong victory and a mandate to go in and change the direction of our country. We said then, we wanted to put the American people first, not Washington politics. We wanted opportunity for every responsible citizen. We wanted a community of all Americans, and we believed that Government was not the problem or the solution, but Government belonged to the people, and it was the job of Government to create the conditions and give people the tools that they need to

solve their own problems and live their own dreams. And we've worked hard on that for 7 years now.

When I was here on that night in 1992, we had a stagnant economy and high unemployment. Today, we have the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded, and the lowest poverty rates in more than 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in over 40 years. We have tried to do what we said we would do.

Our society was deeply divided. There was a riot in Los Angeles that year and great discontent everywhere. Today, we have the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, over 2 million children lifted out of poverty, almost 7 million people off the welfare rolls. We have created empowerment zones around the country in places like the Rio Grande Valley to give people the chance to attract economic investment. The college-going rate is up by about 10 percent. The country is moving in the right direction.

And as I said, as the person you'll hear from this year who is not running for office, the great question that the American people have to answer when they vote for Congress, for Senator, for President, is: Now, what? Now, what? What are we going to do with this truly magic moment? Every person in this audience today who is over 30 years old can remember some time in your life when you made a mistake because you thought things were going so well, you didn't have to think; you didn't have to work; you didn't have to plan; and there was no consequence for slacking up.

Every person here who has lived long enough can remember when you made a personal, a family, or a business mistake because things seemed to be so good that you really didn't have to do what we should all be doing every day with our lives, trying to get better, trying to do more, trying always to think about tomorrow.

Now, what I want to say to you is the last time America had these conditions was in the longest economic expansion in history before this one, between 1961 and 1969. When I graduated from high school in 1964, we had high growth, low unemployment; we were on the way to passing civil rights legislation; everybody thought we would be able to resolve a lot of

those difficult issues in the Congress in debate. The country had been heartbroken by President Kennedy's assassination, but we had united behind President Johnson, and he had done a masterful job of leading us and trying to pass legislation through the Congress, and everybody thought it was going to go on forever.

Within 4 years, we had riots in the streets; the country was deeply divided over Vietnam; President Johnson announced he wouldn't run for reelection; and Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed. And in the Presidential election of 1968, a deeply troubled and divided people voted for someone who said he represented the Silent Majority, which is another way of saying, "This country is divided between 'us' and 'them.' I'm with 'us,' and you don't want 'them.'"

And we have labored under that for 30 years. And for 7 years, I've been trying to turn this around. And I feel now, the country is moving in the right direction. But I want to tell you this: I'm not running for anything. As an American, I have been waiting for more than 30 years for my country to have the ability for all of us to join together, hand in hand, and build the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this is about. And we dare not blow this opportunity.

You know, some people in life don't get a second chance, and those of us who do have to be grateful for it. Now, our whole country has been given a second chance, under even better conditions than existed more than 30 years ago before all the wheels ran off.

So I say to you, when I come down here and talk to people about how we can make the Rio Grande Valley an oasis of opportunity, to me that's part of the long-term challenge of America. We should look at every place in America where there is too much poverty and too much unemployment and say, "If we can't bring economic opportunity to these places now, when will we ever be able to do it?" So every place in America that has not fully participated in this recovery should have dramatic incentives for people to invest there, to create jobs there, to put people to work there, to give people a chance to live their dreams there.

Every place in America and all the people in America that don't have access to health care—we should do more to provide more people access to health care, until everybody has it.

That's why I said in the State of the Union I wanted to see another 3 million children enrolled in our health insurance program and over 5 million parents included in it. I want people, who are over 55 but not old enough to be on Medicare, who lose their health insurance, to be able to buy into Medicare. And I think they ought to have a tax credit so they can afford to do it, because we have to keep moving forward in health care.

We have to keep moving forward in education. That's why I asked the Congress to put another billion dollars in Head Start and to provide enough funds for every troubled school in this country to give after-school or summer school programs to the kids who need it. That's why I want the Congress to provide enough money to repair 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years and to build and modernize 6,000 more so all of our kids will have a chance to get a world-class education.

And that's why I have worked so hard to help people balance the demands of raising their children and doing their work. That's why I want to increase the child care tax credit, why I want to pass an increase in the minimum wage, why I want to give families a \$3,000 tax credit to care for an aging parent or a disabled member of the family—one of the biggest problems in America today—why I think we ought to be proud of the fact that we've opened at least 2 years of college to everybody with these HOPE scholarship tax credits. But I have asked the Congress to give the American people a tax deduction for college tuition at a 28 percent rate, even if you're in the 15 percent income tax bracket, up to \$10,000. That would guarantee that everybody in America could afford to go to 4 years of college if they did the work and learned the things they need to learn to go.

These are important things that will bring us together. Now, let me just say one thing in closing. If you asked me to summarize what it is we did that was different over the last 7 years that worked, I could talk about our economic policy, which was different. We got rid of the deficit, and now I want to pay us out of debt for the first time since 1835, and if we do that, all the kids here will have low interest rates and a strong economy. We had a different welfare reform policy. We said, "Able-bodied people have to work, but we're going to take care of the kids. We're not going

to punish them.” We had a different crime policy. We said we ought to take—put more police on the street and take guns out of the hands of criminals.

But the most important thing we did was to say, “We’ve got a different philosophy. We don’t want to divide the American people anymore. We believe everybody counts; everybody should have a chance; we’ll all do better individually if we try to help each other do better together.”

So if someone came to me tonight and said, “I am the angel sent from the good Lord, and even though you’re having a good time being President, you can’t finish your term. This is your last day, but I’ll be a genie, you can have one wish,” it would not be for all the things I talked to you about. It would be to create one America. It would be to create a climate in America where we genuinely respected one another, where we were genuinely committed to giving one another a chance.

I see our former attorney general, Mr. Morales, back there. Is there life after politics, Dan? [*Laughter*] I hope that in my lifetime we will see a Hispanic-American Governor of Texas, President of the United States, on the Supreme Court, doing all these things. I hope that will be true of all the ethnic groups that are coming into our country and enriching us.

But more important than that, even, I hope that all of our children will have a chance to define and live their dreams, whatever they are. Your Congressman is an unbelievably effective public servant. And it’s not just because he can worry me to death until I finally say yes; it’s because he proceeds from the right philosophy. Everybody counts. Everybody should have a chance. We’ll all do better when we help each other. It’s worked pretty well for America.

I just want to ask you from the bottom of my heart—you know how I feel about Vice President Gore, you know what he’s done here in the empowerment zone and other things—but the main thing I want you to think about, for all of us, what happens to us individually is not as important as the direction the country takes. And I have fought very, very hard to keep the poison and the division and the animosity and the Washington political games to a minimum in terms of their ability to impact you and interfere with what we were all trying to do together.

Now it’s up to you again. And all these elections, from the Presidency to the Senate and Congress races, the governorships, all these elections, they’re like giant job interviews. And you have to decide not only who to hire but what are they going to do. And just remember, as they used to tell me when I was a kid growing up in Arkansas: When you see a turtle on a fencepost, chances are it didn’t get there by accident. [*Laughter*]

Here we are. It didn’t happen by accident. And we will never forgive ourselves if we blow this opportunity. So instead of relaxing, we should bear down and lift our sights and open our hearts and hands and make this election a time when we seize our deepest, fondest hopes and our biggest dreams for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Hinojosa’s wife, Martha Lopez Hinojosa, and their daughter Karen; luncheon hosts Zeke and Livia Reyna and Alonzo and Yoli Cantu; Texas State Senator Carlos Truan; and former Texas State Attorney General Dan Morales.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Extension of Normal Trade Relations Status for Albania

February 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and inter-

national standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania was not in violation of paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 or paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of that Act. That action allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations (NTR) status for Albania and certain other activities without the

requirement of an annual waiver. This semi-annual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

Message to the Congress Reporting Budget Rescissions and Deferrals *February 9, 2000*

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report three rescissions of budget authority, totaling \$128 million, and two deferrals of budget authority, totaling \$1.6 million.

The proposed rescissions affect the programs of the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The proposed deferrals affect programs of the De-

partment of State and International Assistance Programs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

NOTE: The report detailing the rescissions and deferrals was published in the *Federal Register* on February 23.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade *February 9, 2000*

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, with Annexes, done at Rotterdam, September 10, 1998. The report of the Department of State is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The Convention, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, with the active participation of the United States, provides a significant and valuable international tool to promote sound risk-based decisionmaking in the trade of certain hazardous chemicals. Building on a successful voluntary procedure, the Convention requires Parties to exchange information about these

chemicals, to communicate national decisions about their import, and to require that exports from their territories comply with the import decisions of other Parties.

The United States, with the assistance and cooperation of industry and nongovernmental organization, plays an important international leadership role in the safe management of hazardous chemicals and pesticides. This Convention, which assists developing countries in evaluating risks and enforcing their regulatory decisions regarding trade in such chemicals, advances and promotes U.S. objectives in this regard. All relevant Federal agencies support early ratification of the Convention for this reason, and we understand that the affected industries and interest groups share this view.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Convention and

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give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the understanding described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

February 9, 2000.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Dallas, Texas *February 9, 2000*

Thank you. First of all, Fred, thank you for what you said. And I thank you and Lisa for being wonderful friends to me and Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore and to our party. I thank Jess and Betty Jo for being here tonight. I can't help but say, Betty Jo is the niece of former Speaker Carl Albert, who passed away in the last couple of days, a great Democrat. And I had a wonderful talk with his wife today, and it reminded me of why I have been a Democrat all my life. And our thoughts and prayers are with your family.

I thank "B" and Audre Rapoport and Garry Mauro for their work here. And I wanted to acknowledge not only the mayor, who I think has done a superb job, and Senator Cain, thank you for being here, and Sally, thank you for being here and for being our regional Department of Education person, for all the good work you do. But I also want to introduce a former very important person on my White House staff, Regina Montoya, who is now a candidate for the House, who is here. I want you all to help her get elected to Congress. We need to win this seat. [*Applause*] Thank you. She's here, I think.

I got tickled—I started laughing all over again when Ed Rendell was up here talking about the rap that the Republican chairman laid on him after the New Hampshire primary. He said we were the candidate of special interests, and he mentioned—what did he say—trial lawyers, labor, gays, and Hollywood. [*Laughter*]

Let me take you back to 1992. In 1991, I was having the time of my life living in Arkansas in the 11th year of my governorship. I had had a new lease on life. I loved my job. I could have done it now to kingdom come. But I was really worried about my country, because that's the kind of stuff that everybody in Washington said, what Ed just said. And there was a Republican line and a Democratic line. There was

a liberal line and a Republican line. And everybody was struggling to be politically correct and to be as confrontational as possible, because that is the only way you would get your 15 seconds on the evening news.

I suppose it was perfectly good for the people who got on the talk shows all the time and the people who could raise funds for their reelection and stay in, but the country was in the ditch. Even when we were nominally in a recovery, we couldn't generate any jobs. And we had quadrupled the debt in 12 years, and we didn't have much to show for it, because we were spending less in real terms on things that we needed, like education.

The reason I ran for President is that I had been working on all this stuff for a long time, and it became clear to me there were limits to what any Governor or any people could do, or people in their private lives could do, to turn America around until we had a National Government that had it right—that had the right philosophy, that was dynamic and change-oriented and was interested in bringing people together and was committed to creating the conditions and giving people the tools to succeed in a very different world.

So I admit that what the chairman of the Republican Party said is right, but I don't think he got it right. That is, I'm not ashamed of the fact we've got a lot of trial lawyers here. I'm not ashamed of the fact that I think, if people have been shafted, they ought to be able to go to court and pursue their remedy. I also want to say this: I'm also proud of the fact that we've had a real relationship. This has not been a political deal. We haven't 100 percent agreed on everything. We've had a relationship. It's like being in a family or an organization or anything else. It's real here.

You know, I hear all these—our friends in the other party talk about how terrible the trial

lawyers are. All I want to know is, if you guys are so destructive, why do we have 21 million jobs and the best economy we've ever had? And the same thing about the labor unions. Labor enrollments went up last year for the first time in many years. I think that's a good thing for people to be organized, to be able to not only vent their grievances but, more importantly, build partnerships for the future. And if it's so bad, why do we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years? And why do we have the highest productivity that we can ever remember?

I plead guilty to believing that we should not deprive people of jobs or subject them to violence just because they're gay. I'm guilty of that; I believe that. I think anybody that shows up for work and pays their taxes and are willing to do whatever it takes to be a good citizen of their country ought to be treated with the same amount of respect as anybody else. That's what I believe. And I think the evidence is that that's right.

In terms of Hollywood, that's sort of the last refuge of the rightwing arsenal there. [Laughter] I was the first person—not a member of the Republican Party—I was the first political leader, in 1993, to go to Hollywood and ask them to give me a ratings system for television for children and to reduce the amount of inappropriate material our children were exposed to. And not everybody agreed with it, but again, we're in—I have a relationship with a lot of people out there, and we got a rating system. I wish it worked better now because it's kind of—practically, it's difficult because you've got to worry—if you're a parent, you've got to worry about the video games and the TV and the movies and all that. And we're trying to work through that.

But the point I want to make is, my whole idea about politics is that we ought to run it the way we—our country—the way we would run—we would sensibly run a family or a business or any other common enterprise if you were part of a big charitable endeavor here in Dallas. I just think that if you look at the way the world works and how it's changing, all these trends toward globalization, all the threats that are out there from people who are trying to take advantage of globalization for their own ends—if you look at all the opportunities that are out there through scientific and technological advances, it does not make sense for

us in this year to revert to the patterns that I have spent 7 years trying to break.

Everybody has got—we're going to divide up sides now, and if you're a liberal, you've got to be over here; and if you're a conservative, you've got to be over here. And here's your line attacking them, and here's your line attacking the other. And let's don't worry about whether we ever get anything done or not. I think this is nuts. None of you live like this, and none of you have any role at all like this; except when you vote, we're supposed to be like this.

I have worked for 7 long years, with the help of people in my administration, people like you, to prove that we could have a unifying vision that would bring this country together, not in the middle of the road but in a dynamic movement forward.

And look, 7 years ago we had a terrible economy, and now we've got the longest economic expansion in history. Seven years ago we had worsening social problems, and now we've got the lowest welfare and crime rates in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. This works, and it's not rocket science.

And if somebody asked me, "Well, what is the difference? What did you really do that was different as President," and you only get a sentence or two, I would not say our economic policy, although we have a good one, I think, and it's different; or our crime policy, although we have a good one, and it's different; or our welfare policy, although we have a good one, and it's different; or even our education policy, which is profoundly different from what was done before. I would say, I believe that everybody counts; everybody deserves a chance; and we all do better when we try to help each other. And I believe that we don't get anywhere by denying the challenges that are before us so that we can continue the comfortable arguments that we've been making in the past, instead of taking the uncomfortable but exhilarating march into the future.

That's what this whole deal has been about, and that's what I tried to say in the State of the Union Address. Anybody that's over 30 years old—we've got a few people who aren't in this room, so they will have to learn this—but anybody that's over 30 years old can remember at least one time, if not more, in your life when you made a real bad mistake, not because times were tough but because times were so good,

you didn't think anything could go wrong. And so you just didn't want to do what you knew that you ought to do, keep planning, keep thinking about the future, make the tough decisions now. Better to be diverted. Better to lay down and rest. Better to just indulge yourself for the moment. Anybody who has lived any length of time has made a mistake under those circumstances.

That is the question that is facing the United States today. And the consequences are far greater for the Nation than they are for any of us in our personal lives, because we have never had this kind of chance before. So what I tried to say at the State of the Union, what I want to say again to you, I hope you will hammer home to everyone you can talk about this year is that if there was ever a time when we ought to have an election that was a unifying referendum on our common future, it is this one, because the economy is in good shape; the society is in good shape; we've got a lot of confidence; we have relatively few internal crises or external threats. There is nothing to prevent us from saying, "Okay, what's out there that's a big problem or a big opportunity? And let's go deal with it."

And if we do both, we will be able to literally make the future of our dreams for our children. That's what I think the Democrats ought to be saying this year. And that is what we represent. We shouldn't be denying that we ought to change. If somebody who was running for President said, "Vote for me. I'll do just what Bill Clinton did," I'd vote against that person because we live in a dynamic time. But if somebody says, "Vote for me. I'd like to go back to the way it was in 1992 and before," I would certainly vote against that person. [Laughter]

So the question is not whether we're going to change; it is how. So I think if you know the number of people over 65 is going to double, you have to meet the challenge of the aging of America. Putting it off will only make it more expensive and more painful. Today we can save Social Security for the baby boom generation, extend the life of Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit for the 60 percent of the seniors that don't have access to one. We can do it today. We have the money, and we have the reforms to save money, and we ought to do it.

If we know that education is more important than ever before and we've got more kids from

more diverse backgrounds, we should act today to make sure all our kids start school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed: Head Start, after-school programs, school repairs and building and modernizing schools, hooking them all up to the Internet, training the teachers better, the whole nine yards. There is no excuse for us not doing this.

Test scores are up, graduation rates are up, college-going rates are up, but not near where they ought to be—but enough so that we know what to do. It would be different if we didn't know what to do. We know what to do now. We don't have an excuse. So to squander this moment in education would be a great error.

In health care, I was always—one of my friends in the Congress came up to me the other day, and they said, "You know, they told me, the insurance companies did, if I voted for your health care plan back in 1994, the number of uninsured people would actually go up." And he said, "They were absolutely right. I voted for it, and there's more uninsured people today than there was when I voted for it." [Laughter] So we had to find a different approach.

The only social indicator, just about, that's worse today than it was in '93 when I took office is that there are more Americans who work for a living without health insurance. So we got this program, and I wish you would look at this. Some of you, by the way, who work with the agencies in Texas, we've got this program that will enroll 5 million kids in the Children's Health Insurance Program of lower income working people who can't get health insurance on the job. We've got 2 million enrolled now. We've got money for 3 million more. A lot of the ones who aren't enrolled are still in Texas—for a lot of good reasons. I'm not criticizing anybody, but we just need to go out there and get those kids in there.

And I'd like the Congress to say their parents can be enrolled, too. And I'd like the Congress to let people between 55 and 65 who don't have insurance—it's the fastest growing group of uninsured people, people who take early retirement. They're not old enough for Medicare; they don't have insurance. I think they ought to be able to buy into Medicare, and we ought to give them a modest tax credit so it's affordable.

Now, this is a big issue. We know that more and more parents will work. Either they will

be single parents working or two-parent households where both people will be working. If we know that and we know right now that for all of our success, America does less to support work and family—that is, to help working parents succeed as childrearsers, which is the most important job anybody can have—if we know we don't do enough, we should do more.

We know more and more families, as people live longer, are going to be taking care of aging or disabled relatives. We should do more. So I recommended to the Congress to increase our support for the child care tax credit, to give families a long-term care credit for caring for elderly or disabled loved ones, to give parents a tax deduction for college tuition up to \$10,000 a year so we can open the doors of 4 years of college to all Americans. These are big things. Why? Because we know there will be big problems 10 or 20 or 30 years from now if we don't deal with them right now.

And I could go on and on. I don't want to give you the whole State of the Union Address, but the point I'm trying to make is, the Democratic Party is now in a position to say, we have the resources. We've worked very hard to get rid of this deficit. We've worked very hard to pay the debt down. And we've now got the resources to deal with the aging of America, the challenge of the children and their education, the challenge of health care, the challenge of balancing work and family. We can do it and still get this country out of debt in 13 years and still provide extra incentives to places like where I was this morning, in the Rio Grande Valley, to give people extra incentives to invest in urban neighborhoods, rural areas, Indian reservations, where our prosperity hasn't reached.

And why do we do all that? Because we believe everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; and we all do better when we help each other. That's what I believe. Nobody believes the Democrats anymore are weak on the budget, weak on the economy, weak on welfare, weak on crime. But we do believe that if somebody is trying, we ought to help them make the most of their lives. And we now have 7 years of evidence that that's not only a morally defensible thing to do, it not only makes us feel better, it actually works.

So I will close with this, and I don't want to be maudlin, but I can pretty well say what I want to because I'm not running for anything.

[*Laughter*] First time in over two decades I haven't been on the ballot for anything. Some of those guys on the other side may write me out just to—[*laughter*—they may feel deprived that they're being cut out of one more chance to vote against me, but I'm not on the ballot. So I'm just telling you this as a citizen.

Once before in my lifetime, I thought we had a chance to build the future of our dreams. In the last economic expansion—that was, until this month, the longest one in history; it ran from 1961 to 1969. I graduated from high school in 1964. And I think it's appropriate that I say this here. Most of the people who now look back at that period date the onset of American cynicism to the assassination of President Kennedy. That is dead wrong. That is wrong. The country was heartbroken, but they rallied. They united. They tried to lift themselves up. Lyndon Johnson did a good job of moving the country forward.

And we believed, when I graduated from high school, that we were going to solve the civil rights crisis and the poverty problems of America through the orderly legislative process in Congress and working with people. We believed we were going to be able to stand against communism without having an unacceptable cost at home or around the world. We believed that we could do this.

Four years later, I was at my college graduation, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 90 days after Martin Luther King was killed, 94 days after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. The economy was beginning to shut down. The country was torn apart over Vietnam, and we had had riots in the streets of America. I have waited, as an American, over 30 years for my country to get another chance to build the future of our dreams for our children.

Most of us get at least one second chance in life, and if we didn't, we'd be a long way behind where we are. Our country, in our lifetime, has this chance in even better circumstances than existed 30 years ago, with science and technology changes that are breathtaking. I believe that the young women here may very likely give birth to children who will have a life expectancy of 100 years. They will come home from the hospital with genetic roadmaps of their children's lives. And if they give birth to young daughters that have one of those two broken genes that are high predictors of

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breast cancer, they'll be able to take gene therapies that will block them from ever developing in the first place. I believe that will happen.

I believe the young people here will soon be driving automobiles that get probably 80, 90 miles a gallon, and within 5 years they'll be running on biofuels that will be the equivalent of getting 500 miles to the gallon because they require so little oil to produce. I believe we'll find out what's in those black holes in outer space. I believe we'll be able to keep people with diabetes, adult onset diabetes, alive and healthy to a normal lifespan. I believe that we will actually develop computers the size of a teardrop that use DNA for computer memories more powerful than any human chip, so that you will have tiny little computers with a computing power of all the super computers today.

I believe all this is going to happen. I think we'll also have to deal with highly sophisticated terrorists and organized criminals and drugrunners that have access to chemical and biological and other weapons. There will always be enemies of civilization out there. But we'll do just fine if we understand that it still comes down to whether you believe everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; we're all going to do better if we work together.

For 30 years I have waited for this moment. If I contributed at all to it, I am grateful. But as a citizen, I implore you, don't let America turn away from what works when we've finally got a chance to redeem the whole promise of our Nation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Fred Baron and Lisa Blue; Jess Hay, former finance chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Betty Jo; Mary Albert, widow of former Speaker of the House Carl B. Albert; Bernard ("B") Rapoport, former chairman and chief executive officer, American Income Life Insurance Co., and his wife, Audre; Garry Mauro, former Texas land commissioner; Mayor Ron Kirk of Dallas; State Senator David Cain and his wife, Sally H. Cain, Region VI Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, Department of Education; Regina Montoya Coggins, candidate for Texas' Fifth Congressional District; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Jim Nicholson, chairman, Republican National Committee.

Remarks at a Democratic Unity Reception

February 10, 2000

Thank you very much. Let me say how delighted and profoundly honored I am to be here with Senator Daschle and Leader Gephardt, with their colleagues in the Senate and the House who are here in large numbers, and all those who aren't here who are with us in spirit today; how much I appreciate Bob Hatcher and Thelma and Jenny Mae for being here to remind us of why we're all here in the first place. Their testimony makes clear that our agenda is America's agenda, and our presence here makes clear that we are united in our support of that agenda.

I know some of our friends on the other side of the aisle have suggested that, because this is an election year, we really shouldn't do much. Well, I don't think that the two people who just spoke could take a year off from their

jobs. And since everybody here is still drawing a salary, I don't think we could take a year off from our jobs either.

I want to join with what Senator Daschle and Leader Gephardt have said in thanking the members of this caucus for your role in this long boom and so much of the social progress we have enjoyed, beginning with the courageous vote for the economic plan in 1993. Your commitment, constant over the years, to opportunity for every responsible American and for a community of all Americans, to a Government that gives Americans the tools to live their own dreams, has been absolutely critical to anything that our administration has achieved.

I know that we've had a lot of different policies, but more important than all of the specifics was our common commitment. We wanted Bob

and Thelma to be here today because we believe that every American counts. We believe every American should have a chance, and we believe we all do better when we help each other. That is what we believe.

Today I received the Annual Economic Report from my Council of Economic Advisers. It provides further evidence that Americans have built a new economy and that what we believe actually works. The report makes clear that this is the strongest economic expansion in history, not just the longest, that unlike previous economic expansions which, in the end and somewhere in the middle, normally bring you higher deficits, slower productivity, and higher inflation, this one has turned it around, unlike the 1980's when income inequality increased and many hard-pressed working families saw their incomes fall while we were told that the expansion was going on. We now see solid income growth across all groups of American workers since 1993.

All groups are sharing in the prosperity by income, by region, by race. Now, as my leaders said so eloquently, it is for us here in Washington and for the American people to decide what we are going to do with what is truly a magic moment. I argued in the State of the Union Address that we ought to be thinking about people like Bob and Thelma and Jenny Mae, that we ought to ask ourselves, "What are the great challenges before us?" We ought to clearly state what we believe America's goals ought to be and what steps we intend to take toward them this year. That is what we are united in doing.

And let me say—we have a lot of young people here—I want to say something now and something to you at the end. Anybody over 30 in this audience can recall at least one time in your life and probably more than one time when you made a big mistake not because you were under the gun but because things were going so well you thought there were no consequences. You thought you could relax. You thought you really didn't have to think about what you knew was out there plainly before you, so you didn't really have to take those tough decisions; just sort of sit back, relax, enjoy the things that were going on.

That is a message that some people suddenly are sending America today, and that is dead wrong. We will never, in all probability, have another time in our lifetime with so much pros-

perity, so much progress, so much confidence, and so little trouble at home and abroad, to define the future of our dreams for the next generation of Americans. And we had better take this chance and make the most of it.

I must say, I have been quite amused by a lot of the commentators on both sides of our policy of paying the debt off. Some have said I sound like Calvin Coolidge, and others say that I'm using it as an excuse to spend money on Americans. All I know is, it works. If we get this country out of debt, it means the American people can borrow money at lower interest rates to invest in new businesses, to pay their home loans, to pay their college loans, to pay their car loans. It means that all the young people here for a generation will have a healthier economy and a more affordable life than otherwise would have been the case, and it will be more possible for us to meet the great challenges of this country. That is our united commitment, and we ought to do it.

We are united in meeting the challenge of the aging of America. And believe me, this is not an option. I know things are going well, so we can sort of say, "Well, we'll let this slide a while." The people in this country, the number of people over 65 are going to double in the next 30 years. Now, if we start to prepare for it now—to reform and modernize and strengthen Medicare, and to take Social Security out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation—we can do it relatively painlessly.

But make no mistake: This country will do it. And if we just fool around and ignore this for 10 years, who knows what the economy will be like 10 years from now? Who knows what the demands on the American people will be like 10 years from now? Now is the time to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare and to take Social Security out to 2050 and take Medicare out for 25 years—now. Do it now. Save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boomers' retirement.

We know that we live in a marvelous world, where the kids with a good education are going to be able to do things their parents could not even have imagined. And yet, we know that the penalty of not having an education is even greater than ever. We know that it's more challenging than ever before because we have a more diverse group of students, from different racial, cultural, religious, even linguistic backgrounds. We know that right now. And we know

that's only going to become a more pronounced trend.

Within a decade, our largest State, California, will have no majority race. Now, we know that. We also know that there's nowhere near equal educational opportunity in the country, and we know what the challenges are. So we say, now—not later—now is the time for high standards, smaller classes, well-trained teachers. Now is the time for all the kids who need it to have the preschool and the after-school programs they need. Now is the time—not later, now.

We know that more and more families will have the parents working, whether they're single-parent families or two-parent families. And we know right now that for all of our success, America gives less support to help people balance the demands of childrearing and work than any other advanced country.

We can be proud of what we did with family and medical leave. We can be proud with what we did with the Children's Health Insurance Program. We can be proud with what we did with the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill to let people take their health insurance from job to job. But we know that we do not do enough to help people balance the demands of work and childrearing. And raising children, like that beautiful little girl, is still America's most important work. It always will be. And we know we have to do more.

So we believe now is the time to increase the child care tax credit and make it refundable, to help parents do more to pay for college tuition, so that we can go beyond where we were with the HOPE scholarship, which opens the doors of community college to all Americans. With the college tax deduction at 28 percent for all income groups, we can open the doors of 4 years of college to all Americans.

We know we should increase the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people. We know we should genuinely ease the marriage penalty for both middle and lower middle income groups. We know we should do this. We don't know whether 10 years from now we will be able to do this, and we don't know what the consequences to countless families will be if we don't do it now. We are united in saying, let's do it now. We don't have to wait. Now is the time to help families to balance the demands of home and work.

You heard Thelma's story. So you know that the one area where the social indicators have

not gone in the right direction since 1993 is in the number of people who are covered with health insurance. One of the wits in our Democratic caucus said to me the other day, "You know, all those insurance companies told me back in 1993 or '94, if I voted for your health care plan, the number of uninsured Americans would go up. I voted for it, and sure enough, that's what happened." [Laughter]

We know we need a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. And the Congress has fooled around with it long enough. The time is now to pass it. We know we should do more to help enroll more children in the Children's Health Insurance Program. Two million children are enrolled. This Congress provided enough money for somewhere between 4 and 5 million children to be enrolled. And we know—and that's why it's so important.

You remember Thelma's story. I was 4 years old, like this little girl, once, with a mother who was working and, then, a single mother. There are people like her all over the country. One of the most important things we have proposed in this Congress is to let the parents of children who are in this CHIP program also get insurance. They need it. They're working out there. And we ought to do it. And we ought to do it now, not later.

We know the crime rate has gone down to a 30-year low, and it's still too high. And we believe not later, now is the time to learn the lessons of Columbine and all the other things we've seen and pass commonsense legislation to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from kids. We can do that and honor every constitutional provision in our founding document and every fundamental value in our society.

We know we've got to keep putting more police on the street in high-crime areas. Who knows, 5 years from now, what kind of condition this country will be? Why should any more children die we can save? Why should any more crimes be committed we can prevent? Now is the time to take strong action to make America the safest big country in the world.

We know there are still too many people and places that haven't participated in this prosperity. We know that. That's why we favor increasing the number of empowerment zones, increasing the incentives to invest in them, and giving Americans all over this country—people like Bob Hatcher—we know there are inner-

city neighborhoods where he might be able to put people to work; I think we ought to give him the same tax incentives to invest in those neighborhoods we give him today to invest in Latin America, Africa, or Asia. And we ought to do it now—not later, now.

We are united in that. And as I look at Senator Feingold, I think I should say one other thing. Unlike the other party, we are united—united, down to the last vote in both Houses—in saying now is the time to pass meaningful campaign finance reform legislation in this Congress.

We are also united in believing we have to build one America. That's why we want to pass the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act." That's why we want to end all discrimination in employment. We don't—I'll say again—we think everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; we all do better when we help each other.

I want to make this last point. I see all these young people here. The last time America had a chance like this was when I was about your age. I finished high school in 1964. The Nation was heartbroken when President Kennedy was killed. But President Johnson lifted our spirits, united the country, began to deal with the challenges of civil rights, and we believed that our economy would grow on forever. We believed we would meet the challenges of civil rights in a lawful, peaceful way. We believed we could win the cold war without what ultimately happened in the dividing of our country in Vietnam.

And we thought it would go on forever, and everything was hunky-dory.

Four years later, when I was graduating from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, a couple of months after Martin Luther King had been killed, and Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. We had riots in the street. The economy came a cropper on the burdens of paying for a war and inflation. And all that we thought would happen was lost. And the Presidential election in that year was decided on the politics of division, something called the Silent Majority, which means, "The world in America is divided between 'us' and 'them.' I'm with 'us,' and they're with 'them.'" And I have lived with that as a citizen for 30 years.

Now I'm not running for anything. I am not on the ballot. I am telling you this as an American. I have waited for 30 long years to see my country in a position to pull together and move forward together and build the future of our dreams for our children. We dare not blow that chance.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the Great Hall at the Library of Congress. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Hatcher, chairman, Minority Business Roundtable, who introduced the President; and Thelma Pierce, single working mother, who enrolled her daughter, Jenny Mae, in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Statement Announcing Embassy Security Initiatives

February 10, 2000

Today I am announcing initiatives to further improve the security of American men and women serving their country in diplomatic and consular missions overseas and to ensure that the United States performs these activities in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

I intend to request \$1.1 billion in my budget for fiscal year 2001 for Embassy security initiatives including construction of new facilities, additional protective measures for existing facilities, and the full cost of maintaining a high level of security readiness. The budget also in-

cludes a sustained commitment to this effort, including \$14 billion over the next 10 years in security enhancement funding and new construction. I will again ask the Congress to provide advance appropriations for the construction of new facilities in future years to provide a solid foundation on which to plan and execute the Embassy security construction program.

We must continue to reexamine how we manage and protect all U.S. Government employees who work overseas. Last year, following on the excellent work of Admiral Crowe and the

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Accountability Review Board, the Secretary of State appointed a panel, chaired by Lewis Kaden, to review our overseas operations. The Overseas Presence Advisory Panel included a distinguished array of individuals with diplomatic, military, and governmental experience, as well as important members of the business community. The Panel's report last November recommended a wide range of improvements in rightsizing, managing, improving, and protecting our staff who work abroad. The report also recommended changes to the way our representatives overseas work as a team in support of American interests and in the management and financing of U.S. Government overseas facilities.

The Panel has made an important contribution to our Nation's security and the conduct of international affairs. My budget proposals reflect and fully support their recommendation that a greater commitment is needed in this

critical area. I also agree with their recommendation for review and improvement in the way we manage our overseas presence.

I have asked the Secretary of State to lead a Cabinet committee to implement the Panel's recommendations regarding rightsizing. This process will look at the full range of agency staff, who serve in U.S. missions abroad, and make recommendations about the appropriate levels and skills with which we should staff our Embassies in the new century. It will also review and make recommendations regarding the management, financing, and computerization of overseas facilities.

I ask the Congress to join me in working to protect America's presence throughout the world and to ensure that we maintain the best and most effective presence overseas to serve America's interests.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Russia-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation *February 10, 2000*

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Moscow on June 17, 1999. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, a related exchange of notes and the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism, money laundering, organized crime and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance

available under the Treaty includes obtaining the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records and other items; serving documents; locating or identifying persons and items; executing requests for searches and seizures; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; locating and immobilizing assets for purposes of forfeiture, restitution, or collection of fines; and any other form of legal assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested Party.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 10, 2000.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Assistance to
Opposition-Controlled Areas of Sudan
February 10, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 592(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000 (Public Law 106-113), I hereby transmit to you a report concerning U.S. bilateral assistance to opposition-controlled areas of Sudan.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations, and Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Interview With the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, and USA
Today
February 10, 2000

National Economy

Q. I guess I wanted to ask you, given the way that the economy is going—given that there's been so much growth and it's been so successful—how much credit do you think that you and your administration can realistically take, compared to the other factors that people talk about? There's been some discussion, I'm sure you know, recently, with people crediting everything, going back to President Reagan. And I'm just curious on that topic, what your views are.

The President. Well, I think, first of all, if you look at the difference in the expansions of the eighties and the nineties, we had a—the one in the eighties was funded by an old-fashioned explosion of deficit spending. But it built in a structural deficit, which guaranteed profound long-term problems for the economy, very high interest rates, and very slow job growth.

There was a lot of commentary in '91 and '92 about how, even though nominally a recovery had begun, I think some of the writers called it a "triple dip" phenomenon, that we kept sliding back and sliding back.

So I think the main thing we did was to cut interest rates by getting rid of the deficit. And I think that if you go back and read all—I remember what a boost in the bond market there was when we just—when Lloyd Bentsen announced our economic program in December

of '92. So I think our main contribution in the short run was to make it absolutely clear that we would have a consistent, disciplined fiscal approach that would cut and then eventually eliminate the deficit. And I think that played a major role in the investment boom. And it cut interest rates, which also put more money in consumers' pockets, which helped fuel the consumer side of this recovery.

But I think that the consistent policies of the Government that go back to the previous administrations, that reflected the second leg of our approach, which also deserves credit, which is keeping the markets open—you've had three administrations here in a row committed, in the eighties and the nineties, committed to open trade. And I think that that's been very good, because that's kept inflation down and spurred continuing competitiveness. And I do believe the previous administrations deserve credit for that.

Then I don't—you know, the lion's share of the credit belongs to the people in the private economy: the people who restructured in the eighties; the workers who got better training and understood the global economy and didn't press for what would have been inflationary increases in pay and benefits, that aligned them more with the real profitability of their firms.

And then finally, what I think only in the last couple of years has come to be fully appreciated is the enormous contribution of the technology revolutions, which are centered still in

the high-tech sector—they're 8 percent of our employment, but they've been 30 percent of our growth—but also are rifling through every other sector of the economy in a way that has added to productivity that is only now being measured. If you noticed, the last couple days we had a new estimate of productivity growth. My sense is that all along, the economists underestimated—understandably, based on past experience—the productivity contribution of technology and the ability of a combination of fiscal discipline, open markets, and productivity increases to prolong the growth in a way that would generate large numbers of jobs and begin to broaden the benefits of the recovery. That was another real problem for—we had 20 years where income inequality continued to increase, because of the way the recovery was structured. So I think you have to look at the whole piece.

And then, I think now we're beginning to get the benefits of the third part of our economic strategy, which was to continue to make the requisite public investments, which have, I think, made a significant contribution in education, in training. And we've got college-going up by 10 percent now, over when I took office. We've made real, continuing investments in science and technology, which I think are pivotal to the long-term health of the economy and the continuation of this productivity increase.

So I think that we've made a contribution, but the lion's share of the credit—as always, since it's a private economy—we had the highest percentage of private-sector jobs in this economic boom, I think, of any one since we've been keeping such statistics.

Q. To follow up on this, Mr. President, I notice that in your last interview with a group here about the economy a week ago or so, you were very generous with credit. There are some people, in fact, who are saying this is one long boom; we're in the 17th year of an expansion. What do you think of that account of what's going on with the economy?

The President. Well, we could say that, basically, we've been in a 30-year boom and gone back to '61, or a 40-year boom, but for the oil price problems, which led to all the inflation. I mean, you can argue this flat or round. There is a fundamental health in the American free enterprise system, which has prospered in the global economy. And in that sense, the people who set up the system at the end of World

War II deserve a lot of this credit. I don't think you can disaggregate all this.

I think the fundamental mistake that was made in the eighties was basically abandoning arithmetic. I think that we got out of that recession—and we had, you remember, we had impossible conditions in the seventies, with recession and high inflation at the same time, caused by a set of economic circumstances that were not of our own making, at least certainly mostly not of our own making.

So the idea of stimulating the economy in the early years—of the Reagan years was, even though it was masked in anti-Government rhetoric, was basically traditional Keynesian economics. But the problem is, when we had a recovery, because it was sold as a, you know, “tax cuts are good; Government's bad” package, we wound up with a structural deficit that couldn't be overcome without a series of highly difficult and controversial decisions that were embodied in the Budget Act of '93, which required both tax increases and spending restraint. And the people who shouldered the burden of that paid a considerable political price in the elections of '94, but I think there's no question that it enabled us to have a balanced, long-term, stable, not only statistical recovery but finally job-growth recovery that was more broadly shared. It seems to me that was the problem with the eighties philosophy, that we wound up with a structural deficit that was totally unsustainable. And I think it basically grew out of the ideological wrapping of what was done in 1981.

Q. Just one last question along those lines. Sometimes when I listen to you recently, in the talks that you give, I get the sense that you're trying to assure or encourage that your administration get sufficient credit for the boom that's going on now, whether for historians, whether in the next election. And I'm wondering if you have any sense of that.

The President. No, I don't have any sense of that. What I say is what I believe to be true, and I've tried to—with you, I've tried to—as I said in the State of the Union, as always, the major credit for anything good that happens in this country belongs to the American people and the people and what they do in their private lives.

I think Government plays a pivotal role, and I do not—let me flip it around. If you go—forget about what I might say. Look at what Alan Greenspan has said; look at what all the

commentators have said, going back to the '92, '93, '94 period. I do not believe that we would have had a recovery this robust, with this many jobs—I don't think we'd be anywhere close to that—if we hadn't taken serious, aggressive, and immediate action to get rid of the deficit and to bring interest rates down and to free up investment and at the same time, by getting interest rates down, to put more money into the pockets of people. They had lower home mortgage, car payments, college loan payments, credit card interest payments, which enabled the consumer side of this boom to continue.

I also don't believe that there would have been anything like the amount of business investment borrowing or consumer borrowing, if—I don't think that would have been sustainable, in this environment, unless the Government had not only eliminated the deficit but gone into surplus and begun to offset private debt with public savings.

So I simply think that's a fact. But I don't—but my view of this is different. I don't think anybody can claim sole credit. And I'm not so interested in that. I think what's happened is, America is following a balanced policy now. And if America stays on that course when I'm not President anymore, I think we'll meet with success. And then we'll have to be flexible; you know, if intervening events cause a recession, well, there will be cause for adjustment in policy. But if we had adjustment in policy, it might work. I mean, if we had continued with these deficits, then the next time we had a recession, deficit spending wouldn't have been an option to help get the country out of a recession.

So to me, the American people should look at this in terms of—I think I did my job. But I think the rest of the—I think Alan Greenspan did his job. I think the people in the high-tech sector were terrific. I think the people who restructured all of American industry and business to increase their efficiency and productivity were great. And I think the working people of this country deserve a lot of credit for understanding that they can only get wage and benefit increases that were real, and if they got out of line with economic growth, then that could contribute to inflation as well.

So I think we've had a remarkable balance here, where the American people, all of us in our own way, essentially have done what we were supposed to do. And there's more than enough credit to go around.

Technology Revolution

Q. Mr. President, can you talk just a little bit—you talked about the high-tech sector and how important that is to the economy. Can you talk about the Internet for a second and how important it is to the ongoing boom? And also, can you tell us how worried you are about what's happened over the last 3 days with these attacks on websites? If this is a growing part of the economy, should we be concerned that it's so vulnerable to attack? And is there anything the Government ought to be doing about it, beyond what the FBI is already doing?

The President. Well, let me give you a brief answer to the first question you asked, because I think we could talk for hours about that. Quite apart from the technology revolution, I don't think we have any way of measuring the contributions that the Internet is making and will continue to make, not only to the overall growth of the American economy but to the range of individual opportunities open to people.

You may have heard me say this in some of my talks, but I was amazed—I was out in northern California a few weeks ago with a bunch of people who work with eBay. And they were telling me, now, that there are over 20,000 Americans who actually make a living on eBay, not working for eBay but on eBay buying and selling, trading—and that they have enough information on their user base to know that a significant number of these people were once on welfare. And they figured out a way to stay home, take care of their kids, and literally make a living buying and selling on eBay.

Now, that's all I know about that. I don't have any more facts. It's an interesting story you might want to follow up on, but the point is that this is just one example of, I think, a virtually unlimited number of new economic opportunities which will be open. I also think it will shrink distance in a way that will make it possible for more profitable investments to be made in areas that are now still kind of left behind in this economy.

And I—you know, we've tried to do an analysis of all the areas in America which have had slow job growth or which still have higher unemployment. And we developed this new markets initiative and proposed more empowerment zones and things of that kind. But the—if we can bridge the digital divide and literally make the Internet accessible to lower income people

and to places that are not fully participating in this economy, I think the potential is staggering.

Now, to the second question, yes, I'm concerned about the latest hacking incidents. But I think that, you know, we've gotten all this incredible benefit out of a system that is fundamentally open. And as you know, I've worked hard to keep it unencumbered, to try to make sure that Internet commerce is not unduly burdened by regulation or taxation. And if you have an open system like this, you're going to have to have continuous guarding against intrusion. And people go where the money is. It's like Willie Sutton, you know? I mean, the money's in information and in knowledge about transactions and opportunities.

And so my view of this is that this—our renewed vigilance to try to deal with cyberhacking, or even cyberterrorism, is part of the cost of doing business in the modern world. We've been working hard on this for 2 years. We've proposed, I think, \$2 billion in this budget to deal with it. We've got this, you know, this proposal for a cyber-academy to train young people to try to work to help us prevent illegal intrusions into the Internet and into important databases.

And we have this FBI center, as you know, and—I think it's in Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh—that's looking into these latest incidents. But I'm going to bring in some people next week from the private sector and from our Government team to talk about what if anything else we can do about this.

Q. Because of the incidents that just happened?

The President. What?

Q. You're going to bring them in because of these events that just happened?

The President. Yes. Yes. As a result—you know, we have a continuing ongoing consultation with them. We've had extensive conversations leading up to the proposals that we've already made and the work we've done for the last 2 years.

But I don't—I wouldn't—I think it's important that we not overreact to this. I mean, we don't want to shut off this incredible resource, which I think will be a source of great wealth and I think will have all kinds of social benefits, not only in the United States but around the world. And we just have to recognize that it's like any other new institution that's a source of ideas, information, and wealth. I mean, peo-

ple used to—it's harder to rob a bank than it used to be, and we figured out how to make it harder. And we'll figure out—we'll continue to figure out to secure the Internet without shutting it down or closing off options.

But the American people, in my view, should look at this as an inevitable negative development in what is an overall very positive trend. And there's probably no silver bullet to deal with it, but we'll keep working at it until we can prove our capacity to protect the people who are participating in it.

Q. But doesn't this set some limits on the growth of the new economy, the Internet economy? I mean, there was this poor soul who was described in the Post today—he sat there on E-TRADE and watched his stock drop 6 percent while he couldn't get on-line. I mean, if some 14-year-old kid—and we don't know who has done this, but if some 14-year-old kid with a PC can screw up the system that badly, doesn't that effectively limit how much people are going to trust it and how much people are going to use it?

The President. Unless we can solve it. But unless we can figure out how to solve the problem—but my instinct is that there are people just as clever or more clever who will be interested in making the thing work for society as a whole as there are those that want to gum up the works.

The fact that a 14-year-old did it, I don't think, should be surprising to anyone. I mean, all the rest of us—you know, you get to thinking by the time you're 35, you're too old to break new ground in this area. But it's troubling, but I don't—again, I would say that if you look throughout history, every new positive development contains within it the seeds of its own vulnerability, and then people, either for pure mischievousness or because they're trying to do something really wrong and reach some illicit benefit try to interfere with it.

So I don't think what you're seeing today is sort of anything new in terms of human nature or people trying to put their ingenuity to work for destructive purposes. And we just have to keep working until we find ways to thwart it. Because I think fundamentally, this has been an extraordinarily positive development for our country and for the world.

Biotechnology and the Human Genome Project

Q. Mr. President, can I take you from the new economy to what you may call the new new economy: biotech and the human genome. As you know and as you've said in the State of the Union, we're within months of having a first draft of the entire human genetic code. As I'm sure you also know, there is some argument about how we can best put it to use: whether we should have very broad access to it by scientists and so on, or whether we get products, new treatments and so on, faster if it's more narrowly constrained, or access to parts of it, substantial parts of it, are more narrowly constrained. Should the public and especially the research community have ready access to the underlying human code, the genome itself?

The President. Yes.

Q. You know that there are people who say that we should allow extensive, broad patenting of it, not just to use but have a compositional matter portion where people actually—companies, biotech companies—biotech companies, the drug companies actually control the underlying sequence, and that's the best route to get products out fast, get new treatments. What do you think of that argument?

The President. I basically agree with the guidance that the Patent Office has now announced, that they believe that the broad information, the basic sequencing of the genome should be made public and should be made publicly available to scientists and researchers, to all people in private sector businesses and—

Q. Why do you think the Patent Office is—do you think the Patent Office is saying that, and why do you think the Patent Office is saying that? Because there are many people, Dr. Collins, for example, who you were with 2 days ago, who say that's not what the Patent Office is doing.

The President. Let me answer your question first of all, and then—I think the patenting should be for specific discoveries and developments that have a clear and definable benefit, because you don't want to take those things, you don't want to—I think we would be making an error not to give people who develop such things the benefits of them, and you would then discourage private investment and research in that area.

Now, I think some—I believe—and I think that's the position that Dr. Collins believes that

we should have. Now, the Patent Office has been criticized for not following that, for having a policy that was too broad, if you will. But they have—my understanding is that they've announced new guidance and that this is the policy they're going to try to follow prospectively into the future. And it's the one I think they should follow. And I understand there is a debate about this.

But I think most scientists and researchers believe the basic information ought to be as broadly shared as possible. And then when people develop something that has specific use and commercial benefit and the kind of thing that has to be done and should properly be done in the private sector, then that ought to be patentable.

Q. Because, for example, Dr. Collins, who you were with a couple of days ago, and Dr. Lander talked with you and to you about this at the millennial evening last fall—have concern about this, I wonder, would you sketch what you think, in a little more detail, what you think ought to be publicly available and how you can assure that that is publicly available even when we have a very aggressive, very innovative private sector that is filing patents like mad?

The President. The thing that I'm concerned about, obviously, the thing that I'm concerned about is the capacity of the Patent Office to make the judgments and to make them at a timely fashion and to draw the lines in the right way. And you know, I certainly don't feel, for example, that I have the level of knowledge to know how to split the hairs there. And I think what we've got to do is to make absolutely sure if we've got the right policy. Then we have to make sure that the Patent Office has the capacity to implement the policy not only in the right way but in a timely way.

The worst thing would be to have these things all bogged down for years and years and years. And I think that's one of the things we're going to have to assess this year, to really try to make sure that we have the capacity to make the right judgments and to make them in a timely fashion.

National Economy

Q. If I could take the discussion back to a little bit of a more broad approach, things are going so well now economically speaking, and you regularly recite figures that are very impressive, I'm wondering if there is any particular

thing or set of things that you regard as possible threat on the horizon that we need to look out for, that we need to be paying attention to. There's been some discussion of high oil prices, for example, and they've talked about the trade deficit. What would you see as the things we need to be watching?

The President. The thing that bothers me about the high oil prices, primarily, is the disproportionate effect it has on people who are excessively relying on oil. We still have, mostly in the mid-Atlantic and New England, we still have too many people who still rely on home heating oil. They're the ones that have really been hurt.

The country's overall reliance on oil is much less than it was 25 years ago when we had the big oil price problem. And we're on the verge of real, new breakthroughs in fuel efficiency. Our ability to build our buildings with far less energy use per square foot is dramatically increasing, both residences and office buildings. There are all kinds of advances in factory efficiency now.

So the real problem I have with the oil prices is the very old-fashioned problem of the people that are just too dependent on home heating oil, and it's a real, serious problem. But I don't think that will sink the overall economy or threaten it.

I think it's far more likely that we have to be vigilant about the size of our trade deficit and the amount of American obligations held by people in other countries, combined with a very high level of debt in this country.

One of the reasons—right now, we're in good shape on that, because the debt-to-wealth ratio of Americans looks very, very good indeed, even though the per capita debt is high. I also think the individual savings rate is somewhat understated because I don't think we calculate the impact of homeownership as well as we should, and we have the highest homeownership in history.

But for me, that's another argument for our economic strategy. That's why we ought to be trying to—not trying to, we ought to be actually paying down the debt and be very disciplined about it and say that we're on a track to eliminate the publicly held debt over the next 13 years. I understand there's a lot of problems with people who think that would be bad for the bond market and interest rate settings and

all that. That's an arcane decision we could have on another day.

But I think basically, one of the reasons that I have been so adamant about paying this debt down is that it tends to stabilize a system that requires, if you're having a lot of business expansion, requires a lot of business borrowing for new investment, and where you have a lot of personal borrowing from people who feel the security to do it because they have more assets, but the value of the assets is dependent in part on the overall stability of the economy, the confidence of the American people, and the confidence of investors around the world.

I don't think we made a mistake to leave our markets open, for example, during the Asian financial crisis, even though it exploded our trade deficit, because I think it helped the Asians to recover more quickly, and it helped to stabilize the global economy.

But if you ask me the only things that I'm concerned about, I'm concerned about those things. And I think the way to deal with them is to do what we're doing, which is to keep paying the debt down, so that the overall fiscal health of the American economy, when you look at public and private debt, against assets and wealth and growth potential, continues to be robust and strong and the confidence remains high.

Japan's Economy

Q. Speaking of the trade deficit, Japan looks like it's sliding back into recession. I know that this Government has been jawboning the Japanese for years now to try to get them to change policies. How worrisome is it that after all their effort, they're going backwards at this point, in terms of our trade deficit?

The President. I think that—let's just talk about Japan a minute. First of all, it's a very difficult case, because you've got this country of people who work very hard, who are very well-educated, and who have an enormous technological base. My heart goes out to them, because they have tried to take—they've taken interest rates down virtually to zero and are virtually paying people to borrow money. And then the savings habits of the Japanese are so great—and for that and other reasons they've had difficulty making that strategy work. Then they've got a Government deficit now—they've tried

deficit spending, and the deficit is a higher percentage of GDP than ours was when I became President.

So I think that somehow what they have to do is to unlock the creative potential and the confidence of their people at the same time, which will be politically difficult because it will require them, I think, to keep going to in effect deregulate, open up, and make more competitive their economy. I think that somehow they've got to tap the energies of all these young people, like all these young people in America are creating all these Internet companies and doing all the things they're doing there.

They're an immensely gifted people, and they work like crazy, and they have everything they need, I think, to succeed. And they're highly efficient in their energy use. They've got a lot of things going for them. I just think that it must be so difficult for them because the traditional stimulus hasn't worked, traditional bringing interest rates down hasn't worked, because of the nature of the present economy. So I think they're just going to have to keep pushing to unlock the sort of spirit of entrepreneurialism and creativity and confidence in their economy. And meanwhile, we'll just keep working with them and do the best we can.

Yes, I'm concerned about it, but I just have to believe that sooner or later—and hopefully it will be sooner rather than later—they'll come back, because they just have so many assets, they have so much talent.

Q. Does it frustrate you at all that they refuse to change some of the structural policies that we have tried to get them to change over the years?

The President. Yes, but it just takes time. I mean, look at how long the rest of the world beat up on us before we finally had the—in the eighties—look how long the rest of the world hit on us before we finally did something about our deficit. For all of the talk about the globalization of the world's economies, nations are still governed by their people, their own institutions; they deal with their own impediments as well as their own promise. And I think they'll get there.

I think the Prime Minister of Japan is an able man and a man who has shown some political courage already in making some changes, and I think what we have to do is keep pulling for them and do our best to share what we believe will work. And we all need a little humil-

ity because they—you know, what works in one decade is not always great in the next decade. And all these countries had to—they worked on us for a long time before—you know, telling us we had to do something about the deficit.

But I just hope that they will—I wish that they had the confidence in themselves right now that I have in them. I wish that they believed that they could make this sort of leap into the 21st century economy and still be able to maintain their social fabric. And I think eventually they'll do it because I don't think they want to fail. I think they want to succeed. And you can't blame them for playing out these two tried and true strains of economic recovery, on the deficit spending and on the low interest rates, before getting to—because that was easier to do than to deal with the underlying structural issues. And I think eventually they'll do that.

I mean, look at the pain that was caused in America in the 1980's when all the industries had to be restructured and all the—the whole economy was topsy-turvy, and there was a lot of difficulty there for people. And countries don't willingly absorb that kind of short-term pain, even though they know the long-term gain is out there.

So I just think that—but I think they'll get to it. They'll have to. And I think they will, and I think we just need to stick with them, keep encouraging them, keep supporting the right kind of change.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. It's an interesting time to be alive, gentlemen, don't you think?

NOTE: The interview began at 5:36 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the interview were George Hager of USA Today, Peter Gosselin of the Los Angeles Times, and Naftali Bendavid of the Chicago Tribune. In his remarks, the President referred to Francis S. Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health; former Senator Lloyd Bentsen; and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan. An interviewer referred to Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on the Dedication of the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room and an Exchange With Reporters February 11, 2000

The President. It's the first time Joe Lockhart's ever introduced me, I think. [*Laughter*]

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Probably the last.

The President. I thought the last phrase was going to be, "and the man who makes my job somewhere between impossible and miserable every day." [*Laughter*]

Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is a happy day for all of us and, I believe, for people throughout the United States. I want to welcome Jim and Sarah and their son, Scott. I want to welcome Mike and Larry and Jerald and Pierre here, the former White House Press Secretaries. I also want to remember, as I know Jim and Sarah would want me to, Jim's Press Office Assistant Sally McElroy, who passed away last summer. Her husband, Robert Evans, is here, and we welcome him.

Today we honor a man whose courage, purpose, and humor make him a standout Press Secretary and an outstanding human being. Jim Brady, after all, was the man who convinced the White House Press Corps to abandon decades of tradition and actually raise their hands when they wanted to ask a question. [*Laughter*] Jim Brady was the man who changed press conferences forever, one day in the 1970's, when he invited journalists to see a bipartisan group of Senators cutting the budget—with hedge trimmers. Jim Brady was the man who, when Members of Congress proposed to give themselves a \$50-a-day tax deduction, responded with a press release that was one word long: Stupid. [*Laughter*]

Jim Brady is living proof that you can't kill courage, that it takes more than a cheap handgun to destroy a strong spirit. As he himself once said, "No one can shoot away your sense of humor."

Jim Brady was the man who changed press conferences forever for me on this issue. And I want to thank him and Sarah from the bottom of my heart.

Every time I saw him in the early days of my Presidency, and even before, when the Brady bill was being debated, I realized that

his ready smile and sense of humor had to overcome despair that none of us can fully understand and pain that none of us has ever really experienced. I realized that he could have chosen to live his life out in private regret, but instead he chose a public embrace. He could have been remembered, no matter what he did, as a good Press Secretary, a committed campaigner, a world-class chili cook. But he instead chose the connection to other human beings and an eye to the future. Even when he was still in the hospital and had doubts about his own future, he reached out to his fellow patients, to give them reasons to keep going. And for more than 15 years now, he has traveled our Nation on behalf of the National Head Injury Foundation and other groups, with a simple message: Persevere; never give up.

Jim and Sarah have known uncommon perseverance, and they have demonstrated to us what really counts in life. They have built a bipartisan coalition in this country to strengthen our Nation's gun laws, to make our children and our future safer. Against tremendous odds, they fought for 7 years to pass the Brady bill. It was my great honor to sign it into law in 1993. In 1994, we passed the assault weapons ban. We then made it illegal for a young person to buy or receive a handgun.

And what has happened? We have seen gun crime fall by more than a third. We have seen the Brady bill keep guns out of the hands of nearly a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers. We cannot know how many people are alive and fully strong and healthy today because of the labors of Jim and Sarah Brady.

Sometimes in Washington, it's easy to cover the politics and not the policy. And sometimes it's even more interesting, I'm sure, for all of you to cover the politics and not the policy. But when you see Jim and Sarah—for many of you not just colleagues but friends—you know that what we do here really does make a difference, and they have made a difference.

As we have been painfully reminded here in Washington these past few days, guns still are claiming the lives of too many of our children. There is more work to do, and Jim and Sarah

are ready to do it. They have called for extending Brady background checks to sales at gun shows, for mandating child safety locks to be sold with every handgun, for banning the most violent juvenile offenders from ever owning handguns, from ending the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and for ensuring that all handgun owners have a State license, showing they've passed a background check and know how to handle a gun safely.

It is truly fitting that this room will be named for Jim Brady, for working here requires tenacity and perseverance and, above all, a sense of humor. Joe and I also thought about enacting another one of Jim's ideas that he and President Reagan advocated, hinging the floor to give deserving reporters immediate, involuntary access to the swimming pool below. [Laughter] But as much as I admire Jim Brady, I decided that I shouldn't do that. Even though I'm not running for anything, I still need a little bit of press pander from time to time.

Today we give name to a room. But Jim and Sarah Brady have already given far more to their national crusade. I want to finish my remarks by quoting a higher authority, Helen Thomas. [Laughter] A few years ago, Helen said these words to Jim Brady's biographer: "He's like a great tree standing by the river. He's a role model, and that's what life is all about. He realizes life is to be lived, that we should give our all, that we're lucky to be alive."

Jim and Sarah, may we all continue to draw inspiration from your strength and spirit here in the James Brady Briefing Room and all around our Nation.

Now, I want to unveil this plaque and read it to you.

[At this point, the plaque was unveiled.]

The President. It says, "This room is named in honor of James S. Brady, White House Press Secretary from January 23, 1981, until January 20, 1989. Mr. Brady served his Nation with honor and distinction, strengthening the bond between Government and press. May his courage and dedication continue to inspire all who work in this room and beyond."

Congratulations, Jim Brady.

[At this point, former Press Secretary James Brady and Sarah Brady made brief remarks.]

Internet Security

Q. Mr. President, do you want to update us on the cyberterrorism investigation? Anything new there?

The President. No, but as I said, we are going to have some people in next week, and we're going to look at our overall capabilities.

Q. What can you do; what can the Government do?

The President. Well, I think we've got a \$2 billion budget up there on the Hill now, to increase our capacity to make all systems less resistant to hacking and to train more young people and pay them better to come and help work on our side of this issue.

But let me say—I did a couple of interviews yesterday to make a general point I would like to reiterate to all of you. Basically, the development of the Internet and the sophistication of the computers has been a great thing for the world. It's brought us closer together. It's given opportunities to people who wouldn't otherwise have them, something that Jim and Sarah care a lot about. They've helped to empower people with disabilities all over America and all over the world to realize their full potential. But this greater openness and speed of this system and the importance of it have necessarily made for greater vulnerability for people who are just mischievous and people who have far darker motives.

And this is no different from any other development in human history. If you go back, from the beginning of time, where things of value are stored, people with bad motives will try to get to those things of value. Willie Sutton said he robbed banks because that's where the money is.

So now, vast things of value are stored in our computers, and transactions of great values occur on the Internet. And what you will see here, there will not be an instantaneous solution to this, but banks are a lot harder to rob today than they used to be. That's what's going to happen here. This will be an ongoing effort to try to make sure we get all the benefits of the Internet, all the benefits of the computer revolution, but we develop better defenses and better defenders. And I believe we will do that.

In terms of these specific instances, we're doing everything we can through our FBI center in western Pennsylvania, and in other places, to do the appropriate investigations.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. In the Middle East, Mr. President, do you fear that the Israel-Lebanon conflict is spinning out of control? And what does this mean for the peace process in general?

The President. Well, so far I think both sides have tried to keep it within control but take the—the Israelis have taken the retaliatory action they felt they had to take. But there has been some restraint there in the hope of keeping the peace process alive.

It seems to me that it is a sober reminder of why we ought to resume the peace process with great determination. A comprehensive peace between Syria and Lebanon and Israel is the only way, ultimately, I think, to resolve the continuing difficulties, over many years now, along that border. And similarly, I think peace between Israel and the Palestinians is critical to resolving the gnawing problems which reoccur from time to time within the borders of the countries.

So I would hope that it would redouble people's energy for it. And so far, I think that that's where we are, that you don't have the people who are the real players here—as nearly as I can see, and I watch it pretty closely, you know—giving up on the peace process. You do have a lot of frustration, anger. There's still a surprising amount of misunderstanding of each other's motives, given how long these folks have been living together and working together. But we'll see. I'm hopeful.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, the British Government is on the verge of moving to suspend the power-sharing Government in Northern Ireland. How would you view that move, first, sir? And secondarily, the editorial opinion there seems to blame the IRA for the latest impasse. Do you have a comment on that, sir?

The President. Well, when the matter is resolved I might have more to say, but right now you should know that, at least before I came out here, the thing was still hanging some fire. But it wasn't clear to me what was going to happen.

I have been heavily involved, and the whole administration has been, in the last few weeks in trying to keep the Irish peace process on track. We believe that all the requirements of the Good Friday accords, which the voters of

Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic embraced, should be fulfilled. And we hope that a way can be found to keep this going. And until there is a suspension, that's all I want to say, because we're working hard on this, and there's still some chance that we can go forward without a suspension.

Should there be a suspension, it is imperative that all the parties do it on terms which do not allow a backsliding, and that the opportunity be taken to figure out a way forward that again will allow everybody to meet all the requirements that the Irish voters voted for in breath-taking margins.

I don't want to say anything else until we know how this plays out today. We've got a few more hours here. When we see how it's resolved today, I will say a little more. But I have to be very careful. I've been working very hard on this, and I want to be a positive, not a negative factor.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. This will be the last question.

2000 Election

Q. This is a tough political question that I hope all of your returning guests can appreciate. You've probably heard of the expression "Clinton fatigue," and I'm wondering what you think of that as a phenomenon and whether that will have some bearing on how many people you go out to campaign for in this election year.

The President. Well, I get tired from time to time. [Laughter] That's the only one I'm familiar with. [Laughter] I don't even know how to comment on that. I've got more requests right now to help than I can fulfill, and I think what I will be inclined to do is—I always feel that people running for office are the best judge of what's in their own interest, not me.

And I got plenty to do here. But so far, I've been asked to do more events than I can do. And I had—I went down to the Rio Grande Valley this week, for example, a place that I was the first President since Dwight Eisenhower to visit. And I made my third visit down there. I had a wonderful reception.

But I can't comment on that. I think that—my guess is that that will vary from State to State and congressional district to congressional district. I'll just—I'll do what I can to help the people and the causes I believe in, but I don't want to get in the way.

I also find that the ability of any outsider to affect in a positive way the course of an election is far more limited than is generally supposed. The voters understand that every election year they get to be in control again. And so, if you notice, like when I went to campaign for Mr. Street in Philadelphia, a place that has been enormously good to me, I was very careful in what I said to the voters. I said, "You shouldn't be for him because I am, but you know, I'm your friend. Here are my reasons. I hope you'll listen to my reasons and make up your own mind." It's a very delicate thing. I've watched this for years.

I remember once, Jim Brady's old boss, President Reagan, in '84, when he was winning every vote in America, came to Arkansas and made an appearance for my opponent. And afterward,

on Election Day, he got 62 percent of the vote, so did I. [*Laughter*] So you have to be—you've got to be humble in these things and just sort of show up for work every day.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Brady's wife, Sarah Brady, chair, Handgun Control, Inc.; former White House Press Secretaries Michael McCurry, Larry M. Speakes, J.F. terHorst, and Pierre E.G. Salinger; and Mayor John F. Street of Philadelphia, PA. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Press Secretary Joe Lockhart, who introduced the President, and of Mr. and Mrs. Brady. Mr. Brady was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

Statement on Peacekeeping Efforts in East Timor

February 11, 2000

Over the last several months, the United States has worked with our partners in Southeast Asia to help East Timor in its transition to independence and peace. I am proud we were able to support the efforts of the Australian-led INTERFET force, which has brought security and hope to East Timor. With its mission accomplished, INTERFET is now handing responsibility to a U.N. peacekeeping mission, through which the countries of the region will once again provide the vast majority of troops.

Today I am announcing that the United States will continue to support our friends and allies in this important endeavor. A small number of U.S. officers will serve as observers in the U.N. mission. As part of their normal exercises, other U.S. personnel will contribute to humanitarian efforts, such as rebuilding schools and restoring

medical services. These efforts will complement our financial contributions to the peacekeeping operation, as well as humanitarian and development assistance to East Timor that will total over \$70 million this year. We will also continue to stand by Indonesia as it continues its hopeful democratic transformation.

In this way, we will contribute to the birth of two new democracies in a region where freedom and tolerance are taking root. And we will bolster the ability and willingness of the countries in that region to take the lead in building peace.

NOTE: The related memorandum of February 10 on U.S. military activities in East Timor is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

February 11, 2000

The Good Friday accord, made possible by the courage of leaders from both of Northern Ireland's communities, responded to the peo-

ple's overwhelming desire for peace. It has been sustained by those leaders making the tough decisions necessary to keep the process moving

forward. I regret that the IRA did not give the de Chastelain Commission a more timely commitment on arms decommissioning to maintain the momentum toward full implementation of the accord—a commitment which reflects the wishes of the vast majority of people both in Ireland and in Northern Ireland.

At the same time, we have seen real progress in the past few days. This progress is reflected in the most recent report from the de Chastelain

Commission, which states that the commitment made by the IRA's representative "holds out the real prospect of an agreement which would enable [the Commission] to fulfill the substance of its mandate." I urge all the parties to build on that progress, remain engaged, and carry through on their responsibilities to work together to achieve the full implementation of the Good Friday accord.

The President's Radio Address

February 12, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about the important steps we're taking to reach one of our Nation's highest goals, helping all our people to succeed at work and in the most important work of all, caring for their children.

For 7 years now, this administration has taken action to give families more of the tools they need to balance the difficult demands of work and home. We've helped to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for millions of families. We've greatly expanded preschool and after-school programs. We've fought to give generous tax credits to help the growing numbers of families who provide care for aging or ailing loved ones at home.

This month we're celebrating the seventh anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act, the very first bill I was privileged to sign as President. That bill was the product of years of hard work by a large coalition of caring leaders, many of whom have joined me here today. They should be very proud of their efforts.

The family and medical leave law has now given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn child or a sick relative or attend to their own serious health needs without fear of losing their jobs. Everywhere I go, people come up to me and tell me how much this law has meant to their lives. I've heard people say that the time they were able to take off to be by their dad's side in the hospital or bond with a new daughter at home was the most important time they've ever spent.

Not only has the law been a godsend for families, it's also been good for business. Nearly 85 percent of businesses reported that complying with the law required no extra cost. In fact, in many cases it has actually helped save them money by cutting down on turnover and reducing the expense of training new workers.

But for all the success of this law, we know we can and should do more. Today, there are still large numbers of families who need to take leave from work but can't afford to give up the income. That's why, 3 months ago, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and I proposed a new rule to give States flexibility to use their existing unemployment insurance programs to offer paid leave to new parents. Participation is purely voluntary, but we hope States will take advantage of this. Before they do, they must determine how it will affect the soundness of their unemployment system.

Today I am pleased to announce a new way we can make it easier for States to take up this challenge. I'm proposing \$20 million in new competitive grants to help develop and evaluate creative new approaches for providing paid family leave to workers, whether it's through unemployment insurance, temporary disability programs, or any other source. Many States have already recognized the great need for paid leave and have begun drafting their own proposals to provide it. We hope and believe our grants will help to speed the way.

There are two more steps I believe we should take right away. Once again, I asked Congress to expand family and medical leave to give parents time off when they have to go to see their

children's teachers or take them to the doctor. And I asked Congress to extend the benefits of the law to employees of smaller companies, so that we can reach another 10 million American families. I want to thank Senator Dodd, who is here with me today, and Senator Kennedy and Representatives Clay, Woolsey, and Maloney for their tireless work on behalf of these proposals. With their leadership, I believe we will succeed in expanding family and medical leave this year.

I've often wondered how my own mother, when she was a young widow, would have been able to go away to train as a nurse if my grandparents hadn't been there to take care of me. My mother and I were lucky. So were many

other American families. But none of our families should have to rely on luck alone, and no American should ever have to choose between the job they need and the parent or child they love. If we use this moment wisely, we can help to ensure that they'll never have to make that choice again.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:52 p.m. on February 11 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Charles M. Schulz, Jr.

February 13, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Charles M. Schulz, Jr. On the day that our newspapers print his very last "Peanuts" strip, it is especially poignant that we mourn the passing of Charles Schulz himself. For 50 years, his keen eye, his good and generous heart, and his active brush and pen have given life to the most memorable cast of characters ever to enliven our daily papers. The hopeful and hapless Charlie Brown, the joyful

Snoopy, the soulful Linus—even the "crabby" Lucy—give voice, day after day, to what makes us human.

Today, in his final strip, Charles Schulz writes, "Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy . . . how can I ever forget them. . . ." We can say with certainty that we will never forget them, or their creator, or the many gifts he has given us all.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Jeannie, and their children.

Remarks on Receiving the League of United Latin American Citizens Lifetime Achievement Award

February 14, 2000

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Well, thank you, President Rick Dovalina. Elvia Morales, thank you very much for reminding us of why we're all here working every day. She did a fine job, didn't she? I was very proud of her. Thank you.

I thank the students from Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School for Public Policy for joining us, and their teachers and principal. Thank you all again for being here, and good luck to you.

I'd like to thank Senator Chuck Robb from Virginia and Congressman Silvestre Reyes from Texas for joining us today. Thank you very much, gentlemen. I want to thank our Secretary of Energy, and my dear friend, Bill Richardson, for the wonderful statement that he made in opening this meeting today.

I thank all the people of our administration who are here, but I would like to especially acknowledge my Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste; my Assistant to the President who deals with all the Governors, mayors, and half

the headaches in America, Mickey Ibarra; Administrator of the Small Business Administration Aida Alvarez, whom you've acknowledged already; Army Secretary Louis Caldera, who's here; the President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, George Muñoz; the Chairwoman of the EEOC, Ida Castro; and the Director of the Selective Service Commission, Gil Coronado. And there are other present and past members of the administration here. I thank you all.

Tornado Damage in Georgia

I have, before I begin—and I know you'll all forgive me, because they, too, are part of our American family—I have to say that I am very saddened by the terrible loss of life and the other damage which occurred as a result of the tornadoes which swept Georgia early this morning. And we're working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is already there and providing me with regular updates on the situation.

I know that all Americans join me. Let me say, my home State very often had the largest amount of tornado damage in the country in any given year, and the loss of life in Georgia this morning is unusual and terrible. And I ask for your prayers for those people today.

LULAC Lifetime Achievement Award

Let me also say, I am deeply touched by this beautiful award. I have always said that the President's job was reward enough, and no one should give the President an award. And you always have to check your pulse to make sure you're still living, when you get an award, if you're in my business. *[Laughter]*

But having said that, I accept it, and I am delighted to have it, because this has been a lifetime passion of mine. Bill Richardson talked about the people I met in Texas 28 years ago. I was born in a little town in southwest Arkansas which now has one of the Federal migrant centers there, because it's on the way that people come up from Mexico through south Texas and then go all the way up the Mississippi River in their migrant work, all the way to the cherry crop in Michigan.

When I went to Texas 28 years ago, in addition to meeting impressive people, I always begged to be permitted in my work to go to San Antonio and to the Rio Grande Valley. And I just went back to the Rio Grande Valley last

week. When I went there as President, I found that I was the first elected President to go to the valley since Dwight Eisenhower 40 years before. I have been there three times because—partly to help the people there who are doing so well—it's now the third fastest growing area in America, population wise, and they're lifting themselves up; and partly because I want the rest of America to know about their contributions and, generally, the important role that Latinos are going to play in 21st century America.

I also want to say that more than any other person in America, the President accomplishes nothing on his own and would be nothing without all the people who help. So this award really belongs to all the people in this administration, especially my Hispanic appointees whom I've mentioned and two who once were here who aren't anymore, Federico Peña and Henry Cisneros. I thank them for what they did. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation also to the Vice President, who has done so much, through the empowerment zone program and in so many other ways, to lift the lives of our Hispanic-Americans. And I thank him for that.

I would like to thank all the LULAC members who are here and all the members of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda who are here—and for all you are doing to try to help forge unity among the great diversity within Hispanic America, something many Americans don't know enough about. For all the differences of ethnicity, national origin—and occasionally even a difference of opinion—Hispanics in this Nation are united by common values of faith, family, hard work, by a common vision of a unified future.

When I became President 7 years ago, America was already a very diverse country, not nearly so much as it is today. It was clear to me then that we had to go beyond the kind of divide-and-conquer politics which had dominated our country for many years; that if we could make a virtue of our diversity—if we could not only tolerate one another but celebrate and honor one another—it would be America's meal ticket to the globalized information society of the 21st century.

And so we have worked for 7 years, as your president said, for a society in which there is opportunity for all and responsibility from all and a community of all Americans. And it is

working. We have the strongest economy we have ever had, with the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate in history, as you pointed out, a 20-year low in poverty, over 2 million fewer children in poverty, the lowest welfare rates in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years. We are moving forward.

But what I would like to say to all of you is that in my judgment—and I say that as a person who is no longer running for any office but a person who looks on these children as America's children—we have only scratched the surface of our potential as a nation. And we have only scratched the surface of the potential of our young people. And we have only scratched the surface of what we can do because of our increasing diversity.

Therefore, it is more important even than it was 7 years ago when I took office in a time of stagnant economy and social difficulty and political gridlock. It is more important now—now that we know we can do better, now that we know we're moving forward—that we understand clearly we have only scratched the surface and that we resolve to say we have only begun to meet the big challenges and seize the big opportunities that are out there for our country and especially for this generation of young Americans in the new millennium.

I would like to mention some of them but begin by saying we have a special opportunity in this year, as we do every 10 years—but since we just changed centuries, it's particularly momentous to begin by getting an accurate picture of precisely who we are as a nation and what we are becoming. That's why I want to say a few words about the vital importance of the census in 2000. It begins next month.

In the 1990 census, 8 million children were uncounted—8 million people were uncounted, and over a quarter of them were children. Parents with limited English often failed to include their children on the forms, or left them out for fear that landlords or housing officials might learn their families had grown, not realizing the information on census forms is totally confidential.

Now, if we believe everybody in our American community counts, we've got to make sure everyone is counted in this year's census. It's important for the Federal investments that are made in States and communities—yes, that's one reason it's important. It's important for the drawing of congressional district lines and the

allocation of representation in Congress. But it is also important because it gives us a picture of where America is. And we compare it with where we were 10 years ago; we can see where we're going.

I must say, as a public official, I found the 1980 and the 1990 census documents extremely important in showing, among other things, the profound impact of education on income for younger workers. If you compare the 1990 census with the 1980 census, it shows you more grippingly than any other study can how important it is for us to get our young people not only out of college but in 1990 through—out of high school but through at least 2 years of college if we expected them to get jobs with growing incomes.

And what this 2000 census will show is how important it is not only to make 2 years of college but 4 years of college available to all the young people in America. These are the kinds of things you learn in the census, because behind all those numbers there are real lives and real life stories. And when you put them all together, you see the patterns emerge. This is a profoundly important issue. If we want to make good decisions about where we're going, we first have to know exactly who we are.

Now, we have, to try to do better in this census, launched a program called "Census in the Schools" that will provide classroom teachers with lesson plans and other materials to encourage children to tell their parents to fill out the forms, to include information on the whole family, and to make it clear that no one outside the Census Bureau, not even other Government agencies, can ever see the information included on the census forms. If every American knew just those things, I believe more Americans would be counted.

Today I am glad to announce that over one million classrooms already have committed to using this "Census in the Schools" material. More orders are coming in every day. I'm also pleased to announce the Census Bureau today is launching three new public service announcements to get that message out, again, that all the census information is strictly confidential. The announcements feature three of my favorite baseball players, Barry Bonds, Derek Jeter, and Ivan Rodriguez. Thank you for doing that.

I also want to congratulate Dr. Ken Prewitt, the Census Bureau Director, and his staff for their hard work and to say a special word of

thanks to the Census Monitoring Board members I appointed, including Cruz Bustamante and Gil Casellas. Thank you very much for what you have done. Thank you, Gil.

Now, let me just say briefly a few words about the other things we have to do if we want to do more than scratch the surface of our potential. I just presented my budget to the Congress last week. The budget contains a lot of new investments, some of which were mentioned. It also, however, continues to pay our debt down. And there's a lot of controversy about that. Some people are saying, "Well, isn't it enough that you got rid of the deficit? Why are you paying the debt down?"

So I want you to know why I hope that all of you will support not only investing more money in education and in health care and in the environment and in new jobs but also paying the debt down. Because if we pay the debt down, every working family in this country with a home mortgage, a car payment, a college loan payment will have lower interest rates. Every struggling small business in America will be able to borrow money at lower cost to expand. And these children, when they become adults, will be able to finance whatever they have to finance at a lower cost than would otherwise be the case if we get the Government out of the business of borrowing so there is more there for the private sector and for individual citizens. Just think of it: We could be out of debt for the first time since 1835.

There's something else I want to say. Even though the primary beneficiaries of this endeavor are the young, it is also important that we do this in a way that takes the benefits of debt reduction and secures Social Security and Medicare for the time when the baby boomers retire, so that we will not impose unbearable burdens on our children and our grandchildren.

When we all retire, those of us in the baby boom generation, the people born between 1946 and 1964, there will only be about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. It is, therefore, imperative that we begin now—not later, now—to prepare for that day. And because we are fortunate enough to have a strong economy, we can know, if we do the right things today, that these children will not have to worry about raising their children because they can't afford to do that and take care of their parents. So that's another very important thing we have to do.

We have the opportunity to meet the challenge of the aging of America. And the older I get, the more I see that as a very high-class problem. [Laughter] That is a good problem. But it can only be good if our children have greater opportunities than we do, not fewer.

A couple of other things I would like to mention that I think are very important—you were kind enough to say that in 1993 the Congress, by the narrowest of margins, passed a big deficit reduction package that also gave tax relief to 15 million working people—and a lot of them were Latinos—through what is called the earned-income tax credit. It is a good program because it basically gives money back, off taxes, to lower income working people, particularly with children.

I have proposed another big expansion of that, which would help a lot of Hispanic families. It would give more money to families where both the mother and the father are working. It would give lots more money to families that have more than two children. You've talked about coming from a large family. I think this is very important. The way that program works now, it virtually punishes working families that have more than two children at home. I think we ought to keep such families together and reward them and help the parents to succeed. So I hope you will help me to expand that.

I hope you will help me to get another increase in the minimum wage. And I hope that you'll help me with these education programs. My budget would give us enough funds to give after-school and summer school programs to children in every school that's underperforming in the entire country. That's a huge, huge advantage.

Of all the ethnic groups in America, the percentage with the highest—the group with the highest percentage of people without health insurance are Hispanic-Americans. Over 40 million Americans still have no health insurance—more than there were in 1993 when I took office—in 1994 when I tried to find a way to provide coverage to everyone.

We passed a couple of years ago the Children's Health Insurance Program, which gave States the ability to insure children who came from families who were not poor enough for Medicaid but not well enough off to afford private health insurance. We now have 2 million

children in that program. We'll soon have somewhere between 4 million and 5 million, as we get them all enrolled.

The Vice President has made a suggestion that I embraced in the State of the Union to allow all their parents to be enrolled, as well. If we did that, we could insure about 25 percent of all the uninsured people in America. And keep in mind, we're talking about working people here. We're talking about people that get up every day, for very modest earnings, and they pay their taxes. They obey the law. They raise their kids and do the best they can, and they cannot afford health insurance. And with one simple action, we could insure 25 percent of the people in America who don't have health insurance. So I hope you will support that.

And then our Hispanic Education Action Plan was mentioned earlier. This budget has over \$800 million more for that, to try to get tutoring and after-school and mentoring programs specifically targeted at Latino children to help them meet higher standards, to help them finish high school, to help them go to college.

Now, why is that important? Well, you heard Elvia's story. And if I could have anything come out of this ceremony today, by the way, it would be her story, not my speech. Why? Because think of all the obstacles she had to overcome—back and forth to Mexico, this in Spanish, this in English. You know, you hear a lot of people preach about what our children should learn and how everybody ought to learn in English, and I believe that and all that. But they don't think about the practical problems.

Remember the story this young woman told of her life. She has had a heroic journey, to have a degree from a 4-year institution that's a fine institution of higher education. And she did that. Doubtless, she had a lot of support along the way, as she said. But it was still—I mean, it took my breath away to think she's telling the story of her life. She's got one more hurdle she has to leap over.

And I'd far rather people remember her life story than anything I say today—first, because it should inspire these children and people like them all across America; and second, because it would remind people, in the Congress and in other places where we have responsibility, that it's all very well to tell our young people they should be responsible citizens, but when they're doing the best they can, the rest of us

need to pitch in and help them. And we need to give them more support.

I will say again, this is the most sobering thing—I am glad we continue to be a nation of immigrants. The largest group of immigrants still coming to America are people whose first language is Spanish, although they are increasingly a diverse lot, as all of you know. Because so many of our children in our schools are first-generation immigrants, we have the continuing frustrating problem that the dropout rate in high schools is far, far higher among our Hispanic children than among any other group.

Last year we reached a milestone: For the first time ever, high school graduation rates of African-Americans was more or less equal to the high school graduation rate of the white majority. That's a great step forward. We should be proud of that. But the dropout rate among Hispanic children is still high. Why? A lot of them are still quitting to go to work to support their families. An enormous number of others still have serious language problems.

One of the most important things we've tried to do in the last few years is to make sure all of our kids who are in our schools can read independently by the end of the third grade. We have 1,000 colleges sending tutors into the schools now. I noticed Jim Barksdale, a Silicon Valley executive, the founder of Netscape, put over \$100 million into a foundation at the University of Mississippi the other day to do nothing but teach people to make sure they could teach our young people to read—because when children get to junior high school or middle school, as it's commonly called now, and they can't keep up, a lot of people drop out because they're bored stiff because they're not fluent in the language enough to keep learning the material.

So I say to you, remember Elvia's story. It shouldn't be that hard. She was great, but it shouldn't be that hard. We've got to do more to keep all our children in school, get them out of high school, get them on to college. That's what this Hispanic education effort is all about.

And the last point I want to make is, while we've seen a big drop in welfare rolls and a significant but not nearly large enough drop in child poverty, we have to recognize that there are still lots of people in places this economic recovery has left behind. That's why I want to expand the number of empowerment zones and enterprise communities and give people more

incentives to invest in them. That's why I'm trying to pass this big new markets initiative, to give Americans the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America they get to invest in poor areas in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. I want people to invest overseas, but we ought to give them the same incentives to invest in underdeveloped areas right here in the United States and give our people an opportunity, too.

So these are some of the things that I hope we will do. I hope the Congress will also agree to invest more funds in the education of immigrants to teach them English, to teach them civics, to support them.

And finally, let me say, I want to thank those of you who are from Puerto Rico who came up to me today and talked to me about that. I have, ever since I ran for President, been committed to allowing the voteless citizens of Puerto Rico the right to choose for themselves the ultimate status of the island. And again, I have included resources in my budget for them to do that, and I ask Congress to look at this and to stop walking away from this. We cannot—we cannot—continue to pretend that there is any other ultimate resolution to this and to the difficulties that continue to arise, other than letting the people of Puerto Rico decide for themselves.

And I have also done what I could to empower the residents of Vieques to decide for themselves whether the Navy training there should end in 2003. We ought to be a good neighbor, and they ought to be able to decide. And we ought to be able to work around whatever decision they make.

Now, let me just mention one other big issue to me. Bill Richardson and Rick Dovalina were kind enough to refer to all the Hispanic-Americans who have served in this administration. And I'm proud of that. A big part of them, who cannot be here today because they are otherwise occupied, are those whom I have appointed to Federal judgeships. And unlike me, they are not term-limited. They get to stay a long time. Almost half my total appointees are women or minorities. And yet, these appointments have garnered the highest percentages of top ratings from the ABA, the bar association, in 40 years.

Now, one of my frustrations as President right now is that I'm having a hard time getting all these candidates processed and voted on by the Senate. There are three first-rate Hispanic judicial nominees that the Senate has not voted

on yet, and I want to call their names, because I want you to know who they are: Judge Julio Fuentes, for the third circuit, a distinguished civil litigator from Texas; Enrique Moreno, a graduate of Harvard and Harvard Law School, well qualified by the American Bar Association, has still not been given a hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee—better qualified academically than many, many judges who have been appointed by all previous Presidents of both parties; and Judge Richard Paez, for the ninth circuit, he is a sitting Federal judge. He has finally been promised a vote in March. But he has been waiting—listen to this—for 4 years for the Senate to vote on him. I nominated him 4 years ago.

Now, why is that? Because some people don't want these folks on the court, but they don't want you to know they don't want them on the court, because then you may not want them in the Senate. [*Laughter*] Now, this is not rocket science; this is what's going on. So if you don't want somebody on the court, but you don't want the folks back home to know you don't want them on the court, you just arrange for there never to be a vote.

It's not right. That they think that they're too progressive, they ought to stand up and vote them down. But they ought to—it's time to stop patronizing people or insulting them by playing games with them. Just vote them up or down. They're entitled to it, and they can take it. We can all take it. But when good people agree to submit themselves for Federal service and they are good people and they are not disqualified by the investigation, they're elevated by the investigation, they are entitled to be voted up or down. And I ask you to help us.

Now, again I want to say, I hope that all of you when you leave here will remember that, even though the President should never get awards, I'm tickled to get this one. [*Laughter*] I hope you will remember the story of Elvia Morales' life and try to replicate it. I hope you'll remember these children who came to join us today from the Cesar Chavez Charter School. And I hope you will remember that we have just scratched the surface of what their lives and our life as a nation can be.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Enrique (Rick) Dovalina, national

president, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); Elvia Morales, graduate, California State University at Sacramento, who described growing up as a child of immigrants; Irasema Salcido, founder and principal, Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School for Public

Policy; former Secretary of Energy Federico Peña; and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry G. Cisneros. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Wolf Blitzer on CNN.com February 14, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Mr. Blitzer. Thank you very much, Lou. We are in the Oval Office here with President Clinton. Mr. Clinton, thank you so much for doing this historic, first-ever on-line news interview with CNN.com.

I just want to set the scene for you and for our audience. This is not only being put forward on CNN.com and other Internet users, but also it will be seen simultaneously on CNN and CNN International. Fifteen minutes after we're completed, there will be an on-line video that people will be able to see, whenever, if they missed it. There will also be a transcript. They will be able to stream and see this as it goes on, on the Internet. So it's a historic moment for the new technology.

I know you've been fascinated by this, so let's get right at it. We have some E-mail questions. First one from Frank Williams in Tinley Park, Illinois: Mr. President, understandably, you're supporting the Presidential candidacy of Vice President Al Gore. But please share your personal political opinions of Senator John McCain and Governor George W. Bush.

The President. I think I should pass on that. I think—I've tried to stay out of this Presidential election. I'm not a candidate, and I don't think any headlines that I make should interfere with the ability of Senator McCain or Governor Bush to make their point. They're going to have an election in South Carolina, and then they'll go on to other States. And I think that—and at some point it might become appropriate for me to say something, maybe at the Democratic Convention or something, or if they make a specific statement about my administration or my record.

But I really believe that the American people—this is their year, their time. And I am

going to vote for the Vice President, and I do support him, because I think he's been the best Vice President in our history by far. And I think he's got a good program for the American people, and I know him to be a good man who will make good decisions.

But I just don't think I should get in the middle of this Presidential race. It only interferes with the voters' ability to draw their own conclusions. And I trust them; they almost always get it right.

Mr. Blitzer. But you do know Senator McCain and Governor Bush?

The President. Sure.

Mr. Blitzer. You've met them, and you have your own opinions of both of them.

The President. I do, and I follow this campaign closely. I'm interested. It's the first time in over 20 years when I've just been an on-looker, so it's been fascinating to me as a citizen. But I don't think that I should say anything right now. And I don't mean to dodge the gentleman's question, but I just think that anything I do would only complicate their lives. And they're making their case to the people, and they're arguing with each other as they should be. And that's the way it ought to be done right now.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Blitzer. All right, we have another E-mail question from Peggy Brown: Do you find it difficult, Mr. President, watching, listening to criticisms of the First Lady as she attempts to capture the Senate seat in New York?

The President. Sure. I mean, of course, I do. I now know how she felt all those years. You know, I love her very much, and I think—I know her better than anybody else, and I believe she'd be a great public official. And I hope the people of New York will put her to work.

But if she's criticized, particularly if somebody says something I know is flatout wrong, it drives me nuts. I want to be able to say, "Gosh, I wish I could answer that one."

Middle East Peace Process

Mr. Blitzer. All right. We have a chat room that's going on even as we speak right now. There's a question from one person: Are you optimistic, Mr. President, about the future for Middle East peace?

The President. Yes, I am. This is—we're in a little tough patch right now, because a lot of things are going on in the Middle East, the trouble in Lebanon right now. And we're down to the last strokes, if you will. We're down to the hard decisions. But I believe it is so clearly in the interests of the long-term security of Israel and the long-term interests of the Palestinians and the Syrians and the Lebanese to have a comprehensive peace. And I think we're so close on the substance that I am optimistic.

Now, it will require courage. And it will require courage not just by the leaders, but the people of those countries have to recognize that you cannot make peace unless you're willing to give as well as to get. But they ought to do it, and they ought to do it sooner rather than later. I think that the longer you delay something like this, when you have a moment of opportunity, the more you put it at risk. But I am basically optimistic.

Mr. Blitzer. You've invested a lot of your personal time and energy in the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Syrian peace process. Is it time for you, once again, to personally get involved and bring the parties together, do something to make sure this opportunity is not lost?

The President. Well, I am personally involved, even when I'm not in a public way. I'm always on the phone, always working this issue. But I think that there will have to be some forward progress here in the next few weeks, and I'll do whatever I can to facilitate it in whatever way I can. But beyond that, I don't want to say anything right now. We're working it, and the parties are working it.

Internet Security

Mr. Blitzer. Okay. Let's take another question from an E-mail that we received: Do you think, Mr. President, the Federal Government could do more for Internet security? I know you have a big conference, a big meeting coming up here

at the White House tomorrow to deal with this sensitive issue, especially given the hacker problem that we saw in the last few weeks.

The President. Well, the short answer to that is, we probably can. And I'm bringing in a group of people to meet with me tomorrow, a lot of people from the high-tech community and from all our Government agencies. These denial-of-service attacks are obviously very disturbing, and I think there is a way that we can clearly promote security.

I think it's important that the American people not overreact to this. That is, we're into a whole new world with the Internet, and whenever we sort of cross another plateau in our development, there are those who seek to take advantage of it. So this is a replay of things that have happened throughout our history, and we'll figure out how to do it and go forward.

But I think on balance, no one could dispute what a great thing the Internet has been for our country and for the world. There are now over 200 million people that use it every day, about half of them here in the United States. And we just need to keep pushing it.

National Economy

Mr. Blitzer. And we're using it right now. Let's take another question from our chat room, from our CNN.com chat room: Mr. President, how will you advise Vice President Gore to keep this economy growing?

The President. Well, I think he's got a pretty good idea because he's been here with us and has been part of all the decisions that have been made the last 7 years. But if you look at where we are, the question is—we have the longest economic expansion in history; how do we keep it going?

I think we need to remember the fundamentals. We need to keep the debt being paid down, because that allows people in the private sector to borrow money not only to invest in new businesses or in their existing business but also to purchase things. So the continuing debt repayment is important. Keeping our markets open, to make us competitive and keep inflation down, is important. Investing in science and technology and research and in education and training and closing the digital divide to make sure access to the Internet is available to all Americans, those are the kinds of things that will keep this economy going.

Especially, I would say, we have both the moral obligation and an economic opportunity by increasing investment in the areas which have been not so helped by the economic recovery, in the Indian reservations, the inner-city communities, the rural communities where there haven't been a lot of new jobs. If you get growth there, it is by definition noninflationary, because you get—they haven't had much. So you can lower the unemployment rate there, and you create new businesses, new employees, and new consumers at the same time.

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, there's another E-mail question that we have: How would you respond to arguments that you personally have had very little to do with the economic boom that the country has experienced during your administration?

The President. Well, I would respond by asking them to remember what it was like before we announced and implemented our deficit reduction plan and remember what a direct impact that had on interest rates, on investment, and on the stock market.

The American people deserve the lion's share of the credit. The high-tech community—we're part of it today—they deserve a lot of the credit. High-technology companies employ only 8 percent of our people; they're responsible for 30 percent of our growth. The companies that restructured in the eighties deserve a lot of credit. Everybody who's kept our markets open, guaranteeing low inflation and more competition, they deserve a lot of credit.

But nonetheless, we had a completely jobless recovery, what some people called a "triple dip" economy, until we finally said we're going to do something about this deficit. And when we did it, it was like breaking a dam, and the interest rates came down, and people started being able to get money and investing at an unprecedented rate, and the stock market started its upward march.

So I think the critical things we did—we had a good fiscal policy; we had a good policy on the markets; and we had a good policy on investing in technology and in people and education and training. And I don't think there's any question that had we not taken that first big bite out of the deficit, then the growth would have been much slower than it has been.

Mr. Blitzer. Okay. I guess the person asking this question was also suggesting that the Republicans in Congress, Alan Greenspan, and the

Internet economy, all of that combined to help you.

The President. And I agree with that. I agree. I think Chairman Greenspan did a good job. The main thing he's done, that I think he deserves a lot of credit for, is that he has been able to look at the evidence of the new economy and act on the evidence, instead of what you might call the old theology. Otherwise, he could have killed this recovery by raising interest rates too much too frequently in the past.

I think the Republicans in Congress—not a one of them voted for the economic plan in '93. But we did have a bipartisan majority in both Houses in '97 for the Balanced Budget Act, which continued what we were doing, and they deserve credit for that. And I have never—I try never to deny anybody else credit. This is an American achievement, not just mine. But if we hadn't taken that first big bite out of the deficit, I don't think we'd be where we are today.

Situation in Chechnya

Mr. Blitzer. All right, Mr. President, we have another question, an E-mail question: Why are the Western nations—why have they not done enough for Chechnya like they did for Kosovo?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think the situations are parallel. But I think the Western nations have spoken out against the excesses. We believe—I think I speak for all the Western leaders; I certainly will speak for myself—that Russia had a right to take on the paramilitary forces who were practicing terrorist tactics, but that it was a mistake to adopt the position that, in effect, ruled out negotiations with the elected officials in Kosovo, who weren't part of the terrorism, and to adopt tactics that cause a lot of civilian losses without any kind of corresponding gain. So I think we've been pretty clear about that. That's different from what happened in Kosovo, where Milosevic basically ran the whole country out based on their ethnic origin and had no intention of letting them come back until he had crushed anybody's ability to say anything.

So I don't think that the situations are parallel. But I think we have spoken out against the excesses in Chechnya and tried to get humanitarian aid in there and will continue to try to help the people of Chechnya and the legitimate political forces there. That's very different from what the paramilitary forces did. They have

to bear their share of responsibility for what happened as well. I think some of them actually wanted the Chechnyan civilians attacked because they thought it would help improve their political views.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Mr. Blitzer. Okay, we have a followup question from our chat room. Let me read it to you as it's coming in: How can Americans know that America is really at peace with Russia?

The President. Because we're neither fighting with them nor on the edge of fighting. We've detargeted the nuclear weapons against each other. We are working to secure the nuclear weapons in Russia, to help them destroy nuclear weapons, to help safeguard the materials that remain. And I hope very much that after the next Russian election, we'll be able to make further progress on reducing the nuclear weapons there that we both hold.

Mr. Blitzer. And Vladimir Putin, the Acting President, is he someone that you can deal with?

The President. Based on what I have seen so far, I think that the United States can do business with this man. I think he's obviously highly intelligent; he's highly motivated; he has strong views. We don't agree with him on everything, but what I have seen of him so far indicates to me that he's capable of being a very strong and effective and straightforward leader.

Taxes and the Internet

Mr. Blitzer. All right, let's go back to another issue involving the Internet. This is a question: Mr. President, what role will you play in the debate on taxing Internet commerce?

The President. Well, we've played some role already. I signed a bill last year to have a 3-year moratorium on any kind of discriminatory or transactional tax, if you will, on the commerce on the Internet. I don't think that there should be any access or any other kind of discriminatory taxes, from my point of view, ever on the Internet.

The tough question is the whole question of what happens to sales that if they were not on the Internet would be subject to State and local sales tax. And the Governors are trying to work through that. I know Governor Leavitt has taken a particular interest in that, the Governor of Utah. I think that's something that we have to work through because we need—there are whole questions about the need for States

to simplify their tax structures, and there are other questions there that have to be resolved. And I think that's going to take some time to resolve.

But I don't think we should have access taxes on the Internet or any other kind of discriminatory taxes, because this is an important part of our economy, and we want it to grow. I think that for the States and the localities, they're going to have to keep working until they work through what the operational problems are.

Mr. Blitzer. Doesn't that discriminate, though, against stores—a bookstore, for example—

The President. Of course it does.

Mr. Blitzer. —that you have to pay tax—

The President. Absolutely, it does.

Mr. Blitzer. —but if you go to Amazon.com you don't have to pay taxes?

The President. It does, and that's the argument that the Governors are making and the argument a lot of the merchants are making.

Mr. Blitzer. Well, where's your position on that?

The President. Well, what I'm trying to do is get them together. There are also—the Internet people point out that there are also a lot of complications in the way State taxes are. And they have on their side the weight of Supreme Court law which basically was made from mail-order sales. The same argument was made against mail-order sales. And the prevailing legal position is that if you don't have enough connections to a State, you don't have the obligation to collect and remit the sales tax.

Keep in mind, the sales taxes do—it's just that the seller doesn't have to collect and remit it. So most of the people I know who have Internet businesses are concerned about trying to make sure they get a simplified system, and they know what the drill is. Their main concern, however, is not having access to the Internet itself taxed. And I'm with them on that. And I'm trying to support the process that now exists to resolve the issue of how State taxes, the sales taxes, can best be collected in the way that's not too burdensome on the Internet.

You don't want to burden the Internet, but you don't want to put people who aren't making sales on it out of business. And we've got to find that right balance, and that's what we're working on.

Austria

Mr. Blitzer. We have another question from our chat room, an international question involving the political situation in Austria given the fact that Joerg Haider is now—his party is part of the Austrian Government. Let me read to you the question: What does the United States plan to do to make sure that Austria knows that Nazi sympathy will not be accepted?

The President. Well, I think we've made it quite clear that we do not support any expression of either sympathy with the Nazis in the past or ultranationalist race-based politics, anti-immigrant politics in the future. That, I think, is equally important here. And we've also tried to stay pretty close to where the European Union has been because, after all, Austria is a part of Europe, and they've been very tough in condemning what the Austrians have done here. So I think we're on the right track.

There is a delicate balance, however. You know, Austria is a democracy; this man's party got a certain percentage of the vote. He did it based on appeals that went well beyond a narrow race-based appeal. And we don't want to say or do anything that builds his support even further. But I think it ought to be clear to every Austrian citizen that we in the United States do not approve of his political program or his excessive rhetoric.

Iran-U.S. Relations

Mr. Blitzer. Let's stay overseas. We have another E-mail question about U.S.-Iranian relations: I'd like to know, Mr. President, your view on the recent developments of Iranian-American relations as we, the Iranian youth, are really anxiously following political developments between the two countries and no doubt willing to finally see a healthy and mutually respectful relationship between the two.

The President. Well, that's what I want. You know, I said several weeks ago now, maybe a few months ago, that the United States had not been entirely blameless in the past in our relationships with Iran, and that we wanted a good relationship with Iran, that we did not support and did not condone anyone who would support terrorist actions, and that we had some difficulties with Iran, but we were viewing with interest affairs within Iran. We wanted the Iranian people to have a good democracy. We like to see these elections, and we want to be supportive

of better relationships if we can work them out on ways that are mutually agreeable.

I think that one of the best things we could do for the long-term peace and health of the Middle East and, indeed, much of the rest of the world, is to have a constructive partnership with Iran. And I'm still hoping that that can materialize. A lot of that is now in the hands of the Iranian people and their elections and also the leaders of Iran. Some of them don't want that, but I think some of them may want that. And I think it's important that the genuine reformers there not be, in effect, weakened because of their willingness to at least talk to us, because I think the United States should always remain open to a constructive dialog to people of good will. And I think that the estrangement between these two countries is not a good thing. I think it would be better if we could have a relationship.

Mr. Blitzer. As you know, Mr. President, in this regard, 13 Iranian Jews were accused of spying, and they're being held. Is this an irritant in this? What do you want the Iranian Government to do on that front?

The President. Well, I have been assured by the Israelis that they were not spies. And I've done quite a bit of work on it. I'm very, very concerned about this, because people cannot—it is an irritant. The American Jewish community is very, very concerned about it, and we've done a lot of work on it. And I'm hopeful that justice will be done there and that no one will be punished for being a spy who isn't. That's not a good thing to do. And that, obviously, is a real—it's one of the sticking points.

But I think that there are other people of good will who the Iranians recognize are their friends, who want better relationships with them, who have also talked to them about this, and I'm hoping that it will be worked out in a satisfactory manner.

Media Mergers

Mr. Blitzer. Okay, Mr. President, I think we have another question from our chat room. Let's see what it is: How can we keep the media giants from squashing the little guy? I guess they might be referring to the recent merger of our own CNN-Time Warner-AOL. What's your answer to that?

The President. Well, I think the main things to me are—there are two sets of little guys, I guess. The one thing is you don't want to—

and Steve Case has talked about this for many years, himself—

Mr. Blitzer. He's the chairman of AOL.

The President. The chairman of AOL—that it's important not to have access choked off. We want all these—if these mergers go through, we want them to lead to greater access to greater options to consumers at more affordable prices. Then the second thing is, you want other competitors to be able to get into the game. That's what all the big controversy was over the antitrust suit involving Microsoft. And that's handled in the Justice Department, strictly apart from the White House, so we had no role in that one way or the other.

And without expressing an opinion on that case one way or the other, I think what I favor is an American economy where people who have good ideas and new messages they want to get out ought to have some way to do that, if they can generate a following. So that's what needs to be monitored here.

Some of this amalgamation I think is inevitable, given the possible synergy that could exist, for example, between a company like AOL and Time Warner, with all of its myriad publications and programs and networks. But you've got to have—there has to be some room for people who want to compete, and then there has to be a guarantee that consumers will not be choked off and their prices hiked and, in fact, they will have more access to more programs at more affordable prices. And I think those are the touchstones that ought to guide Government policy.

Small Business

Mr. Blitzer. All right. Let's take another question from our chat room, CNN.com chat room: What will the current and future administrations do to keep small business alive? Sort of related to the last question.

The President. One of the things that I'm very proud of about this economy—and again, I don't take total credit for this; this is part of our prosperity—but in every year I've been President, we've set a new record for starting small businesses—every single year.

I think that the Small Business Administration has an important role to play. I think that we have dramatically increased the number of small business loans that we finance, and we've concentrated on women and minorities, others who have been traditionally denied credit.

We have promoted aggressively for the first time what we call community development financial institutions, where we put Federal money into banks to try to help them make small loans to people who never could have gotten credit before. Just as we do around the world, we're now doing that here. And that's helping.

We've tried to continue to minimize the burden of Government regulations on small business. And I think that's important—to keep an entrepreneurial environment in America, so people can get access to venture capital if they've got an idea and start it.

So I think having the right conditions and then having specific access to capital and technical support through the Small Business Administration and the community financial institutions—that's the best thing we can do for small business.

President's Legacy

Mr. Blitzer. We have another question about the future in our chat room: What will the history books say about the Clinton Presidency?

The President. Well, I'm not sure, because that's for the historians to decide. But I think they will say, among other things, that we had a—we came into office with a different approach that was attuned better to the changes that were going on in the economy, in the society and in the world, and that we helped America get through this enormous period of change and transition—in the metaphor I use, to build our bridge to the 21st century—and that our country was stronger when we finished than it was when we began. I hope that's what they'll say, and I believe they will.

President's Future Plans

Mr. Blitzer. All right, we have a follow-up question from our chat room. Let's take a look at that one: Mr. President, what are you going to do when you leave office? Which is now less than a year away. You probably—are you counting the days?

The President. No, not in a negative way. I mean, I'm not eager for them to be over. In fact, one of the problems I have is, I want to work even harder now to try to get as much done as I can.

When I leave, I'm going to establish a library and a public policy center.

Mr. Blitzer. That will be in Little Rock.

The President. And that will take a couple years to do. And I'm going to try to maintain a high level of activity in the areas that I'm particularly interested in. I've spent a lot of my life working on reconciliation of people across racial, religious, and other lines. I'm very interested in using the power of technology, like what we're doing now, to help poor countries and poor areas overcome what would ordinarily take years in economic development and education.

I'm very interested in continuing my work to try to convince Americans and the rest of the world that we can beat global warming without shutting down the economy, that it's no longer necessary to use more greenhouse gases to grow economically. I'm very interested in promoting the concept of public service among young people and trying to get more young Americans to take some time off to serve in our National Government or the State and local government. Those are four things I'll do.

Basically, I want to try to be a good citizen. America's given me a lot, and more than I could have ever dreamed. I've loved being President. And I feel that I've acquired a certain level of experience and knowledge, that I owe that to my country. And along the way, I hope to write a few books and have a little fun, too. And I hope I'll be a member of the Senate spouses club. I'm going to do my best to support my wife in every way I can.

But I just want to be a good citizen. I want to try to put what I've learned in a lifetime to use in a way that benefits the people of America and others around the world who I care about.

Mr. Blitzer. And you'll commute between Chappaqua, New York, and Little Rock, sort of?

The President. Yes, I'll spend some time in Little Rock for the next couple of years, you know, like I said, getting the facility up. And I'll spend some time with Hillary, as much as I possibly can, in New York. And then I'll probably travel some. And I hope we'll be able to travel some together. It depends on what happens in the next year.

But I'm really looking forward to it. I love this job. I don't know if I'll ever do anything again that I love the work as much as I love this. John Kennedy described it well. He said, basically, it challenges all your abilities. It challenges your mind, your emotions, even your

physical strength. But I think that I can do a lot of things that will help other people when I leave here, and I'm going to do my best to do that.

President's Favorite Websites

Mr. Blitzer. All right, Mr. President, if you'll take a look at our chat room, the people who are participating in the CNN.com chat, they're participating in huge numbers right now. Let's take another question, though, from an E-mail person named Seth. He says this: Mr. President, I have heard that you are an avid web surfer and on-line shopper. What are your favorite websites?

The President. Well, I wouldn't say I am avid. I did do some Christmas shopping for the first time on-line this year, though. And I even—I bought some things from the Native American craftspeople up in South Dakota, at Pine Ridge, which was really interesting to me.

But I love books, so I like Amazon.com. And I'm fascinated by eBay, because I like to swap and trade, and it reminds me of the old kind of farmer's markets and town markets I used to visit when I started out in politics in Arkansas so many years ago. I think the whole concept of people being able to get on-line and sort of trade with each other, and almost barter, is utterly fascinating to me.

Issues of the New Millennium

Mr. Blitzer. All right, we have another question, Mr. President. We only have a little time left. Let's take this from the chat room: Mr. President, what is the biggest issue facing Americans in the new millennium?

The President. Well, I think the most important thing that we have to do is to make up our minds that we are actually going to build a more united country out of our diversity and out of our groundbreaking technology and advances in science and technology. That is, I think that if you look around the world today, the biggest problems seem to be rooted in racial, ethnic, religious strife. If you look at America and how well we fit with a positive vision of the 21st century world and you look at the continuing problems we've had here, with these hate crimes, for example, the most important thing we could do is get our minds right and get our spirits right and realize that we have to learn to live with people who are different from us. We have to learn to keep our conflicts

with them within proper bounds, so that our common goals override the differences between us.

If we build one America, that's the most important thing. The American people are so innovative, so creative, and we're so well-positioned for the future, everything else will work out. But if we allow ourselves to fall into these deep divisions over—including political ones—differences of opinion are healthy; demonization is destructive and self-indulgent. And that's basically what we've got to work on.

If we can keep working together enough in creative tension, then everything else will work out. I'm confident of it.

Social Security

Mr. Blitzer. All right, Mr. President. We have time for one final question. It's from Wolf in Washington, DC—that would be me, by prerogative, as the moderator of this discussion, this on-line interview we're having: You know the Republicans today in the House of Representatives are pushing legislation that would remove the limits, ease the limits on Social Security recipients as far as their earnings after they reach 65 until 70—a very sensitive subject, affects a lot of people watching right now, how much money they could earn and still be eligible for Social Security. Will you work with the Republicans, support them in eliminating those caps on earnings?

The President. Absolutely. I'm thrilled by this. I hope this is just the beginning of a signal from them that they're willing to work on this whole Social Security area.

I think we should lift the earnings limit for two reasons. One is, I don't really think it's fair for people—if you're 65 today in America, your life expectancy is 83. And you want to be alert; you want to be physically strong. And we know as people stay more active, they're going to live better, not just longer. So I don't think we should penalize them.

Secondly, I think as the baby boomers retire, it's going to be important to have a higher percentage of people over 65, if they want to, work-

ing. This will be good for our society. I'm strongly in favor of it.

If they will send me a bill—what we call in Washington-speak, a clean bill—that is, doesn't have a lot of other things unrelated to that littered to it—I will be happy to sign it.

Then the second thing I'd like to urge them to do is to think about my proposal to dedicate the interest savings that we get from paying down the debt because of the surplus in the Social Security tax to the Social Security Trust Fund to do two things: Number one, put the life of the Trust Fund out to 2050; that will take care of most of the baby boom generation; and number two, do something about a single woman's poverty on Social Security. Married women's poverty on Social Security, about 5 percent; overall, seniors over 65, under 10 percent now. Single women on Social Security tend to live longer, tend to have less money; their poverty rate is somewhere between 18 and 20 percent.

So I like getting rid of the earnings limitation. It's the right thing to do. Let's just do it. But then let's lengthen the life of the Trust Fund and do something about the poverty rate among women who are retired.

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us from the Oval Office. Always, of course, great to be in the Oval Office. And one day when you're not in the Oval Office, you'll probably be excited coming back here as well.

The President. I will be. I'll always be excited to come here. And maybe I'll even get to do a web chat with you afterward.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; Joerg Haider, leader of Austria's Freedom Party; and Steve Case, chairman and chief executive officer, America Online. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Radio Remarks on Funding To Make Communities More Livable *February 14, 2000*

Across America, communities are struggling to protect precious lands so their children will have places to play, hike, and enjoy the great outdoors. Today I'm announcing nearly \$60 million in new grants to help communities in all 50 States create parks, preserve forests, and save open space.

And the lands legacy initiative in my new budget will provide permanent funding so that

communities can conserve additional lands year after year.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on February 11 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 14. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on the Bombing of a School in Sudan *February 14, 2000*

I am deeply concerned by reports that the Government of Sudan bombed a school in the Nuba Mountain region on February 8, killing and wounding many young children. It is an outrage that such egregious abuses against innocent Sudanese citizens have become commonplace in the ongoing civil war in Sudan, which has claimed over 2 million lives.

The United States calls on the Government of Sudan to cease all aerial bombardment and to refrain from any attacks on civilian targets. We also call for full and immediate access for humanitarian organizations seeking to provide relief to war-ravaged civilians in Sudan.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Technology Industry Leaders and Computer Security Experts and an Exchange With Reporters *February 15, 2000*

Internet Security

The President. The room is smaller than it looks on television. [*Laughter*] Usually I don't get so many of them coming in, except you guys are—[*laughter*].

Well, first of all, I want to welcome the leaders of the high-tech industry and experts on computer security to this meeting at the White House to talk about how to maximize the promise and minimize the risks to the Internet.

The disruptions at several websites last week highlight how important the Internet has become to our whole way of life in America and how vulnerabilities at one place on the net can create risks for all. Our administration has been working for years now to reduce vulnerabilities

in Government computers and to encourage the private sector to do more.

We know that we have to keep cyberspace open and free. We have to make, at the same time, computer networks more secure and resilient, and we have to do more to protect privacy and civil liberties. And we're here to work together.

Last month I released a draft plan to help do our part to meet these challenges. And in the budget, I asked Congress for \$2 billion for cybersecurity to safeguard Government networks, to detect attacks, to hire and train more security experts, to increase cooperation with the private sector. I want to jump-start this effort by providing \$9 million right away to begin some

of these key initiatives. And so we'll do what we can.

I understand that many leading industry members, including the companies represented here today, have agreed to create a mechanism to share cybersecurity information, and I applaud that. I am asking Secretary Daley and my Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and Richard Clarke from the White House to work with these companies to accelerate our efforts with the private sector.

Now, having said that and before we open the floor for questions, I'd like to ask Peter Solvik, who is to my right, the senior vice president and chief information officer of Cisco Systems, to say a few words on behalf of the private sector people who are here today.

Peter.

[At this point, Mr. Solvik made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, is there such a thing as a plan to actually secure the Internet?

The President. Secretary Daley says there is. [Laughter] Let me say, what we're going to try to do today is to talk about what the Government's responsibility is for our own systems and networks, what the private sector's responsibility is, and as I said before, how to talk about having adequate security, how to protect privacy and civil liberties, but also how to keep the Internet open.

And keep in mind, one of the reasons this thing has worked so well is that it has been free of Government regulation. The only contribution the Government made to the Internet was the early research over 30 years ago, now, I guess, is when it started—'69. And there may be more work for us to do in research here. But I think that, insofar as we can, we ought to stay with what brought us here.

The companies and the sector they represent in this room are about 8 percent of our employment. They do represent, as Peter said, over 30 percent of our growth. And so the trick is going to be how to do what needs to be done on security and privacy and still keep it flourishing and growing.

But we ought to approach this with determination, and we shouldn't be surprised that these things have happened. It's just a replay of what has always happened whenever there's a new way of communicating, a new way of making money throughout human society;

there's always going to be somebody that tries to take advantage of it. And we'll figure out how to deal with it and go on.

Q. Mr. President, one issue involved here is the sharing of information. And there are some reports this morning that banks were conscious of efforts to disable their systems, but did not share that information more broadly. Can the Government solve that without forcing industry or business to disclose information it would rather keep private?

The President. I think—let me tell you what I know about that, and there may be something I don't know, so I will offer that caution at the outset. The Justice Department, the FBI had certain information that they made broadly available, and I think the banks were in better shape to take advantage of that information than others were. And I think one of the purposes of this meeting is to figure what do we do from here forward to make sure that everybody is in the same position.

But I don't think that, based on what I know now, we should be out there finger-pointing at any sector of the economy and what they didn't do. I think that they were just better organized to engage in information sharing and to set up the defenses necessary to guard against this. And what we really want is for every sector of our economy to be in the same position.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, oil prices have now risen above \$30 a barrel. Does that increase a need to do—is there anything you can do about that? Or are you more sympathetic to arguments toward releasing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

The President. I think we have to watch this the next few days. There are going to be some important meetings with the oil-producing countries in the next few days, and we will know more about this in a week or 10 days, about what the trends are going to be.

But the American people are handling the price increase pretty well in terms of every aspect of our lives because of increased energy efficiency, except for home heating oil, where you have in the Mid-Atlantic States and New England, unfortunately, so many people still dependent upon a source of heating which the rest of the country left long ago, and they are unbelievably burdened by this.

Now, we've released \$200 million in LIHEAP funds so far. We can release more. But that

eases the burden on the poorest of our citizens, but there are a lot of working people on modest incomes that are just getting killed by this because their reliance on home heating oil. And I have not closed off any options. I'm monitoring this on a daily basis. It's a deeply troubling thing.

But I think the rest of our country should know—I mean, a lot of people are feeling the pinch, maybe, if they drive long distances, because the price of gasoline has gone up. But there is a group of Americans, middle class and lower middle income Americans, who have limited disposable incomes, who have no option to heat their homes but home heating oil. They're the people that are really getting hurt. And I hope—and obviously, the poor would be devastated by it, but we're monitoring that daily to make sure we've released enough of the Federal funds that we have that go directly to benefit them.

And so this is a daily watch, and we'll just have to see where we are. And I may have more to say as the days go by. But we should know more in a week about what the trend lines are going to be and what's going to happen to the price of oil over the next few months.

Congressional Subpoenas

Q. Mr. President, did the White House deny congressional committees access to E-mails it subpoenaed?

The President. I believe that we have complied with every request, and there have been thousands. If the American people knew how much of their money we had to spend complying with requests for paper and E-mails, they might be quite amazed. But we certainly have done our best to do that. There has never been an intentional effort to do that, and I think that we are in full compliance. I believe we are. That's what Mr. Podesta told me right before we came out.

Internet Security

Q. Would you entertain one last question, sir? We've always heard for the last 4 or 5 years that it was going to take an electronic Pearl Harbor—many of the people around this table I've interviewed over the last 4 or 5 years, and they've agreed that's the kind of impact we would need for everybody to play together and work together. Is that what happened last week?

The President. Well, I hope not. [Laughter] I think it was an alarm. I don't think it was Pearl Harbor. We lost our Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor; I don't think the analogous loss was that great. But I think it—

Q. Was it of concern?

The President. Look, it's a source of concern, but I don't think we should leave here with this vast sense of insecurity. We ought to leave here with a sense of confidence that this is a challenge that was entirely predictable. It's part of the price of the success of the Internet, and we're all determined to work together to meet it. And so, yes, we got an alarm, but I wouldn't say—I wouldn't analogize it to Pearl Harbor.

We're all here. We're going to figure out what to do. But you need to let us work now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard A. Clarke, Special Assistant to the President and National Coordinator for Transnational Threats, National Security Council. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Peter Solvik. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Actions on
Digital Computer Exports
February 15, 2000

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85) (the "Act"), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of the Act. The new level will be 12,500 millions of theoretical operations per second (MTOPS). In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(e), I hereby notify you of my decision to remove Romania from the list of countries covered under section 1211(b). I have taken this action based on the recommendation of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, State, and Energy. The enclosed report provides the rationale supporting these decisions and fulfills the requirements of sections 1211(d) and (e) of the Act.

Section 1211(d) provides that any adjustment to the control level described in section 1211(a) cannot take effect until 180 days after receipt of this report by the Congress. Section 1211(e) provides that any deletion of a country from the Tier 3 group cannot take effect until 120 days after the Congress is notified. Given the rapid pace of technological change in the information technology industry, these time periods are too lengthy. I hope that we can work together to reduce both notification periods to 30 days. Such changes will permit implementation of my current decision and future changes in a more timely fashion.

I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 3 countries. For sales to military entities, the level will be raised from 6,500 MTOPS to 12,500 MTOPS. For sales to civilian end users, the

new level will be raised from 12,300 MTOPS to 20,000 MTOPS. I have also directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 2 countries from 20,000 MTOPS to 33,000 MTOPS. Given anticipated significant increases in microprocessor performance in the near term, the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense will review these levels, as well as the level described in section 1211(a), by April 2000, to determine if further adjustments are necessary at that time.

The aforementioned adjustments will take place immediately, with the exception of the change to the individual licensing level for military end users in Tier 3, which will coincide with the change for the notification provisions of the Act, section 1211(a). Both changes will become effective at the end of the 180-day notification period, unless the Congress provides for a shorter period.

I look forward to working cooperatively with the Congress on these issues.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Phil Gramm, chairman, and Paul S. Sarbanes, ranking member, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 16.

The President's News Conference February 16, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. I would like to cover a couple of topics in an opening statement, and then I will take your questions.

First, let me say that we all know that we're in the midst of the longest and strongest economic expansion in our history, with nearly 21 million new jobs, unemployment at 4 percent, and solid income growth across all income groups.

Americans in public service and in the private sector must remember that our success in promoting peace and prosperity is not the result of complacency but of our common commitment to dynamic action rooted in enduring values. If we want to continue to enjoy success, we must continue our commitment to dynamic action.

There is important work to be done in America this year, and in Washington, DC, this year. First, we must stay on the path of fiscal discipline that got us to this point. If we stay on that path, we can make America, in just 13 years, debt-free for the first time since 1835. Then we can use the benefits of debt reduction to preserve two of the most important guarantees we have made to the American people, Social Security and Medicare, something that will be a challenge as we see the number of people over 65 double in the next 30 years with the retirement of the baby boom generation.

Specifically, we can make a bipartisan down-payment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust Fund to keep it strong and sound for 50 years, beyond the lifespan of all but the most fortunate of the baby boom generation. As a first step toward a comprehensive solution, I believe we should do something I called for in my 1999 State of the Union Address, to end the earnings limit for Social Security retirees between the ages of 65 and 69.

To strengthen and modernize Medicare, I propose to implement important reforms and to dedicate more than half the non-Social Security surplus to Medicare, over \$400 billion, to keep it solvent for another decade, past 2025, and to add a voluntary prescription drug benefit.

I'm pleased Congress is beginning to take up this issue, and I ask them to move quickly and to resist the temptation to spend large portions of the surplus before we have lived up to our commitment to prepare for the undeniable health and financing challenges that Medicare will bring.

We should also move to complete the unfinished business of the last Congress, passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights, campaign finance reform, hate crimes legislation, an increase in the minimum wage, and especially, common-sense gun safety legislation.

Guns in the wrong hands continue to claim too many young lives—lives like those of Andre Wallace and Natasha Marsh, the fine young DC residents who were gunned down in front of Natasha's home last week and were buried just yesterday. We saw it also in Littleton just a few days ago, with the shooting deaths of two teenage students from Columbine High School.

Today the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Andrew Cuomo, who is with us today, released the first-ever comprehensive analysis of gun-related violence in public housing in America. The report shows that while crime in public housing is declining, as it is in the rest of the country, gun-related crime remains a serious problem there, with residents of public housing more than twice as likely to be victims of gun violence as other members of our society. More than a million children and 360,000 seniors live in public housing in the United States. They deserve to be as safe as the rest of us. Ten months after the tragedy at Columbine, it is long past time for Congress to pass this commonsense gun safety legislation.

I would also like to address the impact of rising oil prices on American families. In the Northeast the impact has been particularly harsh because, from the Mid-Atlantic States to New England, many families still rely on home heating oil, a source of heating no longer used in the rest of the country. These families have been especially hard hit. That is a serious concern, especially because the winter months have been colder this year than in the past few years.

Since January we have released \$175 million to help lower income families pay their heating

bills. We have also asked refiners to keep producing at full throttle until the crisis is past. And we directed the Coast Guard to expedite deliveries of home heating oil to affected areas. These actions have helped to ease the burden on the citizens who are most vulnerable. Still, there are too many families with moderate incomes who have no option other than heating their homes with oil, and they need help, too. There is more to do.

Secretary Richardson is in New England today holding a summit with refiners, distributors, and major users of home heating oil to determine how Government and industry can work together to better meet the needs of consumers in the Mid-Atlantic and New England States.

Today I'm announcing additional steps to help families struggling to pay their heating bills. I directed my Budget Office and the Department of Health and Human Services to release right now the remainder of this year's funding for emergency heating assistance, about \$125 million more. This money will be targeted toward the hardest hit States, those with the highest usage of home heating oil. I will be meeting with Governors and Members of Congress in those States to ask them to use all their authority to expand the pool of people who receive those funds, making sure that as many people who need the help can get it.

And let me explain what I mean by that. Under the present law, States can pay LIHEAP assistance, low income heating assistance, to people up to 150 percent of the poverty line, the national poverty line, or up to 60 percent of the median income in their States. In the States that are most severely affected, where you have a lot of people who live on middle incomes, but particularly if they have children, are really hurt by an increase of two or three hundred dollars a month in their home heating bill—are eligible for this assistance but don't presently receive it. So if we provide more money—if the States really want to see the maximum number of people helped, they have the ability to raise the income limits of people eligible for that help and to structure the help accordingly.

We will also be requesting \$600 million in emergency supplemental funding for the LIHEAP program to help more hard-hit families through the current crisis, as well as to have some money for others who may be hard hit later in the year when the hot weather sets

in. We will send legislation to Congress in the next 10 days, and I hope there will be fast action on it.

Meanwhile, we will continue to work toward a longer term solution. I've asked Secretary Richardson to conduct a 60-day study on converting factories and major users from oil to other fuels, which will help to free up future oil supplies for use in heating homes.

Americans have always pulled together to help their fellow citizens in times of need. Over the last 7 years, we've stood to help the victims of earthquakes in California, of the farm crisis and a 500-year flood in the Middle West, and again and again and recently again this week, the violent storms in the South. Now the families in the Northeast need our help, too, and we must act.

Again I say, the United States did not get to this fortunate moment by inaction and complacency. We got here by a commitment to giving the American people the tools and conditions to solve their own problems and continuing to act aggressively and dynamically. This must be a year of that kind of action.

Thank you very much.

Now, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], would you like to begin?

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, you don't seem to have any good news on the Northern Ireland and Middle Eastern front, so I thought I'd ask you a homefront question. How do you like being targeted in the Republican Presidential campaign? Texas Governor—I have to quote this—Texas Governor Bush told Senator McCain, quote, "Whatever you do, don't equate my integrity and trustworthiness with Bill Clinton. That's about as low as you can get in the Republican primary." And McCain said that he resented being called "Clinton" or "Clinton-like," and a few other things. What do you say?

The President. Well—[laughter]—I have a couple of observations. One is, you know, they're playing to an electorate, most of whom did not vote for me. And secondly, I have a lot of sympathy with Governor Bush and Senator McCain. I mean, it's hard for them to figure out what to run on. They can't run against the longest economic expansion in history, or the lowest crime rate in 30 years, or the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, or the progress America has made in promoting peace around the

world, or the fact that our party overrode theirs and passed the family leave and it's benefited 20 million people and it hasn't hurt the economy.

So they've got a tough job, and I have a lot of sympathy with them. And I don't want to complicate their problems by saying any more about them. [Laughter]

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Capital Punishment

Q. Mr. President, there are growing calls for a national moratorium on capital punishment, from the American Bar Association to Members of Congress. Governor Ryan has halted executions in Illinois, as you know, because the convictions of 13 people on death row were overturned. On the other hand, Governor Bush said last night that he's confident that the 100 people who were put to death in Texas under his watch were all guilty. You've had some experience with this. You signed four death warrants or execution warrants while you were Governor. What's your feeling about a moratorium on executions?

The President. Well first, I think Governor Ryan did the right thing, and it was probably a courageous thing to do, because a majority of the American people support capital punishment, as do I. But I think that in Illinois, you had a situation where the exonerations and the executions were about equal in number over the last several years. So he had a difficult situation, and I think he did the right thing.

And I think that if I were a Governor still, I would look very closely at the situation in my State and decide what the facts were. There are, I think, not those grounds for that kind of moratorium under the Federal law because of the circumstances under which people are convicted.

Now, we have a different review going on here, a Justice Department review on the racial impact, or whether there was one, in the death penalty decisions under the Federal law. There are 27 people who have been sentenced to death under Federal law, 20 in the civilian courts and 7 through the military system.

We also are in the process of developing guidelines for clemency applications when an individual's claims of innocence or questioning of the sentence, even though guilt is not a question, can be pressed. And I think, in an attempt to address the problem you mentioned, I think Senator Leahy has introduced some legislation

to try to give convicted criminal defendants access to DNA testing and other things which might tend to disprove their guilt.

So I think all these things need to be looked at. The people who support the death penalty, it seems to me, have an especially heavy obligation to see that in cases where it is applied, there is no question of whether the guilt was there. So the only issue that is left is whether, philosophically, you think it is the right or wrong thing to do.

Q. So you would not support a ban? You would not support suspending it or a moratorium now?

The President. In the Federal cases, I don't believe it is called for. But as I say, we do have the review going on in terms of the racial implications of the way it's been applied, and we also are in the process of drawing up guidelines for clemency requests, which obviously would give people an opportunity to raise the question of whether there was some doubt about their guilt or innocence.

But I do think Governor Ryan did the right thing. I think it was a great thing to do.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

President's Upcoming Visit to South Asia

Q. Mr. President, next month you're going on a trip to India and Bangladesh, but not Pakistan. What can Pakistan's military rulers do to get you to reconsider?

The President. Well, first of all, I haven't decided whether I'm going to Pakistan or not. I have decided that I am going to India and Bangladesh, and I will make a decision about whether to go based on what I think will best serve our long-term interests in nonproliferation, in trying to stop particularly the nuclear arms race, and trying to help to promote stability, democracy, and a resolution of the conflict between India and Pakistan.

I hope that my trip will serve to highlight to Americans the importance of that region to us and the very real danger that a conflict between India and Pakistan not contained is one of the most significant security threats to the interests of the United States in this new century and, I might say, a tragic situation.

You know, we—I think one of the reasons we've been able to play a meaningful role in Northern Ireland is we have so many Irish-Americans here. I think one of the reasons we've been able to play a meaningful role in

the Middle East is we have a lot of Jewish-Americans and a lot of Arab-Americans. I think we forget that among all the some 200 ethnic groups that we have in our country, Indian-Americans and Pakistani-Americans have been among the most successful in terms of education level and income level. They have worked and succeeded stunningly well in the United States and, astonishingly maybe, had good contacts with one another.

And I think the United States should be more involved there, even though I think that they'll have to work out this business of Kashmir between themselves. Unless we were asked by both parties to help, we can't get involved. We've been—in every other case we're involved, it's because both parties have asked us to be involved.

But I will make a decision about where to go and what to do based on what I think will further our long-term goals. And I have not reached a final decision.

Yes.

Post-Presidency Legal Issues

Q. Mr. President, as you're well aware, the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct has initiated an investigation into a complaint regarding statements that you made in testimony before Judge Susan Webber Wright—action that could include disciplinary action, up to and including disbarment. My question, sir, is would you be willing to surrender your law license to avoid such a hearing? Or will you fight it, up to and including availing yourself of a public hearing, as you are entitled to under the regulations?

The President. Well, let me say to you, the reason—and the only reason—I even settled the lawsuit in the first place was because I thought that it was wrong for the President to take an hour, much less a day, much less weeks, away from the job of the American people to deal with anything that could be a distraction. And I did it only after there was a court ruling that the case had absolutely no merit, which was obvious to everybody who looked at the facts.

Now, I haven't changed my position on that. As a result, in all the things that have happened subsequently, I have left a lot of things unsaid which I might have otherwise said. And I hope I can continue to do that, and that's what I'm going to do today. I don't think I should be spending my time on this. I think I'm working

for the American people. And I'm going to do my best to adhere to that. And as a result, I have refrained from saying a lot of things I would otherwise have said as an American citizen and as a lawyer.

Yes, go ahead, in the back.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, along the lines of the heating oil situation or whatever, would you at any point consider—because, perhaps as the prices continue to spike up—would you at any point consider that it could have some detrimental effect on the economy? Would you consider tapping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserves? And conversely, I'd like to ask if we as Americans have some kind of divine right to cheap gasoline and cheap heating oil?

The President. Well, you've asked two questions, and let me try to answer them. And I'd like to make, if I might, three points.

Number one, the statute for using the Strategic Petroleum Reserve sets forward the conditions under which it might be used. And I have not ruled out any action which I think is in the interest of the American people.

Number two, I think what is in our interest are stable prices that are not too high but don't drop real low, encourage overconsumption, and then jump way up again. That is, what we need is stable prices that are not too high but that are also stable.

I also think that is in the interest of the producing countries. Why? Because if prices got so high they weakened—disregard America's economy—other people's economies, that would shrink the markets for the producers. If the economy goes down, that would lower the price, and they'd wind up with the worst of both worlds. If the price stayed up for any period of time, it would make non-OPEC members who could produce oil more likely to do it, which would further drive the price down.

So I think the OPEC members understand that, and I think that there is an interest in stable prices at an acceptable level. And we have these conversations all along, and I think that is clear. And we will see what happens on that. But I wouldn't rule out using the Petroleum Reserve.

Now, the third point I want to make is this. You said, do Americans have a right to cheap gas and cheap heating oil? What I want to do, because I think it's important for our long-term

security, is get America in a position where the fuel efficiency of our vehicles is so great, or our ability to use alternative-fuel vehicles or dual-use vehicles, biofuels, mixed electric and gasoline-fuel vehicles that have automatically regenerating batteries—that our capacity to do that is so great that we will not be reliant on the ups and downs of supplies and the increases that might come in the future would have a much more limited impact on us. I would remind you that these increases have had a much, much more limited impact on the United States than the oil price increases of the seventies, for example, because we're so much more energy efficient.

The final point I would like to make is, there are all kinds of problems and historical explanations for why the Mid-Atlantic and New England States are so dependent on home heating oil, and no place else is, but it's not a good situation. It's just not. We need to examine it. That's one of the things I asked Secretary Richardson to look at, is look at what are the institutional barriers for businesses and individuals converting away from heating oil to heating sources that are more commonly used in other places? What are the costs? Are there any Federal actions that might be undertaken in concert with the States or with the private sector to help minimize those costs and facilitate a conversion?

The people on home heating oil are the most vulnerable people in America, by a good long ways, to these radical swings in oil prices. And it's also because they're delivered essentially by individual businesses who come to your home and send you a bill. Consumers don't have the option that many of you who live in DC have, for example. You can average your electric bills. You can average your utility bills over a period of months. So if you have a couple of bad months, you can average them out. Those options are not available to them either.

So I think we have to look long term, in my judgment, at whether there's a conversion strategy there that would enable a whole different energy future to open up in terms of home and business energy usage.

Yes.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, on the topic of gun control, as you're well aware, the central sticking point in the Congress is over this division between

the Senate and the House over a waiting period for gun sales at gun shows. The Senate has endorsed 72 hours. The House and a goodly number of Democrats endorsed 24 hours. Would you accept a compromise in-between, sir, or is that 72-hour waiting period so important, you prefer no bill to a compromise?

The President. Well, first, I think, to me, this is a fact question. There are two benefits to the waiting period. One is, does it really give you an adequate amount of time to check the records? And two is, should there be a cooling-off period if somebody who is really hot buys a gun with a bad intent and might cool down and refrain?

If you move away from 72 hours to a shorter period, then the question is, since so many of these gun shows occur on the weekend, will there be access to the records to do the check? Will you be able—I mean, to me, in terms of all compromises—at least, I can only tell you what I believe—this is not theology. This is, what does it take as a practical matter to have a bill that works to keep people alive? I mean, there's no question that the Brady bill has kept a lot of people alive. And there is, furthermore, no question that there has not been a huge amount of inconvenience in the waiting period.

Now, I know what the argument is. The argument is, well, the gun show people are mobile. So it's not like you can wait 5 days, go back to the same store where you placed the order for the gun, and it's going to be there 5 days from now. And the gun shows are mobile. I understand what the problem is. But there has got to be a solution here that deals with that. Maybe they could park the guns at the local police department or something else. There's got to be some way to deal with this that allows us to have a practical law that works. The one thing I will not do is, I will not sign a law which promises the American people that this is going to make them safer, and it won't do it.

But I am not hung up—I don't think we should be hung up on any of the facts. The facts should be, what is necessary to make us a safer people? What is necessary to save more lives? That should be the only driving concern.

Yes, go ahead, Jim [Jim Angle, Fox News].

2000 Campaign

Q. Mr. President, is a candidate's past record on abortion fair game in a campaign? The First

Lady seems to think it is; the Vice President seems to think it isn't.

The President. Oooh. [Laughter] Now, if I get into that, then you'll have me handicapping that debate last night. [Laughter]

Let me just say this. I'll make a generic comment about that because I think all of you are going to be writing about this. I see, you know, one candidate says this about the other's record. Then one complains about how the other one interprets his record and all that kind of stuff. I have never seen a hard-fought political race where candidates did not disagree with their opponent's characterization of their record and their positions. I mean, that's part of the debate, and it's always going to happen.

And again, I think anything I say to get in the middle of that is not—I'm not running for office, and by and large, I think I shouldn't comment under—there may be a few exceptions, but I think basically the American people are in the driver's seat. They're making this decision. I get to vote like everybody else, but I'm not a candidate, and I don't think I ought to get in the way unless there's some specific issue related to something I've done as President.

Yes.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, may I return to Northern Ireland, sir? In light of what's happened this week, wasn't it a mistake not to ask for specific assurances to disarm from the IRA, not Sinn Fein but the IRA, in advance of going down the political road and starting a new government?

The President. I think Senator Mitchell believes—who, you know, negotiated the Good Friday accords—that like any accords of that kind, there were compromises involved that both sides had to accept about the other. And I believe he thought he got the strongest agreement he could. It was ratified overwhelmingly by the Irish people, by both communities in the North and overwhelmingly by the Republic of Ireland.

It has been honored, to date, in all of its specifics, including standing up the governmental institutions, although there was a delay of several months in doing that. And then the de Chastelain report came out, and then after the British Government passed through the Parliament the bill, in effect, suspending the institutions and reasserting control over Northern Ire-

land, the IRA made certain representations which General de Chastelain considered quite hopeful. And now they're in a rough spot.

But I don't think you can Monday-morning-quarterback that. I think Senator Mitchell and all the people who were negotiating it got the best deal they could from both sides. And I think what we have to recognize now is, while this is a very unfortunate development, a year ago at this time the Irish had had no taste of what self-government was like. They now have had it, and they like it—positive point number one.

Positive point number two: The IRA has given no indication whatever that they will revert to violence. And so that means that they still think, no matter what the rhetoric says, that all the parties really believe that they ought to find a way to work this out. And I can assure you, virtually every day since I've been here, we've worked on this. And in the last several days, we've been involved on a daily basis, and we're working very hard to work this out. I can't tell you what the end will be. I can only tell you that I think we're way ahead of where we would have been, and I still think there's a good chance we'll get there.

Yes, Claire [Claire Shipman, NBC] and then Susan [Susan Page, USA Today].

Vice President Al Gore

Q. Maybe this will be one of the exceptions that you'll be willing to make. Senator Bradley has made it a point of late to challenge Vice President Gore's veracity, essentially, to cast him as a politician not to be trusted. He's been your Vice President for the last 7 years. Are you offended by those remarks? Certainly there's nobody in a better position than you to speak to his character.

The President. Well, my feelings are not relevant, but I can say this: He has always—one of the great strengths that he had as Vice President is that he was always brutally honest with me. I mean, he was never afraid to disagree with me. And when we had very tough decisions, very often we'd be in these big meetings, and very—you see these—when these tough decisions come down—and I mean this, no offense to any of you; this is actually a compliment to you. But when you've got seven people in a meeting and some huge decision is on the line and you realize that if you make the wrong call, it cannot only be bad for the country, it

could be very bad for the health of the administration, it's amazing to see how some people guard their words because they're so afraid that what they say, even though the meeting is in confidence, will be public. In all those tough times, he took a—he decided what he thought was right, and he took a clear and unambiguous stand. And I think the country is better for it.

And I could give you lots of examples. I mean, when it was an unpopular thing to go into Kosovo, he wanted to do it. When it was unpopular to go into Bosnia, he wanted to do it. When it was unpopular to stand up for freedom in Haiti, he wanted to do it. When only 15 percent of the people thought we ought to help Mexico but I knew it could hurt our economy, he was right there. And I could go on and on. So all I can tell you is that in all my dealings with him, he has been candid in the extreme and all anyone could ever ask.

Now, I'll say again what I said before: I have never seen a tough race where people fought with each other where they didn't have different interpretations of each other's record and each other's positions. And then once you disagree with someone's position or someone's record, then the person will say, "I just think you're mischaracterizing it." Now, depending on the level of heat and intensity of the campaign, how they say that and how they feel about it will go up or down. But this happens in every election.

And I think the important thing to remember is, you've basically got four people running for President now who are people of accomplishment, people who have certain convictions, people who have, I think, pretty clear philosophies and records. And I know that everybody will get hot and mad at everybody else, but, I mean, this is not a bad thing for America, this choice they've got. And they're very different.

So America has a good choice. And I think that it's tough to be in these races, and when you're not running anymore, you can look back—everybody can look back on a life in public life and say, "There's one thing I said I kind of wish I hadn't said," or, "I said that, and I believe what I said, but I wish I said it in a slightly different way." But by and large, what's happening here is just perfectly normal, and we shouldn't get too exercised by it.

Q. You don't think Bill Bradley's charges have been below the belt?

The President. Well, I don't agree—I'm not going to get into characterizing his charges. You ask me if the Vice President—I don't have to fight this campaign for anybody. You asked me if the Vice President has been perfectly honest and candid with me, and I said, yes, in the extreme. And that's true, and America's been well served by it. That's all I can say.

My experience is that he is exceedingly honest and exceedingly straightforward and has taken a lot of tough positions which, since he always, presumably, knew he wanted to run for President, could have cost him dearly, and he did it anyway. And I was proud of him for doing it.

Yes, Susan.

Kashmir

Q. Mr. President, I would like to follow up on Steve Holland's question. You said that it's up to India and Pakistan to settle the issue of Kashmir and that they have not asked the U.S. to help mediate that dispute. If India and Pakistan both ask the United States to get involved to try to help mediate the issue of Kashmir, would the United States be willing to do that?

The President. Absolutely. I would. Why? For the same reason we've been involved in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. Because, number one and most importantly, it is a hugely important area of the world. If the tensions between India and Pakistan on the Indian subcontinent could be resolved, it is my opinion, based on my personal experience with people from India, people from Pakistan, and people from Bangladesh, that the Indian subcontinent might very well be the great success story of the next 50 years.

You're talking about people who are basically immensely talented, have a strong work ethic, a deep devotion to their faith and to their families. There is nothing they couldn't do. And it is heartbreaking to me to see how much they hold each other back by being trapped in yesterday's conflicts—number one.

Number two, like Northern Ireland and the Middle East, this country has been deeply enriched by people from the Indian subcontinent, and I think we might be, because of our population, in a position to make a constructive contribution. But if they don't want us, it won't be doing any good. We'd just be out there talking into the air. And I'm not in for that.

Yes, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Post-Presidency Legal Issues

Q. Mr. President, by your answer earlier to John Roberts [CBS News], did you mean to say that you or your lawyers would not offer a defense to the Committee on Professional Conduct?

The President. No, I meant to say I'm not going to discuss it any more than I absolutely have to because I don't think I should be dealing with it. I should be dealing with my job.

Yes, Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. You say you're not running this year, but you are casting a shadow over the debate on the campaign trail. And all of the candidates—

The President. I'd like to think I'm casting a little sunshine over it. [Laughter] I keep trying to build these fellows up, you know. I'm being nice and generous and all that. [Laughter]

Q. All of the candidates are running against your behavior and conduct, not just the Republicans, as Helen mentioned, but all of the candidates.

The President. Well, if I were running, I'd do that. [Laughter]

Q. But on the other hand, also all of the candidates, Republicans and Democrats, do sound a lot like you when they talk about policy. Even the Republicans say they want prescription drug coverage for Medicare—

The President. Yes.

Q. —and they support a Patients' Bill of Rights with the right to sue. And I am wondering if you could comment on both aspects of your influence, both the negative, the fact that everybody seems to be running against your behavior, and also, on the other side, why everyone seems to sound like you when they discuss policy.

The President. First of all, I think, for the Republicans, it's probably good politics to do that, because they spent years and years trying to tell everybody how bad I am.

Q. But it's not just—

The President. So, so—but for everybody—the public, however—people are really smart, you know, and it's pretty hard to convince them that they should hold anyone responsible for someone else's mistake, particularly a personal

mistake. I mean, I can't imagine any voter ever doing that. That's like shooting yourself in the foot.

I even caution people, for example, if somebody says something—one of you says something or prints something or has a story that we don't agree with—I tell people all the time, "Don't ever talk about the press. There is no such thing as 'the press.'" You can't blame—if you think somebody made a mistake, you can't blame everybody else for a mistake somebody made. But that's in a professional context. In a personal context, it's even more true.

So my view is that the voters are going to—this is, as I have said repeatedly, the Presidential election is the world's greatest job interview. And the voters are going to hire someone that they believe, of course, is a good person, a strong person, a person who will be a credit to the office. But they want to know, what in the world are they going to do? How are we going to keep this expansion going? How are we going to meet the big challenges facing the country?

And it is, to me, a source of reassurance—not personal but for my country's future—that so many of the candidates have adopted at least some of the policies that we have tried to put in place over the last 7 years, that moved the country away from this big, deep partisan division that dominated Washington politics for so long.

So all I can tell you is, I think—my instinct is that the voters are going to take the measure of these people. They're going to think: Who will be a good President; who will make good decisions; and do I agree with this person, in terms of priorities and positions? That's what I think. I think the implication that anybody would be held responsible for somebody else's mistake or misconduct is just—it's a real insult to the American people. And they're not going to do that. That's not in their interest, and it's not in their nature. They're too smart and too good for that.

Yes.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, would you rule out the one-year automatic renewal of China's normal trading status, unless Congress disagrees? And do you think that would be a formula Democrats would find easier to accept?

The President. That would be a—I would not support that because, in order to get China into the WTO and in order for us to benefit from the terms of the agreement that Ambassador Barshefsky and Gene Sperling and others made with China, they have to get permanent normal trading status. And since you asked the question, let me tell you why I feel so strongly about it. This is not a political issue for me. This is a huge national security issue, for three reasons.

Number one, our biggest trade deficit is with China, because China has access to our markets and our access to theirs is highly restricted. This trade agreement offers no increased access to the American markets by China but gives us dramatically increased access to their markets. Moreover, it means that we can get access to their markets without having to transfer technology or agree to do manufacturing in their country. And we retain specific rights, even once China is in the WTO, on a bilateral basis to take action if there is a big surge of imports in some sector into our economy that would throw a lot of people out of work in a short time.

So, economically, from agriculture to high-tech products to automobiles and all things in between, I think this agreement is a clear hundred-or-nothing deal for us, if the price of admission to the WTO is modernizing and opening the economy.

Number two, having China in a rule-based system increases the likelihood not only that China will follow the rules of the road in terms of the international economy but that China will cooperate more in other forums, the United Nations and many other areas—to try to help reduce, rather than increase, the proliferation of dangerous weapons or technology, for example. That's what I believe with all my heart.

Number three, I believe this agreement will change China from within, more than all the other economic opening of the last 20 years combined, fairly rapidly because of the dramatic increase in access to communications and contact with the outside world that this agreement portends.

Now, as I said in the State of the Union Address, and I tried to say it again when I went over to Switzerland to talk, the truth is, I don't know what choice China will make. I don't know what path China will take, and neither does anyone else. I don't want to oversell

this to the American people in that sense. But what I believe I do know, based on all my experience not only as President but just with human nature, is that they are far more likely to be constructive members of the international community if they get into the WTO and they make these changes than if they don't.

And I think it's quite interesting—one of the things that has really moved me on this, since one of the big issues with which we have differences with China is in the repression of political and religious expression, is how many of the religious groups that actually have missions operating in China agree with this. People that have actually worked there, lived there, and been subject to some of the repression there agree that what we're doing is the right thing to do. I think that a substantial—a majority of opinion in Taiwan agrees that this is the right thing to do.

So I'm going to push this as hard as I can. I want to get the earliest possible vote I can. And I cannot tell you how important I think it is. I think that if we didn't do this, we would be regretting it for 20 years. And I think 10 years from now we'll look back, and no matter what decisions China makes, we'll say the only thing we could control is what we did, and what we did was the right, the honorable, and the smart thing to do for America over the long run.

Yes.

Federal Election Commission

Q. Both Senator Bradley and Vice President Gore have condemned your nomination of Bradley Smith to the FEC. Would you care to take this opportunity to explain exactly why you've nominated this man and to say what exactly this says about your own commitment to the campaign finance reform that you said you would support?

The President. Well, it doesn't say anything about my commitment, although I think they were right to condemn it, except that—look at what the law says. The law says, A, this is a Republican appointment, and B, as a practical matter, the way the appointments process works in the Senate, if you want anybody to be confirmed for anything, you have to take—and the Republicans in this case happen to be in the majority—the majority leader always makes that recommendation.

Now, I have—I argued with him, as he will tell you, for months about this. And there is a reason they wanted Bradley Smith on the FEC. You know, he hates campaign finance reform, Bradley Smith does. He’s written about it. And he’ll get a 3-year appointment now, where it will be one person on the FEC. And I don’t like it, but I decided that I should not shut down the whole appointments process and depart from the plain intent of the law, which requires that it be bipartisan and by all tradition that the majority leader make the nomination.

And I think it ought to be instructive for the American people, and you ought not to change the subject and confuse them. We have a bill, the McCain-Feingold bill before the Congress. The administration is for it. Both the Democratic candidates for President are for it, and 100 percent of our caucus in the Senate and the House are for it, every last person down to the last man and woman. There is only one reason this is not the law: The Republicans are not for it.

And ever since I’ve been here—we didn’t have unanimous support in ’93, but ever since ’94, ’95, somewhere in there, we always had a big majority of the Democratic Party for campaign finance reform and a big majority of the Republicans against it, even though some Republicans are for it. But basically, the big majority of the Republican Party, particularly in the House and the Senate—I don’t mean out in the country; I mean in the House and the Senate—are against this. That’s why it is not the law of the land.

That is the ultimate truth. This appointment demonstrates that. It’s the poster child—this should be—this is like a big neon sign, “Hello, America needs”—if you care about this issue, you need to know what the real issue is here. Ever since I’ve been here, there’s been an attempt to say, “Oh, a pox on both their houses. The Democrats don’t really care. If they really cared, if the President really cared, somehow we would have this.” It is just not true. What else can we do? Both our Presidential candidates, the White House, and 100 percent of our Members of Congress are for it. Why hasn’t there been a signing ceremony? Because they are against it.

Now, this man, his writings and his honest convictions demonstrate that. And I hope there will be no further doubt about this. The American people can make their own decision.

Go ahead.

Hillary Clinton’s Senate Campaign

Q. Mr. President, current polls show that your wife is virtually tied with her likely challenger, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, when it comes to women voters in New York, and that she is trailing when it comes to white voters. And by most accounts, women will play a decisive role in this race. Can you address why you think your wife is having some trouble connecting with women voters, in particular; what advice, if any, you’re offering her to help her better connect? And are you playing the role of a senior strategist in her campaign?

The President. Well, I’m basically doing for her what she’s always done for me. You know, I’m talking to her about whatever she wants to talk about. I’m giving her my best ideas. I thought she had a wonderful announcement. I was really proud of her. She got up there and said that she understood she was new to the neighborhood, but she wasn’t new to the concerns of the people of New York. And then she said in exact detail—she did what I believe all candidates should do—she said, “Look, if you vote for me, here’s what you get. Here’s what I’ll fight for. Here’s what I’ll do. Here’s what I’ll fight against. Here’s what I won’t do.”

And now the campaign is underway, and I think she’s doing remarkably well, given the unusual nature of the campaign and the formidable obstacles out there. And I think now the people will begin to listen and debate, and I think she’ll do real well. But I’m very proud of her, and I think she’s doing fine.

But you should not—all I’m doing for her is what she did for me. So when she says something, it’s what she believes. And she’s made up her mind what she wants to run on, what she wants to be for, and why she wants to do it. And I was ecstatically happy with the way her announcement came out, because I just knew it was her. And I just think if—you know, you just go out there and make your best shot and hope that it works. But my instinct is, she’ll do right well.

Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service], go ahead.

Public Access to the President

Q. Sir, do you see any way to make the Presidency a position that is closer to the people? It’s sort of aloof now. And you’re a friendly

type of man. You must see some means whereby you can bring the Presidency down to the people more.

The President. Well, I think part of what makes the Presidency aloof is that if you show up for work every day, you don't have as much time to spend with people as you'd like. I think that—I think technology will help some. I think this web chat I did earlier this week with Wolf Blitzer [Cable News Network], where he asked me questions, but he also let a lot of other people ask questions—I thought that was a good way to do it. I think that—in my first term, I did a lot of these townhall meetings, and I think they're good, although I think they tend to get turned in a certain way around whatever's breaking in the news at any given time.

I've tried to not get too aloof from the people. I went down to the Rio Grande Valley the other day. I was the first President since President Eisenhower to go down there, and I've been there three times. And a lot of people came out, and I stopped along the street and talked to them and visited with them. I think that you have to have—I think doing these press conferences helps. I think using the Internet and finding other ways that ordinary citizens can ask you questions in the course of your work helps. And I think that you have to find the proper balance of work in Washington and getting out with the folks to do that.

It's a constant struggle, but my instinct is that technology will help. I think a lot of you, for example—I think your jobs are changing because of the way technology works. And there will be ways that you also can help make people in public life less aloof and bring more people into it. It's going to be very interesting.

Yes, go ahead.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, to follow up on what you said before, you said that no one should be held accountable for somebody else's actions. But if you examine the suspension of the powers in Northern Ireland last week, the British Government was holding Sinn Fein responsible for the IRA not disarming. According to the Good Friday accord, they encouraged both sides to encourage disarmament. Is there any protest on your part to the British Government for bringing down a democratically elected government and—similar to the way you pointed your finger at the IRA in a statement saying that you hoped

that there wouldn't be any backsliding after they retracted their previous statements?

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, I was in constant contact with the Irish and the British Governments, and I think we all know what is going on here. The question is, how can we keep the peace process going; how can we get the institutions back up; and how can we keep the Unionist Party involved and under the leadership of David Trimble, an objective I believe that Sinn Fein strongly supports? That is, I believe that they believe that they have to have people they can work with in order to make this thing last.

I have found that my influence is greater when I say what I think about most of these things to the parties themselves but when I don't try to make their jobs any harder by what I say, particularly after the fact. Now, our big job now is to get these people back on track. In order to do it, we have to honor the votes of the people of Northern Ireland; we've got to stand these institutions back up; and then all the parties that said they supported the Good Friday accords and the people they represent, who voted in record numbers for it, they've got to comply. And we've got to find a way to get this done.

And I think that—I know it's not satisfying to a lot of people; they want me to be judgmental about everything. And all I can tell you is, in private I've tried to be straightforward and clear with them. But I don't want to say anything that would make it even harder to put this thing back together. We've got to keep going forward. The most important thing now is to look about how to go forward and how to get—how to keep the Unionists in harness and how to find a way to comply with all the requirements, including putting those institutions back up.

Yes.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, back on the rising oil prices, Secretary Richardson is beginning a series of consultations with oil companies. Do you think that this will have some moderating effect on oil prices?

The President. I think that oil prices may well moderate. We'll have to see about that. But what I think that he wants to do is to make sure that we've gotten rid of some of the bottlenecks. There are plainly some reasons that are

only indirectly related to the general rise in oil prices—that home heating oil prices, for example, have gone up so explosively. That’s why he went up to Boston first and why the Coast Guard is trying to assure rapid delivery of the oil.

So I think that he believes that in his talks with the oil companies—not necessarily he can talk the oil prices in the aggregate down but that they may be able to take certain specific steps which would alleviate some of the biggest burdens on them.

Yes.

Q. [*Inaudible*—the oil-producing countries, I believe he’s going to make some consultations around the world.

The President. Yes, I think we’re in regular touch with them, and they know what our views are. I think that’s all I should say about that.

Yes.

DNA Testing for Death Row Inmates

Q. Back on an earlier question, the death penalty, you mentioned that supporters of the death penalty, like yourself, have a special burden to make sure that innocent people are not executed. And you mentioned the Leahy bill, but you didn’t state a position on that. That would make DNA testing available to death row inmates. Is it a good idea? Is it workable? Would you sleep better at night if it were law?

The President. Well, first of all, the reason I didn’t take a position on it—I tried to make it clear that I am quite favorably disposed toward it, but I just learned about it in the last couple of days, and I’ve asked our people to review it, to answer the questions that you ask.

Would I sleep better at night, if it were law? If it would really work, I would. In other words, I am favorably disposed toward it. I just want—and we just have a review underway to analyze the law, how it would work, whether it will work, what, if any, practical problems are there. And I am trying to come to grips with it, and as soon as I do, I’ll be glad to state a position. But I want to make it clear—I thought I had made it clear before—I am favorably disposed.

Yes.

Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

Q. On the issue of Vieques and Puerto Rico, currently there is major resistance by religious groups, civic groups, opposition parties to the agreement reached on Vieques. There’s contin-

ued civil disobedience on Navy lands. This might entail a Waco-style operation to get these protesters out. Are you willing to go all the way with Federal authority to clear these Federal lands? And as a followup, do you believe in your heart that Puerto Rico’s colonial status is the root of this problem or is related to Puerto Ricans’ ambivalence to issues of national security?

The President. I think the root of the problem—I think the root of the problem is twofold. One is, as the Pentagon has acknowledged—and they should get credit in Puerto Rico for doing this. It’s hard to get people in Washington to admit they’re wrong, including me. We all hate to do it, you know, including you. We all hate to do it. The Pentagon has acknowledged that the 1983 agreement was not followed in letter and spirit. They have acknowledged that. That left a bad taste in the mouths of the people of Vieques and of all Puerto Rico.

Problem two is the unwillingness of the Congress to give a legislatively sanctioned vote to the people to let them determine the status of Puerto Rico. Now, I think those are the roots of the problem.

Now, there may be some people there who, on any given day, would be, I don’t know, against the military or would think the military shouldn’t train or whatever. But it’s clear that if you look at the offer we made—to begin now to give the western part of the island to Puerto Rico; to facilitate transit back and forth between Vieques and the main island; to do a lot of the other environmental and economic things on the island of Vieques; to have no live fire in the short run here while we’re going through this transition period; to cut the training days in half; and then to let the people decide for themselves with the future of the island is; but to give us a transition period when we don’t have any other place to train—it is a perfectly reasonable compromise, unless either those first two things are eating at you, so you don’t trust anything America or the Pentagon does, or unless you’re just philosophically opposed to America having a military which has to train.

So I still believe it’s a good agreement. I will continue to work with the Governor, with the mayor in Vieques, with the authorities, with a view toward trying to work this out.

I want the people of Puerto Rico to decide this. You know, I did a message to them. I wish they could decide their status. If it were

just up to me, if I could sign an Executive order and let them have a sanctioned election, I would do it today. And I view this compromise as an empowerment of the people of Puerto Rico and, to that extent, a ratification of their longstanding grievances.

But the people of Vieques should be able to decide this. And I don't think that—just as I don't think the Pentagon should impose it on them, I don't think the demonstrators should stop them from having a vote either. I think they ought to be able to make a judgment.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 186th news conference began at 2:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nicholas Kunselman and Stephanie Hart, students at Col-

umbine High School, Littleton, CO, who were murdered in a Subway sandwich shop on February 14; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Gov. George H. Ryan of Illinois; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; David Trimble, leader, Ulster Unionist Party; Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico; and Mayor Manuela Santiago of Vieques, PR. Reporters referred to Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Judge Susan Webber Wright, U.S. District Court for Arkansas, who presided over the Paula Jones suit against the President; and former Senator Bill Bradley. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action Concerning Imports of Steel Wire Rod

February 16, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to provide to the Congress documents called for by section 203(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, pertaining to the safeguard action that I proclaimed today on imports of steel wire rod.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The proclamation and memorandum of February 16 on action concerning imports of steel wire rod are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education Dinner

February 16, 2000

Thank you very much. Dr. McClure, my mother is up in heaven smiling at that introduction. And she's probably the only person who heard it who believes every word of it. [*Laughter*] But I liked it, and I thank you. [*Laughter*]

I thank you so much, all of you, for welcoming me. To your chair-elect, Joann Boyd-Scotland, who sat with me for a few moments; your CEO, my long-time friend Dr. Henry Ponder; Dr. Earl Richardson, who welcomed me

to Morgan State not too many years ago, and then Vice President Gore yesterday; to Dr. Iris Ish and all the members of my Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; to my president, the Arkansas Baptist College president, Dr. William Keaton, my long-time friend.

I want to also have a special word of acknowledgement to your vice president, Dr. Wilma Roscoe. Her daughter, Jena, works in the White

House; that's really why I'm here tonight, to preserve peace in the family. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the White House members who are here: the Director of our Office of Public Liaison, Mary Beth Cahill; and Ben Johnson, who has done a wonderful job for us. I know he spoke here earlier today. I also would like to thank Catherine LeBlanc, who is Executive Director of our Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. And I congratulate all the alumni award winners here tonight.

When Dr. McClure was saying his kind words, what I wanted to say was, I feel like the luckiest person alive, that at this moment in history I was fortunate enough to be given a chance to serve as President and to focus the attention of the Nation on the future, on some old-fashioned ideas: everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; everybody's got a role to play; we all do better when we help each other. The work I have done to build one America for a new century was a joy every day. Even on the darkest days, the fact that I had this job to do for you and for our children and our children's children made this a joy.

And I think of all you have done to make the last 7 years possible. Think about what a different country America would be today had it not been for the institutions all of you represent. Think about what a different administration I would have had. We have Alexis Herman, the Secretary of Labor, graduate of Xavier. Togo West, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Bob Nash—the hardest job in the White House—he handles my appointments. I get the credit when they get it; he takes the blame when they don't. [*Laughter*] And Judith Winston, who ran our One America initiative when I put my White House committee together on race. All graduated from Howard. Dr. David Satcher, from Morehouse; Terry Edmonds, my chief speechwriter, from Morgan State.

But if you think about this economy we have, which is not only the longest expansion in history but has given us the lowest African-American unemployment rate ever recorded and the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years—that would not have happened if it hadn't been for the educational opportunities provided by the people in this room and their forebears, and you should be very, very proud of that.

I was very glad to be invited to come by here and to be able to redo our schedule so

I could come, because I wanted to make one simple point to you. Everybody knows how important your institutions were to 20th century America. I want everybody to know how important your institutions will be to 21st century America.

A third of all the undergraduate and advanced degrees awarded to African-Americans are awarded by your institutions. I want America to know that and to know what a vital role you play in building your communities, nurturing new businesses, and revitalizing neighborhoods, as Howard is doing here in our hometown of Washington. I want America to know about your enormous contributions to research. I want every American to know that last November Tennessee State astronomers made the world's first direct detection of a planet orbiting another star.

We've done what we could to play our role. The Vice President and I have worked hard to be good partners to you. I told Earl, Al Gore was so happy that he got to go to Morgan State yesterday, because when I got to go to Morgan State to give a commencement address, to talk about, of all things, science and technology—not him, I got to talk about that—he was so jealous. [*Laughter*] And I just told him, I said, "It won't be long before nobody pulls rank on you anymore, but I'm going there." And he got to go yesterday.

We want people to know what's going on. And we want you to be able to define a mission for the 21st century that will help to create opportunity for every responsible American. We now have 30 agencies in our Government all singing out of the same hymnal, working for you, to help you reach your goals and your aspirations. The budget I just submitted to Congress includes almost a 40 percent increase in HBCU funding, including the new dual degree program Secretary Riley talked about yesterday.

I want to ask you now to think beyond that. In the State of the Union, I said that I thought America should be proud of what we had done together these last 7 years, but not satisfied. There's a big difference. We should remember that we got to where we are as a country with the right vision and the right values and an awful lot of effort—an awful lot of effort. All of you know, because of the work you do, that the one constant of the time in which we live is change; that there is an inherent dynamism in this moment which rewards people who are

educated, who work hard, who can think and create, and punishes the sluggards mercilessly.

And I don't want to see our country become a sluggard in 2000 just because we're feeling good about ourselves. I don't want to see Washington become a sluggard in 2000 just because there's an election on the horizon that will occupy the headlines, because what is rewarded is action. And so I ask you to help me convince our country and our Congress that this may be an election year, but it's still got to be an action year.

We have an action agenda. You know, I think we can really say—with the HOPE scholarships, with the direct student loan program, with a million work-study positions, with the increases in the Pell grants—we've opened the doors of at least 2 years of college now to every American who will work for it. But it's time to open the doors of college for 4 years to every American who will work for it.

That's why we want to raise the Pell grant again. That's why I want to make college tuition tax deductible up to \$10,000, and I want to do it in a progressive way so that whether the family is in the 15 percent income tax bracket or the 28 percent income tax bracket, they get a 28 percent tax deduction for college tuition. This can make a huge difference to help children stay in school.

One of the things that bothers me most is that since 1993 we have a 10 percent increase in the percentage of our high school graduates going on to college. A couple years ago, for the first time in history, the percentage of African-Americans graduating from high school on time was almost identical to the white majority. The percentage going on to college has significantly increased. But the dropout rate is still way too high.

You wait till this census comes in. And it will give you a profile of the American people and their incomes and their prospects. And what it will show is just what the 1990 census showed, but more so: People with an education do well; people without an education work harder for less. We've got to get these kids into college; we've got to keep them in college. And you have to help us, financially, academically, in every way. I have proposed some new college completion grants to try to help schools experiment with new strategies to keep young people in school within the TRIO program. I know

that this is a big concern of yours. This is a big issue to America.

I want you to help me convince the country and the Congress that we ought to bring economic opportunity to every area that hasn't seen it. We ought to increase the number of empowerment zones under the program the Vice President has headed so ably. We ought—in every poor neighborhood in America, an inner city, a rural area, an Indian reservation—we ought to give people the same tax incentives to invest there that we give them to invest overseas, in Latin America or Africa or Asia. I'm for helping Americans to invest overseas, but we ought to give them the same incentives to invest in poor areas here, where people are dying to go to work or start businesses or have a better future.

I want you to help me convince the country and convince the Congress that there are still a lot people out there in poverty; that they ought to have access to jobs and education; and that even though we have 2 million-plus fewer children in poverty, there are still too many. And as rich as we are now, as low as our unemployment rate is now, there is no excuse for any child in America living in poverty. And we ought to say as a goal, we're going to make sure that we increase the earned-income tax credit for working families; we're going to make sure that we increase child care support; we're going to do whatever it takes to make sure that every parent can succeed at home and work, and no child is raised in poverty. I want you to help me convince the Congress and the country that that is the right thing to do.

The one thing you can play a big role in is making sure we close the digital divide—it's okay to clap for that, that's good. [*Applause*] I was so pleased to learn of your new agreement with Gateway to empower your students, your faculty, your alumni with a million affordable new computers; to put in place the E-commerce tools for improving distance learning, on-line admissions, registration, and financial aid. It's a good company, doing what I think we ought to do.

I visited Gateway's offices in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I met with all their young employees who worked there. They had young people from seven, eight, nine different countries working in one office there, talking all over the world where they were selling these computers. And

Ted Waitt and the people at Gateway have decided that if they're trying to bring that kind of opportunity to the rest of the world, they ought to be closing the digital divide here at home. I applaud them, and I applaud you for working with them. We have to do more with that. There is so much we can do to help young people skip a generation of educational and economic development, in terms of time, if we close the digital divide.

I ask you to help me persuade the Congress to give the biggest increase in civil rights enforcement in history—we still have actual problems with bigotry and discrimination out there—to enforce the equal pay laws; and to pass hate crimes legislation; to do things that will give us the tools to create one America.

Let me just say this briefly in closing. I know you all agree with my agenda. I know you do, and I'm grateful for the support you've given us in everything we've worked on through the years together. But the truth is, you're feeling pretty good here tonight, too. Things are going pretty well at home, aren't they? Yes, you know some people in trouble, but more people are doing better. And so we're all feeling pretty good. The great test of our people in this age is what we do with our good feeling. How many times—anybody that's over 30 in this audience will identify with this—how many times in your life have you made a mistake not because things were going badly but because things were going well?

The whole history of the civil rights movement is about people who were saints under fire. People'd burn crosses in their yards, throw rocks or bullets through the front window. Stand up and be counted. March down the street. We're commemorating Selma this year. We honor these people. But how many times have you made a mistake and failed, and your courage and your vision has failed you, not because you were under duress but because things were going so well you thought there were no consequences to taking your eye off the prize? And I want you to have a good time here tonight, but I want you to hear me about this.

I thank you for acknowledging what I've tried to do with you for America. But being President should always be honor enough. If nobody ever did another thing for me in my life, and I spent the rest of my life doing for other people, I would never catch up, not ever. So what I want to say to you is, take a little time tonight while

you're having fun at dinner and clapping for the award recipients and feeling pretty good about where you are and where your institutions are, but think about what you are going to do with this good fortune and what your country is.

You know, you talked about me being a little boy in Hope. I'm talking to you now more as a citizen than as a President. I'm not running for anything, you know. [Laughter] And most days, I'm okay about it. [Laughter] And I think about the young people and how I've always said, don't stop thinking about tomorrow; keep your eyes on the future; always have a vision. But I also know that to understand today and tomorrow, you have to have some sense of what yesterday was like.

This month when we celebrated the longest economic expansion in history, I did a little looking into, and thinking about, what was the longest economic expansion until this one. You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1968. Now, I remember what that was like. I remember in the beginning how full of hope we were when President Kennedy was elected. I remember when President Kennedy was assassinated, how heartbroken we were, but how we rallied as a country behind President Johnson.

All these people that look back at the sixties and say American cynicism started when President Kennedy was assassinated are just wrong. That's not true. This country was heartbroken, but we stood up together, and we joined hands. And Lyndon Johnson provided great leadership, and he pulled us together. So in 1964, I'm graduating from high school into an America that was the nearest like this America. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. And everybody thought as difficult as the civil rights problems were, they were going to be resolved in a peaceable manner, with this wizard in the White House and the votes in Congress, to lawfully give African-Americans what they were constitutionally entitled to. And all the while we would win the cold war against communism, and we would create the greatest society America had ever known. That's what I believed the night I graduated from high school.

Two years later, we had riots in the streets, a half a million people in Vietnam; the country was beginning to be deeply divided. Two years after that, I graduated from college in this city, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was assassinated, 2 months and 4 days after Martin Luther King

was killed, 5 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't see his way clear to run for President again. The streets were burning in Washington, DC and the country was broken and divided. And we decided a Presidential election on the politics of division, the so-called Silent Majority. You remember that? The Silent Majority was, "There are two kinds of folks in America, the Silent Majority and the loud minority, and you're either 'us' or 'them.'" [Laughter] We can laugh about it. But I want you to hear me now. I'm not running for anything.

I have waited 35 years and some months for my country to be in a position again to build the future of our dreams for all our children. We dare not blow this. Every one of you who can remember how we felt in those early days of hope—you don't know whether in your lifetime you'll get a third chance. America has a second chance to do it together, to build one America, to give all our kids a good education, to give health care to all our people, to lead the world to peace and freedom, to figure out how to live together across all the lines that divide us. We have a chance.

And it's so easy to forget that it requires effort, because things are going well. When you go home tonight, before you put your head on the pillow, just remember where you were, if

you're old as I am or just old enough to remember where you were the last time America thought everything was going to be all right, more or less automatically—it would be taken care of by then—and how quickly we lost it all.

I have waited 35 years. You can take us where we need to go—in the heart of every boy and girl who wasn't alive back then, in the spirit as well as the mind. We can do it, but we've got to work at it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Wesley C. McClure, chair, Joann R.G. Boyd-Scotland, chair-elect, Henry Ponder, president and chief executive officer, Earl S. Richardson, secretary, and Wilma Roscoe, vice president, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; Lucile Ish, Vice-Chair, President's Board of Advisers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Jena Roscoe, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Liaison; J. Terry Edmonds, Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting; and Ted Waitt, chairman and chief executive officer, Gateway 2000, Inc.

Remarks to the Opening of the National Summit on Africa *February 17, 2000*

Thank you very, very much. It's a wonderful thing to be introduced by an old friend. Old friends and people you have appointed to office will tell false, good stories about you every time. [Laughter]

Africa never had a better friend in America than Andrew Young, and I thank him. I want to say I'm honored to be in the presence today of so many distinguished Africans. Secretary Salim, thank you for your visionary remarks and your leadership. President Moi, thank you for coming to the United States and for giving me another chance to visit with you and for the work we have done together. Vice President Abubakar, thank you for what you are doing in Nigeria to give that great country its true promise at long last. We thank you, sir.

I welcome all our distinguished guests from Africa: Mrs. Taylor, Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors. I thank all the Americans who are here, beginning with Andy's wife, who puts up with this relentless travel of his around Africa. Mayor Williams, thank you for welcoming us to Washington. There are three Members of our Congress here today representing what I hope will be a stronger and stronger bipartisan commitment to the future of Africa, Congressman Royce and Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, I thank you for being here.

I want to thank Leonard Robinson and Herschelle Challenor and all the people responsible for this remarkable conference. Thank you, Noah Samara, and thank you, Bishop Ricard,

for being here. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to all the people in our administration who have worked so hard to give us an Africa policy that we can be proud of, that I hope will light up the path for America's future.

I know that Secretary Slater has already spoken here. Our AID Director, Brady Anderson, will speak. Our Vice President will be here. You said, Secretary Salim, you hope future administrations will follow our lead in Africa. I know one that would. [Laughter]

I want to thank Susan Rice at the State Department, Sandy Berger, Gayle Smith, all the people in our White House, all the ones who have helped us here.

Secretary Salim said Africa lacks a strong constituency in the United States. Well, I open this National Summit on Africa with a simple message: Africa does matter to the United States.

Of whatever background Americans claim—Leonard Robinson told me when I came here, we even have 17 delegates from Utah here. [Laughter and applause] There they are, you see? Africa matters, not simply because 30 million Americans trace their heritage to Africa—though that is profoundly important; not simply because we have a strong interest in a stable and prosperous Africa—though 13 percent of our oil comes from Africa, and there are 700 million producers and consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, though that is important. Africa's future matters because the 21st century world has been transformed, and our views and actions must be transformed accordingly.

For most of history, the central reality in international relations was that size and location matter most. If you were a big country or on a trade or invasion route, you mattered. If not, you were marginalized. The average American child growing up in the past saw African nations as colorful flags and exotic names on a map, perhaps read books about the wonderful animals and great adventures. When colonialism ended, the colors on the flags were changed and there were more names on the map. But the countries did not seem nearer to most Americans.

That has all changed now, for the central reality of our time is globalization. It is tearing down barriers between nations and people. Knowledge, contact, and trade across borders within and between every continent are exploding. And all this globalization is also, as the

barriers come down, making us more vulnerable to one another's problems: to the shock of economic turmoil, to the spread of conflict, to pollution, and, as we have painfully seen, to disease, to terrorists, to drug traffickers, to criminals who can also take advantage of new technologies and globalization, the openness of societies and borders.

Globalization means we know more about one another than ever before. You may see the Discovery Channel in Africa. I was thinking of that when that little film was on. The Discovery Channel followed me to Africa and talked about how they were building communications networks in African schools to share knowledge and information. We can find out within seconds now what the weather is in Nairobi, how a referendum turned out in Zimbabwe, how Cameroon's indomitable Lions performed in the latest soccer match. [Laughter] We can go online and read the Addis Tribune, the Mirror of Ghana, the East African, or dozens of other African newspapers. We sit in front of a television and watch people in a South African township line up to vote. We also now bear witness to the slaughter of innocents in Rwanda or the ravages of AIDS in scores of lands or the painful coincidence of remarkable growth and abject poverty in nation after nation.

In other words, it is no longer an option for us to choose not to know about the triumphs and the trials of the people with whom we share this small planet. Not just America and Africa; I would imagine millions of Africans identified with the Muslims of Kosovo when they were run out of their country, all of them at one time. We know about each other. We can no longer choose not to know. We can only choose not to act, or to act.

In this world, we can be indifferent or we can make a difference. America must choose, when it comes to Africa, to make a difference. Because we want to live in a world which is not dominated by a division of people who live on the cutting edge of a new economy and others who live on the bare edge of survival, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to broaden global growth and expand markets for our own people, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to build a world in which our security is not threatened by the spread of armed conflict, in which bitter ethnic and religious differences are resolved by the force of argument, not the force of arms, we

must be involved in Africa. Because we want to build a world where terrorists and criminals have no place to hide and where those who wish harm to ordinary people cannot acquire the means to do them harm, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to build a world in which we can harness our natural resources for economic growth without destroying the environment, so that future generations will also have the chance to do the same, we must be involved in Africa.

That is why I set out in 1993, at the beginning of my Presidency, to build new ties between the United States and Africa, why we had the first White House conference, the ministerial, and that wonderful trip in the spring of 1998 that I will remember for the rest of my life. I went to Africa as a friend, to create a partnership. And we have made significant progress. There are challenges that are profound, but in the last 2 years we have seen thousands of triumphs, large and small. Often they don't make the headlines because the slow, steady progress of democracy and prosperity is not the stuff of headlines.

But for example, I wish every American knew that last year the world's fastest growing economy was Mozambique; Botswana was second; Angola, fourth. I wish every American knew that and understood that that potential is in every African nation. It would make a difference. We must know these things about one another.

People know all about Africa's conflicts, but how many know that thousands of African soldiers are trying to end those conflicts as peacekeepers and that Nigeria alone, amidst all its difficulties, has spent \$10 billion in these peacekeeping efforts?

For years, Africa's wealthiest country, South Africa, and its most populous, Nigeria, cast long, forbidding shadows across the continent. Last year South Africa's remarkable turnaround continued as its people transferred power from one elected President to another. Nigeria inaugurated a democratically elected President for the first time in decades. It is working to ensure that its wealth strengthens its people, not their oppressors. These are good news stories. They may not be in the headlines, but they should be in our hearts and our minds as we think of the future.

No one here, no one in our Government, is under any illusions. There is still a lot of work to be done. Hardly anyone disagrees about

what is needed: genuine democracy, good government, open markets, sustained investment in education and health and the environment and, more than anything, widespread peace. All depend, fundamentally and first, on African leadership. These things cannot be imported, and they certainly cannot be imposed from outside.

But we must also face a clear reality: Even countries making the right policy choices still have to struggle to deliver for their people. Each African government has to walk down its own road to reform and renewal, but it is a hard road. And those of us who are in a position to do so must do our part to smooth that road, to remove some of the larger barriers so that Africa can fully share in the benefits and the responsibilities of globalization.

I tell the American people all the time, and they're probably tired of hearing it now, that I have a very simple political philosophy: Everybody counts; everybody has a role to play; everybody deserves a chance; and we all do better when we help each other. That is a rule we ought to follow with Africa.

There are five steps in particular I believe we must take. First, we must build an open world trading system which will benefit Africa alongside every other region in the world. Open markets are indispensable to raising living standards. From the 1970's to the 1990's, developing countries that chose trade grew at least twice as fast as those that chose not to open to the world.

Now, there are some who doubt that the poorest countries will benefit if we continue to open markets, but they should ask themselves: What will happen to workers in South Africa and Kenya without the jobs that come from selling the fruit of their labors abroad? What will happen to farmers in Zimbabwe and Ghana if protectionist farm subsidies make it impossible for them to sell beyond their borders?

Trade must not be a race to the bottom, whether we're talking about child labor, harsh working conditions, or environmental degradation. But neither can we use fear to keep the poorest part of the global community stuck at the bottom forever. Africa has already taken important steps, forming regional trade blocks like ECOWAS, the East Africa Community, and SADC. But we can do more. That is why our Overseas Private Investment Corporation in Africa is working to support 3 times as many business projects in 1999 than it did in 1998, to

create jobs for Africans and, yes, for Americans as well. That is why we are working with African nations to develop the institutions to sustain future growth, from efficient telecommunications to the financial sector.

And that is why, as soon as possible, we must enact in our Congress the bipartisan “African Growth and Opportunity Act.” This bill has passed in one version in our House and another version in our Senate. I urge the Congress to resolve the differences and send me a bill for signature by next month. [Applause] And I ask every one of you here who just clapped—and those who didn’t, but sympathize with the clapped—[laughter]—to contact anyone you know in the United States Congress and ask them to do this. This is a job that needs to be done.

We must also realize the trade alone cannot conquer poverty or build a partnership we need. For that reason, a second step we must take is to continue the work now underway to provide debt relief to African nations committed to sound policies. Struggling democratic governments should not have to choose between feeding and educating their children and paying interest on a debt. Last March I suggested a way we could expand debt relief for the world’s poorest and most indebted countries, most of which are African, and ensure the resources would be used to improve economic opportunity for ordinary African citizens. Our G-7 partners embraced that plan.

Still, I felt we should do more. So in September I announced that we would completely write off all the debts owed to us by the countries that qualified for the G-7 program, as many as 27 African nations in all. The first countries, including Uganda and Mauritania, have begun to receive the benefits; Mozambique, Benin, Senegal, and Tanzania are expected to receive benefits soon. Mozambique’s debt is expected to go down by more than \$3 billion. The money saved will be twice the health budget—twice the health budget—in a country where children are more likely to die before the age of 5 than they are to go on to secondary school.

Last year I asked Congress for \$970 million for debt relief. Many of you helped to persuade our Congress to appropriate a big share of that. Keep in mind, this is a program religious leaders say is a moral imperative and leading economists say is a practical imperative. It’s not so often

that you get the religious leaders and the economists telling us that good business is good morals. It’s probably always true, but they don’t say it all that often. [Laughter] We must finish the job this year. We must continue this work to provide aggressive debt relief to the countries that are doing the right thing, that will take the money and reinvest it in their people and their future. I ask you, especially the Americans in this audience: If you believe in what brought you here, help us to continue this important effort.

A third step we must take is to give better and deeper support to African education. Literacy is crucial to economic growth, to health, to democracy, to securing the benefits of globalization. Sub-Saharan Africa has the developing world’s lowest school enrollment rate. In Zambia, over half the schoolchildren lack a simple notebook. In rural parts of Tanzania, there is one textbook for every 20 children. That’s why I proposed in our budget to increase by more than 50 percent the assistance we provide to developing countries to improve basic education, targeting areas where child labor is prevalent. I ask other nations to join us in this.

I’ll never forget the schools I visited on my trip to Africa, the bright lights in the eyes of the children, how intelligent they were, how eager they were. It is wrong for them to have to look at maps of nations that no longer exist, without maps of nations in their own continent that do exist. It is wrong for them to be deprived of the same opportunities to learn that our young people have here. If intelligence is equally distributed throughout the human race—and I believe it is—then every child in the human race ought to have a chance to develop his or her intelligence in every country in the world.

A fourth step we must take is to fight the terrible diseases that have afflicted so many millions of Africans, especially AIDS and also TB and malaria. Last year 10 times as many people died of AIDS in Africa as were killed in all the continent’s wars combined. It will soon double child mortality and reduce life expectancy by 20 years.

You all laughed when Andy Young said that I was going to get out of the Presidency as a young man. Depending on the day, I sometimes feel young, or I feel that I’m the oldest man my age in America. [Laughter] The life expectancy in this country has gone from 47

to 77 in the 20th century. An American who lives to be 65 has a life expectancy in excess of 82 years. AIDS is going to reduce the life expectancy in Africa by 20 years. And even that understates the problem, because the people that escape it will live longer lives as African economies grow and strengthen.

The worst burden in life any adult can bear is to see a child die before you. The worst problem in Africa now is that so many of these children with AIDS have also already lost their parents. We must do something about this. In Africa there are companies that are hiring two employees for every job on the assumption that one of them will die. This is a humanitarian issue, a political issue, and an economic issue.

Last month Vice President Gore opened the first-ever United Nations Security Council session on health issues, on a health issue, by addressing the AIDS crisis in Africa. I've asked Congress for another \$100 million to fight the epidemic, bringing our total to \$325 million. I've asked my administration to develop a plan for new initiatives to address prevention, the financial dimensions of fighting AIDS, the needs of those affected, so that we can make it clear to our African partners that we consider AIDS not just their burden but ours, as well. But even that will not be enough.

Recently, Uganda's Health Minister pointed out that to provide access to currently available treatments to every Ugandan afflicted with AIDS would cost \$24 billion. The annual budget of Uganda is \$2 billion. The solution to this crisis and to other killer diseases like malaria and TB has to include effective, inexpensive vaccines.

Now, there are four major companies in the world that develop vaccines, two in the United States and two in Europe. They have little incentive to make costly investments in developing vaccines for people who cannot afford to pay for them. So in my State of the Union Address, I proposed a generous tax credit that would enable us to say to private industry, "If you develop vaccines for AIDS, malaria, and TB, we will help to pay for them. So go on and develop them, and we'll save millions of lives."

But I have to tell you, my speech—and I don't want anybody else but me to be responsible—my speechwriters were so sensitive, they didn't put this in the speech, but I want to say this: AIDS was a bigger problem in the United States a few years ago than it is today.

AIDS rates are not going up in African countries—all African countries; they're actually going down in a couple of African countries.

Now, I know that this is a difficult and sensitive issue. I know there are cultural and religious factors that make it very difficult to tackle this issue from a preventive point of view. We don't have an AIDS vaccine yet. We have drugs that will help to prevent the transmission from pregnant mothers to their children, which I want to be able to give out. We have other drugs that have given people with AIDS in our country normal lives, in terms of their health and the length of their lives. I want those to be available. But the real answer is to stop people from getting the HIV virus in the first place.

I got to see firsthand some of the things that were being done in Uganda that were instrumental in driving down the AIDS rate. Now, I don't care how hard or delicate or difficult this is; this is your children's lives we're talking about. You know, we who are adults, when our children's lives are at stake, have to get over whatever our hangups or problems are and go out there and do what is necessary to save the lives of our children.

And I'll help you do that, too. That's not free; that costs money. Systems have to be set up. But we shouldn't pretend that we can give injections and work our way out of this. We have to change behavior, attitudes, and it has to be done in an organized, disciplined, systematic way. And you can do more in less time for less money in a preventive way, to give the children of Africa their lives back and the nations of Africa their futures back, with an aggressive prevention campaign than anything else. And there is no excuse for not doing it. It has to be done.

Finally, let me say there is one more huge obstacle to progress in Africa, that we are committed to doing our part to overcome. We must build on the leadership of Africans to end the bloody conflicts killing people and killing progress. You know the toll: tens of thousands of young lives lost in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; thousands killed and disfigured at unbelievably young ages in the civil war that nearly destroyed Sierra Leone; 2 million killed by famine and war in Sudan, where government sees diversity as a threat rather than a strength and denies basic relief to citizens it claims to represent.

Most of the world's conflicts pale in complexity before the situation in the Congo. At least seven nations and countless armed groups are pitted there against each other in a desperate struggle that seems to bring no one victory and everyone misery, especially the innocent people of the Congo. They deserve a better chance. Secretary Albright has called the Congo struggle Africa's first world war. As we search for an end to the conflict, let us remember the central lesson of the First World War: the need for a good peace. If you mess up the peace, you get another World War.

A year ago I said if the nations of the region reached an agreement that the international community could support, I would support a peacekeeping operation in the Congo. The region has now done so. The Lusaka cease-fire agreement takes into account the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Congo, the withdrawal of foreign forces, the security of Congo's neighbors, the need for dialog within the nation, and most important, the need for the countries within central Africa to cooperate in managing the region's security. It is more than a cease-fire; it is a blueprint for building peace. Best of all, it is a genuinely African solution to an African problem.

There is still fighting in Congo. Peace will not happen overnight. It will require a steady commitment from the parties and the unwavering support of the international community. I have told our Congress that America intends to do its part by supporting the next phase of the U.N.'s peacekeeping operation in the Congo, which will send observers to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

We need to think hard about what is at stake here. African countries have taken the lead, not just the countries directly affected, either. They are not asking us to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they have asked is that we support their own efforts to build peace and to make it last. We in the United States should be willing to do this. It is principled and practical.

I know—I see the Members of Congress here. I say again—I see Congressman Payne, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Congressman Royce—we need to stand by the people of Africa who have decided how to solve this most complex and troubling problem. We have learned the hard way in the United States, over decades and dec-

ades, that the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war. And we need to remember that as we approach our common responsibilities in central Africa.

Finally, let me say that I intend to continue to work hard on these things for every day that I am President. For me, the remarkable decade of the 1990's began with the liberation symbolized by Nelson Mandela's first steps from Robben Island. In a few days, I will have the opportunity to join by satellite the conference in Tanzania that President Mandela is organizing to build peace in Burundi.

A lot of people look at Africa and think, oh, these problems are just too complicated. I look at Africa, and I see the promise of Africa and think, if the problems are complicated now, think how much worse they'll be if we continue to ignore them.

Other people grow frustrated by bad news and wish only to hear good news. But empty optimism does Africa no more service than groundless cynicism. What we need is not empty optimism or groundless cynicism but realistic hope. We need to see the promise, the beauty, the dreams of Africa. We need to see the problems clear and plain and stop ignoring the evident responses. We in the United States need to understand that our obligations to be good partners with Africa are not because we are certain that everything will turn out all right but because it is important. Because we're human beings, we can never expect everything to turn out all right.

Africa is so incredibly diverse. Its people speak nearly 3,000 languages. It is not a single, monolithic place with single, monolithic truths. A place of many places, each defined by its own history and aspirations, its own successes and failures. I was struck on my trip to Africa by the differences between Ghana and Uganda, Botswana, and Senegal, between Capetown and Soweto. I was also struck by what bound people together in these places.

In George Washington's first draft of his Farewell Address, he wrote, "We may all be considered as the children of one common country." The more I think about globalization and the interdependence it promises and demands, the more I share that sentiment. Now we must think of ourselves as children of one common world. If we wish to deepen peace and prosperity and democracy for ourselves, we must wish it also for the people of Africa. Africa

is the cradle of humanity, but also a big part of humanity's future.

I leave you with this thought: When I think of the troubles of Africa, rooted in tribal differences; when I think of the continuing troubles in America across racial lines, rooted in the shameful way we brought slaves here from West Africa so long ago, and our continuing challenges as we integrate wave after wave after wave of new immigrants from new places around the world, I am struck by the fact that life's greatest joy is our common humanity, and life's greatest curse is our inability to see our common humanity.

In Africa, life is full of joy and difficulty. But for too long, the African people have lacked for friends and allies to help the joys overcome the difficulties. The United States will be a friend for life.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks,

he referred to master of ceremonies and summit national cochair Andrew Young and his wife, Carolyn; Salim A. Salim, Secretary General, Organization for African Unity; President Daniel T. Moi of Kenya; President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar of Nigeria; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Noah Samara, chairman and chief executive officer, WorldSpace Corp.; Gayle Smith, Director of African Affairs, National Security Council; Minister of Health Crispus W.C.B. Kiyonga of Uganda; former President Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; and the following National Summit on Africa officers: national co-chair Bishop John Ricard, board of directors members Andrea L. Taylor and Herschelle S. Challenor, and president and chief executive officer Leonard H. Robinson, Jr. The President also referred to ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, and SADC, the South African Development Community.

Statement on Indications of a Third Consecutive Budget Surplus *February 18, 2000*

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. When I came into office, the debt had quadrupled over the previous 12 years. The deficit had reached a record \$290 billion and was projected to keep rising as far as the eye could see. As a result, interest rates were high, and growth was slow. We have turned this around with strong deficit reduction packages in 1993 and 1997 and tough choices in each and every budget. As a result, we have enjoyed back-to-back budget surpluses for the first time in over 40 years.

The latest financial numbers from the Department of the Treasury indicate that we are on track this year to reach a third consecutive budget surplus. The surplus in the first 4 months of this fiscal year was \$25 billion larger than the surplus last year. These surpluses will allow us to repay a projected \$157 billion in debt this year alone, bringing the debt reduction over 3 years to nearly \$300 billion. If we maintain our strategy of fiscal discipline, we can keep our economy strong and pay down the debt by 2013 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Message on the Observance of Presidents' Day, 2000 *February 18, 2000*

I am pleased to join all Americans in observing Presidents' Day.

Today we salute the leadership and achievements of all those who have held America's highest elected office, and we celebrate with

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special pride the rich legacies of Presidents Washington and Lincoln.

As our first President, George Washington gave strength and legitimacy to our young democracy while ensuring that the newly formed federal government remained accountable to the American people. A leader of exceptional courage and vision in both war and peace, he helped shape the 13 colonies into a nation dedicated to the values of liberty and justice for all.

More than 70 years later, Abraham Lincoln sought to reunite Americans behind these same fundamental values. Through the extraordinary hardship and sacrifice of the Civil War, he remained devoted to the causes of freedom and equality and to preserving our Union. In the waning days of that cruel conflict, he showed remarkable compassion and determination in his

efforts to bind our nation's wounds and restore dignity to all our people.

It was within view of our national monuments to these two great leaders that thousands of our fellow Americans recently joined Hillary and me to welcome the first moments of the 21st century. The era of unrivaled prosperity and peace in which we now live affords us a singular opportunity to reaffirm the values that guided Washington and Lincoln and that have shaped our national character and destiny for more than 200 years. By strengthening our democracy, embracing equal justice and opportunity, and celebrating our diversity, we can continue to build the America that they envisioned and strived so hard to achieve.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on Signing the Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act of 2000

February 18, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2130, the "Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act of 2000." I applaud the sponsors of this important legislation.

This legislation will, among other things, place gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB)—a drug that is abused for its psychoactive effects and, less frequently but more perniciously, used as a tool by sexual predators—in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Making GHB a Schedule I controlled substance appropriately reflects the Congress' judgment that GHB has a high potential for abuse by sexual predators; that its possession and distribution should therefore be prohibited; and that violators should be subject to stringent criminal sanctions.

The Act directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and implement a plan for a national campaign to educate young adults, youths, law enforcement personnel, educators, school nurses, rape victim counselors, and hospital emergency room personnel on: (1) the dangers of date-rape drugs; (2) the applicability of the CSA to such drugs, including penalties; (3) how to recognize signs that an individual may be a victim of such drugs,

and (4) the appropriate response when an individual exhibits such symptoms. The Act also requires HHS to collect data on the incidence of date-rape drug abuse and report the information annually to the Congress.

The Act will not impede ongoing research into the potential legitimate use of this drug to treat the special needs of those suffering from narcolepsy. Indeed, this Act creates a special exemption that provides that the manufacture and distribution of this drug for properly approved research purposes will be subject to the physical security requirements of Schedule III rather than Schedule I.

In approving H.R. 2130, I note that section 8(c)(1) of the bill requires the Attorney General to submit to the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that sets forth the recommendations of a unit of the Drug Enforcement Administration, an entity within the Department of Justice. By mandating the disclosure of an internal Department recommendation, this provision infringes on my constitutional responsibility to preserve the confidentiality of executive branch deliberations. Accordingly, I shall construe the

provision to be advisory, and I hereby direct all executive branch officials to do likewise.

I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of those Members of Congress who brought about passage of this important legislation: Representatives Fred Upton, Sheila Jackson-Lee, Bart Stupak, Sherrod Brown, and Michael Bilirakis and also Senators Spencer Abraham and Orrin Hatch. Their efforts have strengthened the rights and safety of thousands

of women, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for the leadership they have shown in bringing this issue to our Nation's attention.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 18, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 2130, approved February 18, was assigned Public Law No. 106-172.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action Concerning Line Pipe Imports February 18, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to provide to the Congress documents called for by section 203(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, pertaining to the safeguard action that I proclaimed today on imports of line pipe.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The proclamation and memorandum of February 18 on action concerning line pipe imports are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address February 19, 2000

Good morning. On February 12, 1926, as a tribute to the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, the noted African-American scholar and historian Carter G. Woodson initiated Black History Week, the forerunner of what has become Black History Month.

This observance is important because many of the stereotypes and much of the distrust between the races are the result of historical inaccuracies or omissions that have persisted over too many years. The truth is, whether we're talking about the heroic freedom-fighting efforts of the Black Moses, Harriet Tubman, or the landmark legal accomplishments of Thurgood Marshall, we're really talking about vital aspects of all Americans' history. But too many Americans are not aware of the extraordinary contributions African-Americans have made to the life of our Nation, and that's a tragedy.

Together, we have come a mighty long way. Today, we're in the midst of the longest and

strongest economic expansion in our Nation's history: nearly 21 million new jobs; unemployment at 4 percent, the lowest rate in 30 years; incomes up across all groups of American workers; and among African-Americans, poverty and unemployment rates at the lowest levels ever recorded. Crime, which has been especially devastating to many African-American neighborhoods, is now the lowest it's been in 25 years. We've cut taxes for millions of hard-pressed working families and cut the welfare rolls in half while moving millions of people—almost 7 million of them—from welfare to work.

But still there are wide and disturbing disparities in health, income, perceptions of justice, and educational achievements that break down along the color line. It is clear we must do more to close these gaps and give all our citizens a chance both to contribute to and share in our growing prosperity and promise. That is one of the reasons I created a One America Office

in the White House last year, and why the Vice President and I have worked so hard to bring loans and new investments to distressed communities through empowerment zones, the Community Reinvestment Act, community development banks, and now through our new markets initiative.

Especially, we need to make sure our young people are prepared for this new economy, by helping every child enter school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. More Americans—and more African-Americans—are going on to college than ever before. But we must give every child that chance, and we must help their families shoulder the burden.

Today I'm pleased to announce that the Department of Labor is awarding \$223 million in youth opportunity grants to bring education and job training to up to 44,000 young people in 36 communities, from Watts to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This will provide a lifeline of opportunity to any young person willing to work for a better future. And it's a key component of our broader youth opportunity agenda.

We've requested an increase of \$1.3 billion this year to bring an array of education and training assistance to at-risk youth, from the GEAR UP and TRIO mentoring and support programs to get more kids on the right track to success, to an increase in Pell grants to help more of them afford the cost of college.

These youth opportunity grants will draw on the experience and dedication of people like Jacqueline Sharp Massey of Baltimore's Career Academy. For 20 years, Jacqueline has made history of her own by helping literally hundreds of young people to turn their lives around, peo-

ple like 20-year-old Michael Dupree, who with the help of the Academy has gone from being a high school dropout to a biotechnology lab assistant and a member of Baltimore's Youth Council.

Sixty years ago today, the Army Air Corps activated its second squadron of African-American fighter pilots in Tuskegee, Alabama. That squadron and three others fought fascism in the air and racism on the ground. As Tuskegee Airmen, the sky was their limit. And they helped to lead the way to this modern digital age in which there are virtually no limits to how high our people can fly. Their story is a precious contribution to our common history and very much worth remembering this Black History Month.

Their belief in an America that would respect their courage and honor their service is the foundation of the America we all want to live in, one where every person is treated with dignity and respect and all our children have the chance to live their dreams.

That's the America we should work for in the new millennium.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:25 p.m. on February 18 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The National African American History Month proclamation of January 31 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Videotaped Remarks on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

February 21, 2000

Rising oil prices have brought hardship to many families struggling to pay heating bills. I've released \$295 million in emergency funds to help low income families cope with home heating cost. But many struggling families aren't aware they qualify for aid. That's why I've asked States to help make sure they reach as many eligible families as possible. To find out if you're

eligible for help with heating bills, contact your State government or call 1-800-735-8004.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 6:30 p.m. on February 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast as a public service announcement. A

tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Teleconference Remarks to Participants in the Burundi Peace Talks February 22, 2000

[*The teleconference is joined in progress. Former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa stated that the leadership in Burundi was committed to peace, and he then turned the discussion over to President Clinton.*]

President Clinton. Well, thank you very much. First of all, President Mandela, let me thank you for the efforts you are making for peace in Burundi. I know that all the parties there appreciate it, and I can assure you that people all around the world appreciate your efforts.

I also want to say that I am joined here by our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright; my National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger; my Chief of Staff, John Podesta. We want you to know how important the United States believes it is for a peace to be achieved in Burundi.

This work began under President Nyerere, and we thank you for continuing the effort. I want to also say to the people of Burundi, America cares about the peace process there, and America wants all the parties to succeed. I also want to pay tribute to President Mkapa and the people of Tanzania for hosting the talks and being good neighbors. And I thank the facilitators from the Nyerere Foundation who work each day to help their brothers and sisters from Burundi to achieve peace.

I am very glad that I can speak to you because of this modern technology. It's a symbol of our growing interdependence. And I'm thrilled that the sounds and the images of these deliberations are being beamed back to the people of Burundi.

I want to say that, in a way, my speaking to you through this technology shows that the greater openness of people and borders makes us more interdependent in ways that are positive and, particularly, negative as well. As the world shrinks, we are all more vulnerable to the problems of those beyond our borders—all those with whom we share this small planet Earth. All of us benefit when others build peace; all suffer when others suffer.

That is why you are there, Mr. President, and why I am honored to be joining you in this way today. We understand what is at stake, first, for the people of Burundi who have suffered so much death, fear, and insecurity; for all of Africa; and, indeed, for the rest of the world.

Just last week I attended the opening in Washington of our National Summit on Africa. More than 2,000 Americans participated, people from all 50 of our States, from every walk of life and every racial and ethnic background. All came because they believe in Africa's promise and because they want to work with Africans to realize it by building a more open world trading system, by standing with young democracies, by lifting the burden of debt, by supporting education in Africa and fighting malaria, TB, and, of course, AIDS.

The United States wants to build a common future with all of Africa. The real question for the leaders from Burundi who have gathered with you in Arusha is whether your country will share in the promise of this future. Will you lead the way to a lasting settlement for the larger conflicts in the Great Lakes region? Will you show the way for other societies in Europe and Asia that are also victimized by these kinds of ethnic conflicts? Or will you hesitate and falter?

If that were to happen, I am afraid a disaster would befall your people, and it would seep beyond your borders. We have seen how a spark lit in one small part of this region can engulf the whole.

To most of us outsiders, the choice is clear. I know that to our friends from Burundi, who are burdened with painful memories, it is more complicated. Yet I have found that all the great peacemakers somehow find a way to let their real grievances and pain go and walk away, not just from imagined but from very real grievances.

The late Israeli Prime Minister, my friend Yitzhak Rabin, said, "You do not make peace with your friends." And Mr. President, of course, your own life is the most powerful example of the good that comes from letting go of legitimate grievances and harm.

So I ask the people who are gathered there to remember the examples of what works in this new and exciting world, and to let go of their old hurts, even if they are legitimate—perhaps especially if they are legitimate, because nothing that happened yesterday will take care of today and tomorrow, and the children of Burundi deserve leaders who are looking to today and especially to tomorrow.

It requires vision to believe that in the end we'll all be better off if we work together; that people of different tribes and ethnic groups, different races and religions, all need one another; that violence is bad because it just breeds more violence; and that sustainable peace and security can be achieved only by negotiation, by what you are doing there; that everyone comes out ahead when all members of society feel that they have a common stake in the nation.

It requires courage for these leaders to accept the risks of peacemaking. It's easy for me, half a world away, to tell the leaders of the various parties they should do this. But I know they have to go back and explain it to those whom they represent. So, even though it's easy for me and hard for them doesn't change the fact that it's still true: The courageous and brave thing to do is to find reconciliation and to give everyone a role to play in Burundi's future.

Of course, there are those who doubt that you will succeed. There are those who believe some places are simply cursed by their past and condemned to a future of endless conflict. But Mr. President, if that were true, your old cell on Robben Island would still be occupied today instead of being the site that all the tourists want to see.

We can change; all of us can change. And I thank you again for helping the people of Burundi to change. I applaud the effort of all who are gathered there in Arusha and the vision and courage that brought you there. I support the efforts to form a new social compact and a single, indivisible, democratic nation.

I call upon those armed groups still using violence to suspend hostilities and come to the negotiating table. You do not have to abandon

your points of view, just to defend them with the force of argument, not the force of arms.

And let me say to all our Burundian friends who are present there, the United States and our partners will do all we can to ensure that these talks to succeed and to help create the economic conditions essential to a sustainable peace. My Special Envoy, Howard Wolpe, will continue to work with you, and I thank him for his dedication. We will do this because it's the right thing to do and because we, too, have a stake in your future. We will do it because we have faith in you, President Mandela, and in other African nations who have pledged to see this process through.

Ultimately, of course, the people of Burundi and their representatives will have to decide what to do. You have all known fear and insecurity and loss. I ask you, do not condemn your young children to what you have known in the past. Seize this chance to give them a different future. Give them a country where they can sleep in their homes, walk to their schools, worship in their churches, and rise to their potential without being at war with their neighbors; a country that helps to fulfill the promise of Africa, that is part of the life of the world.

This will be a long and difficult journey. But as you go forward, I want the people of Burundi to know the people of the United States are prepared to walk with you. We will reach our destination together. *Turikumwe*—I am with you. And I thank you.

[At this point, President Mandela thanked President Clinton and made brief remarks.]

President Clinton. Thank you. Let me just say very briefly how much I appreciate those remarks and, again, how much I appreciate all the parties being in Arusha. And you may be sure that the United States will continue to support this process. And if the process achieves an agreement which brings peace, we want to support Burundi. And we want to use this process, and your role in it, Mr. President, as a shining example to other troubled countries in Africa and throughout the world that there is a way to walk away from war toward a peaceful future.

So again, I thank you. I pledge my support. And I am very impressed by what all of you have done. I urge you to stay there and keep working at it. You can do it, and the United

States will be with you. Thank you very, very much.

President Mandela. Well, goodbye, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:50 a.m. from the Situation Room at the White House to Burundi peace talks participants at the Inter-

national Conference Center in Arusha, Tanzania. In his remarks, he referred to President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania; and Howard Wolpe, Special Envoy of the President and Secretary of State to Africa's Great Lakes region. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Mandela; however, it did not include the opening portion of the teleconference.

Remarks on Efforts To Improve Patient Safety *February 22, 2000*

Thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking Barbara Blakeney for her words and her work on the frontlines of health care, and for the true visionary leadership that the nurses of our country have given efforts for health care reform, certainly for all the days that I have been privileged to be here as President, and long before.

I want to thank Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman for the work that they have done on the whole issue of quality health care, on medical errors, and their pioneering work for the Patients' Bill of Rights.

I thank Senator Jeffords, Senator Specter, and Senator Harkin for being here. They had an important hearing today, and I can tell you that—I was talking to them for a few moments outside—they are passionately interested in and very well-informed about this issue. And as we all know, when we have a bipartisan commitment in the Congress to solving a problem in America, it normally gets solved. And I thank you all very much for your dedication.

I want to thank all the people who are here from the National Government. John of AHRQ—I like that. That's pretty good. [*Laughter*] Tom Garthwaite, Sue Bailey, Paul London, all the people here from all the other agencies who have worked so hard on this. Thank you very, very much. Thank you, Ken Kizer. I thank the leaders representing consumers, health care plans and providers, business, labor, and quality experts who are here. And of course, I want to thank the National Academy of Sciences' Institutes of Medicine for its landmark report.

As Secretary Shalala said, the IOM study focused new light on what has been a high priority

of ours, which is ensuring that all Americans get the highest quality health care in the world. Secretary Herman pointed out that this is about more than saving lives—the dollar cost of—it is about more than money, and it's even about more than saving lives, because it's about the toll in lost trust in the health care system. We heard a lot about it when the IOM study came out.

But we know that if we do the right things, we can dramatically reduce the times when the wrong drug is dispensed, a blood transfusion is mismatched, or a surgery goes awry. As I have said many times, I will say again, I'm not here to find fault. I'm here to find answers.

We do have the best health care system in the world, the finest health professionals in the world. New drugs, new procedures, new technologies have allowed us to live longer and better lives. Later this year, when researchers finish the mapping of the human genome, it will lead to even greater advances in our ability to detect, treat, and prevent so many, many diseases.

But the growing advances have been accompanied by growing complexity in our health care delivery system. I might say it's complicated by the choices we have made about how we finance it and operate it. So the time has plainly come, as a result of the IOM study, to just take a step back and ask ourselves: How can we redesign the system to reduce error? Have we given all of our caregivers adequate training? Do they adequately coordinate with and communicate with one another? Do all settings have the right kinds of teams and systems in place to minimize mistakes?

These are the kinds of questions that were asked and answered in our landmark efforts as Americans to improve aviation safety and workplace safety. And if these questions are properly asked and answered in the context of the health care system, they will dramatically reduce errors there as well.

Last December I directed our own Health Care Quality Task Force to analyze the IOM study, to report back with recommendations about how we can follow the suggestions they made to protect patients and promote safety. This morning I received the task force report, and I am proud to accept all its recommendations.

Our goal is to reduce preventable medical errors by 50 percent within 5 years. Today I announce our national action plan to reach that goal.

First, we agree with the need to establish a focal point within the Federal Government to target this challenge. So today I propose the creation of a new center for quality improvement in patient safety. My budget includes \$20 million to support the center, which will invest in research, develop national goals, issue an annual report on the state of patient safety, and translate findings into better practices and policies.

Second, we will ensure that each and every one of the 6,000 hospitals participating in Medicare has patient safety programs in place to prevent medical errors, including medication mistakes. These new systems save lives and over time, of course, also save money. I commend hospitals for the steps they have already taken, and we'll work with them and other health care experts to develop this regulation in the coming months.

Third, as we seek to make sure that the right systems are in place, we need to make sure they are working. Today I am releasing our plan for a nationwide, State-based system of reporting medical errors, to be phased in over time. This will include mandatory reporting of preventable medical errors that cause death or serious injury, and voluntary reporting of other medical mistakes and so-called near misses or close calls.

Reporting is vital to holding health care systems accountable for delivering quality care and educating the public about the safety of their health care system. It is critical to uncovering weaknesses, targeting widespread problems, ana-

lyzing what works and what doesn't, and sharing it with others.

Twenty-one States already have mandatory error reporting systems. We want to make sure they have the tools to do it right, and that every other State will follow suit. That's why we'll be working with the National Quality Forum, a private-public group of health care experts, to develop a set of patient safety measurements that would lay the foundation for a uniform system of reporting errors.

We also want to replace what some call a culture of silence with a culture of safety, an environment that encourages others to talk about errors, what caused them, and how to stop them in the first place. So we'll support legislation that protects provider and patient confidentiality, but that does not undermine individual rights to remedies when they have, in fact, been harmed. People should have access to information about a preventable medical error that causes serious injury or death of a family member, and providers should have protections to encourage reporting and prevent mistakes from happening again.

And when it comes to reporting, we want the Federal Government to continue to lead by example. The Department of Veterans Affairs already has a mandatory reporting system for death and serious injuries. Beginning this spring, all 500 Department of Defense hospitals and clinics will do the same. And the VA will add a voluntary reporting system in its hospitals nationwide.

Finally, I'm announcing a number of new steps we will take that specifically target medication errors. Each year, medication mixups claim thousands of lives. Sometimes mistakes occur because many different drugs sound or look the same, sometimes because people are taking multiple medications and going to multiple doctors.

I'm calling on the Food and Drug Administration to develop new standards to help prevent medical errors caused by drugs that sound similar or packaging that looks similar. In addition, we'll develop new label standards that highlight common drug interactions and dosage errors. The VA will also put in place computerized systems to prevent medication mistakes; no more handwritten prescriptions that no one can read.

Hospitals that have already taken these steps have eliminated—listen to this—two out of three medication errors. This is very significant. We tend to think all of our problems are the result

of some complex, high-tech glitch. We just want to make sure people can read the prescriptions. Two out of three of these errors can be eliminated.

Taken together, these actions represent the most significant effort our Nation has ever made to reduce medical errors. It's a balanced, commonsense approach based on prevention, not punishment; on problemsolving, not blame-placing.

If we can do this and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, we will have gone a long way toward ensuring quality health care for all Americans in the 21st century. Just think about it. We can cut preventable medical errors in half in 5 years, reduce concerns about lawsuits and about medical mistakes, avoid needless injuries and deaths, save lives, and make the

world's best health care system much better for all Americans.

This is a worthy endeavor. It is one that, as you see, will be bipartisan, and one that I am committed to seeing through. Thank you all for being here, and let's get about the business of doing this.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:53 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara A. Blakeney, first vice president, American Nurses Association, who introduced the President; John M. Eisenberg, Administrator, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; and Paul A. London, Senior Policy Adviser to the Secretary, Department of Commerce.

Remarks at a Reception for Lieutenant Governor Ruth Ann Minner of Delaware

February 22, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, Lieutenant Governor Minner, Senator Biden, ladies and gentlemen. I was sitting here looking at all of your faces, and I reached over and whispered to Joe Biden, I said, "You know, I really like Delaware." [Laughter] It has certain unique parallels to my home State. It's two of the places in America where there are more chickens than people. [Laughter] And depending on what day it is, that's not all bad. [Laughter]

I am profoundly grateful to Delaware for many reasons. You have been so good to me and to Al Gore. Twice you have given me your electoral vote; you supported the Vice President, for which I am very grateful. I couldn't even begin to tell you, in the time I have allotted tonight, all the reasons for my gratitude, respect, and affection for Senator Biden.

Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Go ahead and tell them. [Laughter]

The President. Beginning with his uncommon humility. [Laughter] His retiring personality. [Laughter] His always muted voice. [Laughter] Actually, if you're looking for somebody in American politics who understands what life is like for ordinary people, who's always there to defend the Constitution of the United States,

and understands the rest of the world—in other words, the three big things you've got to do if you're a Senator—there is nobody in the Senate who can do all three as well as Joe Biden. You are very well served.

And the third thing I'd like to say is, I'm also grateful to your Governor for a lifetime, nearly, it seems like, a political lifetime of friendship and all the work we've done together on welfare reform, on strengthening families, on child support enforcement. I'm elated that he's running for the Senate. And I look forward to his success and to his service.

The fourth reason I'm here is, this is my year to support women for elected office. I'm into that. I think we ought to do more of that. [Laughter] Hillary tried to call me right before I got here. She's up in New York and coming home tonight. And I would imagine she was trying to call me before I got here to say that she thinks you guys ought to stick together—[laughter]—and so do I.

But let me tell you, finally, I'm here because I really admire Ruth Ann Minner. I really admire Ruth Ann Minner. Some of you know this, but I was born to a widowed mother who had to leave to go back to school. I can only imagine

what it was like. She had to go back to get a GED, start her own business, depend on herself, raise three sons—I met two of them tonight. They both look like—they look like they ought to be playing for the Redskins—[laughter]. They'd improve our defense a little bit. And I've watched her in public life.

And you know, people make fun of little States. When I ran in '92, President Bush kept referring to me as the Governor of a small southern State. I had to hear him say it five times before I realized it was a putdown; I thought he was bragging on me. [Laughter] I was proud of it; I didn't have any better sense than to think that was a good thing. [Laughter]

You can't really play games with people in a place like Delaware, and you can't posture. And people don't hire you for hot air; they hire you to produce. And people know most of the problems we have are human problems, and they don't expect us to let our political differences paralyze us. And I just wish there were more people like Ruth Ann who have been through the kind of life experiences she's been through, who still had enough energy and optimism left to devote themselves to public life.

We need more people who are making decisions in State capitals who know what it's like to try to feed kids without a high school diploma. We know. We need more people who can remember what it was like when they wondered if their children would be able to get a decent education, who understand what it's like to be on the other side of life's arc of opportunity—both because they understand the government ought to give people a helping hand and because they understand that if the hand is outstretched and you don't work for it, you still won't reach it. We need that. Our country needs it.

And I was flattered that she said that what we needed in this election was to ratify the direction in which we're going. I have only a slightly different take on that, and I'd just like to close with a few moments speaking to you more as a citizen than as your President.

Before I was President, I had the privilege of being Governor for a dozen years, and I loved it, and I was not burned out on it. And every time I got tired, a week or two later I'd get a second wind and go on. I think I could be doing it still, because if you are a truly committed Governor or a truly committed mayor or you have some other responsibilities

at the grassroots level, you can actually see people's lives changing before your very eyes.

And we have—the way I view this last 7 years is that we basically turned the ship of state around. When I took office, we had high unemployment, and the social problems were getting worse, and there was political gridlock in Washington. And we had decades of national elections decided by the politics of division, us and them. And it never made much sense to me, and I tried to turn it around. And I think we have turned it around.

The question for the country now is, what are you going to do with this good fortune? I'd like for more people in positions of influence to have the memories Ruth Ann Minner has of what's it like not to have good fortune. They are more likely to make good decisions in times of prosperity. They are more likely to remember that not all people and communities have participated in this economic recovery; more likely to remember that we still need to keep paying the debt down, get this country out of debt so we'll keep interest rates down for other people; more likely to remember that not every child has a world-class education; more likely to remember that there are still young families out there struggling to balance work and family, trying to succeed at home and at work. And that is very important.

I told somebody the other day, if somebody stood up and ran on a platform, "Vote for me; I'll do just what Bill Clinton did," I'd vote against them, because times are changing. We're living in a time of very rapid change. But I do believe we ought to change in the direction in which we have been going. The question is, ought we turn the country around now? Not me—we. All of us, together.

Now we have a chance to meet the big challenges out there. The longest economic recovery in our history—what are we going to do with it? Now is the time to think about the big challenges: What are the big challenges our kids face? How are we going to deal with the retirement of the baby boom generation? How are we going to grow the economy and continue to improve the environment? Big, big challenges.

And you are so lucky to be backing someone who not only has a distinguished career in public service, a proven ability to make progress, but a life story which guarantees that even in these good times she won't forget what our shared

mission is. That is a great privilege. You ought to make sure the people of Delaware take full advantage of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:09 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware; and Wayne and Gary Ingram, sons of Lieutenant Governor Minner, who was a candidate for Governor.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Maxine Waters February 22, 2000

Thank you. When Maxine said, you know, she looked at me like that, and I said what I said—*[laughter]*—I looked at Sidney, and I said, “Does she ever look at you that way?” *[Laughter]* He said, “After 30 years, what do you think?” *[Laughter]*

Let me say, first of all, on the way over here with Minyon Moore, my political director, and Lynn Cutler, from the White House, I told Minyon—she said, “You know, you’re not running for anything, and you’re still out doing these things.” I said, “Let me tell you something. Maxine gets mad at me, but she was with me from the get-go in 1991, and she was with me on June 2, 1992, in California after the California primary, when I was nominated and all the press wrote that I was actually the third choice of the country, Ross Perot was going to be the next President.” And that was just between June and November. Caution: don’t predict too much about this year—remember that. *[Laughter]*

So we’ve had this wonderful relationship. It has been full, rich, and honest. *[Laughter]* And I have loved it. I told Maxine one time she was mad at me, I said, “You know, Sidney is an Ambassador, and he doesn’t talk to me that way.” *[Laughter]* And she said, “Well, he’s a diplomat. I’m a politician.” *[Laughter]* I’ve got 11 months. If I keep plugging, I’m finally going to win one of these arguments. *[Laughter]* I’m really working on it.

I want to thank my great friends Eleanor Holmes Norton and Elijah Cummings for being here. And Ron Dellums, we’re glad to see you, and thank you for the copy of your book. It’s at your local bookstores—*[laughter]*—I recommend you buying this book. I figure I might as well turn this into a two-fer tonight. *[Laughter]*

And let me say to all of you who are here who have been my friends over these years, I thank you very much. I’m honored to be here. I thank you for supporting Maxine, and I thank her for supporting others. I think we’re all here because she’s so feisty and full of conviction, and because as the years go by she seems to get healthier and more beautiful—*[laughter]*—and more full of energy. She and Sidney, both of them look better than they did the first time I saw them, and that’s saying something. *[Laughter]* And I thought they looked pretty good then.

But we need to remember, in times where all of us have been fortunate enough to come to a place like this, an event like this, that we got here by working hard and by working together on good ideas based on our shared values. And now is not the time to stop doing that. Now is not the time to relax or to become diverted.

The other day I said—some of you were at the White House, I think, the other day when we celebrated Black History Month and I read my radio address. But I want to say that when we celebrated, this month, the longest economic expansion in our history, I went back—and I was curious, so I said, I wondered when the longest expansion in our history was before we got to this month and ours took over. And it was, interestingly enough, between 1961 and 1969. And those of you who were of age then will remember that.

I graduated from high school in 1964. Our country had gone through the terrible trauma of President Kennedy’s assassination. We had rallied behind President Johnson. I thought then, and I believe now, he did a magnificent job of unifying the country and saying we had to take up the unfinished agenda of America.

And he began to push that civil rights legislation through Congress.

And we really believed—my group of young people did, when I went out into the world as a high school senior graduate in '64—we had low unemployment, high growth, low inflation, the Congress dealing in a legal way with the civil rights challenge. And the country was militarily strong, and we thought we could prevail in the cold war. And we thought everything was going to be just fine.

A couple of years later, in southern California, we had riots in the streets. A couple years later, I graduated from college—2 days after Bobby Kennedy was murdered, 2 months after Martin Luther King was murdered, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for President anymore, just a few months before Richard Nixon was elected President on the first sort of divide-and-conquer theme of modern politics called the Silent Majority. You remember that? If there's a Silent Majority, there's got to be a loud minority, and it's "us" versus "them." And just shortly after that, we lost that economic expansion.

What's all that got to do with this? Eleven months from now I'll be a citizen again. I'm talking to you as a citizen now. I have waited over 30 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. We had a chance in the early sixties, but we couldn't manage. The cold war turned hot in Vietnam; the political system breaking down over civil rights at home; and we lost our economic prosperity and our social progress and our political cohesion. And I have waited—as a citizen, not a politician—for 30 years for America to have that chance again.

And it's easier for us now because of the struggles many of you have undertaken over the last 30 years, because the cold war is over. And we will never forgive ourselves if we don't take this chance to build the future of our dreams; say, what are those big issues out there?

Okay, we've got the largest number of kids we ever had in our schools, and they're the most racially, ethnically, religiously diverse. How are we going to give them all a world-class education?

Okay, we've got the crime rate going down, got people like Maxine turning these kids away from gangs toward better lives. How can we now make all our streets safe and America the safest big country in the world?

Okay, we're going to double the number of people over 65 in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] How are we going to take care of them without bankrupting their children and their children's ability to raise their grandchildren?

Okay, we've got the best economy we've ever had, but what about all the people and places—the urban neighborhoods, the Indian reservations, the poor rural areas—that haven't been caught up in this?

Okay, we've got former welfare recipients making a living on eBay. What about the people that haven't bridged the digital divide? A lot of you talked to me about that last night—to-night, I mean.

And you can add your own list. We proved we could grow the economy and clean up the environment, but we're still burning up the atmosphere. How are we going to turn this climate change thing around and still keep giving people a chance to make a living?

There are big questions out there. But unlike the 1960's, we are not as torn by internal crisis or external threat—not that there are no crises, not that there is no threat, but they're not of the same dimension. And we all—all of us who lived through that ought to be humble enough to know that we have a chance—and for us, a second chance—to do something that comes along maybe once in a lifetime for a great country.

I feel that in these 7 years, you know, I've worked and worked and worked to kind of turn the country around economically, to move things in the right direction socially, to try to pull us back together politically, to try to be a force for peace around the world, and integrate us with the rest of the world. Maxine mentioned Africa, and I appreciate that.

But I think now, like, America is ready, you know, to do these big things. And so tonight I speak to you not—mostly not just as President but as someone who remembers what it was like to be 18 years old in 1964, to weep over a lost President, believing things could be made right, and then to watch everything come apart.

We've waited a long time. Maxine, Elijah, Eleanor, they're going to carry this banner. It matters what happens in this Presidential race. It matters what happens in these congressional races. It matters whether we count everybody in the census. It matters who gets elected in the Governors' races. And it matters whether

we say, “Hey, we do remember. We’ve not taking this for granted. We’re not being arrogant; we’re not being self-satisfied. We know we’ve got a second chance, and we’re going to make the most of it.”

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:19 p.m. in the Salon B Room at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Waters’ husband, Ambassador to the Bahamas Sidney Williams; and former Representative Ronald V. Dellums. Representative Waters was a candidate for reelection in California’s 35th Congressional District.

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for King Juan Carlos I of Spain *February 23, 2000*

Your Majesties, members of the Spanish delegation, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the people of the United States, I am delighted to welcome the King and Queen of Spain back to America.

A quarter century ago, the very first trip King Juan Carlos made overseas after his proclamation as King was to the United States. Your Majesty, we are honored that you have decided to celebrate the anniversary of that journey and the friendship between our nations by making America your first stop overseas in the new century.

In the life of every democracy there are defining moments that stand above the rest—Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg; Lech Walesa raising a fist in a Polish shipyard; students standing with sledgehammers atop the Berlin Wall; Nelson Mandela taking the oath of office as President of South Africa. Nineteen years ago, on this very day, Spain had one of those moments. In the early evening hours of February 23, 1981, 200 armed militia in Madrid stormed the Parliament in a coup. They fired automatic weapons. They took every major elected figure in Spain hostage. Many feared Spain’s 2-year-old experiment with democracy was over. But when angry generals urged King Juan Carlos to join their rebellion, he replied defiantly, “Your coup will succeed over my dead body.” He rallied the people of Spain. He appealed to the military sense of honor. He stood strong, and less than 24 hours after it began, the coup was over.

Freedom was secure in Spain. And less than a decade later, when freedom was reborn in Eastern Europe, the newest democracies could look to Spain as their example. When the task of building an undivided, democratic, peaceful

Europe is completed, all friends of freedom will owe a very great debt to King Juan Carlos.

Your Majesty, for more than five centuries now, our two nations have been united by a common history. Today, we also are united by common values and common responsibilities. In Kosovo, Spanish pilots, soldiers, and police have performed with great bravery, and in April, a Spanish commander will assume the command of KFOR. In Latin America, we have stood together, supporting hurricane victims in Honduras and Guatemala and flood victims in Venezuela, promoting a better life for the people of Colombia, advancing the cause of human rights in Cuba.

Your Majesty, on this lawn almost a quarter century ago, you said that your greatest wish then was that your visit, and I quote, “would contribute to reinforcing the bonds of friendship between us, for the good of our two countries and all those who aspire to attain the same ideals of faith, freedom, and justice.” Your Majesty, your visit then and all your work since have strengthened our bonds of friendship. As you continue to lead your nation and to stand against the forces of terror and the enemies of peace and freedom, may your words be our hope and our guide as we walk together in this new century.

Again, we thank you for the honor of your visit, and we welcome you warmly—your friends in the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia were accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. The transcript

released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the King.

Remarks Announcing Budget Initiatives on Transportation for Working Families

February 23, 2000

Thank you very much. Let's give him a hand. [Applause] There you go. Wasn't he great? Thank you very much, Michael. We all know you don't do this public speaking for a living, and you did a terrific job. You may have a few more job interviews after the day is over. [Laughter] For those of you who don't know, Brocton, New York, is near Buffalo. So if this message goes out there to western New York, Michael is looking for a good job. [Laughter] And if he takes one, there are a lot of other people who are, too, out there.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman for being here and for his support of this endeavor. I want to thank our Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Mort Downey, for their work, he and Secretary Slater. And I want to say a special word of welcome to Senator Arlen Specter from Pennsylvania, who has kept our welfare-to-work policy completely bipartisan, and I thank you, sir, for what you've done, and I'm glad you're here.

I grew up with and served as a Governor for a lot of people like Michael Alexander. In my term of service in Arkansas we had, depending on what census it was, somewhere between 5 and 10 of the poorest counties in America. Some were in the Mississippi Delta, and they were predominantly African-American. Some were in the Arkansas Ozarks; they were overwhelmingly white. They were all full—they were all rural counties, and they were all full of people who lived in little places and had to go to bigger places to work. They all wanted to work, and they all wanted to do right by their kids.

And I saw this young man up here speaking, and I'm thinking about what it must be like to be his age with his whole life still before him, two little kids under foot, trying to figure out how to do right by them. Somebody like that shouldn't have to worry about whether they can go out and get in the car, whether the

car will start, and if they get in a car, whether they won't be able to get food for their children. That's what this is all about.

And what I want you to know is, there are lots of Michael Alexanders out there in America. They're from all backgrounds, all races, all faiths. And for those of us who grew up in places where a lot of Michael Alexanders live, we know that but for a bump in the road, a lot of others of us could be in the same fix they're in. That's what this is all about.

We have worked very hard for 7 years now, based on a vision I had in 1992 that everybody that was responsible enough to work for it ought to have a shot at the American dream. And a lot more people do today, for the reasons that Secretary Glickman said. The Congress has helped us not just by getting rid of the deficit and getting interest rates down and getting investment up but also trying to make work pay.

That's what the earned-income tax credit's all about. And I hope Congress will expand it again by trying to make sure that especially parents in his position can, under family leave, more of them can take a little time off without losing their jobs if their children are in trouble or their parents are sick. And I think we ought to expand the law to cover regular visits to schools, too. You heard Michael mention that.

And it's working, all right. And it's working—the poverty rate is way down, lowest in 20 years, lowest Hispanic poverty rate in 20 years, lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, since we've been keeping separate statistics for about 30 years now. But there are still a lot of people who are responsible enough to work and go to school, who are not being rewarded with a chance to succeed at work, at school, and raising their kids, and work themselves into a middle class lifestyle. And as you just heard in graphic terms, one of the biggest barriers today is transportation and not, interestingly enough, not just for people living in small towns

like Brocton but also increasingly for people living in inner cities.

Why? Because two-thirds of all the new jobs are now being created in suburbs, which means if you're living in the inner city or in a small town, you're someplace different from where the jobs are. And if you're living in a city with perfectly wonderful public transportation, 9 times out of 10 it doesn't run to the suburbs. So even if you have access to public transportation, it probably doesn't take you to where the jobs are.

Three-quarters of all the Americans who get public assistance live in central cities or rural areas; two-thirds of the new jobs are in the suburbs. It doesn't take Einstein to figure out that transportation is critical to matching the available work force with the available jobs.

Now consider this, just for example. A low wage job seeker living in Watts in Los Angeles who has a car can get to 57 times more jobs than a person living in Watts who does not have a car and has to depend on public transportation.

Nationwide, low income families with cars are 25 percent more likely to work than those without cars. If you want more people to work, you've got to help them get to work. The first step is to eliminate the roadblocks that keep them from getting or keeping a car. Among the most senseless of them are food stamp rules that force low income families to choose between the food they need for their children and the car they need to work. No family should have to make that choice. And today I want to take some action to help make sure fewer do.

Under current rules, a family that makes a few-hundred-dollar downpayment on a car immediately can become ineligible for food stamps, even though it's the bank, not the family, that owns the car. Today we are releasing a new regulation that will allow families with as much as \$1,000 of equity in a car to keep the car and remain eligible for food stamps. That will help 150,000 people like Michael have a car for work and still have food stamps for their kids—150,000.

Another roadblock in the law says you're ineligible for food stamps if the car you own, as Secretary Glickman said, is worth more than \$4,650, a limit set by Congress over 20 years ago. Since then, the price of the average car has tripled. Dan said nothing costs what it did

20 years ago. As I prepare to return to the ranks of ordinary citizen, I find that nothing costs what it did 8 years ago. [Laughter] I can tell you, it's hard to find a reliable car for under \$4,650.

Last summer I took executive action allowing more families moving off welfare to own their cars and still receive food stamps. But we've got to raise the limits again to cover all low income working families. The budget I submitted last month does that. It allows another quarter of a million families to have a car and to get to work and still keep the food assistance for their children.

That's in the budget, and that's Senator Specter's responsibility and why I'm so grateful to him for being here today, because this should be an American issue. This should not be a partisan issue. No American of any political party or philosophy has a vested interest in keeping somebody who's dying to work from getting there or in depriving children of the nutritional assistance they plainly need.

The budget also takes two other important steps. It helps more low income families save money for a car through the Individual Development Account program, the IDA. You may have heard—I talked a little about that in the State of the Union—this is an idea that has enjoyed broad bipartisan support to try to help even poor people have the tools to save. Currently, thousands of low income families use these IDA's to save for college, a first home, to start a new business. And the Federal Government matches their savings. I want to include in that list—saving for college, a first home, starting a new business—saving to buy a car to get to work.

We also budget our investment in the access to jobs initiative, which funds creative, locally designed transportation solutions, such as van-pools that a lot of nonprofits and faith-based groups have used. And I'm glad to see some representatives of those groups here today. They shuttle inner-city workers to suburban jobs.

Now, this is usually not a practical solution for small towns and rural areas, but it can work very well in inner-city areas where the jobs are close together in the suburbs or where there's a big suburban employment center where you can take 20, 30, 50 people from a given inner-city neighborhood to one site of employment. But this is also very, very important.

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I mean, consider the irony of this: We have employers all over the country suffering labor shortages. You have people like Michael who are going to community college and working and supporting two children by himself—doing everything they can do. Such people should not be held back by the absence of transportation or punished if they have the initiative and enterprise to buy a car, especially if, like him, they help to repair it in the first place. [*Laughter*] That's a great story.

So, this is the smart thing to do. It's the right thing to do. If you want to keep the economy going without inflation, you've got to continue to train people to go into jobs that are already there. Then they become not only employees paying taxes, but they become consumers, and they add to the stock of our national wealth.

Now, despite all these obstacles, millions of Americans who don't have cars still make it to work. They get up at dawn; they travel 2 hours on three different buses to suburban jobs that pay 7 bucks an hour. They come home the same way, and somehow they still manage to get their kids to and from school and do the grocery shopping. They do it all without a car. They are, in so many ways, the real heroes of this country.

We normally think of heroism as something done in a moment of immediate danger. But it may take more courage to get up every day against all the obstacles and live your life and raise your kids and do what you're supposed to do and walk away from whatever illegal options are out there for you and just keep banging away at it. The people who do this not only deserve our admiration; they deserve our support. And we ought to work for a day in America when that sort of heroism is not required to go to work and take care of your kids.

If we can do these specific things we've talked about today, hundreds of thousands of people like Michael will be able to sleep better at night knowing they've done their work, taken care of their children, and their country wants them to be rewarded for it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Alexander, participant in a local program to help welfare recipients purchase a car, who introduced the President.

Videotaped Remarks on Rock the Vote's 10th Anniversary *February 23, 2000*

I am honored to be a part of Rock the Vote's 10th anniversary celebration. And it is with great pride and appreciation that I accept this year's Rock the Vote award. Thank you.

From our first days as a nation, the right to vote meant the right to participate and to be heard, although it's often taken for granted. We must not forget that generations of Americans before us had to fight to gain that right. When blacks and women won the right to vote, when we outlawed the poll tax and literacy tests in the South, when the voting age was lowered to 18, and when we finally recognized the voting rights of the disabled, more Americans gained the opportunity to realize what Lyndon Johnson once told us: "Voting is the first duty of democracy."

That's why Rock the Vote was founded and why you're all here today, to help more young Americans fulfill that right and to recognize the power and the impact of their votes. Your dedication to protecting freedom of speech, educating people about the issues that affect them, and motivating them to register and vote has helped countless young people across our country.

With your help, we've transformed voices into action. Year after year, starting with the motor voter bill, which you first championed, you've worked with our administration to make sure that young people get involved and stay involved and to remind them that voting is not only a right, it is a solemn, profound responsibility. Now, we approach the first election of the 21st

century, and it is more important than ever that young people get out and vote.

I congratulate all tonight's award recipients. And I thank Rock the Vote for all you have done in these 10 years. Thank you for the work you do every day, still, to help young people build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams.

This is the most hopeful moment in the history of America in terms of our ability to shape the future. It will only be done in a right and

helpful way if the young people of America seize their opportunity to have their voices be heard. You can take a lot of pride in your contribution to that great moment.

Good night, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President remarks were recorded at approximately 5:50 p.m. on February 10 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring King Juan Carlos I of Spain

February 23, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome His Majesty King Juan Carlos and Majesty Queen Sofia; members of the Spanish delegation; to all the rest of you. It is a great honor in this house of the American people to welcome a King and Queen who are truly of their people.

Your Majesties, on behalf of all Americans, let me begin by expressing my condolences to the families of the two victims of yesterday's car bombing in northern Spain. We stand with Spain in condemning this cowardly act and call on those responsible to renounce the violence and terrorism which have taken too many innocent lives in recent years. In a democracy, we must settle our differences through dialog, not destruction.

One of the greatest pleasures of the last 7 years has been the opportunity that Hillary and I have had on many occasions to be with King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia. Five years ago, I welcomed them to the White House on the occasion of their son's graduation from my alma mater, the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. On that day, the King and Queen also received honorary doctorates.

The King joked that day that the reason the university had given him the degree was that if his son started bragging about his masters, he could always say, "Yes, but I am a doctor." [Laughter]

Two years later, the King and Queen hosted Hillary, Chelsea, and me just a few weeks after Chelsea graduated from high school. For me, it was the fulfillment of a long dream. When I was a young graduate student, more than 30

years ago, I first went to Spain in the spring of 1969. I went to Granada to visit the Alhambra. I never got over it, and I promised myself that one day, somehow, I would return. Well, thanks to the King and Queen, I was once again able to see the Sun set over the plains of Granada, in a style slightly better than that which I enjoyed as a graduate student. [Laughter]

It is a special honor for us to have the King and the Queen here today on the anniversary of the day in which the courage of the King literally saved democracy for Spain.

Our friendship is just the latest chapter in a long history of friendship between our two nations. Five centuries ago, the vision of Queen Isabella guided sailors across vast oceans to discover a new world. The Spanish of that day left their language, their religion, and much of their culture on these shores. The State in which I was born once was part of the Spanish Empire. And I suppose, Your Majesties, I am, in a sense, one of your subjects. [Laughter]

Today, five centuries later, Christopher Columbus is the only foreign citizen America honors with a national holiday. For some time now, Spanish has been our second most spoken language, and all across America, Spanish-speaking men and women, many of whom are here tonight, enrich our Nation and our lives. Today, five centuries after Spain helped to lead the world through the age of exploration, it is the vision of a direct descendant of Queen Isabella, His Majesty King Juan Carlos, who is helping to lead this new world through a new age of information.

Spain is spreading the values of democracy, respect for human rights, and free markets across the globe, from Latin America to the Balkans, Europe to the Middle East. Your Majesties, we are proud in America to be your partners, your allies, and your friends.

Saint Isidore once wrote, "Spain is the most beautiful of all the lands extending from the West to India, for through her, East and West receive light." Today, may the light of our friendship continue to inspire and enlighten nations from East to West as we work to build a world that is more democratic, more open, more free, and at peace.

I ask you all to join me in a toast to the King and Queen of Spain and the people of their wonderful country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Sofia, wife of King Juan Carlos I, and their son, Crown Prince Felipe; and Spanish politician Fernando Buesa and his bodyguard Jorge Díez, who were killed in a car bomb explosion on February 23. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the King.

Remarks to the Business Council *February 24, 2000*

Thank you, Ralph, and good morning. I want to begin by asking if the microphone's too loud, so—can we turn it down just a little bit? That's good. I'm delighted to be here. I know you just had a good panel on the economy. And I wanted to talk mostly about China today, but I would like to mention just a couple of other matters very briefly.

First of all, you've already talked in some detail about the question of how to keep the economy going. And I don't have much to add to what I'm sure Secretary Summers said, except I would like to just make three points very briefly. Number one, I think it is terribly important that we continue to pay the debt down and for reasons that you understand. But it's an enormous hedge against the necessary borrowing by business to continue to invest and continue to grow. And whatever the Fed does, the interest rate structure will be lower than it otherwise would be, not only now but for perhaps decades in the future. So I think it is a critically important thing. And I think it's important that people understand this. I've seen all kinds of articles in the papers saying I've adopted Coolidge economics, but I don't think so. We're continuing to invest robustly in our people and our future. But I think it's important.

The second point I want to make is, I think it is even more important that we continue to invest in the education and skills of our people. A lot of you are heavily involved in trying to

make our elementary and secondary schools better. We have a proposal now before the Congress to make college tuition tax deductible, which would functionally open the doors of 4 years of college to every American, with the other increases we've made in the Pell grants and other things. But I think we need to do more on this, particularly with people who are already in their young adult years who are out there and not either employed or are underemployed. I think that's important.

And the third thing I would say is, many of you have helped us on this new markets initiative, but I hope all of you will. Some of you have been involved in our Welfare to Work Partnership, which has 12,000 companies now and has hired hundreds of thousands of people from welfare to work. And reports indicate that they're doing quite well.

But I think when you consider the fact that telecommunications, among other things, enables us to bring economic opportunities to rural areas—and in the worst case, some of our Indian reservations still have unemployment rates that are around 70 percent—there are real opportunities there for noninflationary growth if we can figure out how to do it. I don't want to minimize the risk. I'm trying to get Congress to pass some legislation that would give significant tax credits to minimize the risk of private sector investment in these areas, but I think they are profoundly important.

And as I said, I know a lot of you have been involved in this already, but this is the only chance we've had, I think, in my adult lifetime to genuinely bring free enterprise to people in places that have been left behind. And it's an opportunity I think we ought to take, and I also think it would be good for the overall economy.

Now, I want to talk a little about China today, because I think it is the most important question that the Congress will take up in the first half of this year. And I realize that in many ways I may be preaching to the choir, but I think it's important that we all understand not that this is a good thing to do but that it is an essential thing to do.

For 30 years now, every single President, without regard to party, has worked for the emergence of a China that contributes to the stability, not the instability, of Asia; that is open to our products and to our businesses; that allows people access to ideas and information there; that upholds the rule of law at home and adheres to the rule of law around the world.

We have a big stake in how China evolves. We have, after all, fought three wars in Asia in the 20th century. And the path China takes to the future will either illuminate or cast a great shadow far beyond its borders. I think we all know that. Therefore, it is clear that the more we can promote peace and stability in Asia by helping the right kind of China to develop, the more America's interests and values will be served.

The WTO agreement with China helps to advance all these goals in unprecedented ways. It's the kind of opportunity that comes along once in a generation. If we seize it, a generation from now people will wonder why the debate was hard at all. If we don't, we'll be regretting it for a generation.

I don't think there's any question that this is in America's economic interests. The agreement requires China to open its markets on everything from agriculture to manufacturing to high-tech products. All we do is simply agree to maintain market access already given to China. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute in China products made by American workers here at home. It strengthens our response to unfair and market-distorting trade from China, from import surges to forced technology transfers to protection of intellectual property.

One of the things I am quite sure that many Members of Congress still do not know is that this agreement actually contains bilateral protections that we don't now have to deal with problems like import surges, and it's important that they know that.

If you think about what this agreement could mean to our economy, we could start with agriculture. From corn to wheat to barley, tariffs are cut by two-thirds, and our farmers get full access to a fifth of the world's population. It's little wonder that the pay stubs at the Farmland Institute read, and I quote, "China will account for nearly 40 percent of the future growth of American agricultural products."

With regard to our telecommunications industry, those of you in that business know that China has the largest potential market in the world, and only 5 percent of it has been tapped. This agreement will allow our firms, which are already leading the world, access to the other 95 percent.

With regard to the auto industry, tariffs will fall by nearly 75 percent. The requirement that we rely on Chinese distribution is eliminated, as is the requirement that we have to transfer our technology, I think a very important advance secured by Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling in this agreement. For the first time, American manufacturers will be able to sell American-made cars in China, to set up their own distribution centers, to run their own service shops, to provide their own financing to consumers. That means we'll sell more American cars and auto parts there and have more jobs here at home.

Most Members of Congress don't question the economic benefits. Critics are more likely to say things like this: "China is a growing threat to Taiwan and other neighbors. We shouldn't strengthen it." "China is a drag on labor and environmental market rights, and if you put them in the WTO, they will block further progress on those issues." Or, "China is an offender of human rights, and we shouldn't reward it." Or, "China is a dangerous proliferator. We shouldn't empower it."

Now, all these concerns, I believe, are legitimate. The question is whether they will be advanced or undermined by the decision Congress will make and America will make on letting China into the WTO. I believe to set this up as a choice between economic rights and human rights or economic security and national security

is a false choice. I believe that this agreement is vital to our national security and that every single concern we have will grow greater and the problems will be worse if we do not bring China into the WTO. So I believe this agreement promotes not only the economic interests of the United States but progress toward positive change in other areas in China.

For the past 20 years, China has made progress in building a new economy. It's lifted more than 200 million people out of absolute poverty. It's linking so many people through its wireless communication network that it's adding the equivalent of a new Baby Bell every year. But the system still is plagued by corruption. Less than one-third of the economy is private enterprise. The work force, meanwhile, is increasing by about 12 million a year. At least 100 million people in China are still looking for work, and economic growth has slowed just when it needs to be rising.

So the leaders of China actually face quite a dilemma in making this decision to go for WTO membership. They realize that if they open their markets to global competition, they risk unleashing forces that are beyond their control: unemployment, social unrest, demands for political freedom. This is a big decision in a country that time and again has suffered more from internal chaos and disintegration than from external threat.

But they have concluded that without competition from the outside, China will simply not be able to attract the investment or build the world-class industries they need to thrive in a global economy. So with this agreement, Chinese leaders have chosen to embrace change. They are highly intelligent people. They know exactly what they're doing, and they're prepared to take a risk that will require them to change as well.

So the real question for America is, now that they have decided to take their risk, do we want to walk away from our decision? Do we want to risk a total rejection of the profound decision and choice they have made? I think it would be a terrible mistake. We need to embrace their decision, not only for our own interests but for the long-term interests of the world.

The WTO agreement advances our interests by encouraging China to meet, not muzzle, the growing demands of people for openness. Rather than working from the outside in, it will

work from the inside out, as all profound change has to do.

Let me just make a few points about this. First, having China in a rule-based system increases the likelihood that China will follow the rules of the road in terms of the international economy. Under this agreement, for the first time, some of China's most important decisions will be subject to the review of an international body. It means China is conceding that governments cannot behave arbitrarily at home and abroad, that their actions are subject to international rules.

Opponents say that doesn't matter, because China will just break its promises. But if that were to happen, our differences can no longer be ascribed to U.S. bullying. This time it will be 135 nations making collective judgment. Look, nobody agrees with the WTO all the time. I don't agree with their FSC decision. I presume most of you don't. And we'll have to work with Congress to try to figure out whether there is a WTO-consistent way for us to continue to play on a level playing field. But having a system of rules is, nonetheless, profoundly important.

Second, the agreement will obligate China to deepen its market reforms and intensify the process of change. A decade ago, China's best and brightest college graduates sought jobs in the Government and large state-owned firms or universities. More and more now, they're starting their own companies or choosing to work for foreign-invested companies, where generally they get higher pay, a better work environment, and a chance to get ahead based on merit, not politics. That process will also accelerate if China joins the WTO.

Third, this agreement has the potential to help open China's society in noneconomic ways. In the past, virtually every Chinese citizen woke up in the morning in an apartment or house owned by the Government, went to work in a factory or farm run by the Government, read newspapers written by the Government. The state-owned workplaces operated the schools where they sent their children, clinics where they got health care, the stores where they bought food. The system was a big source of the Communist Party's power. The meager benefits provided were a big source of the loyalty it commanded.

Now, with lower tariffs and greater competition, China's state sector will shrink, the private sector will expand. In that way, the WTO will

speed a process that is removing Government from vast areas of people's lives.

It will also increase access to communications dramatically. A year ago, China had 2 million Internet addresses. Now it has 9 million. The agreement will bring the information revolution to cities and towns all across that vast nation it hasn't reached yet. And as the Chinese people see how the world lives, they will seek a greater voice in shaping their own lives. In the end, China will learn what people all over the world are now learning: You can't expect people to be innovative economically while being stifled politically.

Bringing China into the WTO doesn't guarantee, of course, that it will choose a path of political reform. But by accelerating the process of economic change, it will force China to confront the choice sooner in ways that are more powerful, making the imperative, I believe, the right decision.

Of course, bringing China into the WTO is not, by itself, a human rights policy or a political rights policy for the United States. The reality is that China continues today to suppress voices of those who challenge the rule of the Communist Party. It will change only by a combination of internal pressure for change and external validation of the human rights struggle. So we must maintain our leadership in the latter even if the WTO agreement contributes to the former.

That's why we sanctioned China as a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act last year, why we're once again sponsoring a resolution at the U.N. Human Rights Commission condemning human rights abuses there. We'll continue to press China to respect global norms on nonproliferation, and we'll continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question. We'll also continue to make absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.

We must not and we cannot rely solely on the invisible hand of the market to do all our heavy lifting in China, and neither should the private sector. For all of us, including the business community, permanent NTR must mean a permanent commitment to positive change in China.

But to even get that opportunity, we've first got to sell this agreement to the Congress, and

we can't underestimate how hard it will be. I want you to know that I will push as hard as I can to secure agreement as quickly as possible. I made that clear in the State of the Union Address, in my press conference at Davos. Last week I started meeting with Members of Congress, and those meetings are continuing. You will get a full-court press from our administration, ably led by Secretary Daley.

Now, I know you realize the stakes here. If China doesn't approve permanent normal trading relations, we risk losing the full benefits of China's WTO membership. In a global market economy, your companies would be shut off from a fifth of the world, while your European, Japanese, and other competitors would take advantage of the benefits we went to the trouble to negotiate. Failure would also send a signal to the world that America is turning inward. It would be, I believe, a devastating setback to our vision for the future.

Now, I think it's important that we be honest with the Congress and the country on one thing. We don't know—you don't know and I don't know what choices China will make over the next decade. We can't control the choices they make, but we can control the choice we make; that's all we can do. And all my experience, not only as President in dealing with China but as a person who has lived more than half a century in dealing with human nature, indicates that this is a time for the outstretched hand in constructive partnership.

And I believe—I will say again—if we pass this up, we will regret it for a generation. And all of our successors and interests will be paying a price far greater than economic, because of our rejection. We cannot allow this effort to fail.

We face a choice between a Chinese market open to American products and services or closed to us—and only to us; between speeding the opening of China's economy or turning our backs; between a China that is on the inside of an international system looking out or on the outside looking in.

Let me just make one other comment about this. Some of our friends in the labor community, with whom I have great sympathy, say that, well, if you put China in the WTO, it will make it even harder for legitimate labor and environmental issues to be raised, because we know where they stand. Look, I just went to Seattle and met with the people in the WTO. That's

a hard sell no matter who's there, and it won't change substantially if China's there. That's just not a vital argument, given where all the other countries are. That is not accurate.

A lot of you don't even agree with me on that, but I can just tell you, whether you agree or not, the membership of China in or outside the WTO, given the perceived interest of the other developing countries that are going to be in the WTO on these issues, will not materially change what the WTO does on that over the next decade. I feel very strongly about that.

So we've got a simple choice to make. And the first thing we have to do is to make it clear that there will be a vote on this and that we want the vote as quickly as possible. And no one should take a pass.

I know that—I met with a lot of Republican members who were very concerned about the religious liberty issue. I can just say—a lot of you may know this—but the religious groups with whom I have met, who have been involved in China for years, who have been doing their missionary work there for years, are overwhelmingly in favor of this. The forces that genuinely and sincerely advocate religious freedom and then oppose this agreement are overwhelmingly people who have not been involved in China, with the Chinese, seeing how the society works.

So I really believe this is a choice for America between fear and hope. They made a decision, and anybody who understands anything about Chinese history knows that these people are very deliberate, highly intelligent, and aware of the consequences of the decision they have made. And they have decided to bear the risks of be-

coming part of a more open society. They know it will require them to change in ways that they have not yet come to terms with.

We have the strongest economy we have ever had. We are the world's only superpower, and whenever we walk away from an opportunity to lead the world toward greater integration and cooperation, as I believe we did with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, we bear a particular responsibility for future adverse consequences.

So I ask you to help me with Members of the Congress, without regard to party, based on the national interest, the clear economics, and going beyond the economics. This is a profoundly significant decision for the United States. It will affect our grandchildren's lives, and we dare not make the wrong decision.

Together, we can make sure it comes out all right. You can help us pass this, but it can't be a casual effort. It's not going to be a casual effort with me, and it can't be with you. And even if your companies don't have any direct stake in this, as an American you have a huge stake in it. As a citizen of the world—and most of your companies are citizens of the world—you have a huge stake in it. I'll do whatever I can. I implore you to do the same. And we'll have a good time at the signing ceremony.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. at the Park Hyatt. In his remarks, he referred to Ralph S. Larsen, chair, Business Council. The President also referred to FSC, the foreign sales corporation provision of U.S. tax law.

Remarks to the Granoff Forum at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania *February 24, 2000*

Thank you so much. Dr. Rodin, thank you for bringing me here to Penn and to this magnificent hall. Mr. Mayor, thank you for all the kind things you said. I enjoyed working with you and with Mayor Rendell for Philadelphia. I don't think any American can understand our history, our present, or our future without knowing something about Philadelphia.

And I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us today: Representative Chaka Fattah, Representative Joe Hoeffel, Representative Brady, thank you all for being here. I want to thank my Economic Adviser, Gene Sperling, and Karen Tramontano for coming from the White House, because they had a lot to do with whatever success we have enjoyed. And I want to thank Michael Granoff for giving

me a chance to attend one more inaugural than I'm entitled to under the Constitution. [Laughter]

They actually promised me a banquet with a Philadelphia cheesecake. I don't know—cheesesteak, I mean. I don't know if I got it yet. [Laughter] If you knew how many cheesesteaks I have consumed since I became a candidate here—[laughter]—I think I could get a special line of credit for the revival of the city's economy just as a consumer.

It's hard for me to believe that it was almost 8 years ago when I came here then as a candidate for President. It was a very memorable day for me. I had just come off an entire week without saying a word publicly, because I had lost my voice and my doctor ordered me to stop speaking. Now, that's torture for any politician, doubly worse if you're in a campaign you could still lose and awful if you think you might have something to say.

In those 8 years, a lot of wonderful things have happened to me. I look out in this audience, and I see so many people, young, old, and in-between, that I have gotten to know in the years since then. Judith talked about how different it is now from the time when I was elected Governor when I was 32, in 1978. It's also quite a bit different than it was in 1992.

When I took the oath of office as President, there were 50 sites on the World Wide Web. There are millions and millions now. At that time, we had high unemployment, deepening social problems, political gridlock, diminished hope. The Philadelphia Inquirer had just run a series which became a best-selling book entitled "America: What Went Wrong?" It was, unbelievably, a question that was on virtually everyone's lips just 8 years ago.

I had some pretty basic ideas that all boiled down to my conviction that there was nothing wrong with America that couldn't be fixed by what's right with this country and that the job of Government was to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own God-given abilities, their ideas, and their efforts.

When I came to Penn, I came here to outline a plan that I believed would unleash the pent-up potential of the private sector to build a new economy for all Americans, one that would literally breathe new life into the American dream. One of the things that I focused on

then was the importance of advancements and investments in science and technology.

Here at Penn before—even then, it was before the first graphical web browser had been created—I said we ought to have a national strategy to create a national information network to build on the promise of the Internet, to link every home, every lab, every classroom, every business in America. Well, today, thanks to the hard work of the American people and the vision of American entrepreneurs, we are seizing the potential of the Internet and other technologies. We have ushered in an economic transformation as profound as that of the industrial revolution, creating a high-performance economy powered by technology, driven by ideas, rewarding the values that are literally at the core of the American character: innovation, flexibility, and enterprise.

And 7 years and some-odd months later—one month, I guess—we have almost 21 million new jobs; the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded; the lowest poverty rate in 20 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the highest homeownership on record; the longest economic expansion in our history.

Today I want to use this inaugural lecture to talk fairly briefly about how we got here and where we go from here, to focus on how powerful new technologies are energizing every sector of our economy and how to keep this expansion going and to bring its benefits to people and places still far, far from the American mainstream.

For me, today's forum is a prelude to a major economic conference I intend to convene at the White House on April 5th, to deal with the big cutting-edge economic issues still before us, with some of the Nation's top economists, CEO's, and other experts. I want to ask them to identify ways we can build on America's strengths and deal with our continuing weaknesses, to take what President Theodore Roosevelt called the "long look ahead" for America over the next several decades.

But first, how did we get here? There are several reasons for this long economic expansion. I want to focus in detail on two, and then I will mention the others as well. First, fiscal policy was important. In an era where worldwide capital markets dominate the ability to get money and the price people pay for money,

nations can no longer purchase prosperity on the cheap by running continual big deficits and piling up debts.

By 1993, we had quadrupled the debt of America in the previous 12 years. It had given us enormous interest rates, a stagnant economy, a deep recession, and then a jobless recovery. One economics expert characterized it as a triple dip economy.

I think it's important to understand why that happened. In 1981, we had a difficult economy, and there was an argument for some economic stimulation, which traditionally, going all the way back certainly to President Roosevelt and the time of the Depression, had entailed either tax cuts or public spending or a combination of both. But everyone understood that in order for that to work when the economy started going again, you had to cut the deficit. And we just never did it, I think partly because we had this dominant idea that somehow Government was the enemy in America, that it would always mess up a two-car parade, that there was no such thing as taxes that were too low, and that the deficit really didn't matter. But plainly, it did.

I never will forget the first day, before I was even sworn in, that my then-designee for Secretary of the Treasury, Senator Lloyd Bentsen, the chairman of the Finance Committee, announced our economic plan. Just by announcing it, the bond market shot up, interest rates shot down, and the economy began to take off.

Then, as had already been said, we basically took two big bites out of this apple. We passed a plan designed to cut the deficit by \$500 billion. It actually did almost double that. It passed by one vote in the House, one vote in the Senate. The Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate. As he says, whenever he votes, we win. [*Laughter*] And I signed it in August of '93.

It was a painful vote. A lot of Members of Congress were defeated for casting the vote, including Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, who's here today. She gave up her seat in Congress to turn the American economy around. And the people who did it deserve the thanks of the American people, because it made all the difference in the world. And anybody who says that it didn't make any difference doesn't remember what interest rates were or what the level of investment was before it occurred.

Then in 1997, we took another bite at the apple, and we passed the Balanced Budget Act.

This time, it passed with a majority of both parties in both Houses, big majorities. And we had a national consensus for fiscal responsibility for the first time in 16 years.

Now we've enjoyed the first back-to-back budget surplus in 42 years. We will pay about \$300 billion off our national debt by the end of this year. We've actually been buying in some of the debt early, for the first time, as far as I know, in the history of the Republic.

Now, why is this a good thing? Because the deficit reduction set in motion a virtuous cycle, reducing interest rates, freeing up an enormous pool of capital for private sector investment. It enabled people to borrow money to invest in new businesses, in new technologies. It enabled consumers to borrow money at lower cost for homes, for car loans, for college loans. A study I received a few months ago estimated that the average American family had saved, now, as a result of lower interest rates, about \$2,000 a year on home mortgages and \$200 a year on car payments and college loan payments, because of the lower interest rates that were the direct result of getting rid of the deficit.

Therefore, I would argue that whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, whether you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative, you should be for this. If you are a conservative, the case is self-evident. If you're a liberal, you ought to be for it because it helps poor people as well as wealthy people, and it gives the Government money to invest in education and health care and social projects without harming the economy. America needs a national consensus for a solid economic policy that responds to the realities of the global economy, and I believe we have it now.

Now, I think it's also fair to say that almost nobody thought it would work as well as it did. And that's the second question. Okay, everybody—I thought it would work, but I remember when I was sitting around the table in Little Rock in December of '92 with the Democratic economists, not the Republicans, and I said, "Okay, how low can we get unemployment without inflation?" And the consensus was, somewhere between, oh, 5½ and 6 percent. You get below that, and you're going to have inflation, and the Fed will have to raise interest rates, and then it will slow the thing down.

My instinct was we could do better than that. But I can tell you, nobody thought we could have 4 percent unemployment on a sustained

basis without inflation. How did that happen? Because of a dramatic increase in productivity by American businesses and American workers. Productivity over the last 4 years has grown at the rate of 2.8 percent a year, about twice the rate we saw in the entire decades of the seventies and the eighties.

Why did that happen? That's the second thing I want to look at. Overwhelmingly, it was the role of technology investments, especially in information technology, that boosted this productivity. Today, information technology industries and firms alone constitute less than 10 percent of our employment, but have contributed about a third of our economic growth over the last several years, generating jobs, parenthetically, that pay about 80 percent more than average wages in America.

And just as Henry Ford's mass-produced motorcars and the assembly line itself had broad spillover effects on the productivity of the American economy, these new information technologies are doing the same thing, rifling through every sector of the economy and increasing the power of American workers and American firms to produce wealth and to broadly share it.

This is a little appreciated fact, I think, except in general, and almost nobody has been able to properly measure it, which is why everybody underestimated both the length and the depth of this economic recovery. There are very few models which can capture it.

But if you just look at the—take a traditional example that magnifies or illustrates the spillover effect. One of the biggest problems that businesses have is managing inventories. Let's say, if a manufacturer predicts that 1,000 units of his products will be needed in the month of July this year, and then July rolls around and demand turns out to be 10 percent less than the manufacturer thought it was going to be, 10 years ago when that happened, the manufacturer might not have recognized the drop in demand until it was too late and even larger inventories in parts and finished products had piled up in warehouses. And then because the inventories were so large, the manufacturer might have to cut back on orders, let's say, as much as 20 percent, which would often lead to significant job layoffs and an increase in unemployment.

Today, information technologies allow industries to recognize instantaneously changes in de-

mand and to manage their inventories much more quickly. A lot of the biggest retailers in America today literally have daily reports on every single product they have in every single store and manage all their inventories accordingly. That means that they can plan in a stable way to maintain the work force. And they also don't get behind when they have the opportunity to sell more of something.

None of this would be possible if it weren't for information technology, even though its impact may be felt in the most traditional of business activities in America. It's the sort of thing that you see in every aspect of the American economy.

Information technology is also having a profound impact on the speed with which new products are being brought to market. Detroit's automakers, for example, have used supercomputers and advanced networks to reduce the time it takes to develop new cars from 60 months to 30 months or less.

I grew up in the automobile business, and one of the biggest kicks I've gotten as President is going to the Detroit auto show. I only regret I didn't get to go every year. But it is fascinating to watch the progression of these new models and to see how much more quickly they're coming on-line and to also see the intersection of the information technology revolution with the revolution in material science, something that a lot of people on the Penn faculty have also been involved with over the last 10 or 15 years.

Pharmaceutical companies are using supercomputers to simulate literally millions and millions of possible candidates for new drugs, cutting down development time for new anticancer drugs, for example, by several years.

And of course, information technology is creating an infinite number of possibilities for electronic commerce for traditional businesses. Just for example, this past holiday season I bought a couple of Christmas gifts on-line from members of the Lakota tribe at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, a place that still has an unemployment rate of 70 percent, in a country with an unemployment rate of 4 percent. One of the reasons that their unemployment rate's so high is that they don't want to leave the lands of their ancestors, which are so physically distant from markets and consumers. But information technology can change all that, and in time, I'm convinced, can give us the chance

to build a truly national economy as we build a truly global economy.

Business-to-business E-commerce is growing even faster than retail E-commerce. In 3 years, it may reach a staggering \$1.3 trillion in the United States alone. Companies moving their operations on-line have found enormous savings. During a—listen to this—during a single hour of bidding in a recent business-to-business auction, the price of printed circuit boards was bid down by 42 percent, saving the ultimate buyer \$6.4 million in one bid.

When the Vice President and I first came into office, it was clear to both of us that technology would be an important part of our productivity growth. And we asked ourselves, what should the Government be doing? What is the Government's role in sharpening our high-tech edge to develop and disseminate new technologies?

Well, first, we negotiated with our trading partners an historic information technology agreement which will eliminate tariffs on \$600 billion worth of semiconductors, computers, telecommunications equipment, and other high-tech products. We fought for and achieved the first comprehensive telecommunications reform in 60 years. We transferred large blocks of the airwaves from Government to the private sector, which has spawned new digital wireless industries. And thanks to the E-rate, which was part of the Telecommunications Act, Internet discount rates have been given to schools, to hospitals, to libraries in ways that have increased the number of our classrooms connected to the Internet from 3 percent in 1994 to 63 percent in 1999. And soon, we'll have 100 percent of our schools connected, except those that are too old to be wired, and that's a story for another day. But I'm trying to fix that, too.

We've also worked to accelerate R&D at every level, pushing for an extension of the research and experimentation tax credit, increasing our national science and technology budget every single year over the last 7 years.

You know, Dr. Rodin mentioned ENIAC. Nearly all of the information innovation in the entire information age started as long-term research projects beyond the 3 to 5 year time horizons of most corporations and their ability to fund their own research. That is why we have tried so hard to expand the Federal Government's role and why we continue to do so.

So, I think the role of fiscal responsibility was important. The role of technology is profoundly important in explaining not only why we had this recovery but why it's gone on so long and why it's operated so strongly and why it hasn't been overcome by inflation.

Before I go on to talk about how we can keep it going and spread it, let me just mention, there are other factors as well. I don't think there's any question that, in addition to fiscal policy, we've had good monetary policy coming out of the Federal Reserve. And the reason is, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Greenspan, was able to look at the evidence of the new economy over the traditional ideology, which would have said, "You better stop this thing now, because it's gone on longer than anything else has. Therefore there is by definition inflation, even though you can't see it. So raise interest rates and stop it right now." He was resisting that, because he knew something was going on, even though no economist could give him a model which proved it. And I think that that has been very important.

I think the fact that we have had two decades of bipartisan support in the White House for open markets in America has been very important. You know, when politicians talk about trade, they only talk about the products and services we sell around the world, and then they become vulnerable because we have a trade deficit. Well, one of the reasons we have a trade deficit is we quadrupled our debt over the previous 12 years before I came here, and another reason is that our economy has been stronger than other people's economies, so we've had a demand greater than our ability to sustain it here at home. But I think it's important to point out that it's not just exports that are good. Imports can be good, too. Most of you who are here are wearing something that was made in another country. And you might rail against imports, but I bet you're not going to throw it away, whatever it is. It broadens consumer choice. And something else that has happened that almost nobody talks about is that the fact that we have had open markets has contributed to greater competition and kept down the risk of inflation.

I never will forget when interest rates came way down in a hurry after I took office, and the homebuilding business just was booming. And everybody started buying homes because they could finance their mortgages at such low

rates. And there was a shortage of timber, and the price went through the roof. And I looked at the indicators, as I have every month since I've been here, and I said, "Oh, my goodness, maybe we're not going to—surely this is not going to happen right now. Surely we're going to get more than a 2-year recovery." And it wasn't 2 months before the price of lumber had gone back down because of import substitutions, because when the price went up, the market became attractive; the market became saturated, went back down, and we continued to grow without inflation.

So I think that has been underappreciated. That's why we've tried to build bridges to Latin America, to Africa, to the Asian-Pacific countries, and I'll say more about that in a minute. But I think it's very, very important.

I think the role of sophisticated capital markets in America is very important. Everybody knows what mistakes were made in the bad days in the eighties with the savings and loan crisis. We don't give enough credit to the fact that people have been able to get credit when they needed it for venture capital enterprises, continue to invest, and build the new economy. And those of us who want to see it spread believe there ought to be more venture capital into places and to the people who haven't had access to it.

But our markets work better than most other countries do for entrepreneurs. That's why you have so many people just a couple of years older than most of the undergraduates here who are worth a couple hundred million dollars with their dot-com companies. It makes all of us who are older think we were in the wrong line of work for a long time. But an idea is not worth anything unless it can be translated in business into an enterprise, and that requires capital.

And finally, I think you have to give a lot of credit to the businesses that restructured in the tough years of the eighties and to the American workers who put a higher premium on their own education and training than ever before and who have been very sophisticated in this economy, asking for pay increases more in line with the increase in earnings of their companies than ever before.

One of the things people used to tell me, when I was an undergraduate in college, was that economic expansions were broken because working people saw the economy growing and they wanted their share of it and they would

always ask for more than a growing economy would warrant and that would build inflation into the economy. You haven't seen that here. And it's a tribute to the people who work in America who understand the connection between economic growth of their firms and growth in their own paycheck and earning.

So there's plenty of credit to go around. President Kennedy once said, victory has a thousand fathers; only defeat is an orphan. And I do think it's important to recognize there are many factors in this recovery. But I think they would not have happened, we would not have had it in the first place, had it not been for a responsible fiscal policy. And it clearly would not have gone on as long as it has and the way it has without the information technology revolution.

So the next question is: Can we keep it going, and if so, how? And can we spread the benefits to people in places that have been left behind? I would suggest the following things. The first is, you can't forget what got us here. We have to maintain our fiscal discipline. When I put out my last budget, it was interesting. I figured I got it about right because I was attacked from the left for practicing Coolidge economics, because I want the country to pay its debt down; and I was attacked from the right for investing too much money in education, health care and the environment, and science and research. So I said, "I must be doing this about right." [Laughter]

But let me take the fiscal discipline argument. One of the ways we've continued to grow is to make capital available to the private sector. There's a lot of debt out there now, business debt and personal debt. It doesn't look damaging today because the debt-to-wealth ratio is still very good, because so much wealth has been generated in this economy. But we have to maintain confidence, and we have to keep interest rates down, which means we have to keep paying this debt down.

We could, in effect, pay off all the publicly held debt that the Government has over the next 13 years. That would make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. That's even before I was around—1835. Now, I would argue that in a global economy that's a good deal. Why? That means that your children will have a structure of interest rates lower than what would otherwise be the case. And unless you believe that

the process of globalization is somehow reversible and the global capital markets will somehow cease to exist, that has got to be good policy. So that, I think, is the first thing we have to do.

The second thing we have to do is to continue to invest in our people. We have to continue to improve the productivity and availability of American people. There are still lots of people in this country that are unemployed or underemployed. We have to take all the people that are on public assistance of some kind or another, make sure they all have education and training and then access to jobs.

I just announced an initiative yesterday rooted in the fact that two-thirds of the new jobs are being created in the suburbs and three-quarters of the people who want jobs are in inner cities or rural areas, not suburbs. And the Government that gives them assistance also has put all kinds of barriers in the way of these people having cars or social service or faith-based institutions buying vans and getting them from where they live to where the jobs are. But this is very important.

We've got to continue to invest in education and training. The increases in the Pell grants we've had so far and the work-study program and the AmeriCorps program and the HOPE scholarship, which is a \$1,500 tax cut a year for most people for almost all of college, has in effect made 2 years of community college available to every American. We now have a proposal before Congress to make up to \$10,000 of college tuition deductible for all Americans, at a 28 percent rate for people in the 28 percent income tax bracket or the 15 percent income tax bracket. And if we did that, we would in effect make 4 years of college available at some 4-year institution to all Americans. I think it's an important thing to do.

I urge all of you who will be undergraduates or graduate students here after the census is completed, whatever your field of study, to get a copy of the census and the analysis of it, because one of—the census data, whether you're into statistics or not, paints a picture of America unlike anything else. And it will document to you, in stunning terms, the premium of education, even more than you instinctively know. This is a profoundly important issue if you want America's economy to grow over the long run.

The third thing we have to do is to continue to push for open markets and free trade. That's

why I strongly support bringing China into the World Trade Organization. It's the biggest market in the world. Only about 5 percent of it is open to us now. We make no new concessions in our markets to get massive access to Chinese markets, in return for putting them into the World Trade Organization. It is economically a good deal. It is also very much in the national interest.

If you—those of you who are young have no memory of the fact that your country fought three wars in Asia in the 20th century because of turmoil and instability. And China still does things that we don't agree with. But everything I've ever learned, not only as President but about human nature in my life, indicates that if we give them a chance to be a part of the global community and they have decided to take the risk of enterprise and lack of control and creativity—all of which runs counter to a top-down, totally controlled society—that we ought to give them a chance to make it.

We can't control what China does. And I'm not going to stand here and tell you that they're going to turn out as we would hope. But I'll tell you this: We can control what we do. And if we do this, 20 years from now we'll look back and wonder why we ever even debated it. And if we don't, 20 years from now we'll still be kicking ourselves in the seat of the pants for turning away from an enormous opportunity to give our children a safer world. That's what I believe.

I also think it is very important to recognize that in order to keep this economy going, we have to find more and more customers. I'm going to the Indian subcontinent in a few days. I'm trying to get Congress to pass a new bill to open trade opportunities with Africa, with the Caribbean Basin, to do more with our neighbors in Latin America. Last year, Congress agreed to begin with me a historic effort for the United States to do its part to relieve the debt of the poorest nations in the world. A lot of the poorest countries in the world can't be our trading partners, can't grow, can't stabilize, because they're spending money they ought to be spending on education and health care and economic development paying interest on debt. And they'll never catch up. We're never going to get paid off anyway. And if we can get a commitment for that money to be reinvested in the economy and the education and the health care of the kids, we ought to have

a massive effort to relieve debt of countries that are well-governed and responsible.

The next thing we have to do is to continue to open markets here in America. If you heard the State of the Union Address for the last 2 years, you probably have heard all this before. But if I look for ways to continue to grow America's economy without inflation, I look to the areas of high unemployment. If you can create new businesses, new business owners, and new employees who are also consumers within our borders, that will grow the economy without inflation. It will also fulfill our moral responsibility to give everybody a shot at the American dream.

I mentioned to you that the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation has an unemployment rate of about 70 percent. But there are plenty of inner-city neighborhoods, including some in this city, and many rural areas that have unemployment rates that are still 2 times or more the national average. And yet I believe intelligence is pretty equally distributed throughout this whole world.

I bet a lot of the students here have bought and sold things on eBay. You ever use eBay? Everybody that ever used eBay, raise your hand. Some of the young executives at eBay, I've become acquainted with them. And one of the things I learned is that 20,000 Americans now make a living on eBay—not working for eBay, not working for the company—make a living on eBay, buying and selling, and that many of them used to be on welfare. No car, no way to get to a job; get hooked up to a computer; find eBay; go around the neighborhood; find people you can do business with. And poof! You've made a business.

Now, there is a real opportunity here. And I think we ought to—my basic theory is this: We ought to give the same tax incentives to Americans to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas of Latin America or Africa or Asia. I think it's very important. And it's a real opportunity.

We've had great success in our enterprise zones, one of which is here; with our community development financial banks, which make loans to people who couldn't get them otherwise, one of which is in Philadelphia; with vigorous enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act, which has been on the books for 22 years but over 95 percent of all the investments have occurred in the last 7 years, because it's good business to invest in honest people with skills

and ideas and markets, who are in places that are underserved. And it will help the rest of us to keep this economy going.

Final thing I'd like to say is, we've got to continue to deal with the full implications of this revolution that we're in—one, to stay on the far frontiers of science and technology in every way. Sooner or later, even the most hard-headed rejectionist will have to acknowledge that the problem of climate change is real and that we had better find a way to grow our economy and improve our environment at the same time, including reducing the amount of greenhouse gases we put into the atmosphere. When we do that, we will realize that there is a \$1 trillion potential market out there that will do wonders for the American economy if we are out there with the products and services necessary to save the planet.

The same thing will be true with all the incredible discoveries that will be made in biology in this century. So we—that's why I recommended a \$3 billion increase in our 21st century research fund and why I hope and pray and believe that there will be a bipartisan support for it in Congress.

And the last point I want to make in this regard is that we have to close the so-called digital divide. When I mentioned to you that I bought those Christmas gifts from the Indian reservation through E-commerce, that's closing the digital divide. I mentioned to you that we're trying to hook up every classroom and library; that's closing the digital divide. We're going to try to train huge numbers of new teachers in all the schools in our country so their kids don't know more about the Internet than they do; that's closing the digital divide. We're going to establish 1,000 community centers so adults can have access to the Internet who don't have it now; that's closing the digital divide. We're doing to take a whole tour on that this spring.

But I believe that not only within the United States but beyond it, we could skip years and years it would otherwise take to bring poor areas up to standards and educational opportunities and economic opportunities if we maximize the use of technology. And again, I think it's a great economic opportunity. But it won't happen by accident. We'll have to make a deliberate decision to do it.

So these are the things that I think we have to do. We've got to stay the course on fiscal

discipline. We've got to stay the course on expanding trade. We've got to bring economic opportunities to people and places that haven't had them here in the United States. We've got to continue to lead to the far frontiers of science and technology. We've got to close the digital divide.

One last point I would like to make, that I readily concede grows out of my political philosophy. Life is about more than economics, and societies do well economically when they are strong generally. That means I believe that when we passed the family and medical leave law, which has allowed 20 million people the ability to take time off from work for a newborn baby or a sick parent without losing their jobs, I think we strengthened the American economy. When we raised the minimum wage, I think we strengthened the American economy.

And we have to continue to look for ways to balance work and family, because most people will tell you that the biggest challenge a lot of Americans face, now that most people have a job, is figuring out how to be good parents and successful in the workplace. And this is a challenge faced increasingly not just by people with low incomes but by people who are in middle and upper middle income positions. This is important.

We have to face the challenge of the aging of America. Now that we're not spending this surplus that's being accumulated by your Social Security taxes, I think we ought to take the interest savings and put it in the Social Security Trust Fund. And if we do it right now, we can run that Trust Fund out to 2050, which means, when all the baby boomers get in retirement years and when we double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years, that those of you who are having your children then will not have to worry about whether you can send your kids to college because you've got to pay for all of us. It's a great social question, but it will have a profound impact on the economy.

So I ask all of you who are—particularly you young people—don't ever forget that there are what the economists used to call "externalities" that will affect the health of your economy. And the strength and cohesion of our society, the sense of fairness and justice and energy with which people get up and go to work every day, which are unmeasurable, will have a profound

impact on the health and welfare of our American society.

I think we have to keep working to eliminate hate crimes and the feelings of discrimination we have against people just because they're of a certain race or of a certain religion or because they're gay, because I think all that is not only bad, it has an impact on our ability to work together, to be productive, to make the most of our own lives. And I hope you will never forget that.

I worked as hard as I guess any President ever has to fulfill our campaign commitment, which in 1992 in James Carville's eloquent words were, "It's the economy, stupid." And I believe that, but I never believed it was just about money, and I never believed it was just about jobs.

One of the most exciting things to me is that so many of these young people I see making huge sums of money in an economy of ideas are leaving all their money in their firms and still living on fairly modest wages and are a lot more worried about what they're going to spend their money on that's good, rather than what they're going to buy with their wealth.

So the purpose of all this, never forget, is to build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams. That's the purpose of it. It's to give people control over and direction over their lives and the ability to raise their children and to follow their imagination. And no generation of Americans has ever had this chance to the extent that all of us do.

So I hope that all of you will think about these things and ask yourself these questions: How did we get here? How are we going to keep it going? How are we going to give these opportunities to people in places that have been left behind? And what else do we have to do to be a better place, so we'll all be free to live up to the fullest of our God-given abilities?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in Irvine Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Judith Rodin, president, University of Pennsylvania; Mayor John F. Street and former Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia; and Michael Granoff, founder and chief executive officer, Pomona Capital, who established the annual Granoff Forum lecture series. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Strengthening Police and Judicial Institutions in Countries Where Peacekeeping Forces Are Deployed

February 24, 2000

I have just signed a Presidential decision directive (PDD) that will improve America's ability to strengthen police and judicial institutions in countries where peacekeeping forces are deployed. The PDD directs the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice to undertake a series of critical enhancements in the areas of police-military coordination as well as in police, penal, and judicial training and development.

In peacekeeping missions from the Balkans to East Timor, establishing basic law and order has been among the most important—and formidable—challenges. Developing effective local police forces, establishing credible court and penal systems, and reforming legal codes can make the crucial difference between building a just future and lapsing back into conflict.

When fully implemented, this PDD will help overcome major obstacles that currently confront

international peacekeeping operations. By enhancing cooperation between police and military peacekeepers, we will better ensure public security during these operations. By more effectively training and fielding international police monitors, we will better ensure that local police fairly and effectively prevent the breakdown of law and order in post-conflict societies. And by improving our ability to provide assistance to local judicial and penal institutions, we will better ensure accountability as well as confidence among local populations often traumatized by the conflicts they have endured.

We must do everything possible to improve our ability to help countries in transition to get the job done and to encourage other governments and the United Nations to be deeply engaged in these efforts.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City

February 24, 2000

If I had any sense, I would quit while I'm ahead. [Laughter] Next time we have an argument, Shelby, I'm going to play that back to you. We tape everything like this. [Laughter] Thank you, Shelby. Thank you, Leo. Thank you, all of you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here tonight and for your support at, I think, a very critical time.

I would like to make just a few brief remarks, and I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for the contributions that you have made to America's prosperity. I have had occasion over the last couple of months—because we were coming up to February, and if the economy kept growing, then we knew it would be the longest economic expansion in our history and the first time we ever had an economic expansion remotely this long without a war somewhere in there chugging up things. And so—and I knew that I would be doing interviews and members of the press would be asking me, "Well, what caused all this?"

And I thank you for what you said. But if I could go back, my whole theory was, in 1991 and 1992 when I was running for President on the economic issues, is that there was this enormous pent-up capacity in the American economy; a whole culture of entrepreneurship; dramatic restructuring of traditional industries which had gone on in the 1980's in response to all the competition we had; by then, already 20, really almost a 40-year history, but certainly a 20-year history that went through my Republican predecessors as well, of having at least the Presidents always support open markets and expanded trade, which I think is a very important part of this whole strategy. And I think we should be doing more of it, and I'll say more about that in a minute.

But I had a feeling that there was something structurally amiss that kept holding us down. We'd go into these recessions and then we'd get out, but we had anemic recoveries. We were in the midst of a statistical recovery that was

generating no jobs. Unemployment was still going up.

And I felt strongly that it was the product of two things. Number one, we didn't get rid of the structural deficit that was created in 1981, when we were in a recession and you could make a compelling argument that we needed to do what governments had been doing since the Great Depression, either cut taxes or increase public investment or both, to get us out of the recession. But always before, after a period when the economy started to grow again, we got rid of it. And instead—I think because we were in the grip of an ideology that said Government is always the problem, it will mess up a two-car parade, and you should never, ever do anything that increases revenues or does anything about this deficit—we had built in these huge interest rates and serious, serious imbalances in our economy.

The second thing that I thought was holding us back is there was no real coherent theory about what kind of economy we were trying to create, what our role ought to be, and what your role was bound to be. And so we set about trying to change that. And I think that we ought to say here that—I felt confident that if we could get the deficit cut in half and then get rid of it, that we would lower the structure of interest rates in a way that would put more money into the hands of ordinary American consumers and make capital more available at more affordable rates to investors and to entrepreneurs.

No one predicted that the recovery would go on as long and be as strong as it has, because no one had an economic model to measure the impact of technology on productivity. And one of the things I always say is, you have to give the Federal Reserve a lot of credit for this because if Alan Greenspan had followed all the textbook economic models, he could have killed this recovery, because everybody would have said, "Well, after 2 years or 3 years or 4 years or 5 years, some point along the way, you've got to shut this down, because every time this has ever happened before, inflation has been raging." And he was willing to look at the evidence, not the theory, and not get in your way.

And what I tried to do was two things. I've always believed that the primary role of Government in the globalized information society in which we live is to establish the conditions and give people the tools necessary to make the most

of their own enterprise and their own talents, and to invest in those things that otherwise would not be invested in, without which we cannot be the society we ought to be. That's basically what I think the role of Government is.

So the first thing we had to do was get rid of the deficit. And you heard Shelby say that—pointed out that Al Gore passed the tie-breaking vote. One of his great lines is, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter] And I must say, I didn't have any gray hair when I became President. He's cast too many votes to suit me; there are all these close votes, you know. [Laughter] But it's true, whenever he votes we win.

And when we announced the economic program—just when we announced it—when Lloyd Bentsen announced it in December of '92, the bond market went up; the interest rates dropped; and the rest is history. And the deficit reduction package turned out to have greater savings than we thought because there was more economic growth than we thought being triggered out of it.

Then in '97, we had a bipartisan Balanced Budget Act that carried big majorities of both parties in both Houses. And I thought we had established the first bipartisan economic policy, or at least fiscal policy, in 16 years. And then the Congress passed the tax cut I felt strongly was too big, given the obligations out there on Social Security and Medicare and other things, and I vetoed it. And now, just listening to the debate, we might be about to get back to a bipartisan fiscal policy. But I think that is very important.

The other thing we tried to do, the second thing I think is also very important—I believed that it was very, very important that we do other things, the financial modernization bill, a continued aggressive trade policy. We've had over 270 trade agreements.

I hope all of you will support my attempt to bring China into the World Trade Organization by giving them permanent normal trading status. I think it's very important, not just for economic reasons but for economic reasons among others. And it's a 100 percent economic winner for us because we make no concessions except to let them come in, and they open their markets to us. I also think it would be very good for the cause of freedom and human rights in China.

Then I thought the Telecom Act was very important. And I know a lot of you do. But we had these big, big fights, some of which were public, some of which weren't so public, because we were trying so hard to get it right. And it seems to me that, other things being equal, we ought to always opt for competition. We ought to always opt for—we've got an idea-based economy here.

One factor that never gets enough credit, by the way, I think, in America's recovery is the sophistication of our capital markets. Just like the failure of the S&L crisis and doing deregulation in the wrong way helped to hurt us badly in the eighties, I think the sophistication of capital markets in America today has played a major role in this long-term recovery. The ability of people who have good ideas to get capital and the kinds of judgments that have been made have been—on the whole, have served this country very, very well. So the Telecom Act I think had a big role in this.

I think the fact that we have continued to aggressively invest in research, in science and in technology, in biomedical science but in other science as well, is going to have a big long-term impact. And I believe, over the long run, the fact that we've doubled investment in education and training generally and dramatically increased the college-going rate will help a lot of companies to sustain their growth and their prosperity.

So I feel good about where we are. And I guess what I would ask all of you to think about is—and what I hope the subject of this election will be, because I'll be a citizen bystander, not a candidate—is, now what?

I mean, you know, 7 years ago we had high unemployment, low growth; we'd quadrupled the debt. The social problems were getting worse, and we had total political gridlock. The country's sort of turned around now. And almost every—almost every social indicator is better. We have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households—poverty rate—in 46 years. There are more people in poverty there because there are so many more single-parent households.

We have very robust movement. And the real question ought to be, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? And I talked about that in length, as Ed Rendell said, I al-

most put him to sleep in the State of the Union. [Laughter] But I would just like to reiterate. It seems to me that these are the questions we have to ask.

And my answer is, number one, we've got to try to keep this economy going. And when a downturn comes, we've got to do our best to make sure it's minimal in duration and depth, whenever that is. I think continuing to pay down the debt is very important. And there is some difference of opinion about that. But let me say why.

We financed—you can't expand the economy this quick without people borrowing money and going into debt. People have to borrow money to start most businesses. And of course, there's been a lot of consumer debt, too, but basically you've got all this business borrowing. I think it's served us well. But the net debt of the country can be much less if we're continuing to save by paying the Government debt down, and I think we ought to keep going. I know a lot of people in the bond market disagree with this, but I think we ought to have a goal of making America debt-free over the next 13 years because it will lower the interest rate structure over the long run. And I think it's good social policy.

You know, the average person—I had an economic analysis given to me the other day that said the average person, because of lower interest rates over the last 7 years, was saving \$2,000 a year on home mortgage payments and \$200 a year on car payments and college loan payments. So I think it's good social policy, and I know it's good economic policy. It maintains confidence, and it frees up capital, and it keeps the economy in greater balance. So I think that's the first thing.

The second thing I think we have to do is to try to do more to bring prosperity to the people in places where it hasn't reached yet. I think that—one of you said to me tonight that you approved of our attempts to close the digital divide, but it shouldn't be seen as social policy, it ought to be seen as part of our long-term economic strategy to increase economic growth.

If you think about how the American economy can grow, we have to find more businesses and more consumers, more employees, and more purchasers. We do that by expanding trade. We also do that by expanding opportunities to the people in places in this country that

haven't yet been a part of it. Some of them are in inner cities; some of them are in small rural areas; some of them are on Indian reservations.

I bought Christmas gifts over the Internet this year to try to show that I'm not as hobbled as Al Gore says I am—[laughter]—but also to make a point about this. I bought two Christmas gifts from the Lakota craftsmen on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where the unemployment rate is still 70 percent, 7-0. Now, these people do not want to leave the land of their ancestors, and they should not have to do so to make a decent life. But they are way away from any kind of big market. It's not easy to get there. If you go visit, it's probably because you wanted to go out and see Mount Rushmore or the Crazy Horse Monument. But the Internet gives them a chance to build an economy without moving.

It's for the same reason I'm trying to make it easier for poor people to own cars without losing their food stamps, because two-thirds of the new jobs are in suburbs and three-quarters of the people who need work are in rural areas and inner cities. Somehow they've got to get where the jobs are, even if they're willing to go back to community college and train.

I did an event this week at the White House with a young 24-year-old man who lives in a small town near Buffalo, New York, who is going back to community college, learning how to repair computers. He's a single father with two kids. And under the old rules, if he'd gotten a car, he wouldn't have been able to keep his food stamps for his kids. This kid is out there doing everything he's supposed to do. And there's millions of people like that. We're here having a great dinner tonight; there are a lot of people out there who have to think about it before they take their kids to McDonald's.

So I think that there is so much we can do. One of our proposals in this budget is to give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in Latin America or Asia or Africa—which I support, but I think we should have the same incentives here.

And I want to try to do more to set up 1,000 community computer centers around the country in areas that wouldn't have them otherwise, so that not just kids in the schools with Internet hookups but adults can come in and become conversant and figure out how to do it.

I was out in northern California the other day with some young executives at eBay, and they told me over 20,000 people are now making a living off eBay, not working for eBay, making a living buying and selling. And they said they've done some profiles of these people, and a substantial number of them used to be on welfare. And if you believe that intelligence is more or less equally distributed and so is good and bad luck, there's a lot of other people that could be doing that if we could figure out ways to hook them into the future. So I think that's very important.

I think we ought to make access to college universal, which is why I want to make college tuition tax-deductible.

I think we ought to do more to help people balance work and family, which is why I want to expand the reach of the family leave law. I was told that if I passed the family leave law and signed it, it would hurt the American economy. But it's hard to prove. We've had 20 million people take some time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick, and we've got 21 million new jobs. So I think the evidence is—I believe most of you work in places where you think, if the people who work with you aren't worried sick about their children while they're at work, they're more productive and they do better.

I believe we ought to do more to be a better partner around the world, not just with the China-WTO but with the Africa and the Caribbean trade initiatives I put up there, with the debt relief to poor countries that could be doing more trade with us.

And these are the kinds of things that I want you to think about. I won't go through the whole litany of issues, but a lot of you know a lot about this economy. A lot of you have been a big part of it, and you live in a dynamic world. The thing that I want most for my country now is for this to be a dynamic decision-making process in this election. The worst thing we could do is to think—and I appreciate what Ed said about people who said they supported my policy. But if someone were running for President and said, "Vote for me. I'll do exactly what Bill Clinton did," I would vote against that person, because I think we should stay with the direction of the policy, but we have to keep changing. We have to keep seeking new frontiers. We have to keep moving.

And Government is no different from your enterprises. Whatever you do, it is no different. We still have—we're still bedeviled by some old problems. You know, all these hate crimes you see that are so upsetting, where somebody gets killed or shot just because of their religion or because they're gay or because of their race, that shows you that in this most modern of worlds we're still subject to very primitive emotions, even in this country; that we still have our more minor versions of the conflicts that have engulfed the Balkans, that bedevil the Middle East, that torment India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

So these are the things I want you to think about, because I'm convinced that we have a chance that maybe has never before existed in my lifetime, to work together as a country to build the future of our dreams for our children and be a truly good citizen in the world and to benefit from it. And I think we'll make more money doing the right things. And that's what I want for my country.

Now, a lot of you are younger than I am, but a lot of you are about my age, and I want to tell you, when I was studying this whole deal about this expansion, I noted that the longest expansion in American history before this was between 1961 and 1969. And I'll just close with this thought. I graduated from high school in 1964. President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Some people write about the history of the last 30 years and American cynicism and all that business, and they say it all started then. That's not true.

I was there. Americans were not cynical after John Kennedy was murdered. They were heartbroken but not cynical. And they united behind Lyndon Johnson. He won an enormous election mandate. We were passing civil rights legislation. And most people believed in 1964, when I graduated from high school, that we could keep low unemployment, high growth, low inflation going indefinitely. They thought we could actually bring opportunity to people in poor areas; there were differences about how to do it. And they thought we would solve the civil rights challenges of America through the Congress,

through the courts, in a lawful way. And they thought we would successfully pursue the cold war until eventually we prevailed. That's what we thought. In other words, we were about as confident then as we are now.

Two years later, we had riots erupting in our cities. The country was becoming divided over Vietnam. The economy began to be unraveled over the conflict between guns and butter. Four years later, when I graduated from college,^o it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for President again. The country was totally divided over the war in Vietnam. And we elected a President of, I think, immense ability, but on a campaign of division. He said he represented the Silent Majority, which would mean, I guess, the rest of us were in the loud minority. [Laughter] And it was "us" against "them." And we've been playing "us" against "them" politics ever since.

I have done my best to bring an end to that—I'm sure you would admit, with decidedly mixed results. But I have done my best to bring an end to that, because I'm old enough to know that today's confidence can get away in a hurry.

And I say this to you not as a President but as a person, as an American. I have waited now for 35 years for my country to have the chance I thought we had 35 years ago. And I don't want us to squander it. If somebody asks you why you came here tonight, give them that for an answer. And think about, in your own mind and heart, what you think we have to do to make the most of this. We've been given a second chance, those of you who are my age or older, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at the Restaurant Daniel. In his remarks, he referred to Shelby Bryan, event host; Leo J. Russell, president, Pride Technologies; former Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee.

^o White House correction.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City
February 24, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Doug. I want to thank you and Traie for hosting us, and all the rest of you, thank you so much for coming tonight. I thank my good friend Mayor Rendell for agreeing to become the chair of the Democratic Party, a little part-time job that he can do on the side. [Laughter] Thank you, Carl McCall, for being here. And thank you, Carolyn Maloney, for being here and for always being there for me and for our country in Washington.

I would, just following up on what Doug said, I want to say to all of you who have made such immense contributions to the economic prosperity and to the quality of life our country has enjoyed over the last few years—I want to express my gratitude to you. For me, it's been a great privilege to serve. As I've told all the young people who work for us, even the bad days are good days if you have a chance to do something good for our country, and a lot of the static should be looked at as part of the cost of doing business in the modern environment in which we all labor. But it's been a wonderful thing to see our country grow and prosper and deal with a lot of our non-economic challenges over the last few years.

And I would just like to ask you briefly to think about how you would answer the question tomorrow if someone asked you why you came here tonight and spent all that money to hear Bill Clinton give a speech, since you could have heard a much longer one at the State of the Union for free on television. [Laughter] And you need to have an answer for that, for yourselves and because this is a long year. There will be a big election, and there will be many ups and downs and twists and turns in the road, not only the Presidential elections but in the congressional elections, the Senate elections, and others, one of which I have a particular interest in here. [Laughter]

The central question before our country today is, what are we going to make of these unprecedented good times—of the longest peacetime expansion, the longest expansion in our history, including wartime, now, the longest economic expansion ever; of a 20-year low in poverty and a 30-year low in welfare rolls and a 40-year

low in female unemployment, and a 40-year low now, Doug, in the size of the Federal Government. What are we going to do now?

It seems apparent to me that one of the ways we got to where we are is that the Government has followed policies that created the conditions and gave people the tools and removed the impediments so that the incredible creative enterprise of America could flourish. And we did it by understanding that we live in a very, very dynamic time, fueled principally by globalization and the explosion of technology, particularly information technology, but also in the biomedical area, in material science, and a whole array of other areas. That seems to me to make the argument that what we need is to change, to keep changing, to be very dynamic, but to do it consistent with the principles and the direction that we followed for the last 7 years.

I say all the time, and it normally gets a laugh, that if someone were running for President this year and said, "Vote for me. I'll do just what Bill Clinton did," I would vote against that person because we're not standing still; we're moving.

But I think, just to pick up on some of the things you said, among the questions I think that should be asked and answered, that I tried to answer in the State of the Union are: How are we going to keep this economic growth growing? And how are we going to spread it to people in places that haven't been part of it? We have a moral obligation to do that, and it also will help to keep the economy growing. We've got some people here today who don't live in parts of New York City that have flourished, who live in other parts of New York that haven't participated fully in the economic expansion. I think we ought to continue to pay this debt down, to keep the economy going. And I think we ought to give special incentives and make special efforts to get people to invest in the areas that have been left behind.

What are we going to do to give all of our kids a world-class education? What are we going to do to open the doors of college to all? I think we ought to, at a minimum, do what Senator Schumer and Hillary have suggested and give people a tax deduction for college tuition.

We've got the college-going rate up 10 percent over the last 6 years. It needs to go up some more, and we need to make sure when people go, they stay.

What are we going to do to help people balance work and family better? We saw Doug and Traie's beautiful daughter here tonight. I just signed cards for five kids over here, that said, "My Dad had dinner with the President," and I affirmed that that, in fact, happened and signed my name. And I hope my penmanship will not be taken as a model for the children. [Laughter] But most of you who can afford to come here tonight may not have to worry about that. But the truth is that most families in this country today have to work for a living, both parents or a single-parent household. And even if they make good incomes, they worry about where their children are when they're working, particularly if they're in preschool years. Do they have adequate care? What happens if the parents can't get off work to go to the parent-teacher conferences at school? What do they do if the children get sick? What do they do if they have a sick parent? And we haven't done enough to help people balance work and family.

What are we going to do to help to continue to grow the economy and meet these big environmental challenges that are out there? The truth is, this is a gold mine if we'll look at it as an opportunity, not a problem. There's a \$1 trillion global market for environmental technology to defeat global warming, if we embrace it instead of run away from it.

What are we going to do to continue to be a force for peace and freedom and against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction around the world? And do we understand that our economic interests around the world and our national security interests are increasingly merging? I believe China, for example, should be taken into the WTO because it's great economics for America in the short run, but I'm convinced it's the only way to really assure a stable, peaceful Asia and a stable transformation within China over the long run.

What are we going to do to maintain and improve the basic fabric of life here at home? I think it's interesting, as I say continually, that in this most modern of ages, where we talk about the wonders of the Internet and bridging the digital divide, which is very important, that we continue to be bedeviled by the oldest of human society's problems, people who can't get

along with people who are different from them. We're horrified when we read about the tribal wars in Africa, the continuing problems in the Middle East, the killing in the Balkans, and on and on and on. But in this country, in just the last couple years, we've had people killed because of their race, their religion, or their sexual orientation. How are we going to get beyond that?

I think part of it is passing legislation like the hate crimes legislation and the Employment Nondiscrimination Act. Part of it is enforcing the laws, but part of it is setting the right tone and showing a devotion to the differences among Americans and relying on our common values.

You mentioned the court appointments. That could well be—I'll just mention two issues that I think are very important, about how you strike the balance between individual liberties and community responsibilities. The Democratic candidate for President will support maintaining a woman's right to choose and will act accordingly. The Republican candidate for President, whoever it is, won't and will act accordingly, according to both political obligation and conscience.

You know, it's fashionable now, and it has been for several years, unfortunately—probably two decades now—for people who run against one another basically to try to convince the voters that their opponents are bad people. I just don't believe that. I think you here have a difference of conscience. But you should not be naive and expect that if someone who differs with us and whose political allegiances are different gets elected, that they will abandon their conscience. And we shouldn't ask them to.

And the next President is going to appoint somewhere between two and four judges on the Supreme Court, and it will have a huge impact on America. And so the American people should think about that.

On the other hand, there's another big party difference that's very important to me, where, in effect, we've changed sides, where they believe individual liberty means that they shouldn't adopt even the most commonsense measures to keep guns away from children and criminals. And we believe our common responsibility to one another means that we ought to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill, means that we ought to do other things. For me and for the Vice President and for Senator Bradley, we

believe at least we ought to license handgun owners. That's what we believe. We license cars and drivers. Somebody steals your car while you're here tonight and they drive it to New Jersey and leave it in the parking lot and you call the police, you can be notified within a minute or two, once it's found, because we have records of it.

And I think we have—and I say this as someone who comes from a culture where half the people have a hunting or a fishing license or both. I'm proud of the fact that we've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. And don't kid yourself, one of the reasons is the Brady bill, which has kept a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns. I signed the bill. The last President vetoed it. I've tried to strengthen it. That's what our party believes. They don't believe that. They actually agree with the NRA. I'm not going to tell you that I think they're bad people. That's what they think. They are willing to pay a price, in a country that's less safe, that I'm not willing to pay. And I don't think it has anything to do with individual liberties. And I do not believe the 2d amendment says that you ought to be able to get an assault weapon with a huge magazine that we ought to continue to import. We have differences here, and you can see it in the votes of the last 7 years. And these are big decisions the American people ought to make.

But what I want to say to you tonight is, we have an unusual responsibility, all of us in this room, individually because we've been successful and blessed, but also as a nation. And a lot of people have heard me say this, and they may think I'm a broken record, but one of the nice things about not running for office is you can just say what's on your mind. [*Laughter*] I have thought a lot and done many interviews, and you've seen some of them, about why this expansion has gone on as long as it has. And I think there are many reasons. I think our economic program had a lot to do with it, but I think the unbelievable impact of high technology on productivity throughout the American economy kept it going longer and stronger than anyone had imagined. And there are lots of other reasons.

The important thing to me, though, is not what caused it but what are we going to do with it. And I told the group that I was with earlier tonight, and I try to say this everywhere because I think it's important for you to think

about. Some of you, like Doug and Traie, are a lot younger than me; some of you about my age; some of you a little bit older. The last time we had the longest economic expansion in history was in the 1960's, 1961 through 1969.

When I was a child, a young man graduating from high school, 1964, John Kennedy had just been assassinated. Lyndon Johnson was the President of the United States. Unemployment was low; inflation was low; growth was high. The country had rallied behind a new President. We were passing civil rights legislation. Most people, in spite of the heartbreak of the loss of the President, felt pretty good about things. They thought we were going to solve our civil rights problems peacefully. They thought this economy would go on forever. They thought we would prevail in the cold war, and they didn't think Vietnam would tear the country apart.

Within 2 years, we had riots in some of our streets. And within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. Washington, DC, was in flames. The country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war. The expansion was a few months away from being over, and we had our first presidential election based on—in modern times—based on the politics of real division, the Silent Majority. That means that those who weren't in it, like me, were in the loud minority—"us" and "them."

And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" ourselves to death for a long time now. And when I ran for President in '92, I said I wanted to create a country of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. I have tried to end the politics of division. I think I've been more successful outside Washington than inside, but nonetheless, I think we've made a lot of headway.

The reason I'm telling you this is, we thought it was going to go on in 1964. If anybody had told most Americans that within 4 years the wheels would have completely run off, no one would have believed it. And as an American citizen, not President, as a citizen, I have waited 35 years for my country to be in a position for us to build the future of our dreams for our children—35 years.

And we've got a second chance. We should be happy about it, but we should be humble.

And we should understand that life is a fragile and fleeting thing. Nothing lasts forever—nothing good and, thank God, nothing bad. And if somebody asks you why you came here tonight, you tell them, because you like what happened but because you feel a heavy responsibility to make sure that we make the most of a truly magic moment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 p.m. at the Four Seasons Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Doug Teitelbaum, his wife, Traie, and their daughter, KateRose; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; and former Senator Bill Bradley.

Remarks on Funding for Native American Programs and an Exchange With Reporters

February 25, 2000

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be joined today by Senator Akaka and Senator Johnson; Sue Masten, the president of the National Congress of American Indians; Kelsey Begaye, the President of the Navajo Nation; and other distinguished tribal leaders from all across our country.

I'd also like to thank a few Members of Congress who are not here today but who have been vital to our efforts to increase support for Native Americans: Senators Daschle, Domenici, Bingaman, Inouye, Nighthorse Campbell, and Dorgan; and Representatives Kildee, Kennedy, and Hayworth.

Before I leave to give out the Baldrige Awards, I just want to say a few words about the importance of bringing the promise of prosperity to Indian country.

Nearly four centuries ago, not far from where we stand today, the Powhatan Confederacy enjoyed a prosperous trading partnership with the newly settled European colonists. As our country grew, many tribes gave up their land, water, and mineral rights in exchange for peace, health care, and education from the National Government. They formed solemn and lasting pacts with our country, agreements the United States, to be charitable, has not always lived up to.

While some of today's tribes have found success in our new economy, far too many have been caught in a cycle of poverty and unemployment. Too many have suffered from Government's failure to invest proper resources in education, infrastructure, and health care. The facts, of course, are all too familiar. American Indian

unemployment remains unacceptably high, reaching 70 percent on some reservations. One-third of American Indians and Alaska natives still live in poverty and many lack decent health care. Indians are the victims of twice as many violent crimes as other Americans. Nearly half the roads and bridges on reservations are in serious disrepair. Many schools are crowded and crumbling. More than 80 percent of the people in Indian country are not connected to the Internet, and one-third of Indian children never finish high school.

These facts are discouraging, but clearly not irreversible. That's because of something no statistic can measure accurately, the potential of the more than 2 million members of tribal nations in the United States. I am confident that with the right tools and the right support we can, together, bring new opportunity with new investment to Native Americans and to Indian reservations. That's something I made clear back in 1994, when I met with leaders from over 550 federally recognized tribes in our first government-to-government meeting here at the White House, and when I visited the Pine Ridge Reservation last summer. I want to make that even more clear today.

We're in the midst of the longest, strongest period of economic growth in our history. There is no better time than now to make sure Indian country has the tools to succeed in the new economy. If not now, when will we ever step forward to bring the hope of a good job, decent health care, safe communities, quality education,

and new technology to every corner of this Nation, from Penobscot, Maine, to Window Rock, Arizona?

I was proud to announce in my State of the Union Address the single largest budget increase, nearly \$1.2 billion, for new and existing programs that assist tribal nations. This bipartisan budget proposal includes funding to increase economic opportunity, health care, education, and law enforcement for Indian communities, in a cooperative effort with all agencies of our Government.

One of the first steps must be to make sure American Indian children and children everywhere in America have the education they need to succeed. My budget more than doubles last year's funding to replace and repair schools on reservations and to address the growing digital divide with grants to tribal colleges for information and technology training.

The information superhighway links people and communities across very great distances, but we can't abandon our old highways either. Our budget includes unprecedented funding to improve roads and bridges in Indian country. It also takes steps to strengthen tribal communities through improved public safety and health care. It increases funding for law enforcement officials and alcohol and substance abuse programs. Finally, it includes a 10 percent increase for the Indian Health Service, to expand access to high quality health care.

Working with members of both parties, representatives from tribal communities, and leaders from the private sector, together we can pass this budget and give the people in Indian country the tools they need and deserve to succeed. These are important steps, and we have an historic opportunity to achieve them this year. I ask Congress to work with me to seize this vital opportunity.

An old adage of the Sioux says, "Each of us were created in these lands and from them will spring the future generations of our people." We should all begin this new century by honoring our historic responsibility to the new generations of the first Americans.

Thank you.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, at least two OPEC nations seem to have decided that they're going to increase their oil output. I'm wondering if the

United States put direct pressure on them, and why do you think they are doing this?

The President. Well, I think that they're doing it because they believe it's in their long-term best interest. They don't want oil prices to go as low as they dipped at the bottom, not all that long ago, and we shouldn't either. But they know if oil prices are too high, one of two things will happen. Either they will provoke any economic downturn among their customers, and then the demand will fall off and the price will drop; or they will provoke more competition from non-OPEC members, and the supply will go up in ways they don't have control over. So I think that they would be making a sound decision to try to stabilize prices at a lower rate.

Q. Was there diplomatic pressure put on them to do this from the United States?

The President. I think—we are in constant contact with all the oil producers and all these other—as we are with other countries around the world. I wouldn't characterize it that way, however. I think this is a decision they will make on their own, based on what they believe is in their interest.

Iraq

Q. Are you easing the import restrictions on dual-use technology to Iraq, sir?

The President. What we are reviewing is whether there is some way to continue our policy of meeting human needs without allowing Saddam Hussein to rearm. I think it's clear to everybody who has looked at the facts, however, that they're exporting about as much oil now as they were before the embargo was imposed. And any continued suffering from lack of food and medicine on the part of Iraqi children or the poor is the result of Saddam Hussein's policies, not this embargo.

If you look at the difference in the health indicators of children in the north of Iraq where this program, the oil for food program, has been administered by the United Nations and in the rest of Iraq where it's been administered by Saddam Hussein, it's perfectly clear that he has increased the misery of his people and has blamed us for something that is no longer—clearly—clearly no longer attributable to the international community.

Nonetheless, if there is a way to further free up resources for the overall health and development of the people of Iraq without doing anything that will make it easier for him to rearm in ways that will be damaging to his neighbors and to the stability of the region, we ought to be open to that. And we ought to be careful and constructive in listening to arguments about it.

Yes, April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks].

Secret Service Promotions Lawsuit

Q. Mr. President, what are your thoughts about the black Secret Service filing a suit against the Service in reference to promotions there, and especially in light of the fact that you supported the Secret Service officers that filed suit against Denny's several years ago?

The President. I knew what the facts were there. This case has just been filed. There are a lot of members of racial and ethnic minorities who have done very well in the Secret Service, and I think that it's better not to comment on the merits of the case. I will say this—I try never to pass up a chance to say I think that it is a superb organization. They do a wonderful job. And we have been, my family and I, very well served by men and women in the Secret Service of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. And I think that, beyond that, I shouldn't comment because it's in litigation, and there are very specific facts that are alleged that it would be wrong to comment on. But I think the Secret Service has given a lot of different kinds of Americans a chance to serve, and they have done it superbly well there.

Go ahead, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, I know that you hate to talk politics, sir, and I don't mean to keep you here for a long time. And I realize that you don't want to influence the race, but we are about to go into a very important week here in the primary season. And I'm wondering, sir, without asking you to handicap the race, who do you see as being the stronger Republican candidate to go up against the eventual Democratic nominee in November?

The President. Sounds like a handicap question to me. [Laughter]

I'll give you a straight answer which won't sound straight. I don't think you can know now.

I mean, what happens is, in national political life, one person begins and is in total control of the way he or she presents himself or herself and is hot as a firecracker. And then a fuller picture comes out, and maybe even an attack or two comes out, and then that person once again returns to the ranks of human beings, and people make more reasoned and seasoned judgments.

And we're in a period where there's been a shift in that. But I think you have no way of knowing whether today's facts will be November's facts. So I don't think that—for our Democrats, my advice not only to the Vice President but for all of our people out there running is, run on what we believe in; run on what we've done; run on what you want to do. And don't worry about what the Republicans are doing. Just go out there and make your case to the American people, and don't worry about it, and time will take care of it. And then eventually these races, including the Presidency, will be joined. There will be two choices. There will be debates, and people will draw their own conclusions.

But I don't think—I think it is utterly impossible on today's facts to answer the question that you've asked with any confidence, because look how different today's facts are than the facts 6 months ago. And 6 months from now, they might be different again.

John [John Palmer, NBC News].

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, there were reports today of really some horrendous atrocities in Chechnya, allegedly carried out by the Russians. Does this give you even more concern than you've had in the past about Russian behavior there?

The President. Well, of course it does. The reports are very troubling, and I think they again make the case for the right kind of unfettered access to Chechnya and to the people there by the appropriate international agencies.

I think, you know, in every conflict of any duration, there are always excesses. I'm not excusing anything. I'm saying that if you look at the fact that this is the second incarnation in this decade of the conflict in Chechnya, if you look at the bitter feelings, the tensions there—and I think it is imperative for the Russians to allow the appropriate international agencies unfettered access to do the right inquiries, to

find out what really went on, and to deal with it in an appropriate way. I think that these reports should increase the sense of conviction that people all over the world have about that.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. One quick question on China. Key Democrats are saying right now that the chances of getting your trade policies through Congress are not very good, rather bleak. And it comes at a time when China has been doing a lot of saber rattling and also has been telling, basically, the United States to mind its own business regarding Taiwan. Do you really think you can get those trade policies through in this environment?

The President. Well, I think the environment is unfortunate, but I think you have to see those statements in terms of—in the context of the election in Taiwan for Presidency. I think that's what's going on here. Keep in mind, the United States has had now for two decades a "one China" policy that says we believe in one China, but we believe the differences between Taiwan and Beijing have to be resolved in a diplomatic manner, and we support a cross-strait dialog.

So in the context of this season, the President of Taiwan announced that he thought they ought to start acting like there was not one China, that it was—that they should be state-to-state relations. Then the Chinese made some military maneuvers which raised questions. We said the same thing then we said in light of their statements here. But it would be a mistake for either side to abandon a policy that has served both well for the last 20 years.

Now, having said that, in the absence of some destructive action, it would be a terrible mistake for the United States and for those who basically find this an uncomfortable vote to use this as an excuse to isolate China and almost guarantee the very things they say they're worried about.

Look, this is an economic no-brainer. It's almost—it's amazing to me that anybody could say the contrary. China opens all their markets to us for reducing tariffs, allowing us to invest there, allowing us to open business there. In some areas, we no longer have to transfer technology. We get special rights outside the WTO if they bombard our markets unfairly with cheap products that forge a big surge and throw a lot of Americans out of business. We have special rights in this agreement to go against them,

something most Members of Congress don't know. So it is clearly an economic plus.

So the real issue is, from the point of view of national security, do you want them in the international system as responsible players, or do you want to say, "We don't want you in the international system until you're governed exactly the way we think you should be and until you do exactly what we think you should. And until that time, we will keep you out, so there"? Now, based on all your knowledge of human nature, which do you think is more likely to produce constructive partnerships and constructive conduct on the part of the Chinese?

All I can tell you is, I know this is an election year. I know that some Members are receiving pressure—in both parties, I might add. I think it is very interesting that most of the religious groups, for example, that have done missionary work in China and have seen the impact of religious persecution or the absence of religious liberty there—virtually all of them that have actually worked in China strongly favor China's coming into the WTO because they understand once there are millions and millions of Internet connections, once the Chinese are open to the world, once they are involved in an international system, the Government will be more likely to be responsible, and the people will be more likely to find their own freedom.

And I believe that if we do not do this, that our country will be regretting this 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now. We will be shaking our heads saying, what in the world got ahold of our judgment in the year 2000? If we do it, 10 years from now, we will marvel that it was ever even a hard debate. That's what I believe. And so I'm going to stick with it, and I believe we'll make it.

Now, the statement on Taiwan may get harder, but you have to see it in the context of the electoral politics playing out in Taiwan and not necessarily assume that some destructive action will follow—just as I saw the Taiwanese provocative comments in the context of the Taiwanese elections.

Thank you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. Following his remarks, he went to the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel for the presentation of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards. However, a fire in the hotel at the beginning of the President's

remarks there prevented him from completing his planned participation in the awards ceremony.

Statement on the Report of the Interagency Task Force on the United States Coast Guard Roles and Missions

February 25, 2000

I am pleased to receive the report of the Interagency Task Force on the U.S. Coast Guard Roles and Missions. I extend my sincere appreciation to Chairman Mortimer Downey and the 15 other members who provided advice as to the appropriate future roles and missions for our Coast Guard. I also would like to commend the leadership of Secretary Rodney Slater and the Department of Transportation for their vision and vigilance in maintaining safety—my administration's highest transportation priority.

As we have witnessed time and again, and most recently with the tragic loss of Alaska Air Flight 261, the Coast Guard provides America with a maritime military and a multimission presence that is flexible and adaptable.

The Coast Guard will continue to safeguard America's maritime safety and security. I look forward to working with the Congress to ensure that the world's best Coast Guard remains as its motto proclaims: *Semper Paratus*—Always Ready.

Statement on Assistance to Communities Struck by Hurricane Floyd

February 25, 2000

When Hurricane Floyd hit communities on the eastern seaboard nearly 6 months ago, it left many thousands homeless, destroyed countless businesses, and caused severe loss of crops. While this storm took a terrible toll, hard-hit communities have shown determination and courage as they have made great efforts to rebuild. It is our job to help them, and today I am asking Congress to provide an additional \$347 million to do so.

These funds include essential assistance to farmers who have suffered crop loss, to help to construct low income rural housing, and to provide some 2,000 housing vouchers for families displaced from their homes. I am also asking

Congress to fund a feasibility study for the historic Princeville, North Carolina, to best determine options to protect this culturally significant town from future flooding.

We have already made \$2.6 billion available in grants and loans to help the victims of Hurricane Floyd. I urge Congress to approve my request today for additional funding in order to support the efforts of hard-pressed communities as they continue to rebuild and to bring to nearly \$3 billion total funds available to them.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Emergency Assistance to Fishing Communities

February 25, 2000

Due to the decline in important fishing stocks on the west and east coasts, many fishing communities are suffering unexpected losses that se-

riously threaten their livelihoods. In Long Island Sound, the lobster catch has fallen sharply this year. On the west coast, in Oregon, Washington,

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and California, there has been a serious decline in groundfish stocks.

The economic threat to fishing communities is severe. I am asking Congress to provide emergency assistance of \$56 million to provide aid to those whose economic welfare is threatened by this crisis and to fund research to identify the causes and potential solutions to these prob-

lems to restore the long-term health of our vital fishing industry. I urge Congress to act quickly to provide relief to communities that are clearly in need.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Signing the Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act

February 25, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign a bipartisan bill that will help save lives by giving families immediate access to vital information about poison control. Each year, more than 2 million poisonings are reported to the Nation's poison control centers, and more than half of the victims are young children. The Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act authorizes \$140 million over the next 5 years to fund the Nation's poison control centers, carry out a national media campaign, and establish a national toll-free telephone poison control hot-

line to give callers immediate information if there is an accident in the home. This new funding will help provide vital resources and information to inform the public about poison control and assist parents in protecting the health and safety of their children.

NOTE: S. 632, approved February 25, was assigned Public Law No. 106-174. A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba

February 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two un-

armed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2000.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces to East Timor

February 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On October 8, 1999, I reported to the Congress, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, the deployment of a limited number of U.S. military forces to East Timor to provide support to the multinational force (INTERFET) peacekeeping mission in East Timor. This force, established by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, was to restore peace and security in East Timor, protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor, and, within force capabilities, facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. The U.S. support to the multinational force was limited to planning and staff, communications, intelligence, and logistics.

This multinational force was formally replaced in East Timor on February 23, 2000, by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Consequently, the U.S. personnel who were the subject of my October 8 report have redeployed from East Timor. The UNTAET, which was established by Security Council Resolution 1272, has a mandate that includes maintaining law and order throughout East Timor, establishing an effective administration, ensuring the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, and supporting capacity-building for self-government. To implement this plan, the Security Council authorized UNTAET to deploy up to 8,950 military personnel, 200 military observers, and 1,640 civilian police.

The U.S. military contribution to UNTAET is small. The United States has agreed to provide three military observers and one judge advocate; these personnel serve in the United Nations pursuant to the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264) and will operate under U.N. operational control.

Nonetheless, because the United States has a strong national security interest in promoting regional security and supporting East Timor's transition to independence, the United States will maintain a credible and visible presence in East Timor. The United Nations also supports a continued U.S. presence in East Timor and has indicated that East Timor would benefit

greatly from U.S. military deployments to and engagement activities in East Timor. As a result, I have authorized the deployment of a support group (USGET), consisting of approximately 30 U.S. personnel, to facilitate and coordinate U.S. military activities in East Timor. Personnel assigned to USGET will operate under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement. In addition, I have authorized a rotational presence of U.S. forces to be achieved through temporary deployments, including periodic ship visits, to East Timor during which U.S. forces will conduct humanitarian and assistance activities throughout East Timor. These rotational presence operations will provide peacetime exercise opportunities for U.S. forces in East Timor, allow for a flexible and visible U.S. force presence independent of UNTAET, and provide humanitarian and civic assistance to East Timor's citizens in critical areas.

The first rotational presence operation, involving the USS BONHOMME RICHARD amphibious group, her embarked helicopters, and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), commenced in East Timor on February 23, 2000. These forces are operating under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement.

At this point, our rotational presence operations are envisioned to continue through the summer of 2000. It is likely that future rotational presence operations will include rotation of naval assets, embarked aircraft, and small light engineer units. Certain of these forces, including those of the BONHOMME RICHARD, will be equipped with the normal complement of defensive weapons. The duration of our support depends upon the course of events in East Timor. It is, however, our objective to redeploy USGET and reduce rotational presence operations as circumstances permit.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part

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of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address

February 26, 2000

Good morning. Last month, in my State of the Union Address, I called on Congress to help us launch a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every child can learn. This morning I'm announcing new steps to do just that, to provide tools for States and local communities to turn around their worst performing schools or shut them down.

If our Nation is going to make the most of the promise of the new economy, we must help every American make the most of their God-given potential. But students can't aim high in schools that perform low. Every child deserves a high-quality education.

Over the last 7 years we've followed a commonsense reform strategy: Invest more in our schools and demand more in return. I'm proud that our administration has enacted the largest investments in education in three decades, while at the same time working hard for higher standards, greater accountability, and extra help so that all children can meet those high standards.

It's working. Across our Nation, reading and math scores are on the rise. But in spite of this progress, too many schools in our poorest neighborhoods still fail to offer a quality education, and too few of these failing schools ever get enough help to turn around.

That's why I challenged Congress last year to pass my plan to establish a new school accountability fund to help States and local communities to fix failing schools. Together, we enacted a landmark initiative to provide \$134 million to States and school districts this year alone. Today I'm releasing official guidelines to ensure that these funds are invested in what works.

We're taking two unprecedented steps. First, under our plan districts and States will soon receive money dedicated entirely to turning around failing schools. This accountability fund

will enable districts to take firm measures, putting in a tougher curriculum, helping teachers get the skills and training they need, and if necessary, closing down a failing school and re-opening it under new management or as a public charter school.

Second, my plan also expands public school choice. For the first time ever, we'll require that districts give students in a chronically failing school the option to transfer to a better performing public school.

We know accountability works because that's what the experience of local communities tells us. Two years ago, for example, North Carolina drew up a list of the State's 15 worst performing schools and sent assistance teams to each school. Just a year later, reading and math scores shot up, and 14 of those 15 schools improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. I've been to schools all over our country that are achieving in the very same way.

Ultimately, of course, it's up to States and local communities to take the reins and turn around a failing school, but the Federal Government must play a key role by granting more flexibility, demanding more accountability, and investing more in education. With today's action, we're declaring as a nation that we will not fail our children by tolerating failing schools. We must do more.

In our budget for the coming year, I'm doubling the size of the accountability fund to \$250 million and doubling our support for after-school and summer school programs, so that every child in a low-performing school has the opportunity to participate. I ask Congress to do its part and make these vital investments.

Again, I also ask Congress to pass my "Education Accountability Act," which will make our schools even more focused on results. We must

stay on track to hiring 100,000 high-quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We must fulfill our commitment to build and modernize public schools. And we must invest in efforts to mentor disadvantaged students to help them understand that if they learn what they need to learn, they can all now go on to college.

This entire strategy is rooted in fundamental values: Everyone counts; everyone deserves a chance; everyone has a role to play; and we all do better when we help each other.

Fixing a failing school isn't easy, but communities are proving every day that it can be done. So we must continue to invest more and demand more. We owe it to our children and to our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:37 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner February 27, 2000

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. We will follow our custom tonight, which means that Governor Leavitt and I will give toasts, after which there will be no more duties, and we'll have a good time. [Laughter]

I want to welcome Governor and Mrs. Leavitt, Governor and Mrs. Glendening, and all of you to the White House, the 93d meeting of the National Governors' Association. I feel like I've been to most of them. [Laughter] Actually, we were thinking tonight, Secretary/Governor Riley and Secretary/Governor Babbitt, when we leave this year, will have attended 16 of these dinners. And I figure Governor Thompson and Governor Hunt are about that many. But I will have attended 20. And I told Governor Kempthorne tonight that he made a good swap when he left the Senate and became Governor; I told him I never got tired of being Governor. And I always look forward to your coming here.

Two hundred years ago exactly this year, Thomas Jefferson became the first Governor to be elected President. One of the central principles he carried with him, from the writing of the Declaration of Independence to the statehouse to the White House, is that the role of Government can never be fixed in time or place; it must remain fluid while anchored to firm principles. Jefferson said, "Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As new discoveries are made, new

truths disclosed, institutions must advance also and keep pace with the times."

Well, today, 200 years later, in the tradition of Thomas Jefferson, our Nation's Governors are keeping pace with the times. This year your theme is "Strengthening American States in the Global Economy." It is truly a new economy. It has changed not only the way people make a living but the way we live and relate to each other and to people all around the world.

For 7 years now, you and I have worked as partners to give the American people the conditions and tools they need to make the most of this new world, with a Federal Government that is smaller, less oriented toward regulation, and more committed than ever to achieving high goals. With your help and hard work, America has made great strides in these last 7 years, cutting crime, cleaning the environment, improving education, moving millions from welfare to work, building the longest prosperity in our Nation's history.

For your role in all these achievements and for the work that you will do with us in this millennial year, I thank you. It has been a great joy and a great honor for me to serve as President and especially to work with the Governors.

I leave you with only this thought. In my lifetime, our country has never had the opportunity we now have to build the future of our dreams for our children. The longest expansion in American history before this one was in the decade of the 1960's. I graduated from high

school in 1964. President Kennedy had been killed. The country was heartbroken, but we united behind a new President. We believed at the time that the economy, which was booming, would go on forever; that we would solve our civil rights challenges peacefully, through laws and courts; and that we would prevail in the cold war without particular incident.

Two years later, riots were starting in the streets. And 4 years later, 2 days before I graduated from college, Senator Kennedy was killed. That was 2 months after Martin Luther King had been killed and 9 weeks after President Johnson said he could no longer run for reelection, and our country was divided along partisan and cultural lines in ways that still manifest themselves.

I say that not to be somber but just as a cautionary reminder that it's easy to assume, when things are going well, that it is part of the natural order of things and that it will always be so, without regard to what actions we take, what words we speak, what hopes we harbor in our hearts. In a year, I will be a private citizen; most of you will still be serving. Remem-

ber that. We have the chance of a lifetime, and I, for one, have waited 35 years for my country to have that chance. It's a great honor for all of us to serve.

I offer you a toast and the fond hope that you will make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the participants drank a toast.]

The President. Governor Leavitt, the podium is yours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, chairman, and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland, vice chairman, National Governors' Association, and their wives, Jacalyn and Frances, respectively; and Governors Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, and Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Governor Leavitt.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With the National Governors' Association

February 28, 2000

The President. Thank you. Good morning, Governor Leavitt, Governor Glendening. It's a great pleasure for me to be here with many members of my Cabinet and my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, and Mickey Ibarra, who does such a good job of working with all of you. Hillary and I especially enjoyed the time we spent at dinner last night, and I hope you did as well.

Over the last 7 years, I've tried to build a genuine partnership with all of you, based on greater resources, greater flexibility, and a greater commitment to shared goals. I think we could all agree that the results have been good: welfare rolls cut in half; 2 million children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program; 150,000 young people in AmeriCorps; our schools improving.

This year we'll have a lot to do. Among other things, we have to work hard to make sure that we count every American in the census.

We begin the new century on a high note. In the last 3 months of 1999, economic growth was 6.9 percent, the fastest in more than a decade. This month, expansion has lengthened to the point that we are enjoying the longest economic period of growth we've ever had. Our social fabric also is on the mend: the lowest crime level in 25 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rates in 40 years, and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded.

I believe that in this new economy, government's role is to give the American people the tools and the conditions they need to make their way and to advance our Nation's progress: fiscal discipline, investments in education and technology, new markets for American products and services.

Today we're going to have a roundtable discussion of three issues vital to our continued success: health care, trade, and the impact of the digital technology on the new economy. We'll also talk about what we've already done and what more we can do to help American families cope with rising home heating oil prices, especially in the Northeast, and the prospect of other oil-related price increases.

On Friday I sent a supplemental appropriations request to Congress to replenish the LIHEAP funds to help more hard-hit families through this crisis and to ensure that there's enough money in the fund for others who may need help later in the year, when the weather gets hot.

Since January, we've allocated \$295 million to help people in need. In addition to making up that shortfall and ensuring there are sufficient funds for the future, we're also requesting \$19 million in additional funds for the Department of Energy's weatherization programs, to help increase energy efficiency of homes and reduce energy costs for families, and we're requesting resources to help make \$86 million in SBA loans available to small home heating oil distributors, so that they will be able to extend the kind of flexible payment terms to customers hard hit by the recent price spike that so many utilities do today.

I urge Governors who are receiving these LIHEAP funds to adjust eligibility standards also to cover as many low and moderate income families as possible, and to keep in mind that States can use Temporary Assistance for Needy Family funds to provide emergency heating assistance to very low income families with children.

We've also directed the Coast Guard to expedite deliveries of home heating oil. And as I think all of you know, Secretary Richardson is conducting a 60-day study of diversifying energy supplies and possibly converting factories and other major oil users to other fuels to free up oil supplies for home heating use. And, in anticipation of other potential price spikes in other parts of the oil market, we are asking refiners to keep producing at full throttle until the crisis has passed.

Finally, I hope that we will begin a discussion about how to make our economy even more energy efficient, so we're not so dependent on the ups and downs of supplies or so affected by future oil prices.

Whether in response to an earthquake, a flood, a hurricane, a farm crisis, our people always pull together at times like this. And for those of you like me, who come from different parts of the country, I can tell you that the families in the Northeast need our help now, and we're going to do what we can to provide it.

Before we begin our roundtable discussion, let me just say a few words about the other issues that are important to every Governor in this room and every citizen in our Nation: education reform, the current debate over how best to provide a Medicare prescription drug option for our seniors, and environmental stewardship.

Over the past 7 years, as we have turned the deficits into surplus and now are on our way to being debt-free in 13 years, we have also nearly doubled our investment in schools and demanded more in return, working hard, along with you, for higher standards, greater accountability, and extra help to the children who need it. Virtually every State has embraced that approach. Last year, with your help, we enacted landmark school accountability legislation to provide \$134 million to States and school districts to turn around failing schools. Last week I announced new guidelines to help States invest in what works to do just that.

I want to thank you for your partnership in the accountability movement and ask you to continue to work with us to strengthen our focus on that.

Another issue of increasing importance to States is the growing challenge presented by the lack of prescription drug coverage for seniors. Many people don't know that States, through their Medicaid programs, are the single largest purchasers of drugs in the world. Increasing drug costs are likely to be one of the fastest growing components of Medicaid programs in the years to come. We all recognize, I believe, that we need to modernize and reform the Medicare program, to extend its life, to make it more efficient and more competitive and better able to meet the challenges of the baby boom generation's aging.

I hope, as part of this broader reform, we can work with you to develop a privately contracted, voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit. It's a life-and-death issue for many seniors, and I don't think we should let another year pass without taking action. Tomorrow I will release a State-by-State analysis of the health,

financing, and demographic challenges facing the Medicare program and the tens of millions of Americans it serves.

Finally, let me also say that this is a good year to secure permanent funding for the protection of precious lands across our Nation. I had a good discussion with Governor King about this last night. Last year Congress approved a substantial increase in our lands legacy initiative. Two weeks ago, as part of this effort, I announced \$60 million in grants to States to create parks, save open space, and protect forests. The new budget proposes another substantial increase, a record \$1.4 billion to protect land and coastal resources, and this year we've proposed to make the higher level permanent funding. At least half of this funding would go to support State and local conservation efforts. I hope we can make this, too, our gift to the future.

Now, I'd like to call on Governor Leavitt to make some opening remarks, and I want to thank you again, sir, for what you said last night. It was terrific. Welcome.

[At this point, the discussion proceeded.]

The President. I would just like to make one comment—and then I know Governor Leavitt has got an agenda—about the role of government in the new economy. All of you will be thinking about this. I think we need to think about how we can reasonably make more new markets or help to facilitate them; how we can remove barriers without undermining public interest to the private sector's development; and how we can make government more user-friendly. And I'll just give you a couple of examples.

One of the biggest fights we had here when we overhauled the telecommunications law, for the first time in 60 years, was the insistence, that we in the administration had, that we let as many entrepreneurs into this unfolding new business as possible. And now, everywhere I go, I see people who are doing terrifically well, have hired huge numbers of people, who didn't even have businesses 5 years ago, because we got Federal legislation that had an entrepreneurial focus. And I think all of us should be sensitive to that, because I know Tom Friedman talked to you the other day; he's one of many people who points out that, even though more of our growth than ever before is in private sector jobs, the role of government, while different, is still profoundly important. And if you make the

wrong call on some of these things, you wind up paying for it for a long time to come.

We just had a financial—totally bipartisan financial modernization act pass the Congress last year that, I believe, is an example of removing impediments without undermining the public interest. We enacted the Community Reinvestment Act, but I think that we took a set of barriers out of the way of our financial institutions in maximizing the digital economy.

And then we've also tried to make government more user-friendly. We have more and more people filing their taxes electronically and relating to us in a lot of other ways. And I saw an article in my weekly reports just last night that at least one of you has already cleared the way for people to vote electronically, which will be an interesting challenge. If somebody wants to explain to me how we can do that and meet all the security needs, I'd be interested in it, because I think, clearly, we're all going this way.

I know many of you have advance voting. And interestingly enough, it's just to make government more user-friendly, and it's changing politics. There's one State here where a congressional race was decided in the last election because of advance voting, and there was a totally different result on election day than in the advance voting period. But we all are going to have to be very creative.

The other thing I think we have to do is not shut ourselves out of any part of the world, and I want to talk to you more later about the importance of bringing China into the WTO, which I feel very strongly about, and I hope we'll have a chance to talk about that.

Thank you very much. We'll let the press leave, and we'll go on with the program.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, chairman, and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland, vice chairman, National Governors' Association; Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine; and Thomas L. Friedman, foreign affairs columnist, *New York Times*. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Statement on Funding for Amtrak

February 28, 2000

There has never been a better time to expand our investment in Amtrak and the Nation's passenger railways. The number of Americans relying on Amtrak has continued to grow for 3 years in a row. And through sound financial management, Amtrak continues its movement toward viability.

Therefore, this year I am asking Congress to increase Amtrak funding by more than \$400 million, or more than 70 percent, in order to make

investments to expand Amtrak routes and provide even more efficient service, laying the foundation for high-speed rail. With this major funding increase this year, we can help ensure a thriving passenger rail system for many years to come.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Floods in Southern Africa

February 28, 2000

I am deeply saddened by the devastation caused by flooding in southern Africa, which has worsened over the past few days. Almost a million people in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe have lost their homes or their livelihoods, and tens of thousands of people in Mozambique are stranded in flood-affected areas and require urgent rescue.

Today we are allocating \$1 million, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, to support aircraft for critical search and rescue operations and the delivery of relief supplies.

In addition, we have already provided over \$1.8 million to fund air transport, prevent disease, deliver supplies, and support relief efforts. Two aircraft from the Department of Defense are on the way to deliver shelter materials, blankets, and other relief supplies. Also, we are dispatching a disaster assistance response team to the region to determine other ways that we can help our friends in southern Africa.

The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the people of the region as they cope with this disaster.

Remarks at the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner

February 28, 2000

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you for this wonderful book. Governor Patton, Mrs. Patton, Governor Davis, Governor O'Bannon; to B.J. Thornberry and all the officers of the DGA and especially my great friend Mark Weiner. I want to acknowledge also the presence—Mark Weiner did a good job tonight, and all the rest of you did, raising this money. I thank you for that.

I want to acknowledge the presence in this audience of the man who was the executive director of the DGA when I was a member,

my good friend Chuck Dolan. I thank you for being here and for all you did for us. And all my colleagues—I know there are five or six Governors out there who are former Governors with whom I served—thank you for being here.

I want to acknowledge the Governors who are retiring. Governor Rossello, thank you for everything you've done. And Governor Carper and Governor Carnahan are going to be Members of the United States Senate, and that will be a good thing for the Senate, a bad thing for the Governors.

I want to say a special work of thanks to the man who nominated me to be vice chairman of the DGA in 1979, Governor Jim Hunt, one of the finest people I ever met in my life. Thank you, Jim Hunt, for what you did.

You know, I will treasure this book. I have a first edition of "Profiles in Courage," but not one signed by John Kennedy. Hillary says that the reason I admire John Kennedy so much is, he's the only person to ever serve as President whose handwriting was even harder to read than mine. [Laughter] But I can recognize the signature, and I thank you.

President Kennedy once said, "The party which, in its drive for unity, discipline, and success, ever decides to exclude new ideas, independent conduct, or insurgent members is in danger." Well, thanks to the Democratic Governors, to your new ideas, your independent conduct, and your willingness always to try to do better and to be different, the Democratic Party is in no danger. We're stronger tonight than we have been in many, many years, thanks to you.

As President, I have been deeply indebted to my service as Governor. It has stood me in good stead. And I have been deeply indebted to so many of you for the friendship, the advice, the counsel you have given me, and to so many who were members of this organization with me who continue all during these years to call with a helpful word or sometimes just a word of friendship and support.

Thanks to our partnership and the hard work of the American people, our country is in good shape at the dawn of the new millennium. We have 21 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rate ever, and the longest economic expansion in history. We are well-positioned for this new century.

And I am very proud that there is in this country, embodied in the service of the Democratic Governors, a new Democratic Party, committed to new ideas and the old principles of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. I am proud of what we have done together.

But you came here tonight because we're raising money for the elections of 2000. And as dearly as I loved every single word Paul Patton

said, and I'll treasure it for a lifetime—and he'll never be able to get away from it because everywhere I go, the White House Communications Agency captures things on film. I've got a movie, a color movie of Paul Patton, and the next time he gets mad at me, I'm going to play it for him. [Laughter] I will treasure everything he said for a lifetime. As much as I treasure and as much as I have loved being President, elections are about the future. And in this election season, those of you who are running and those of you who are serving and not running must be very active in defining the choices for the future.

Last night at the dinner at the White House, I reminded all the Governors that we are now in the longest economic expansion in history, and it's easy to feel comfortable and confident, maybe even a little complacent. But the last time we had the longest economic expansion in history was in the decade of the 1960's, between 1961 and 1969.

In 1964, when I graduated from high school, America was still profoundly sad about the loss of President Kennedy, but very optimistic and very united behind President Johnson; absolutely convinced we'd just have high economic growth with low inflation from now on; absolutely convinced that we would solve the civil rights challenges of our age through the Congress; absolutely convinced that we would prevail in the cold war as a united nation.

Within 2 years, we had riots in the streets, and the country was divided. Within 4 years, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy had been killed. Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. The country was split right in two. We had a Presidential election which for the first time in a long time was about the politics of division. You remember the election of 1968? "Vote with the Silent Majority." And it was "us" and "them." If you weren't in the Silent Majority, presumably, you were in the loud minority. I know; I was one of them. And in just a few months, we lost the longest economic expansion in history. And we've had decades of "us" and "them" elections and "us" and "them" politics in Washington, DC.

I ran for President because when I was a Governor, I could not have survived practicing politics the way it was done here every day, and I was sick and tired of people all caught up in the Washington political game, deaf to the voices of the people like those in Appalachia

that Paul Patton introduced me to. On that hot day in Hazard, Kentucky, which I'll never forget because it was so hot, I saw people like the people I grew up with. They don't want much from us. They get up every day and go to work, and they obey the law, and they pay their taxes. All they want us to do is to work as hard at our job as they work at theirs and to pay attention to what their concerns are and to think about how their children are going to do better.

And I came to Washington determined to do that. I am profoundly indebted to every Governor who served with me, who helped me, and to all of you since. But what I want you to remember is, elections are about the future, and so is governance. And don't you dare be complacent about this. I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in shape again to build the future of our dreams for our children. Our party can lead the country to do that. We're going in the right direction. We have the right ideas. We have the right values. And you have to lead to make sure it happens.

And you have to be willing to do things that may not grab the headlines all the time. We have to take what Theodore Roosevelt said at the dawn of the century: "A growing country with a young spirit should always take the long look ahead." Today some of you came in to see me, including Governor Carper and former Governor Dukakis, who is here tonight, to talk about my Amtrak budget. Well, that's not a headline grabber, but it's important to the future that America have a high-speed rail system that guarantees our energy security and our safety and our strength. It's part of our long look ahead.

It's part of our long look ahead that we recognize that we've got the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. That is the good news. The challenge is that nearly every family in nearly every income group is having some difficulty balancing the burdens of raising their children and succeeding at work, and whenever this country has to make a choice—any family—we lose.

And we have to do more to help people to succeed at home and at work. We have to do more to bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind. If we can't bring free enterprise to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the inner cities, and to the Indian reservations of this country now, we'll never get around to it. And the Democrats

ought to lead the way. Everybody deserves a chance to work who is willing to do so.

Jim Hunt said something today I want to emphasize. We started out together in 1979, and we all wanted—especially in the South, where we knew we had to do it—we all wanted to make education better. But we really didn't know how to do it, especially with all the kids from all the different backgrounds, the different economic and racial and religious and ethnic backgrounds, with all their different burdens that they carried from home to school.

But we don't have an excuse anymore. Now, we know what works. We know how to turn around failing schools. We know all our kids can learn. And we know how to invest in it. We know how to demand high standards. We know what to do. We in the Democratic Party have to lead America to excellence in education for every single child in this country, across all the lines that divide us.

When I became President, there were a lot of people that never thought the crime rate would go down again. But we know how to do it. We know you've got to put more police on the street, people who are trusted by folks in a community, who work with them, who know how to prevent crime as well as catch criminals. And we know—even in the South, we know—we've got to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children. We know what works. The Democratic Party ought to lead the country to making this the safest big country in the world. We owe that to our children.

We know that in the digital economy the Governors came here to talk about, you do not have to weaken the environment to improve the economy. In fact, we know that we can improve the environment and the economy at the same time. There is a \$1 trillion market in the world today for environmental technologies that avoid the worst consequences of global warming and clean up local air and water systems and preserve the land—\$1 trillion market. We know that. And a lot of our friends in the other party don't know that yet. The Democratic Party ought to lead the way to a 21st century economy that proves we can have the strongest economy in history and the cleanest environment in history. We ought to lead the way to that sort of future.

And we know, even those of you that come, as I do, from a landlocked State in the middle

of the country, that there is no more artificial dividing line between foreign policy and domestic policy. We know that our welfare is tied to the welfare of people all around the world. That's why I've worked so hard for peace in every region of the world and why I've worked to expand trade and why I believe we ought to take advantage of an agreement that finally opens China's markets to us, the way our markets have been open to China for decades now; why I believe we ought to continue to work to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological terrorism; why we ought to adopt the test ban treaty—even though the Senate voted against it last year—because we have got to make a safer world if we want our kids to live on safer streets and have a safer future in every State in the United States of America.

And, finally—you know, I get apprehensive when people start giving me gifts, even one like this that I treasure. That's the kind of thing that they ought to do for you when you're not around anymore. I have to pinch myself. I'm still alive; I'm still here. *[Laughter]* I hope to be a useful citizen when I'm no longer living in the White House. But if the good Lord came to me tonight and said, "I'm sorry, you can't finish your term. You're out of here tomorrow morning. And I'll only give you one wish. I'm not a genie; you get one wish, not three," I would set aside everything I just said to you and pray that America could find a way to overcome the profoundly ingrained tendency of people everywhere to distrust people who are different from them by race, by religion, people who were gay, all these things that are different.

Why? You've been here talking about the Internet economy. I've got a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia over the Internet. People are being drawn together as never before. I was in poor villages in Africa where the school buildings had maps that still had the Soviet Union on it. But because they're getting computer hookups, pretty soon they'll just be able to print out maps that are new, and those poor little kids in those little villages will be able to learn the same geography our kids do in our finest schools.

We are being drawn together as never before, and yet we are bedeviled by the oldest problems of humankind. Sunday I'm going to Selma to be with Governor Siegelman and the veterans of the Selma march 35 years ago. For me, par-

ticularly because I'm from the South, it is a signal honor. And we will celebrate all the great things that have happened in the last 35 years to bring us together.

I see Governor Barnes out there from Georgia. He went in on a great vote that carried in two African-Americans to statewide elected office in Georgia. And there are things like that happening all over America: Governor Locke out there, the first Chinese-American Governor our country ever had; Governor Cayetano from Hawaii, a Philippine-American. But it is still true that even in America—we had kids at a Jewish community center in California, little kids shot at just because they were Jewish; a Filipino postal worker killed just because he was Asian and worked for the Federal Government; all those fine people killed in the middle of the country by that man who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy; Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming.

Now, most of the news in America is good. But I am telling you, we're a smart people. You can't keep us down no matter what, as long as we've got our heads on straight. But the Democratic Party ought to take the lead in reminding us that one of the things that we have learned as we've unlocked the mysteries of the human gene is that we are genetically 99.9 percent the same and that the differences among individuals within racial groups are different—are greater than the differences from group to group.

Whether we like it or not, we're all in this boat together. And those of you who have been in the Oval Office know that I keep on the table there a Moon rock that Neil Armstrong gave me on the 30th anniversary of the landing on the Moon. It's a lava rock that is 3.6 billion years old. And whenever anybody gets all hot and lathered up in the Oval Office in a meeting and they act like the whole world is about to come down, I say, "Time out. See that rock? It's 3.6 billion years old. Now, we're all just passing through. Chill out." *[Laughter]*

But even though we're all just passing through, every minute, every hour, every day is precious. So I ask you all, apart from everything you do on all these issues I mentioned: Model that, model one America. Remind people that if you believe everybody counts and everybody ought to have a chance, then you've got

to believe we're all better off when we help each other instead of look down on one another.

That's another thing the Democratic Party has stood for. We lost a lot of Presidential elections because we stood for it, but we're coming back now because we stand for it. You've got 13 seats up in 2000 and 36 up in 2002. I'm going to help you with the 13, and when I'm just a citizen, I'll help you with the 36 if you want me to. But we will never have a national Democratic Party that's as strong as it ought to be until we have a majority of the governorships again and until we can prove, where people live, that we care about them, that we can produce for them, that we reflect their fondest hopes and deepest values. You can do that.

You have helped me to help America. You have immeasurably enriched my life. You've been good to me and Hillary and Al and Tipper. And for all that, I am profoundly grateful. I will treasure this book for the rest of my days

and my friendships and, seriously, what Paul Patton said. But America is always about tomorrow. So be proud of what we've done, but keep your eye on tomorrow, and lead the American people where we ought to go.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. at Union Station. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, chair, Gov. Gray Davis of California, vice chair, B.J. Thornberry, executive director, and Mark Weiner, treasurer, Democratic Governors' Association; Governor Patton's wife, Judi; Governors Frank O'Bannon of Indiana, Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico, Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, Mel Carnahan of Missouri, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, Don Siegelman of Alabama, Roy Barnes of Georgia, Gary Locke of Washington, and Benjamin J. Cayetano of Hawaii; former Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts; and astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Remarks on Tobacco and Medicare and an Exchange With Reporters *February 29, 2000*

The President. Good morning. I would like to say just a couple of words about two subjects vital to the health of the American people, Medicare and tobacco.

Throughout the life of this administration, Vice President Gore and I have done everything we could to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. Five years ago, we put forward a landmark rule affirming the FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products.

Since that time, the tobacco industry has fought our efforts at every turn. I am heartened today by news reports that the Nation's leading cigarette maker is now willing to accept Government regulation of tobacco.

If Philip Morris is ready to support the FDA provisions of the tobacco bill the industry and the Congressional leadership killed just 2 years ago, that is an important step forward.

Every day, 3,000 young people smoke for the first time, and 1,000 of them will die earlier as a result. We have a duty to do everything we can to save and lengthen their lives by protecting our young people from the dangers of tobacco.

I also want to comment briefly about an important new report I am releasing today on the future of Medicare. I am pleased to be joined here today by some of the Nation's foremost leaders on behalf of our senior citizens, along with a number of seniors who know from their personal experiences what Medicare means to their lives.

In the 34 years since it was created, Medicare has eased the suffering and extended the lives of tens of millions of Americans. It has given young families peace of mind knowing they will not have to mortgage their children's future to pay for their parents' health care.

If we want our children to have the same peace of mind when our generation retires, we must act now to strengthen Medicare. When I became President, the Medicare Trust Fund was scheduled to go broke last year, 1999. Because of the tough actions we have taken, the life of the Trust Fund has been extended by 16 years.

Still, we must do more. The Trust Fund is projected to go broke now by 2015, and the new report I am issuing shows why. Not only

will the senior population nearly double over the next 25 years, but already today, in 40 of our 50 States, 1 in 10 Medicare beneficiaries is 85 years of age or older. This is the fastest growing group of seniors, and they require the greatest amount of care. And they will spend—consider this—almost a quarter of their lives on Medicare. The report also shows that in every State in America, there are more women on Medicare than men; on average 57 percent women, 43 percent men.

This report is the most compelling evidence to date that we must strengthen and modernize Medicare for the long run, including adding a voluntary prescription drug benefit. With our economy strong, our budget balanced, our people confident, now is the time to deal with this important issue. The budget I propose does just that while maintaining our surplus and paying down our debt over the next 13 years to make us debt-free for the first time since 1835. It uses the savings from debt reduction to lengthen the life of Social Security and Medicare. It uses competition and the best private sector practices to control costs and improve quality in Medicare. And it provides funds to give every older American, at long last, a choice of affordable coverage for prescription drugs.

These drugs are an indispensable part of modern medicine. No one creating a Medicare program today would think of creating a program without prescription drug coverage. Yet more than three in five Medicare recipients now lack dependable drug coverage which can lengthen and enrich their lives. It's even worse for seniors in rural areas, who have little or no option to purchase private prescription drug coverage. And as today's report shows, nearly a quarter of our Nation's elderly live in rural areas.

Our budget would extend seniors the lifeline of optional prescription drug coverage. It creates a reserve fund of \$35 billion to build on this new benefit and protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

I have been gratified to see the growing bipartisan support for adding prescription drugs to Medicare since I first proposed it last year. But I am concerned, frankly, about two things.

First, some in the congressional majority have talked about providing drug coverage only to the very poorest of our seniors. This report shows that doing so would mean denying a prescription drug option to the nearly half of all seniors who have modest middle incomes, be-

tween \$15,000 and \$50,000, the majority of whom lack dependable drug coverage as well. I think it would be wrong to deny them the opportunity to get that drug coverage.

Second, the majority party in Congress has begun talking again about spending the surplus on huge, risky tax cuts which would make it impossible to pay down our debt. That would leave nothing for extending the life of Social Security and Medicare, nothing for a voluntary drug benefit. I believe that when they read this report, they will understand what the consequences of such a decision would be.

The American people have worked hard to turn our economy around and turn our deficits into surpluses. Now we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to both pay down the national debt and to reform Medicare, lengthen the life of Social Security, and add a voluntary prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. We owe it to the American people to seize this opportunity this year. And I thank all of these fine people who are with me for the contributions they are making to that effort. Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Are you throwing in the towel on the Middle East negotiations, and why have you never condemned the bombing of the power plants for civilians in Lebanon?

The President. First of all, I am not throwing in the towel. And Mr. Ross is coming home to consult with me to see where we are. We've made some important headway. We've still got some stumbling blocks there. We're working harder than ever. I'm doing what I think is most likely to succeed this year in securing dramatic advances with the Palestinians and with Syria and with Lebanon. And I'm doing the best I can on it, just as I have been for 7 years.

But it would be a great mistake to overread the significance of his coming home. He's coming home because we need to talk about where we are now and where we're going. But there is no throwing in the towel here.

China

Q. Is the China WTO vote starting to slip away from you? And what are you going to say to the Chinese to get them to stop undermining your message?

The President. Well, no, I don't think it's slipping away. I think the white paper contains

some fairly inflammatory language which caused me, once again, to say that we have had the same policy for 20 years now: We believe in one China, but it has to be resolved peacefully, and we are adamantly opposed to any sort of force. The white paper also contains some specific suggestions, however, about how a dialog might be opened.

And I understand that this is the political season over there as well. They're having a Presidential election in Taiwan. And I have noticed, not only in this election in America but in previous ones, sometimes things are said in political seasons that might not be said at other times. I'm sure you've noticed that as well.

I don't mean to trivialize this. It is very important that everyone understand how strongly the United States views our long-standing policy. We accept one China, we believe there must be cross-strait dialog, and we believe there must be no violence of any kind. But I do not sense that this vote is slipping away.

Oil Prices

Q. Americans today are paying \$1.42 a gallon for gas. That's a pretty good hit at the pump every day when they fill up their tanks. Is there anything that your administration can do to solve that problem, and specifically, is the release of oil from the strategic oil reserves still on the table?

The President. The answer to the second question is yes. We're looking at this oil swap issue. But I think that—as you know, there have been lots of press reports about the prospect that production will be increased and if it is, then the oil prices will go down and the gasoline prices will go down. And that's really what is needed here. And we'll see—I'm encouraged that that might occur. So that's the main thing we can do. But no, I have not taken the petroleum reserve issue off the table. And I certainly wouldn't do that in the event that we don't seem to have any other options.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, if I could follow up on the Middle East question for a moment. You have a little more than 10 months left in your Presidency. Are you prepared to turn this process over? And will you take steps to turn this process over to whoever your successor is?

The President. Well, if we haven't gotten it done, I will. But keep in mind, the Israelis and

the others—the Palestinians have committed to resolve their issues by the middle of September. That's their common commitment. And neither one of them have given up on that deadline.

And secondly, I think that on the Syrian track, given how hard it was to get it started and how close, I believe, they are on the substance of it—I don't think there is as much difference there as is commonly assumed—I think it is more likely that we'll have success if we have it this year than if we put it off.

But they're not operating on my timetable. They're operating on theirs. And I'm doing what I can to help to get them get the job done as quickly as possible.

Austria

Q. Mr. President, does Haider's resignation really make a difference while the Freedom Party is still in the Austrian Government, and should the international community normalize relations with Austria now?

The President. Well, I think the answer to your question is: I don't know if it makes a difference or not. It might; it might not. The EU has put out a very cautionary statement this morning, and obviously they're closer to it than we are. I think the important thing is that the party reject the kind of intolerance that we fear has been a part of it. And I think the EU statement is a pretty good capturing of how we all feel right now.

Expulsion of Cuban Diplomat

Q. The Cuban Government continues to insist that the diplomat that was expelled on Saturday had committed no illegal acts. What is your—

The President. Well, my belief is that that matter was handled in the appropriate way, in the way that countries always handle such matters with diplomats. There is no difference in the way we've handled that than the way we've handled many other cases, not just in my administration but long before. And I don't think I should say more about it than that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for West Palm Beach, FL. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Dennis B. Ross. Reporters referred to Austrian Freedom Party leader Joerg Haider and Cuban diplomat Jose Imperatori. The National

Economic Council/Domestic Policy Council report was entitled "America's Seniors and Medicare: Challenges for Today and Tomorrow, a State-by-State Status Report."

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in West Palm Beach, Florida

February 29, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, Bren, thank you for your wonderful remarks and for opening your home to us today, giving those of us who suffered through an unusually long, cold Washington winter a chance to gaze out on the Atlantic under different circumstances, and for always being there for us.

I also want to thank you for what you have done for the most important U.S. Senate candidate in the country to me. Hillary had a wonderful time here, and I thank you and the rest of you who helped her. I thank you for that.

I'd like to join with Joe Andrew in expressing my appreciation to all the other officers of the Democratic Party and the Florida officials that are here. Congressman Peter Deutsch and Lori flew down with me today. We had a good time, and I was glad to be able to ferry them back home, for a few hours anyway.

I'd like to thank Danny Abraham, Cynthia Friedman, the Carters, all the others who have done this fine work today, and I'd like to put in a special plug for my longtime friend Representative Elaine Bloom, who is running for Congress here. She was for me in December of 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. [*Laughter*] And I am for her in 2000. I'm going to do what I can to help. But I thank you for running for Congress. Thank you.

Let me just say a few words today about this millennial election and about why we're where we are. Eight years ago, when I ran for President, I did so because I thought Washington had become a place that was almost turned in on itself, obsessed with itself, and stuck in the thinking and the debate of a time that was long gone. It was obvious then that we were moving into a global economy, into a global society, that the whole way we work, the way we earn a living, the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world was undergoing a profound change. And yet, in

Washington, we just kept repeating over and over and over again the same debates. Each party took the same sides, staked out the same opposite position. Paralysis occurred, and the results were not particularly satisfying to the American people.

And so I decided that I would ask the American people to give me a chance to try a different approach: to try to have a politics that would unite and not divide; to try to have a budget policy that would restore basic arithmetic to the American budget and to stop pretending that we could ever get rid of high interest rates and low investment and slow growth until we got rid of the Government deficit; to put the American people first in profound ways, so that it would no longer be about Washington but about how people lived out here.

And we've been working at it pretty steady now for 7 years and a month, and the results have been good. We have the longest expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years. Adoptions are up. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized for the first time. The college-going rate's increased a lot. We've got 150,000 young Americans who are doing community service through the AmeriCorps program, 1,000 colleges with their kids out, going into grade schools every week to teach people to read. The country is coming together and moving forward. And that is the good news.

But I think the most interesting thing about this election is, in my judgment, that the winner will be determined by what the election is about—in the President's race, in the Congress races, in the Governors' races. And you have to help decide what the election is about. And there's more latitude now because things seem to be going well, so we're under the illusion that there is more latitude to decide what the election is about.

I always tell people the Presidential election is the world's greatest job interview, except that the job interview, unlike most jobs, this job interview has two components. First of all, people have got to be able to look at you and size up, "Can I imagine this person having this job?" And then they have to decide what the job is about. And they are two different things. If you don't pass the first test, you don't get to take the second one.

Now, I think all four of the candidates that are left passed the first test. The American people can look at them and imagine them being President. But the winner will be determined by, what is the job about? What is the election about; what is the charter; what do you want; what are we to do with this enormous amount of prosperity, this historic moment where we can make peace?

Very often, democracies mishandle good times, because people are under the illusion that it's just sort of on automatic and it goes on forever. And when I gave the State of the Union Address, I asked the American people to work with me this year and the Congress to try to overcome the partisan divides and to take a long look ahead at the big challenges facing America. I asked them to pay the debt off, get America out of debt for the first time since 1835. I asked them to deal with the aging of America. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years.

I released a Medicare report today that said the fastest growing group of seniors are people over 85. They will spend almost a quarter of their lives on Medicare. And since 70 percent of our seniors don't have access to affordable quality medicine, I'd like to see them get it under the Medicare program. But we also have to change the program so it will last longer.

We have to lengthen the life of Social Security. I persuaded this Congress to save the Social Security surplus—that is the surplus that we get because you pay more in Social Security taxes than we pay out now—but I haven't persuaded them to do anything with it. So the good news is we're paying down the debt. But the bad news is we haven't saved Social Security yet. Because if they would just take the interest savings we get from a lower debt and put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could run it out to 2050, which would take it beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers. We have to deal with this.

We've got to face the fact that we have the largest and most diverse student population in our history, and we no longer have an excuse for not making our schools excellent. We now know how to do it. We were talking the other night with the Governors, who just left town, in Washington. And there were a couple of people, one in my Cabinet, the Secretary of Education, and one retiring Governor, the Governor of North Carolina, who has the best school improvement record in America, and we were laughing about what it was like when we started as young men together 22 years ago as Governors. Everybody wanted to make the schools better, but we didn't really know how. Now we know. We have mountains and mountains of evidence of what works. And the National Government should play a role in that. There's nothing more important than giving all our kids a good education. Is that going to be a part of this election, or not?

We've got the crime rate down 7 years in a row. It's the lowest it's been in 25 years. But nobody seriously believes this country is as safe as it ought to be. We can make America the safest big country in the world. Columbine happened a year ago, and I'm still waiting for Congress to close the gun show loophole, to stop the importation of these large capacity ammunition clips, and to require child safety locks on guns.

Today in Michigan in a school, a 6-year-old boy, with a gun that his brother gave him, shot a 6-year-old girl. And she died. The child was 6 years old. How did that child get that gun? Why could the child fire the gun? If we had the technology today to put in these child safety locks, why don't we do it? I don't know what the facts were in this case, and I don't want to prejudge it or condemn anyone. But I know this: I know that the accidental gun death rate of children—the accidental gun death rate of children in America is 9 times higher than that in the other 25 biggest countries combined—combined. So we know what to do. We just don't have any excuses. Is that going to be a subject of this election, or not?

You have to decide that. And the same is true with health care. The same is true with the environment and whether we can grow the environment and improve the economy. The same is true with our obligations around the

world. How do we define America's responsibility to fight biological and chemical and nuclear warfare, to fight terrorism, to advance the cause of peace, to fight against the racial and ethnic and tribal turmoil around the world, to advance the cause of peace through expanding trade?

I strongly believe—and our party's divided about it, I know—but I strongly believe we ought to let China in the World Trade Organization. Everything I've learned as President and everything I've learned in 53 years of living is that you get a lot more from people if you give them a chance to work with you than you do if you tell them you don't want to fool with them any more.

And we've got a big stake in how China turns out. I don't know how they will and neither does anybody else, but I know this: If we put them in this trade organization, they'll have to open their markets to us just like our markets are open to them. So it's a no-brainer economically. But politically, it's important, because they will have an incentive to make good choices in the future about their role in the world. If we keep them out, they'll still keep selling stuff here, they'll relate more closely to others, and they'll have no incentives to be responsible partners in the world.

If we do this, 20 years from now we'll wonder why we ever debated it. If we don't do it, 20 years from now we'll be still kicking ourselves. That's what I believe. So I'm going to fight for it.

But these things ought to be the subject of this election, because you know the world will grow smaller, not larger. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, much lower than anybody thought we could have without exploding inflation. But there are still people and places that have been left behind. Should they be the subjects of this election?

There are rural areas, Indian reservations, and inner-city neighborhoods where there are still people willing to work; where there is no free enterprise, no investment; where we could, by changing our tax laws and giving people like you the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America you have today to invest in poor areas in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia—I'm for that, by the way. I'm trying to get America to invest more money overseas, but we ought to have the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America.

Does this matter to you? I think it should. By the way, it's not only morally right; it's a good way to keep the economy growing without inflation. There are Indian reservations in this country where the unemployment rate is still 70 percent. If you cut it to 20 percent, just to 20 percent, all those people would become consumers as well as workers. It's noninflationary growth.

I'll just mention one other issue. You have to decide. I have found it incredibly ironic that in this most modern of ages, where I meet all these young people that have made fortunes in their twenties off dot-com companies—you know, I'm too old to make a living in this flourishing sector of our economy. And it is growing like crazy, you know. I just was at the Business Roundtable, and all these heads of these Fortune 500 companies were trying to figure out why the Dow was going down while the NASDAQ was going up. And we're doing all these incredible things.

I went in a little African village, and I saw a hookup from an American cable company and what they were putting in there so these kids could get modern maps to learn geography. I went into a *favela* in Rio with Pelé, the great soccer player, and saw what an American company was doing there, through technology, to try to get these poor children in Rio a chance to have a different life. I have seen all these efforts to bridge the digital divide in America, all this neat stuff and a lot of more mundane things. I have a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia. I mean, you know, it's the modern world out there.

I know in a couple of months, I'll have an announcement that will be one of the great honors in my life. I'll be part of—we will announce that the human genome has been fully sequenced, and we can now set about the business of analyzing the very blueprint of life and why we turn out the way we do and how we deal with various things. We may be able to block broken genes with gene therapies to stop people from ever developing diabetes, to stop people from ever developing Alzheimer's, to stop people from ever developing breast cancer, all of these things. It's just going to be unbelievable.

Now, don't you think it's interesting, with all this stuff going on, that the biggest problem we face as a society is still the oldest one?

We're still scared of people who are different from us. And it's easy, once you are frightened or uncertain, to turn that into distrust, to turn that into dehumanization, to turn that into violence, and then to have no conscience about it because they didn't matter anyway.

I mean, it's interesting—you look around the world, and you see tribal wars in Africa where hundreds of thousands of people die in a few days. You see continuing religious and ethnic tensions in the Middle East, and religious tensions continue in Northern Ireland, where I thought we had the door closed, and it got knocked open again. And what—this is outrageous—what happened in the Balkans, the problems they're having in Russia in Chechnya. You just look around the world, on any given continent.

And in America you say, "Well, look at us. We're the most successful, diverse democracy in history." That's true, but we had a shooting at a Los Angeles Jewish center, where Jewish kids were shot at because they were Jewish. A Filipino postal worker was killed because he was both Asian and a Federal employee, and the guy that killed him thought that was a double shot. Matthew Shepard was killed because he was gay. The guy in the Middle West killed the former African-American basketball coach at Northwestern, killed a Korean Christian walking out of church, and three or four other people, and he said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy. And I could go on. You know all these issues.

What I want to say to you is that times are good, but we should be humble about this. We should be grateful, and we should be humble, because we have, number one, not repealed all the laws of human nature, which means there is still the darkness of the heart to deal with, and number two, good times are either made the most of or squandered.

And I just want to leave you with this. A lot of you here are younger than me, but a lot of you are about my age, maybe a little older. When we celebrated earlier this month the longest economic expansion, peace or war, in our history, I was very interested in that, because I love economics and I study it every month. I read all the numbers and everything and try to keep up with what's going on. So I went back and studied the last longest economic expansion in our history. Do you know

when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969, the years of my childhood and youth, when I should have been doing dot-com companies. [Laughter]

But let me tell you about them. In 1964, the height of the expansion, I graduated from high school. My President had been killed a few months before, and the country was heart-broken. But contrary to a lot of the Monday morning quarterbacks that look back, it was not the beginning of American cynicism. That's not true. We united behind President Johnson. He got off to a great start. He was leading us toward passing civil rights legislation, legislation to help the poor. And in 1964, when I finished high school, there was this enormous sense of optimism and confidence in the country that, A, the economic good times would go on forever; B, we would resolve in a lawful way, through our Congress, our civil rights challenges; and C, we would certainly prevail, without controversy in our country, in the cold war against communism. Those things would happen. Everybody thought so.

Two years later, we had riots in our streets. The country was already divided over Vietnam. Four years after I graduated from high school, I was graduating from college 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for election. And the country was totally divided. And there were more riots in the streets, and the National Capital was the scene of a riot in which block after block burned to the ground.

A few months afterward, we had a Presidential election, the first Presidential election in modern times fought on the grounds of "us" versus "them," where President Nixon, a man of immense talent, I might add, was elected on a theme of the Silent Majority. Now, some of you remember that. Now, if there's a Silent Majority, there must, by definition, be a loud minority, right? I was one of them; I know. [Laughter] So it was "us" and "them." A few months after that, the economic expansion was over. And we've been having "us" and "them" politics ever since. And for 7 years, I have worked to end that, I think with greater success out here in the country than in the Capital, but nonetheless, it's been an honor to try.

I'm telling you this as a citizen now, why I'm glad you're here. You have to help us define what this election is about. And that's what we're going to use your contribution for. But

those of you who are older, like me, you remember what it was like in the mid-sixties. As a citizen, I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this is about. It's not just about choosing a person. We have to define the job and the direction. Then the choice will take care of itself. You know what I think. But just remember how quickly these things can get away and what a heavy responsibility we have to make the most of a truly magic moment.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Bren Simon, Danny Abraham, Cynthia Friedman, and John and Nancy Carter, luncheon cohosts; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Lori Deutsch, wife of Representative Peter Deutsch; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI; and former professional soccer player Pelé, Minister of Extraordinary Sports of Brazil.

Remarks on the Shooting Death at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Michigan and an Exchange With Reporters in West Palm Beach February 29, 2000

The President. I would just like to say how very sorry I am about the shooting death of the first grade student at Buell Elementary School in the Mount Morris community near Flint, Michigan. I know the prayers of America are with the child's family and fellow classmates and all the people of that small community.

I think it is important that today our thoughts be with them. And I don't know, obviously, all the facts; I may not even have as many as you do. But I think this is once again a call to us to do whatever we can to protect our children from this sort of violence and this tragedy. And I'm just very, very sorry, and I wanted to say that.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, is there anything that can be done to stop tragedies like this?

The President. Well, what I'd like to do, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], is make sure I have all the facts before I say that, you know, if we had had one of the laws that we're proposing, it would make a difference. I don't want to—I think today is a day for grieving and regret, sympathy and support for the family and the community and the other kids and the people in that school. This must be an agony for all of them.

But I think that—I do think just generally that we should be really pushing for the child safety locks and even more for the investment

in safe gun technology so we can complete this research and see if we can't develop guns that can only be fired by their adult owners.

I think that I'm very troubled. I don't want to comment too much on the facts of this case, but if you get away from this case, as I said when I was inside, just the accidental death rate of our young people from guns is so much higher than any other country that it's clear that we need to keep working on this, and I hope that we will.

Q. You said inside it has been a year since Columbine. Is there anything you can do, a stick you can use to get Congress to move? Are you willing to say, for example, that you would veto Commerce-Justice if it doesn't have the protections you're looking for?

The President. Well, I believe that we will get some action this year, and I wouldn't rule anything in or out. But I don't want to get into the tactics now, except to say that—keep in mind there is a budget—there is a bill in conference, and one of them is pretty good, and one of them is not. We've got to try to get the best bill we can out of conference. And I just hope that everyone will weigh in and try to get this done. It's very important to the future.

Q. You did seem to indicate in your speech inside that this should be an election issue.

The President. Oh, I do believe that. I think the issue of—not this terrible tragedy but the

issue of gun safety, I think, definitely should be. We ought to make a decision as a people. That's why we have these elections. And we can do that, you see, without any name-calling or anything. People can just state what their positions are and why, and the American people can make their judgments. But I do think, to me, it ought to be one of the big goals of our country to make America the safest big country in the world, and therefore, is a proper subject of debate in this election. It's nothing but an issue, so there's no need for name-calling or anger or anything else. People should just

state what they feel should be done, and the American people can make up their mind who is right.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Establishment of the President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina

February 29, 2000

As the first city in the United States founded by former slaves, Princeville, North Carolina, holds a special and highly significant place in our Nation's history. In its early days, Princeville was called Freedom Hill by fleeing African-Americans who settled along the banks of the River Tar under the protection of Union troops at the close of the Civil War. In more recent times, repeated flooding from the River Tar has caused damage in Princeville, which was devastated this fall by the particularly severe floods that accompanied Hurricane Floyd.

Today I am announcing the creation, by Executive order, of the President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina. This Council will bring together representatives from 12 Federal agencies, several key members of my Cabinet, and chaired by Sally Katzen of the Office of Management and Budget. It will work with elected officials, the private sector, community and non-profit groups to recommend measures to preserve and protect Princeville for the future. I have asked the Council to move promptly to recommend action that my administration can take to help repair and rebuild

Princeville and, to the extent possible, protect the town from future floods.

We have taken many steps since this terrible flooding hit Princeville last fall, from immediately dispatching emergency workers to making resources available for the people of Princeville in their efforts to rebuild. It is my firm belief and the policy of my administration that we must do more to help the people of Princeville who have bravely chosen to stay and rebuild their badly damaged hometown. We owe them our best efforts.

It is enormously important that, as we celebrate Black History Month and honor the long and proud history of this uniquely important town, we also take steps to preserve it for the future. As we embark on this new chapter in Princeville's history, I would like to thank Representative Eva Clayton who has led the charge for this step I am announcing today, and who has worked tirelessly on behalf of this important town. I also thank Representative Charles Rangel for his support of this important effort.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Feb. 29 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Social Security Reform Legislation February 29, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am pleased that Congress is moving forward with a bill that eliminates the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age. As I said in my 1999 State of the Union Address, “we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn.” The retirement earnings test was created during the Great Depression to encourage older workers to retire in order to open up more jobs for younger workers. As the baby boomers begin to retire, it is more important than ever that older Americans who are willing and able to work, should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

We should reward every American who wants to and can stay active and productive. I encourage Congress to send me a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age.

Eliminating the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age is a first step toward Social Security reform. I remain committed to making bipartisan progress on Social Security this year. I ask Congress to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security

to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Moving forward on these two, simple steps would be a substantial downpayment on Social Security reform. It would demonstrate that we can work together, building the bipartisan trust necessary to finish the job of meeting the long-term Social Security challenge.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Elaine Bloom in Miami, Florida February 29, 2000

Thank you. Well, I was looking out at the beautiful vista—first, I was looking down on you. Did you see me up there? And I was looking at this magnificent home and thinking how fortunate we are, all of us, to be in this country at this moment, to be free citizens, to be able to come here to support someone in whom we believe.

I want to begin by thanking Phil and Pat Frost. They have been with me a long time, too, and I am honored to be here in their magnificent home. I want to thank all of you who helped to spearhead this immensely successful event for Elaine tonight. I want to say that I'm

glad that her children, David and Anne, are here, and I'm sorry the judge couldn't come. But far be it for us to get him in trouble. We want him to stay on the bench and make good decisions. *[Laughter]*

I want to say how grateful I am for the friendship and support I have enjoyed from Congressman Peter Deutsch and his wife, Lori, who is here. And I thank them so much for their service to the United States. And Representative Sally Heyman, we're glad you're here.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime personal friend Bill Nelson. I

am thrilled that he is running for the Senate and thrilled he is doing so well.

I want you to know why I'm here tonight, besides the fact that I've been dying to see Phil and Pat's house. I'm here for three reasons. One is, Elaine was there for me when only my mother thought I could be elected. [Laughter] And she reminded me tonight that when we first met, she said, "Now, look, I'm going to ask you some questions, but I want you to know in advance I'm going to be for you anyway, so you don't have to tailor your answers. Just shoot me straight." And we've been shooting each other straight now for, well, more than 8 years.

I'll never forget when the first significant victory I won was in the Florida Democratic Convention when they had this straw poll. And Elaine and some of my other supporters hauled Hillary and me from meeting to meeting to meeting. I thought New Hampshire was tough till I met these people in all these little caucuses, you know. I had to answer 400 questions. When I got through with that caucus, I said, "I hope we did well, but I'm so tired, I don't care whether we win or not anymore." [Laughter] It was an amazing experience. And we had a lot of opponents, a lot of good people running for President in 1992. And we got a majority of the Florida Democrats at that caucus, and I feel profoundly indebted to Elaine Bloom.

The second reason I'm here is because she embodies the philosophy that we call the New Democratic philosophy, that is conservative in part but also liberal in part. I believed, when I ran for President, that there was something really wrong with the way things were going in Washington. I felt that it bore no reasonable relationship to the work I had done for a decade as Governor, the work that she was trying to do here in the legislature with people like Governor Chiles and Governor, now Senator Graham before him, the work of getting people from different walks of life together, defining goals, defining opportunities, defining problems, then figuring out what to do about them.

Washington was a place where, maybe because people felt they were so far from their constituents and it was so hard to get that 15 seconds on the evening news at night, they seemed to me to be more interested in sort of lobbying rhetorical bombs at one another and putting each other in little boxes and repeating

over and over and over again the fights of yesterday as America kept moving into tomorrow.

I was absolutely convinced then that there was nothing wrong with this country that couldn't be fixed by what was right with it. And so, with Elaine's help, with the Frosts' help, with a lot of you in this room, I asked the American people to give me and then give me and Al Gore a chance to see if a unifying philosophy of opportunity for every American and responsibility from every American and a community including all the people of this country could lead us to new ideas and a new direction. And now it's worked out pretty well.

And I am immensely gratified to have been a part of the progress this country has made. I'm proud of it, and I know I am not solely responsible for it. If it hadn't been for—[applause] Thank you. It wouldn't have been possible if this country weren't the greatest environment for entrepreneurs and businesspeople in the world. It wouldn't have been possible if the American people weren't committed to working harder and smarter, and as the economy grew they didn't ask for inflationary pay increases. They understood they were in a world economy, and they ought to be tied to the growth of their enterprises. It wouldn't have been possible without the support of the members of my party in Congress, who, without any help from the Republicans, voted to bring the deficit down in 1993, got interest rates down, and started this long job-creating boom. So I am very grateful.

But the third reason I'm here is the most important of all, and that is that in 11 months or so I'll be just another citizen, but the work of America goes on. We've turned this country around. We're moving in the right direction. But if you really think about what you'd like America to be, there's a great deal yet to be done.

Yes, we've turned deficits to surpluses. But I think we ought to take this country completely out of debt, for the first time since 1835, to keep interest rates down for a new generation.

Yes, the schools are getting better and more of our kids are going to college. But I don't think we ought to stop until we've got the certainty that every child, without regard to race or income, can get a world-class education and every person can go on to college and stay there for 4 years and not have to drop out because of the cost.

I don't think we should stop until we find a way for every American to have affordable health care, until we find a way to—[applause] Thank you. And Florida—I don't think we should stop until we know that when the baby boom generation retires—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers; that's everybody born between 1946 and 1964—when we all get into our retirement years, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I don't believe we should stop until we have modernized Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and secured it so that the baby boomers can retire without the gnawing worry that we will be an awesome burden to our children and our children's ability to raise our grandchildren.

And I can tell you, the people my age, we think about this a lot. And I'm trying to get this Congress to lengthen the life of Social Security, to lengthen the life of Medicare, to add a prescription drug benefit, but we can't stop until that's done.

I'm proud of the fact that we've done a lot to save the Everglades, but I don't think we should stop until we reverse the tide of global warming and prove we can grow the economy as we improve the environment.

I'm proud of the fact that we've made progress for peace and freedom around the world, but there are still threats from biological and chemical and nuclear weapons. There are threats from terrorists. And there are still profound problems in every corner of the world that people have because of their racial, religious, ethnic, and tribal differences. And we shouldn't stop.

And I can tell you that it profoundly matters who is in the Congress. It's a big deal whether Bill Nelson gets elected to the Senate or not, more than you can imagine. There's going to be somewhere between two and four Justices appointed to the Supreme Court. I hope that Vice President Gore will be making those appointments, but the ultimate backstop is the Senate.

That's another reason I'm so interested in the Senate race from New York—one of many. [Laughter] And I want to thank—so many of you tonight said something nice about Hillary or said you were helping her, and I'm very grateful to you for that.

It matters because we're going to have to decide whether to follow the path of fiscal re-

sponsibility or not. We have doubled spending on education and training in my term, while getting rid of the deficit. And we did it by giving you the smallest Government in 40 years, by eliminating hundreds of programs. Was that a conservative decision or a liberal decision? Well, it was conservative: We got rid of the deficit. It was liberal: We doubled spending on education and training. That's the kind of discipline and values and vision we need. It matters.

And finally, I'd like to thank all the law enforcement people who are here for supporting Elaine Bloom. One of the reasons I wanted to be identified with her is that she knew you could be a Democrat and still believe we ought to drive the crime rate down and that you could be tough and smart about crime. That's very important to me.

I don't know if you had a chance to watch the news tonight, but a 6-year-old child near Flint, Michigan, shot another 6-year-old child and killed her today. Now, I don't know all the facts yet. I thought I had them, and I didn't. The first version I had wasn't right, but anyway, somehow—what's a 6-year-old kid doing with a gun, anyway? And what can we do about it?

I've supported putting 100,000 police on the street. I've supported more efforts in the drug war. I've supported putting 50,000 more police out there now in high-crime areas. But we've got to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children. We just do. There's a huge difference there. Is that conservative or liberal? The NRA crowd says that's liberal. I think that I'm trying to conserve life. I think it's conservative in the best sense, and I think it's the right thing to do.

So I'm here because I feel obligated to a woman I love, not only because she supported me, because when she disagreed with me or was worried about it, she'd call and chew me out about it. And I like that. Too many people are afraid to tell Presidents what they think, and that's what gets Presidents in trouble. She was a true friend. She always told me exactly what she thought. I'm here because she shares my philosophy. But mostly I'm here because of you, and because when I'm just a citizen and I'm not President anymore, I want my country to do well.

I said something today at lunch I'd just like for you to think about, and I'll say it much briefer tonight. The last time we had—we now

have the longest economic expansion in history. The last longest economic expansion in history was 1961 to 1969, the years in which I grew up, graduated from high school, went to college, and finished college. When I graduated from high school in '64, Lyndon Johnson was President, passing civil rights legislation. We thought the economy would boom forever. We thought the civil rights problems would be solved in law, not in the streets. We thought we would prevail in the cold war without any division in our country.

When I graduated from college 4 years later, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. The streets of Washington had burned after Dr. King was killed, and this country was divided right down the middle on the Vietnam war. And we were divided in a Presidential election where President Nixon said he represented the Silent Majority, which meant those who disagreed were in the loud minority, people like me. And we've been having these "us" and "them" elections ever since—"us" and "them" politics.

Now, the country has been turned around, but we have big challenges out there. And what I want to say to you is that, in 1964, if anybody had told us the wheels would run off by 1968, no one would have believed it.

This is not just a time for celebration; this is a time for humility and for resolve. As a citizen—not as President, as an American—I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. That work will have to be done by the people who will be here after the 2000 election. That's the most important reason I am here. I trust Elaine Bloom with my daughter's future, with my grandchildren's future, with the future of America.

And I ask you all to be vigilant and disciplined and active in this election. Just because we're doing well doesn't mean you can relax. You should feel a heavier obligation. And whenever you are tempted to think it doesn't matter, you remember this story I told you tonight. I have waited 35 years. We've got a second chance, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Philip and Patricia Frost, reception hosts; Elaine Bloom's husband, Philip, a judge in Florida's Eleventh Circuit, and her children David and Anne; State Representative Sally Heyman; and 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI. Ms. Bloom was a candidate for Florida's 22d Congressional District.

Remarks to UUNET and MCI WorldCom Employees in Ashburn, Virginia March 1, 2000

Thank you very much, Melissa. To Bernie and John and Mark, thank you for welcoming me and Ambassador Barshefsky and our whole team here. I leaned over to John when I looked at all of you out here, and I said, "Now, I can't believe all these people are off work now. What terrible thing can happen?" [Laughter] What could I be responsible for doing to the Internet today? [Laughter]

I am profoundly honored to be here, and I thank all of you for allowing me to come. I came here to talk about your future. But because this is the only opportunity I'll have today to speak, through you and the media, to the

American people, I have to make a brief comment about one other issue.

Today there was another terrible shooting in the Wilkesburg community in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania. We don't know all the facts yet, but it was a bad situation. Yesterday, of course, that tragedy occurred in Michigan, where a very young child was killed by another very young child. I just talked to the superintendent of schools there, right before I came out.

I want to say two things about it to all of you. First of all, these are personal tragedies that, because of instantaneous media coverage,

we all know and feel. And we owe the families of the victims and the communities our prayers and our best wishes.

Secondly, as citizens, these incidents, particularly the one yesterday in Michigan, call on us to recognize the fact that we simply haven't done everything we can do to keep guns away from criminals and children. And so today I have to say again to Congress: You have had legislation now that would require child safety locks, would close the gun show loophole, would take other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands for well over 6 months. You're supposed to take a recess next week. Before you take the recess, please send me this legislation. It will help keep America safer.

Now, I want to talk to you today about your future, which is unfolding at a breathtaking rate. We were talking before we came out. I said, "Tell me a little about the growth." So John said, "Well, 5 years ago we had 40 employees. Today, we have 8,000." Bernie said, "Five years ago, we had 2,000 employees. Today, we have 88,000." You're getting along reasonably well. [Laughter]

I have been going around the country saying to my fellow Americans everywhere that in a new economy in which we have now, in the last 7 years, 21 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the highest homeownership on record, and the longest economic expansion in our history, the world is changing so fast, if you want to keep doing well, you have to keep trying to do better; that it is very important that all of us understand that we'll never get anywhere by standing still. Although given the pace at which you're growing, I'm glad I'm giving you the chance to stand still for a little bit today. [Laughter]

This shift in our economy is changing the landscape of our country, both symbolically and literally. I first saw the landscape of northern Virginia as a freshman in college 36 years ago. But it looks different than it did when I became President 7 years ago. Everywhere you look, there's a brandnew facility. This place is truly amazing. And beneath all the booming business parks and green pastures, there are countless miles of cable, conducting more than over half the Internet traffic in the entire world.

There are more high-tech firms in northern Virginia today than there were farms in 1970, when the region led the State in the production of milk. [Laughter] Here in Loudoun County, there are more high-tech workers than there were residents in 1980. It has been an amazing thing. Workers like you and firms like UUNET are the new engines driving our economy. You represent about 8 percent of our employment but 30 percent of our growth over the last decade, something you can be very proud of.

The new technologies that you use are also finding their ways into every sector of our economy, making companies of all kinds more competitive. UUNET provides a lot more than Internet service. Every day you show us something about the power of ideas, the power of imagination, the power of enterprise, values that are at the core of America's character and at the bottom of this booming new globalized economy, in a marketplace that is much, much wider and fuller of possibility than any of us could have imagined when this company sold its first commercial connection in 1988.

In just 12 years, you've extended your reach to 100 countries, expanding your global network by more than 1,000 percent a year. The global network is a big part of your future, and that's what I want to talk about today, and what Government's role in that is.

People ask me all the time, well, this is the highest percentage of growth in jobs in the private sector and the smallest percentage in the Government of any recovery we've ever had, since we could measure such things. As a matter of fact, since I've been President, we've reduced the size of Government to its smallest point in 40 years, since 1960. So people say, "Well, what is your job, Mr. President? What is the Congress' job?" I think our job is to create the conditions and provide the tools for you to do your job.

What does that mean? That means we ought to invest in education and training and new technologies. There's a lot of research that can't efficiently and economically be done in the private sector. The Internet originally grew out of Government-funded research, which, as I was reminded today by your leaders, is one of the reasons there are so many high-tech firms in northern Virginia.

Second, we've got to give you an overall healthy economy, which is why we had to get rid of the deficits and start running surpluses

and why we ought to pay this country out of debt, keep interest rates down, and make capital available for other companies to grow as well.

The third thing we ought to do is to promote genuine competition. That was behind the gentle nudge that Bernie gave me about the Baby Bell comment. [Laughter] He was—actually, it was a little inside joke, but he was referring, in a supportive way, to the fact that the Vice President and I fought hard in the Telecommunications Act, when we rewrote the telecommunications bill for a procompetitive position. And because we fought hard, we got it. And you not only have companies like yours that have swollen in size in the last 5 years; there are hundreds and hundreds of companies that didn't even exist 5 years ago that are able to make it today because the United States took a procompetitive position in the Telecommunications Act. Those are our jobs. That's what we're supposed to do.

But finally, we are a country with 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population. And you don't have to be Einstein or even particularly good with a computer to know that if you've got 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population and you would like to keep doing better, you have to sell something to somebody else—[laughter]—and that in a world that is increasingly globalized, you're better off when they're better off. It's not good for you that African countries which are capable of growing at 7, 8, 10 percent a year are so burdened by debt that they can't educate their children or provide health care to their people. It's not good for you if, because we refuse to open our markets to some countries in the Caribbean or Latin America, they don't open their markets to ours, and they grow more slowly, and their people remain poorer. You'd be better off if they get richer and more of them will be on the Internet.

We live in a time when, really, doing the morally right thing happens to be good economics. But in order to do it—again I would say, you will do a lot of it. I've seen enterprising kids in poor African villages logging onto the Internet and finally seeing a map that's up to date and learning geography and doing all kinds of things. People will take care of this if we establish the right conditions and provide the tools.

One of the things that we have worked hard on is to expand trade. Under Ambassador Barshefsky and her predecessor, we completed over 270 trade agreements. But in many ways, perhaps the most important of all is the agreement that—or the decision Congress will have to make this year and in the next few months on whether to let China come into the World Trade Organization by giving them permanent normal trading relations status with the United States.

If you've been following this debate at all, you know there is a lot of controversy about this in the Congress. And I won't go through all the arguments now, but let me just tell you, I can say this from my heart; you know, I'm not running for anything this year. [Laughter] And most days it's okay with me, but I'm not—[laughter]—most days.

But I care a lot about what this country will be like when the young people here in this audience are my age, when your children are your age. This is a profoundly important issue. It is, in the short term, the kind of decision that every country would wish for. Once in a generation you get a chance to open a market with over a billion consumers, the biggest potential market in the world.

Let me explain, first of all, what this agreement does. In return for China's entry as a full partner in the World Trade Organization, the United States would gain unprecedented access to China's markets. Today, with the Chinese, we have our second biggest trade deficit, tens of billions of dollars, because our markets are open to their products—and they should be, because we'll be better off if they do better. But their markets are not very open to our products and services. Under this agreement, Chinese tariffs in every sector, from telecommunications to automobiles to agriculture, will fall by half or more in 5 years. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China made by workers here at home without transferring technology in manufacturing—never happened before. For the first time, China will agree to play by the same open trading rules we do—never happened before.

Meanwhile, we'll get two tough new safeguards against surges of imports which would threaten to throw a lot of Americans out of work in a short time under unfair trade practices. So these are the kinds of changes any

President, regardless of party, would welcome, because Presidents, regardless of party, have worked to bring out these changes for more than 30 years now.

This is a good deal for American workers, for American farmers, for American business. It's a good deal for America. But the only way we can get this agreement is for Congress to give China permanent normal trading relations. This is one of the most important votes Congress will pass in this year and for many years to come. Next month, our Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley, and our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, are going on missions to China with dozens of Members of Congress to meet with people in Government and business and religious leaders who are interested in change in China.

It's very interesting to me that the more people go to China and spend time there, no matter what they do for a living or what their perspective is, the more likely they are to favor our bringing China into the world system of rule-based trade, because this is about economics and more than economics, and I want to say more about that in a minute.

But just think about the economics of high-tech companies. Today, China's tariffs on information technology products average 13 percent. When China joins the WTO, those tariffs will start to fall and be eliminated by 2005. China will open its Internet and its telecom markets to American investment and services for the first time. That's a huge deal.

Now, the magnitude of all this almost defies measurement. The number of Chinese Internet users—let's just take that—quadrupled in the last year alone, from 2 million to 9 million. This year, the number will exceed 20 million. And you know what the internal dynamics of this technology are. You know how much your company has grown. Now, project that rate of growth onto a country that has over 1.2 billion people. And keep in mind, the United States is not being asked to do anything to get this agreement, except to treat them like a normal trading partner on a permanent basis and bring them into the WTO.

So what are we going to do? China doesn't have the information infrastructure to support 500 million Internet users yet. But UUNET already has a presence in Hong Kong. You could help them to build it.

Let's look at what happens if we didn't do it. Today, we've got a huge advantage in high-tech trade internationally. What would happen if we didn't take advantage of this? China will grow anyway, and someone else, not you, will reap the benefits of it. So if we turn our backs on this opportunity, we will be unilaterally disarming in perhaps the most vital area of our future economic growth.

And let me say, finally, this is about more than money. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was good morally and good economics to help lift the burden of debt from the poorest African countries if they're working to try to do better. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was the right thing to do to buy more from the Caribbean and Latin American countries if they were doing the right thing and opening their markets to us.

We have a decision to make here. The people who don't want to do this by and large think that China should not be taken into the World Trade Organization because we don't agree with all their political decisions. We don't like it when they repress human rights or political rights or religious expression. We don't agree with them that we should take little or no account of environmental impacts of economic decisions or that we shouldn't take strong steps to eliminate child labor and slave labor and things like that. We have differences.

But think of this. You know how much the Internet has changed America, and we were already an open society. I can look out in this crowd and tell that many of you come from some place else. You know how much the Internet is changing where you came from and how much it could change if it were there. The same thing is true in China.

Everything I have learned about human nature in my life plus everything I have learned about China as President convinces me that we're a lot better off bringing them into the family of nations, into this common endeavor, than shutting them out. Do we know what China will be like in 20 years? Of course we don't. We can't control what they do. All we can control is what we do. But here again, I think our values will be advanced, along with our economic interests, if we give people a chance to be good partners. If you don't give them a chance, it's almost certain that they will react in a negative way.

So I ask all of you to think about this, because normally, Americans don't think about foreign policy much. But you know that with every passing day in a globalized economy, there is no longer a clear, bright line between an issue which is a domestic political issue and an issue which is a foreign policy issue.

With every passing day, these issues grow closer together. Do I like it when people's religious liberty is oppressed in China? No, I don't. But it's very interesting; most of the evangelicals I know who have missions in China want China in the WTO because they know that that will make it more likely that there will be more freedom of expression, more contact with the outside world, and a bigger stake in working with other countries.

This is about money, yes, but it's about more than money. It's about whether we can create a world where there's the kind of harmony across race and ethnicity and religion that there must be in this workplace that I can see just by looking around the room here. Wouldn't you like it if the world worked the way you do here? How could it be bad if companies like UUNET are able to make the tools of communications cheaper and better and more widely available to more Chinese people? It has to be good.

So I will say to you, I don't agree with everything the Chinese do. I'm sure they don't agree with everything I do. [Laughter] And far be it for me to equate the two disagreements. [Laughter] I don't believe—in all seriousness, I don't believe it's right to crack down on people for their religious views or their political expression or because they want to be in an association like the Falun Gong. I don't think that's right. But I don't believe that we will have more influence on China by giving them the back of our hand instead of giving them a chance to build a different future.

That's what this is about. And I want every one of you to think about this. Look, economically, this is a no-brainer. It's in your interest. It will make this company a lot more jobs. But I don't ask you as citizens to check your values at the door. Every one of us believes in some things that money can't buy.

But I'm telling you, you just think about what you have learned in your life about human nature. The leaders of China are not foolish people; they're intelligent people. They know, if

they open these markets, they know, if you go in there and everybody gets connected to the Internet, that change is coming more rapidly in ways that you cannot control. And people will be able to define their future, independent of the Government's ability to control it, more than ever before, whether you're talking about religion or politics or personal life choices or anything else. They know that, and they have made this decision. And we cannot let our disagreements with Government policy get in the way of our interest in a long-term partnership with the most populous country on Earth. So again I say, what is good economics is also consistent with our values.

The late Chief Justice Earl Warren once said that, "Liberty is the most contagious force in the world." I believe the Internet inevitably is an instrument of human liberty, and it will be in China as well, if we continue to reach out to people.

So I'm asking you to do something if you agree with this. I want you to tell the Members of Congress, without regard to party, that represent your State—if you live here, if you live in Maryland, you live in West Virginia—I want you to ask them to support this. And I want you to tell them—I want you to tell them that you will stay with them on this decision if they do, because this is very, very important.

You know, I'm grateful that since I've been President, America has done well. I'm grateful for the chance I've had to make a contribution to it. But frankly, I'm much more interested in whether America continues to do well long after my tenure in office. And again I say to you, if you know in your business that—if you want to keep doing well, you always have to keep trying to do better and looking to the future, anticipating the changes, imagining how you want it to be.

I can't imagine a world that I want for my child and my grandchildren that doesn't include partnerships that are constructive with the big countries of the world, which promote human liberty as well as economic progress. That's what this whole thing is about.

So I say to you, I came here today because you are the symbol of 21st century America. You are the embodiment of what I want for the future. And because of what you do for a living every day, because of how you see and

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feel the way the world is changing and how you see what it can become, you are in a position, that most of your fellow Americans are not in, to understand the importance of this. So again I say to you, you're doing great. I want you to do better. And I think we can do better and do good, but we have to start this year by making sure that we don't turn away from this profoundly important opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at UUNET Technologies. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Pizzo, vice president and general manager, service delivery organization, John Sidgmore, chairman, and Mark Spagnolo, president and chief executive officer, UUNET; Bernard J. Ebbers, president and chief executive officer, MCI WorldCom, Inc.; Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Larry J. Allen, superintendent, Mount Morris School District; and former U.S. Trade Representative Michael (Mickey) Kantor.

Radio Remarks on Read Across America Day *March 1, 2000*

On March 2, volunteers across the country will celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday by reading to more than 20 million youngsters in the third annual Read Across America Day. The event brings together athletes, entertainers, and business leaders and others to help spread the joy of reading to our Nation's youth and to ensure that all children develop the reading skills they need to succeed in school and in life. I urge all Americans to participate.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 3:45 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Assistance to Mozambique *March 1, 2000*

This evening I am announcing my intention to augment substantially U.S. assistance to flood-ravaged Mozambique, and to ongoing regional efforts to address the emergency caused by flooding in southern Africa.

The United States has already committed \$12.8 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense in support of relief activities. This includes over \$4 million for search and rescue air operations and the deployment of a water rescue team and boats from Metro-Dade, Florida. Already, one U.S. military aircraft delivered relief supplies to Mozambique today, and a second will shortly arrive in South Africa. Our assistance also includes food and funds to support

efforts to control the spread of disease. Other countries are contributing generously as well. But we can do more to address the needs of the nearly one million people who have been displaced in the region and who face more flooding in the days to come.

I have approved the deployment of a Joint Task Force to the region to assist in the relief effort. The deployment will include six C-130 support aircraft to deliver relief supplies, six heavy-lift helicopters to assist in search and rescue, and small boat search and rescue capability. The deployments will help support the relief effort in Mozambique and elsewhere in the region.

All Americans have been deeply moved by the tragic events in southern Africa. At the same time, we have admired the determination of the governments and people of the region to meet this challenge. We have also been gratified by the generous response of the American people and others in the international community.

I offer the strong support of the Government and the people of the United States to the peo-

ple of Mozambique, and all of southern Africa, and pledge that we will work with you to address this crisis.

NOTE: The related memorandum of March 2 on emergency disaster assistance for southern Africa is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements

March 1, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act, (1 U.S.C. 112b), I hereby transmit a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq

that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Trade Policy Agenda and the Trade Agreements Program Report

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I trans-

mit herewith the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program. The Report, as required by sections

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122, 124, and 125 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization and a 5-year assessment of the U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Interview With Katie Couric of NBC's "Today" Show

March 2, 2000

Michigan Shooting

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us.

The President. Good morning, Katie.

Ms. Couric. Good morning. Let me ask you, first of all, when you heard the story of a 6-year-old boy in Michigan, a first grader bringing a gun to school and shooting to death his 6-year-old classmate, what was your reaction?

The President. Well, first, I think I had a normal human reaction. I didn't respond as President. I was just—as a parent I was heartbroken, and then I was angry. I thought, you know, how did this child get the gun in the first place? What's a 6-year-old doing with a gun?

Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Couric. When something like this happens, politicians often jump on it as an excuse for more gun control. But I know that, Mr. President, you're very proud of pointing out that gun deaths have dropped to their lowest levels in more than 30 years in this country. So should we view this more as a tragedy than a reason to call for more gun control?

The President. Well, it's both. The gun death rate has dropped to its lowest point in 30 years, but it's still by far the highest of any advanced nation in the world. And if we had passed the child trigger lock provision and we applied it to all new guns, then at least those guns would not be used by 6-year-olds to kill other 6-year-olds. I think that's very important. That's a part of this bill, which also closes the gun show loophole in the background check law, bans the import of large ammunition clips, that the Congress has had for 8 months now with no action.

So I'm going to call the leaders of both parties in both Houses and ask them to come down

here and break the logjam. There's been a House version and a Senate version of this bill for 8 months, and they have done nothing, and meanwhile, 13 kids every day—every single day there are 13 children who die from guns in this country. So I do think we need more legislation.

Ms. Couric. Well, why is it locked in committee, why has it been stalemated? And when would you like them to come to the White House?

The President. Well, I think it's been locked in committee because the Senate—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, so we got a tough bill in spite of fierce lobbying against it by the NRA. And the two Houses can't resolve their differences. But maybe this tragic death will help. We need these child trigger locks on the new handguns. That will begin to make a big difference. And then in this year's budget, I've asked them to fund some more research into smart gun technology, which would enable us to have guns that could only be fired by the adults who own them. That also would be a big advance.

One of the things that's being debated in Michigan is whether there should be parental accountability provisions. We had provisions in our law for that, so that all States would have these laws—several do, but most don't—and those were taken out, so maybe they'll be revisited in the conference as well.

But the main thing is, if we can just get the child trigger locks and fund investment in the smart gun technology, I think we'll be a long way down the road. Of course, I think ultimately what we ought to do is license handgun owners the way we license people who drive cars. I think that is the critical next step. And I hope that we will consider that, as well.

Now, this guy stole a gun, apparently—that’s the allegation—in the house where the child took it. But it would clearly make a big difference in the future to people’s lives.

Ms. Couric. Let me deal with some of those issues that you’ve just raised, Mr. President. What about registering guns? All Americans are required to register their cars. Why not require them to register guns?

The President. You could do that, but the problem is there are over 200 million guns out there; some say 250 million guns out there now. And most of the experts with whom I talked before I made my proposal believe that if we required all handgun owners to be licensed, we could achieve the same results. That is, whether you’ve got an old gun or you’re buying a new gun, if people could come in when they do get new guns and get a license, then I believe we’d have the same result. I’m not sure, practically, that we could get all the guns registered in this country because there are so many out there already. So I’d like to begin with that.

You know, keep in mind, we had all those kids die at Columbine, and when I fought for the Brady bill—which has kept a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns—and the assault weapons ban, about somewhere between 8 and 12 Members of Congress were defeated in the next election by the NRA because they voted for that.

And then when all those kids were killed at Columbine, I thought, surely, we can close the gun show loophole, have the child safety locks, and maybe have the parental responsibility provisions and ban ammunition clips. And those bills have been just lingering up there for 8 months. I don’t think most Americans have any idea what a stranglehold the NRA has had on this Congress. And the people in our party have taken the lead, with a few brave Republicans, in trying to fight for sensible legislation. But we need the public aroused on this. We need the public to be heard.

I would not be opposed to registering guns, as well, but I just want you to understand there are practical problems with that, and you get most of the benefit if you license the gun owners. So I would like to see us start with that.

Ms. Couric. When it comes to licensing, Mr. President, Wayne LaPierre, who you know is the executive vice president of the NRA, said, quote, “Criminals aren’t going to stand in line to get their photos taken. They’re not going

to stand in line—stand,” rather, “for licenses. You’re walking way out on a limb.”

The President. Well, you could say that about people with automobile licenses, too. But when people don’t have gun licenses and they’re found with guns and they’re in violation of the law for that, very often you can get them before they commit a crime.

If the facts, as they’ve been reported, are true about the tragic circumstances in which this 6-year-old boy lived and have the even more tragic consequence of killing that totally innocent young girl—this man apparently stole that gun. But the point is, he could never get a license to carry a handgun.

Ms. Couric. But meanwhile, is it practically possible to check every gun owner in America to see if he or she is carrying a license?

The President. Well, none of these things will happen instantaneously, overnight. But yet, they will begin to make a difference.

Look, when we passed the Brady bill, Katie, let me remind you, people said, “Well, this won’t make any difference, because criminals don’t get their guns at gun stores.” It turned out, a lot of them did. It turned out we were able to deny 500,000 people who were trying to buy handguns the right to do so because they were felons, fugitives, and stalkers. Now, there are a lot of kids alive and there are a lot of adults alive in America because we did that.

Now a lot of them are using the gun shows or these urban flea markets. If we close that loophole, do the background check there, license new handgun owners—license—excuse me—handgun owners, and put safety locks, these trigger locks on the guns to protect the kids—and then the next big step is to technologically develop guns that can only be fired by their lawful owners—we can turn this situation around.

But like I said, we’ve got over 200 million guns out there. We’re losing 13 kids a day. The accidental rate of children—that’s another thing I’d like the American people to think about. The rate of kids being killed by accident with guns is 9 times higher in America than that of the next 24 biggest countries combined—combined.

So we have not done nearly enough, and we need to identify these things and just systematically go do them. None of them interfere with the right of any lawful citizen to hunt or to

engage in sport shooting. And it's an unbelievable thing, after what we saw clearly at Columbine and all the problems that were there, that 8 months have gone by, and the Congress can't act. And the reason they can't act is because of the heat the NRA has put on them.

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, why haven't you publicly asked gun manufacturers to produce these so-called smart guns voluntarily?

The President. Oh, I have. Let me say, we're getting some support from responsible gun manufacturers. Many of them have already said they want to put the child safety locks on their new guns. Many of them are engaged in this technology.

But what I want to do is to have the Government also fund some of the research, just as we funded the initial research that led to the Internet, just as we fund the initial research that is leading to the sequencing of the human genome. A lot of this basic research to solve big national problems often starts with Government funding. So I'd like to see the Government do its part.

But I have asked the gun manufacturers to do so. And some of the responsible manufacturers have already said, "Yes, we're going to go with the child safety locks, and we want the smart gun technology." I just think we ought to get there as quickly as we can, which is why I want the Government to invest as well.

Ms. Couric. All the Presidential candidates seem to agree on this point, so you would think it could be accomplished. What is the NRA's biggest beef, in your estimation, about the technology that would enable only the person who owns a gun to actually fire it?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think that's accurate, that all the Presidential candidates do.

Ms. Couric. Well, George W. Bush favors trigger locks, I understand. John McCain—

The President. This morning.

Ms. Couric. Pardon?

The President. This morning, Senator McCain voted against the Brady bill.

Ms. Couric. But he says he favors technology that would enable the gun user to wear a special bracelet. He said that last night.

The President. They were against the Brady bill. They're against extending—closing the gun show loophole. They're against the licensing of handgun owners.

But nobody could be against technology. So I hope that we can get 100 percent of the Congress to at least vote for the research and the new technology.

Ms. Couric. What is the NRA's biggest beef about smart guns?

The President. I don't know that they'll be against smart guns, but they're basically against anything that requires anybody to do anything as a member of society that helps to make it safer. That is, if they were making this argument on car licensing or licensing of car drivers, they would say that everybody has an individual right to drive a car, and therefore, no lawful car owner should be required to undergo the terrible burden of getting a car license because there are some people who are irresponsible and shouldn't be driving cars.

I mean, that's the essential argument they're making. They're saying guns are special, guns are different than cars, and the rights of individual citizens are far, far more important than the safety of society as a whole. That's their argument, and I just disagree with them.

Ms. Couric. An NRA spokesman actually told us last night that this isn't about making guns safer, it's about prosecuting criminals, and that your Justice Department hasn't done enough in that area.

The President. Well, we've increased gun prosecution since I've been here, and we have a lot of people in jail for it. All I can tell you is, we have a higher percentage of people in jail than all the other advanced countries, and they have a lower gun death rate. Why is that? That's because they don't have an NRA in their country, and they take sensible steps to protect children and society as a whole from people having guns who shouldn't have them, doing things they shouldn't do with them. You've got to keep guns away from criminals and children if you want a safe society.

Look, if the NRA were arguing years ago in this vein, they'd be against airport metal detectors because, after all, everybody—most people that go through airport metal detectors are innocent. Why should we burden them with having to go through and empty their pockets and take out their money clips and all that because there's just a few criminals around? And you know, you're interfering with their individual rights to walk on an airplane. That's the argument they make. You shouldn't burden an individual law-abiding handgun owner, because

most of them are lawful, just because there are a few criminals.

But the point is that society takes steps with speed limits, with licensing laws, with airport metal detectors, and any number of other ways, where we all make a little bit of sacrifice in time and effort to comply with a system that makes us all freer. And we still get to do our lawful activity.

So I just think they're wrong about that. They're saying that guns are different—guns are different than cars, guns are different than any other area of our national life where we seek for common safety, we protect ourselves from the people who would abuse our liberty, abuse our freedom, and abuse our safety. And I just think they're wrong about this, and I hope that a majority of the Congress will agree. And I hope that more and more members of the Republican Party will agree. As I say, we have had some few brave members of the Republican Party that have joined the vast majority of Democrats in trying to responsibly deal with this without in any way undermining the right of people to do legitimate hunting or sport shooting activities.

And we can do this. We can make America a lot safer.

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, before we go, in closing, when do you plan to invite congressional

leaders to the White House to discuss the juvenile justice bill?

The President. Well, I'd like them to come down next week, as soon as we can set it up, because we're running out of time, and we need to get out of this terrible logjam. And I hope that these tragedies will give a little impulse, a profound sense of obligation to do that. As again I say, nobody is trying to interfere with individual rights here. What we're trying to do is to promote the common safety of the American people, and we're not nearly safe enough. All you've got to do is look at these incidents.

Can we eliminate every problem? No. Is there a silver bullet that will solve it overnight? No. Can we save a lot of lives, including a lot of children, 13 every day—13 funerals a day? You bet we can, and we ought to.

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, again thank you very, very much for spending some time with us this morning. We really appreciate it.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:08 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Jamelle Andrew James, who was accused of supplying the gun used by 6-year-old Dedrick Owens to shoot 6-year-old classmate Kayla Rolland in Mount Morris Township, MI. Ms. Couric referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation March 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, and good morning. Dr. Herald, thank you for your powerful statement. I would like to thank Senator Kennedy, Senator Specter, Senator Chafee for being here; and Representatives Norwood and Dingell, Representatives Berry, Morella, and DeLauro; Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman.

I especially thank the doctors and nurses who stand with us today, the Patients' Bill of Rights coalition, representing our Nation's top health, consumer, and provider organizations.

Dr. Herald's testimony was powerful, but unfortunately, as she made it clear, not unique. For more than 2 years, we've heard health care

professionals tell us the same thing. For more than 2 years, we've heard heart-wrenching accounts of families across our Nation denied the basic patient protections they need. For more than 2 years, we've worked for a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights that says you have the right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to see a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a treatment, the right to hold your health care plan accountable.

Along the way, with the help of others in our administration, I've done everything I could, through executive action, to extend patient safeguards to some 85 million Americans who get

their health care through Federal plans, to provide similar patient protections to every child covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program. But no State law and no executive action can do what Congress alone has the power to do. Only Federal legislation can assure all Americans and all plans get all the patient protection they need.

Thanks to the leadership of Congressman Norwood, Congressman Dingell, and the other Members here, the House of Representatives passed such a bill, with the support of 275 Members, including 68 members of the Republican caucus. It is a truly bipartisan bill.

Later today a conference committee will meet to take up the legislation. Many of the conferees do not reflect the will of the majority in the House or the will of the majority in the country. I told Congressman Norwood right before we came in here that I think this issue is the only issue with which I have dealt since I've been President that generated any controversy where there is, in the country, almost no difference in the level of support between Republicans, independents, and Democrats. Every major national survey shows that well over 70 percent of all Americans, without regard to their political party, support a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. The American people support it, and they're entitled to have their elected Representatives ratify it.

The Norwood-Dingell bill is the only bipartisan patient protection bill on the table. So far, it's the only bill that can make its way to my desk. I will not sign legislation, as Dr. Herald said, that is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only. It's not a real Patients' Bill of Rights if it denies people the right to see a specialist, if it fails to guarantee access to the nearest emergency room care, if it denies the right to stay with a health care provider throughout a course of treatment, and if it has a weak appeals process that's tilted against the patients, if it doesn't include a strong enforcement mechanism to hold a health care plan accountable, or if it leaves more than 100 million of our fellow Americans out. We need a bill that covers all our fellow citizens, not one that provides cover for special interests.

Again I say, this is not a partisan issue anywhere else in the entire United States of America. And I am honored that we have had the bipartisan support we have had. This legislation has the endorsement of more than 300 health

care and consumer groups across our country. So as the conference committee gets down to business, I ask them to listen to the voices of people like Dr. Herald, the people who live in the health care system, the people who know how it works, the people whose first concern is for their patients and their families and their future. It is time to reach across party lines and do this.

Let me say that if the Congress will send me a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights today, I'll send every one of them an invitation to a signing ceremony tomorrow. [Laughter] Nothing would please me more than to see this issue removed from the context of partisan political debate and embedded in the daily lives of all our citizens.

It is now my privilege to present the sponsor of the Norwood-Dingell bill, a long-time dentist, a man who has simply acted on his convictions and his experience. And I think we would all do well to listen to him. It's probably a little harder for him to come out for this bill than it was for me, and I feel particularly indebted to Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Representative Norwood.

[At this point, Representatives Charlie Norwood and John D. Dingell and Senators Arlen Specter and Edward M. Kennedy made brief remarks.]

The President. Well, I just want to end on sort of a cautionary but clarion note. Where I come from, this exercise that we have just engaged in is known as preaching to the saved. [Laughter] And it's very important. But this is one of those examples where the public and the people that really know how the system works are in the same place. And I believe a majority of Members of Congress, if—as Congressman Norwood said so eloquently, if they're permitted—they're given a good bill to vote for, they'll vote for it. So the only way that we won't get a good bill is if this conference committee prevents the Congress from voting on a bill they would like to vote for, that is consistent with not only what the majority of the American people want but virtually 100 percent of the medical professionals in the country and a majority of the Congress.

So that's what the stakes are. I am profoundly indebted to the Members who are here, to all the health care professionals who are here, to Dr. Herald who spoke so well. But I ask you to remember the work is ahead of us. And I

think we need to, all of us, each in our own way, go to work to impress upon that conference committee their profound responsibility to give the Congress and the country the bill they want to vote on and the bill they want to live under.

Let's get to work. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Herald, member, American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine, who introduced the President.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Biotechnology, Foundation, and International Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters March 2, 2000

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, I have a very distinguished group of leaders here in the White House today, and I thank them all for coming: leaders of the international organizations concerned with the health of people throughout the world, Minister of Health from Uganda, the leaders of the pharmaceutical industry and biotech industry and the foundation community in our country who are profoundly interested in joining forces to fight against diseases that kill both people and progress in the world's poorest countries, diseases like AIDS, TB, and malaria, each of which claim over a million lives a year, and others as well.

We agreed that the solution must include the development and the delivery of effective vaccines. That's how we got rid of smallpox and come close to eliminating polio. So today we're beginning a partnership to eradicate the leading infectious killers of our time, speeding the delivery of existing vaccines and getting to the heart of the problem, the lack of incentives for private industry to invest in new vaccines for people who simply can't afford to buy them.

I have attempted to put a comprehensive package on the table so that the United States can do its part to change this: a billion-dollar tax credit to speed the invention of vaccines; a \$50 million contribution to a global fund to purchase vaccines; substantial increase in research at the National Institutes of Health.

I've asked the World Bank to dedicate more lending to improve health, and Mr. Wolfensohn has been very forthcoming here today, and I thank him for that.

The private sector is also responding to this challenge, and I want to thank them and recognize the commitments that have been an-

nounced here today. Merck is committing to develop an AIDS vaccine not just for strains of the virus that affect wealthy nations but for strains that ravage the poorest nations as well. This is profoundly important. It's also donating a million doses of hepatitis B vaccine to those who need it most. American Home Products will donate 10 million doses of a vaccine to—strains of pneumonia and meningitis in children. SmithKline Beecham will expand its malaria vaccine program and begin new vaccine trials in Africa and will donate drugs worth a billion dollars to eliminate elephantiasis, which is a painful and potentially very crippling and disfiguring tropical disease. Aventis Pharma will donate 50 million doses of polio vaccine to 5 war-torn African nations.

This is a very important beginning. It will save lives and make it clear that we're serious. But all of us agree there is more to do. We have to first build on the bipartisan support that now exists in our Congress to enact the research and experimentation tax credit and the tax credit that we proposed for this specific purpose and to get the funding increases through. I will go to the G-8 meeting in Okinawa this summer to urge our partners to take similar steps. And so let me say, I am profoundly grateful.

Gun Safety Legislation

Now, because this is my first opportunity to be with you when you can say something back today, the press, I also want to just say a word about the terrible shooting yesterday, which followed the killing of the 6-year-old child the day before in Michigan.

These two incidents were very troubling, and they have individual causes and explanations and

doubtless will require individual responses. But they do remind us that there is still too much danger in this country and that for more than 8 months now, Congress has been sitting on the commonsense gun safety legislation to require child safety locks, to close the gun show loophole, and the background law, and to ban the importation of large ammunition clips. I have said before, I will say again today, I'm going to invite the leaders of this conference down to the White House to talk about what we can do to break the logjam.

I also think we should go further. We ought to invest in smart gun technology. We talked about investing the vaccines; we're not too far from being able to develop technology which could change all the handguns so that they could only be fired by the adults who purchase them. And that would make a big difference. Apparently, the child who was killed was killed by another child with a stolen gun. If we had child trigger locks on all the guns, it wouldn't have happened.

And finally, I think that it's long, long past time to license purchases of handguns in this country. Car owners are licensed. All drivers are licensed, whether they own a car or not. I think it's time to do that.

So I hope that we will see some action. But the most important thing now, thinking about this child, is, if we had child trigger locks on all these guns, we could keep them alive. So I hope Congress will break the logjam, and I'm going to invite the conferees down here to do it.

Let me finally say again, this is a truly astonishing turnout of people around this table, and together, if we work on it over the next few years, we can literally save the lives of millions of people. And it couldn't be done without the presence of all these people. And I'm very grateful to them. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, if legislation was sent to you that included the riddance of ammunition clips and included safety locks but did not include the gun show loophole, would you veto that?

The President. Well, I don't know. I think they'd have a very hard time explaining why they did it. Let me remind you, when I signed the Brady bill, and the NRA opposed it, they said, "Oh, this Brady bill won't do any good now because criminals don't buy their guns

through gun shops. They buy their guns at gun shows and these urban flea markets or on the sly, one on one. They don't use gun shops." Well, come to find out, 500,000 people couldn't get a handgun because they were felons, fugitives, or stalkers. And it's a safer country because of it.

Now that we want to extend the background check to the gun shows, they say the people—they say the criminals don't use the gun shows, even though 5 years ago they said they did. There is no logical reason to let these gun shows off the hook on the background checks. And the technology is there to do it without causing a total breakdown. And I suggested, if they're worried about the inconvenience to the buyers and the sellers, they could always—and they have these things out in the country somewhere—they could always deposit the weapon with the local sheriff's department while they're waiting to do the background check.

There are all kinds of fixes for the alleged problems here, and there's no reason to do the—the Brady bill is saving people's lives and keeping guns out of the wrong hands. But we do need the child trigger locks. That child would be alive today if that gun had had a child trigger lock on it that the other 6-year-old child could not have fired. And we just need to—we've got to have it. We've got to have it.

The accidental death rate of children by guns in this country is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 biggest industrial economies combined. I mean, that's something that—if you forget about the intentional crime, just look at the accidents, we've got to do it, and we need to do it tomorrow. We need to do it as quickly as we can.

International Monetary Fund

Q. Mr. President, what are your specific objections to the German IMF candidate, and what do you expect to happen from here?

The President. We've handled that in the appropriate way, I think, through Secretary Summers. Let me say, I want there to be a European Director of the IMF. I will not support an American candidate, even though I have enormous respect for Mr. Fischer. And I'm gratified that the African nations expressed their support for him. He's an enormously able man. But we have a naturalized American over there leading the World Bank in a great way, and

I think the Europeans should lead the IMF. And it would suit me if a German led the IMF.

I don't—nobody is playing any games here. We went through a terrible crisis in the late nineties in Asia. We in the United States went through a terrible problem with our friends in Mexico when their economy was on the verge of collapse and causing others in Latin America, and indeed, far beyond Latin America, to teeter. We think the IMF will become even more important in the years ahead.

We want the strongest possible person in the world to head it. It's a big, big, important job. But I am completely committed to having a European head of the IMF, and it would suit me if the person were from Germany. I'd like to see Germany play a bigger role in all these international institutions.

Religious Right and 2000 Election

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about Senator McCain's remarks about the leaders of the religious right? Would you care to associate yourself with his description of what's wrong?

The President. Well, they've been a lot rougher on me than they have on him. [Laughter] I thought it was rather interesting that he was—you know, they weren't for him, and I understand that.

Look, let me say what I think is the—I think that people of faith who believe that their faith drives them to certain political positions should be able to pursue that, their political views, whatever they are, in American politics. I just don't believe they ought to say that people who disagree with them are somehow unworthy of receiving the same consideration they expect to receive in the political arena.

And so I don't want to—I think that for the last 20 years, we've all been too focused on harsh rhetoric and the politics of personal destruction, and I don't want to contribute to it today. But I've been the recipient of some of their venom, and I don't want to respond in kind. What I want to make is—I think most people who take positions in politics take them not because they're the prisoners of interest groups but because that's what they believe. And there are plenty of differences that ought to be debated, and then the voters should make their judgments.

And I think any attempt to demonize or, in effect, perform the first plastic surgery on these candidates and to treat them like they're not

even people, is wrong, whoever does that. So I don't want to contribute to that. I welcome the members of the religious right into the American political community, and I welcome their right to vote against me at every election. [Laughter] I do. It's part of what makes America a great country. I just don't think they should be condemning of other people, particularly in ways that may not be true, and certainly in ways that are almost cruel.

I think what we need to do is to tone down the personal destruction and turn up the focus on the big challenges facing the country, and we'll all be better off. They ought to be into politics, but we ought to just tone it down a little bit.

Kosovo Funding

Q. Mr. President, last night Senators were here meeting with your Joint Chiefs of Staff, where they were asked for another \$2.6 billion in supplemental aid to Kosovo. One of the main concerns these Senators had was whether or not the allies were pulling their fair share. Do you believe that the allies are contributing equal portions that the U.S. is putting into this?

The President. The EU, the European allies, will pay the big majority of the continued costs of maintaining order and building the infrastructure and the future of Kosovo. We are being asked to pay a minority of the money that I think is more or less in line with our fair share and in line with the fact that we paid the majority of the costs for conducting the military campaign that brought the Kosovars home.

But I know it's difficult for Congress to come up with this money, and they'd rather spend it someplace else. But just like we're talking about this vaccine issue and how, if we spend money here, it's good for Americans as well as for the people around the world.

It would be a good thing if we can prove that we can end ethnic cleansing and slaughter in the Balkans, and nobody else has to be drug back there to fight in another war, or we don't have to figure out how to handle and take care of a million refugees who will have their health problems and their other problems. And so, as expensive as this is, as General Shelton always says, the cheapest peace—the most expensive peace is cheaper than the cheapest war.

And so I hope the Congress will go along here. But it is a minority share, and it should

be. The Europeans are shouldering the lion's share of the burden.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Health Crispus W.C.B. Kiyonga of Uganda; James D. Wolfensohn, President, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and World Bank Group; Kayla Rolland, who died after she

was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; and Stanley Fischer, First Deputy Managing Director and Acting Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, who was nominated for the position of IMF Managing Director. A reporter referred to State Secretary for International Finance Caio Koch-Weser of Germany, who was also nominated for the position of IMF Managing Director. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the First Estimate of E-Commerce Retail Sales

March 2, 2000

Today the Commerce Department released the first-ever official estimate of retail E-commerce sales—or “E-tail” sales. This is a historical landmark that symbolizes and helps measure our transition to a new information economy. We first started keeping track of retail sales on a monthly basis in 1951. The announcement that E-tail sales over the Internet and other electronic networks reached \$5.3 billion in the fourth quarter of 1999 is an important step to ensure that we have accurate and timely information about the economy in the 21st century.

This is only the latest evidence of the dramatic contribution that the Internet, information technology, and E-commerce have made to what is now the longest economic expansion in his-

tory. When I became President in 1993, there were 50 sites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are more than 10 million. The information technology industry now accounts for fully one-third of our economic growth, and the jobs it creates pay almost 80 percent more than the private sector average. Using the Internet, families can obtain lower prices and better choices for everything from groceries to home mortgages to automobiles. Our goal must be to continue to support the basic research that has allowed the Internet to flourish, to enable every American to enjoy the benefits and opportunities of the new economy, and to ensure that the privacy of individuals is protected in the information age.

Remarks to the 1999 NCAA Football Champion Florida State Seminoles

March 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated. Well, President D'Alemberte, I was hardly old enough to vote the first time I met you. *[Laughter]* You're aging well. *[Laughter]*

Coach Bowden, welcome. I also want to welcome all the Floridians who are here. I thank Senator Graham and Senator Mack for coming; and Representatives Boyd, Brown, Deutsch, Foley, and Miller. And we have—Senator Breaux from Louisiana is here, and Congressman Blumenauer from Oregon are here. I don't know if they're trying to spy for their football

teams—*[laughter]*—but we're honored to have them. The mayor of Tallahassee is here, Scott Maddox; and State Representative Margie Turnbull. We welcome all of them. And mostly, I want to say a warm word of welcome to the Seminoles. I want to welcome you back to the White House.

This was the first national champion football team that I welcomed at the White House, in early 1994. And that team was 12 and 1; this team is undefeated. I came in with you, and I'm going out with you.

This team has won 109 games, this Florida State team, in the 1990's—truly the team of the decade in American football. In the first Sugar Bowl of the new millennium, you played a Virginia Tech team that you got way ahead of, but I think you must respect them a lot because they didn't give up. And Michael Vick and his Hokie teammates turned out to be worthy adversaries, Coach. And for those of us who love football, it was a sight to behold.

We all sat on the edge of our seats as you reclaimed the lead in the fourth quarter with your 85-yard scoring drive and quarterback Chris Weinke's touchdown pass to Ron Dugans. It was a 46-29 victory, hard won and richly deserved. After it was over, I think there wasn't a single football fan in America who doubted that Florida State was truly the best team in the country and a deserving national champion.

I could say a lot about all the players and the ones who had starring roles in the games, and not just the championship game but the other games. I watched several of them on television last year.

But I want to say a special word of personal admiration and respect for Coach Bowden. I have watched him year-in and year-out. I have watched him be gracious in victory and gracious in defeat, which is more difficult. Of course, it's easy if you don't lose very much. *[Laughter]* That makes it a little easier. But I have been immensely impressed by the leadership that he and his team have brought to the young men that have been on this football team, especially this year, but also in past years.

Bobby, I was told that for 24 years you had an empty picture frame on your desk, waiting for an undefeated team, and I'm glad you can finally fill that picture frame. Congratulations to you.

And let me say to all the young men on this team, some of you will play some more football and go on into the pro ranks, and if you do, I wish you well. Most college football players, even on national championship teams, don't go on to play in the pro ranks, and I wish you well, too. What it takes to win on the football team, hard work and discipline and devotion to a common effort, give you pretty good lessons for life. And if you remember what brought you to the national championship, you'll be a champion when you leave Florida State whether you play any more football or not.

That is the ultimate lesson, Coach, of the way you run this team. I respect you; I admire you. I congratulate you all. And I thank you for giving the rest of us who just watch from the stands or on television a magnificent season. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Talbot D'Alemberte, president, Florida State University, and Bobby Bowden, coach, Florida State Seminoles, made brief remarks; and player Todd Frier presented the President with a team jersey.]

The President. That's great. I'm going to have to bulk up before I can—*[laughter]*. Well, this is terrific. I want to thank all of you. A lot of people here I see made the trip up from Florida, and I want to welcome you to the White House and, in closing, just say this: When we have an event like this and we're able to invite people to come in here and express their pride and support for some remarkable achievement, it embodies the motto that the White House is the people's house.

And I think I should tell you that this is not only the first national championship of this new millennium, the first national championship team, but you are coming here in the 200th anniversary of the White House. It was completed in 1800, and John Adams, our second President, was the first person to live here. Every President since then has lived here.

And this house has seen a lot of changes and a lot of things come and go. But the feelings you have today and, I hope, the pride you feel as Americans in being here are what has sustained us now for 200 years. And if we just keep them, a couple hundred years from now, there will be another group of young people here celebrating an athletic achievement. Chances are they'll still be playing football, and the offensive line will average 500 pounds. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much, and welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Representatives Corrine Brown and Dan Miller; and Michael Vick, quarterback, Virginia Tech Hokies. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President D'Alemberte, Coach Bowden, and Mr. Frier.

Interview With Dan Rather of the CBS Evening News March 2, 2000

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you for doing this. You're proposing registering guns like cars. But if you're going to do that, then why not take the next step and regulate guns, as we do cars? After all, if there's something seriously wrong about cars, the Government can regulate automobiles. Are you willing to do that?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think we should minimize the impact that licensing handgun owners themselves would have. That's what I want to do. And I think it's a very important step. Now, it's tough to pass in this Congress because most of the Republicans agree with the NRA that guns are different, and even though it might save lives, we shouldn't do it. But I think it's very important.

There's a practical problem with the guns, of course. There are over 200 million of them already out there. But I think if we would begin the process of making handgun owners get a license before they can buy a gun, pass a Brady background check, and then have a gun safety course, I think it would make a difference.

I think if we did that, plus had child safety locks, closed the big loophole in the background registration law by covering the gun shows and the urban flea markets, and then continue this technology into safe guns so that as soon as possible we can sell guns and adjust them so that, by fingerprints, they can only be fired by the adults who own them, all these things together would make our country a much safer place. And I'm going to continue to fight for it.

We need to start by passing this legislation that the Congress has had for 8 months now. The Senate passed a pretty strong law, with the Vice President casting the tie-breaking vote. The House passed a much weaker law. And they've just been sitting on this for 8 months. I hope that these last 2 tragic days will finally move the Congress to act. And I'm going to meet with the leading conferees on the two bills in the next few days to try to do that.

Mr. Rather. But you're not prepared to take the step to try to regulate guns?

The President. I think that the most important thing we can do now is to pass the legislation

before the Congress, and then try to pass legislation that would require the owners themselves, people who want to buy handguns, to be licensed, just as car drivers are. I think that's the next big step, and I think it will make a big difference.

Just with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the more police on the street, we've got the murder rate down to a 30-year low. But it's still way too high. And the accidental death rate from children is astronomical. It's 9 times higher than the next 24 industrial nations combined. So we've got to do more with this. And I want to focus on this agenda. I think it will drive the death rate down from guns both for murders and from accidental death rates.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, how, if in any way, would your new proposals have prevented or even helped to prevent the shooting of this 6-year-old girl in Michigan?

The President. Well, I think—there are two things I'd like to mention. One is something that is still in the bill. If this gun had a child trigger lock on it, then the child, in all probability, could not have figured out how to undo the child trigger lock and fire the gun. So that's very, very important.

Then I had a provision which neither the Senate nor the House passed, to make national a law that today I think fewer than 20 States have, which would hold adults responsible for the kinds of activities that this young boy tragically engaged in when he killed that little girl. I think that it ought to be national, not just in a few States.

And so I hope the Congress, and maybe the conference, will reconsider that, even though even the Senate wouldn't pass that. They ought to take a look at this now, because clearly the adults bear the primary responsibility here. And people would think twice before just leaving a gun hanging around the house that a kid could walk off with if that were the case.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, there are so many questions about this issue that run so deep in the American character, as well as our history. With, as you've mentioned, at least 200 million guns out there, what about the argument that

says, listen, there's really no chance that we're going to have meaningful gun control in this country unless you go out and get those guns back, and that's simply not practical?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, you never want to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Look how much good the Brady bill has done. It's kept a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. And that's one of the reasons that the murder rate is at a 30-year low. So it won't solve all the problems, but it will solve some.

Secondly, especially if we could license people when they come in to buy handguns, we could then couple that with a very aggressive gun buyback program. Keep in mind, yes, there are more than 200 million guns out there, but a lot of them are in the hands of collectors and not regularly in use. What we need to do is to get these cheap guns off the streets, and with an aggressive gun buyback program we could do that. Just with the few million dollars we spend on it every year, we get a huge number of guns, offering about \$50 a gun. So I would also like to see that program expanded.

If you could get a lot of the older guns that are just out there floating loose off the street, if you could license the handgun owners, if you could have child safety locks, and then if we could proceed with this safe-gun technology so that in the future all the guns that were sold could only be fired by the adults who are their rightful owner, I think you'd go a long, long way toward making this a much, much safer country.

And it wouldn't in any way infringe on the rights of hunters and sport shooters, except to ask them to do what the rest of us do when we go through airport metal detectors or get driver's licenses. We undergo a little bit of inconvenience so that society as a whole would be a lot safer. And I think we have neglected this far too long.

As I said, there's not enough urgency in the Congress. You've got a dozen kids a day still getting shot to death out there, and this bill has been up there for 8 months. So this is one place where I think the United States Congress is completely out of touch with the American people, largely because of the genuine fear people have of the organized NRA interest back in their district. And they just no longer reflect the views of the majority of the people.

I had a woman tell me yesterday, when I was touring a high-tech facility in northern Virginia, that her husband was a Republican and an avid hunter who strongly supported these initiatives. And I think that's where the American people are. It's time for Congress to get in step with the American people and take these actions that will make our children safer.

Mr. Rather. Is it or is it not your contention, Mr. President, the basic problem has been the Republican-led Congress?

The President. Oh, absolutely. Now, we have some Democrats who live in rural districts where there are a lot of hunters and where they're afraid of this, because when I passed the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill back in '93 and '94, there's no question that the NRA beat about a dozen of our Members. There's no question they did. These people who voted with us to make our streets safer and save lives gave up their seats in Congress.

But public opinion has shifted a lot since then. And this is primarily a problem of the leadership in the Republican Congress being unwilling to part from the NRA. And I hope that they will do it now, because I think a lot of their Members want to. And almost all these Members of Congress could vote for this legislation and not be threatened at all, and they need to do that.

Mr. Rather. When I talk to the Republican leadership in Congress, they—and I will say, somewhat gleefully—say, “Look, there are at least 60 Democrats in the House who no way, no how are going to vote for any additional gun control legislation.”

The President. Well, that leaves us with about 140 on our side, which means they only have to produce 80 for us to have a majority. So they ought to do that. There's 80 Republicans who come from suburban districts where their constituents strongly support this and where they would not be defeated by the NRA if they went with us.

Mr. Rather. You've mentioned the NRA several times. Everybody knows the National Rifle Association pours a lot of money into a lot of campaigns to beat just this kind of legislation that you have proposed. But is it or is it not reality that what you have are tens of millions of Americans who own guns and, whatever their party affiliation, however they feel about you, are just adamant about not controlling guns any further, and that's the real problem?

The President. Well, it is, but most of them—a lot of gun owners—keep in mind, I’m convinced a majority of hunters and sport shooters, once they understand that these regulations do not in any way, shape, or form, impact their ability to conduct their lawful affairs, will support what amounts to a minor inconvenience—doing a background check at a gun show, for example, having a child safety lock on a handgun—to save lives.

And I’ll say again, I know public opinion has changed. In New Hampshire, we lost a Democratic Congressman who voted for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. He lost his job in ’94. And I went up there in ’96 and met with a bunch of people who were hunters and sportsmen, and I said, “Now, the NRA told you we were going to take your guns away and inconvenience you.” And I said, “If you missed a day in a deer season, I want you to vote against me, too. But if you didn’t, they didn’t tell you the truth, and you need to stick with us.” And we won, and won handily there.

So I think people are changing as they understand this is simply commonsense safety measures. And as a society, we all undergo minor inconveniences so that our children can grow up safe. And it’s ridiculous—the United States is the only country in the world that would allow this kind of, I believe, recklessness with the public interest. Nobody else does it, and that’s why we have the highest murder rate and the highest accidental gun death rate of children, because we don’t take these commonsense measures. I think we ought to make this a safer country. And we can do it, I’ll say again, without interfering with people’s right to hunting and sport shooting.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I know you have a meeting to go to. You’ve been very generous with your time. A last question. So many people, when I talk to them, they say, “Look, it’s fine for the President to talk this way, but he’s going to see rocks grow and water run uphill before he sees any real gun control legislation.” Now, you’ve made it clear you don’t believe that. What can you do to move this along? Can you call the Members of Congress to the White

House for a special meeting to compromise? What can you do?

Mr. President. Yes. Well, I’m going to bring down the leaders of the House and the Senate, the Republicans and Democrats, who are in charge of this bill in the conference. The House and the Senate version are in a conference. They’re supposed to come up with a unified bill and let the House and Senate vote on it. And I don’t have any doubt if they report out a good bill, it will pass. And I’m going to do everything I can to pass it.

I don’t believe that. They said—once they said we’d see water run uphill before we had Brady background checks, and then before we banned assault weapons, and then before we banned these large capacity ammunition clips. We did all that, but we left some loopholes in the law that we ought to close. We ought to require child safety locks. We ought to invest in safe-gun technology. And we ought to license handgun owners.

You know, every significant reform in a controversial area is considered to be impossible when you start. But you just start, and you keep working, and you keep working, and you keep working, and eventually it happens.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you. I’d love to come by sometime and talk to you about Colombia and China and Taiwan. But I appreciate you taking time today to do this.

Thank you very much.

Mr. President. Thank you very much, Dan.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I really appreciate you taking time to do this. Great. Thanks a lot. Tell the First Lady hello for us.

Mr. President. I’ll do it.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at approximately 4:06 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast, and the transcript was embargoed for release until 6:30 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks to the Aspen Institute in San Jose, California March 3, 2000

Thank you very much, Eric. I appreciate your kind remarks, except I don't want you telling anybody that. [Laughter]

I'm delighted to be here with my friend Reed Hundt, our former FCC Chairman. And President Johnson, thank you for having us here at the Aspen Institute. Senator Feinstein, thank you for coming out with me this morning, along with Congresswoman Tauscher. And I thank Representative Eshoo for coming and Representative Lofgren for welcoming us to her district.

Governor Leavitt, thank you for being here. Governor Leavitt is the leader of the Governors this year. He just spent 3 days with me in Washington. I thought he would find something else to do. If he spends any more time with me, they'll run him out of the Republican Party. [Laughter] However, being a Baptist, not a Mormon, I believe in deathbed conversions. You're always welcome over here. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mayor Gonzales for welcoming us. And I thank Mayor Menino for being here, and our former Governors, Roy Romer and Gaston Caperton, and former Mayor Schmoke from Baltimore. And I thank Bill Kennard, our present FCC Chair, for coming out with me today.

Gun Safety Legislation

I do want to talk a little bit about the meaning of this 50th anniversary of the Aspen Institute, but because this is my only opportunity to speak to the American people through the press today, there was a late-developing event last night in the Congress I'd like to comment on, related to the gun violence and what our national response should be in the wake of the tragic shootings this week.

Over the last couple of days, I have once again asked Congress to meet and pass commonsense gun safety legislation that they've been sitting on for 8 months. Let me mention, in the aftermath of the Columbine shootings, I asked the Congress to pass legislation that would provide for child trigger locks on all guns, close the loophole in the Brady law which requires background checks for guns bought at gun shops but not at gun shows or urban flea markets, and ban the importation of large capac-

ity ammunition clips, which are now illegal under the assault weapons ban that Senator Feinstein gave us, if they're domestic. And I asked for also a national law on adult supervision responsibility if children were recklessly allowed to get guns, and that's, of course, exactly what happened in the case, the tragic case in Michigan.

Well, anyway, 8 months ago the House passed a version, and the Senate passed a version. And from my point of view, the Senate bill was much better; it was much stronger. And it passed when the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote. But for 8 months there's been no action on this legislation, so I asked for it.

Well, last night, Senator Boxer offered a non-binding resolution that would put the Senate on record as saying we need to pass commonsense gun safety legislation now. And after all we went through this week, the resolution failed on a 49-49 tie, with 100 percent of the Democratic Senators and 10 percent of the Republican Senators voting for it, and 90 percent of the Republican Senators voted against it.

Now, this is not a partisan issue, I don't believe, anywhere but Washington, DC. Again, it's a great credit—you've got to give credit where credit is due—it's a great credit to the power of the NRA in Washington. Just this morning they said they were going to launch a \$20 million campaign to target Members of Congress who do this kind of thing, try to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

And right now they're running ads that treat the possibility that we could have technology to develop smart guns—that is, guns that could only be fired by their owners—as some sort of a joke. Well, I don't think it's very funny when a 6-year-old can pick up a gun and go shoot another 6-year-old, and a child safety lock would have prevented it; smart gun technology would have prevented it.

We know the Brady background check law has kept half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns, and I think that we ought to close the loophole that allows a lot of people to buy at these gun shows and not do the background checks. They work.

And I believe, and I know Senator Feinstein believes, that we ought to ask handgun owners to have a license, the way we ask drivers to do.

But the main thing I want to talk about now is, there is a practical bill before the Congress which would deal with the fact that we're losing 12 kids a day to gun violence. And in addition to the intentional deaths, the accidental death rates of children under 15 by guns is 9 times higher in the United States than in the next 24 biggest industrial countries combined.

So I ask you—I know I didn't come here to talk about this, and I know the American people may think I'm a broken record about it, but I think the older you get—you said something about when you get to 50 you begin to—whatever you said about being 50, I'm not so sure. [Laughter] The Vice President once gave me a birthday present that said that the Cherokees believed that people didn't achieve full maturity until they were 51. All I know is that if you've ever had a child, everything else seems small by comparison, including the most wonderful job in the world. And I think this is crazy, what we're doing.

I come from a State where half the people have a hunting and fishing license. I fired my first .22 when I was 10, 11, 12 years old. This has nothing to do with any of this. We are a big, complex society, and we can save more of our children. We've got a 30-year low in the murder rate, 30-year low in the gun death rate, but we can make this the safest big country in the world, and we can do it without undermining the personal liberties of other people. So I hope you'll forgive me, but I wanted to say that, get that off my chest, and ask them to send me the bill in the next few days.

Internet Security and Privacy/Digital Divide

Now, I think it was interesting—I was thinking about what things were like when the Aspen Institute started 50 years ago. The first conference took place as scientists were close to giving us our first glimpse of the double helix, and there was a revolution in communications technology: color television. From that day to this, the Aspen Institute has had a proud tradition of informed and enlightened dialog on emerging national and global issues.

And of course, I look out on this audience, and some of you were referred to by me or by previous speakers, that all of you are people

on the front lines of change. All of you are people who care very much about our future. All of you are people who have a greater grasp of what is going on than most people have time to gain, given their own lives and responsibilities. And that's why it's important that you gather and think about these things.

There is no question that one of the reasons that—and perhaps the primary reason this has been both the longest and the strongest economic expansion in history is because of the explosion of technology. The high-tech companies alone account for only 8 percent of our employment, but they've been 30 percent of our growth. And perhaps even more profound, the technological innovations that are the core business of many of the companies represented in this room and certainly in this area are rippling through the whole rest of the economy, adding to the overall productivity of the American economy in ways that, frankly, have not been measurable.

I'll just give you one example. In 1992, after the election, when I gathered our economic team around the table at the Governor's Mansion at home in Arkansas, I asked these economists, many of whom were young and vigorous people, I said, "Now, how low can we get the unemployment rate before inflation sets in, the Fed will have to raise interest rates, and we'll be back in the tack again? How low can it go?"

And a couple of them said 6 percent. A couple of them said 5.5 percent. They were universal in their belief that if we ever got the unemployment rate down to 5 percent and it stayed there, we'd have raging inflation, and we'd have to break it, and it would be the end of the recovery. And these were people, obviously, that had a—they were members, by and large, of my party; they shared my political philosophy, though they had a philosophical predisposition toward believing that low unemployment was a very good thing however it was achieved. Yet, they thought that.

Why is that? Because economists had no tools, as recently as 1992, to measure the impact of technology on this economy—something that Governor Romer's son was pointing out to us before, I think, before anybody else, at least that I know of, in the country—had no tools to appreciate what the impact on productivity would be and how it would rifle through the economy and lift the whole thing in a way that

would enable us to have 4 percent unemployment for a sustained period of time.

We had the new unemployment figures come out today. We had 4.1 percent, and we're almost bumping 21 million new jobs now, in the last 7 years. And the biggest concern we've had about inflation is the rising oil prices, which is part of the old economy, if you will, and something that has to be worked out a different way. But it's very interesting. And let me give you an example of why we've had a hard time understanding what the potential of the economy is.

We, the people who do this work, started to count software investment as a part of GDP only in October of 1999. It's amazing. Think about this. We began counting retail sales as part of GDP in 1947, and we've done it about the same way ever since. Yesterday we got a new benchmark for the new economy when the Department of Commerce yesterday released its first-ever quarterly report on E-commerce, telling us the Internet sales in the fourth quarter of last year, the holiday season, were \$5.3 billion—about \$65 of those attributable to the President. [*Laughter*]

Now, that was more than twice the previous year. But many believe that E-commerce will climb to \$1.3 trillion—trillion—a year within just the next 3 years. When I became President in 1993, there were 50 sites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are more than 10 million. I visited a company involved in the web last week in northern Virginia, UUNET. They did their first contract in 1988; by 1994, they had 40 employees. They have 8,000 now.

So we now know that we have a new and different economy. We now are beginning to figure out, A, how to measure it and, B, how to assess where tomorrow's growth will come from. I also think it's very important that we assess precisely what the role of Government should and should not be. And I want to commend Governor Leavitt here for taking on the completely thankless task of trying to figure out how Internet sales should be dealt with in the taxation systems of State and local government. You talk about a stone-dead loser. [*Laughter*] It is a totally thankless—I admire him for many reasons, but shouldering this burden may be the most compelling example that he really has a good heart and willingness to do what has to be done.

But if you think about it, how this is managed is an example of what will be a whole new set of questions about what the role of Government should be. And they can't all be answered now because things are developing too fast. And let me just suggest that I think that our guideposts ought to be that we should have a Government that tries its best to establish the conditions and then to give individual Americans the tools necessary to make the most of this emerging economy.

Vice President Gore and I have really worked hard on that. We negotiated historic trade agreements on information technology, to open markets, establishing conditions. We tried to bring our export control policies up to date and still be sensitive to what our national security people say. That's the framework, the conditions. Maybe one of the most important things we did was to fight for the right kind of comprehensive telecommunications reform in the first overhaul of that bill in 60 years. And we worked very hard in the White House to make sure that it was a reform that was oriented toward competition, toward giving new firms a chance to enter new markets and entrepreneurs a chance to really create wealth and jobs out of their ideas.

And I think it's clear to me now, looking back, that the fights we waged to try to be pro-competitive, pro-entrepreneur, in that rather herculean legislative battle, had even more positive impacts than I had imagined they would.

Those are the conditions. What about the tools? The E-rate, which the FCC did, and I want to thank both our former and our present Chairman of the FCC for their support of this. We got discounted Internet rates for schools and libraries, which increased the percentage of our school classrooms connected to the Internet from 3 percent in 1994, when the Vice President and I did our first NetDay in San Francisco, to 63 percent in 1999. And we're up to over 90 percent of the schools have at least one connection. And we'll soon be at a point where the only schools that don't have at least one connection will be schools that are literally too old and decrepit to be wired, which is a problem for another day. But we have a lot of our urban school systems have school buildings with an average age of 65 or 70 years of the school buildings, and it's a very difficult problem.

But we're on our way to universal student access because of the E-rates. Otherwise, without the E-rate, a lot of these schools could never have afforded to hook up, and a lot of these small libraries in rural areas could never have afforded to hook up.

We've also worked to accelerate the Federal investment in research and development and to—conditions—help you extend it by an extension of the research and experimentation tax credit and by expanding our national science and technology budget every year. After all, Government-funded research helped to spark everything from the Internet to communication satellites.

This year we have proposed an increase of \$600 million in information technology research and almost \$500 million for a major new initiative in nanotechnology, the ability to manipulate matter at the atomic and molecular level, something that will, in my view, give you a whole new generation of revolutions in this remarkable area.

Now, we only know some of the likely developments as a result of this R&D. We know it is highly likely that soon we'll have technology that will put all the contents in the Library of Congress in a device the size of a sugar cube, and find and treat cancerous tumors when they're just a few cells in size so that you won't have to have the ravages of side effects of cancer treatment and the effectiveness of the treatment will be far greater than it is today. And those are only two things. There are many other things. If this nanotechnology business really works, and we can figure out how to, in effect, use that to develop information storage, then what will happen within a reasonably few years is literally beyond the limits of my poor imagination.

So I will say again—but we do know this; we know that whatever happens, the Government's role, in my judgment, should be to try to establish the conditions in which good people, working hard, will be rewarded in a way that will be positive for society as a whole and then to give people the tools to make sure that everybody has a chance, no matter where they start in life. That, I think, to me, will in all probability be the key responsibilities of Government for quite a long while to come.

And if they are well fulfilled, whether it's in maintaining fiscal responsibility and paying down the debt so that there is more money

available for investment capital to start all these new firms and give life to all these new ideas, or investing more in education and in what works and in giving States like California that have pioneered charter schools the right to have more and the support they need to have more, or giving every kid who is in a tough neighborhood the right to an after-school or a summer school program—those things will have to be done so that we have both the conditions and the tools consistent with a society that is both successful and genuinely egalitarian.

Now, I know that the Forum on Communications and Society is also working hard to be a catalyst for change and for better and broader use of technology. Of all the areas where we might work together, I would suggest that there are two which are absolutely vital to keep the information economy and all America growing strong. The first is Internet security and privacy, and the second is closing the digital divide. The first, from our point of view, relates to conditions; the second relates to giving all Americans the tools they need to make the most of their own lives in this remarkable time.

We know we have to keep cyberspace open and free because it sparks creativity and innovation, because its infinite networks can do so much to bring us together. But we also know that cyberspace must be a community of shared responsibilities and common values.

Last month I met with high-tech leaders to talk about making our networks more secure and resilient. They urged the Federal Government to do something we have committed to do, to lead by example, to take that responsibility very seriously. We have formed a Government-industry partnership for security. I've requested more than \$2 billion from Congress to fund cybersecurity initiatives and research.

Today I'm ordering a review of every Federal agency to determine our vulnerability to denial-of-service attacks and to make sure that Federal computers cannot be used by outsiders to attack others. They will be reporting back to my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, so that we can prepare a strong response. And I hope industry will follow that example.

We must also do more to uphold Americans' high expectations that their right to privacy will be protected on-line. That includes making sure that as Government works to protect our citizens in cyberspace, it does not infringe on our civil

liberties. We must not undermine freedom in the name of freedom.

Our administration has encouraged Internet firms to work together to raise privacy standards. The response has been good. The share of commercial websites with privacy policies went from 15 percent to 66 percent in just one year. That's a very impressive record.

But the American people know it's still not enough. Some subjects are so sensitive, I believe they should have legal protection: our medical records, our financial records, any interactions with our children on-line. Business must find ways to give Americans the confidence they expect in these and other privacy concerns. So today I think we must all ask ourselves and everyone in this area: Do you have privacy policies you can be proud of? Do you have privacy policies you would be glad to have reported in the media? I hope that all of you will work with us and work together among ourselves to maximize the possibilities of an open Internet by securing Americans' fundamental right to privacy.

I can tell you that I spend—you know, one of the things I have tried to do as the President is to avoid becoming isolated from the concerns of ordinary citizens, and among other things, I have a special ZIP Code for old-fashioned mail at the White House that I gave to a bunch of people that I grew up with who are just citizens in all walks of life. And for 7 years now, they've written me about what people were mad at me about. [Laughter] They've written me when people thought I made a mistake. They've written me when they thought the Government was totally irrelevant to their lives because they were concerned about other things.

And I also spend a lot of time just talking to people. You know, when I go places, very often I'll stop and just go down and have an unscheduled stop and get out and shake hands with people and ask them what's on their mind. People are worried about this. This is a big deal to people. You know, ordinary folks, even people who aren't on-line yet, are very excited about the prospects of this age so many of you have done so much to create. But they are really concerned about this. They are afraid they will have no place to hide.

And so I would argue again that the continuing success of this phenomenal enterprise, which has no parallel in history, requires us to seriously take into account the core of what

makes America a unique place, that freedom requires a certain space of privacy.

Now, I also would say, to go to my second condition—that's about the conditions; this is about the tools—I think business must work with us to make sure that we close the faultline between those who have access to computers and to the Internet and those who do not. It has now become known as the digital divide.

This spring I will take another one of my new markets tours designed to convince the private sector that places in America which have still not fully participated in our economy are great new markets. The Indian reservations, the rural areas, the inner-city neighborhoods are opportunities for us. And we know the only way we can fully maximize them is to bring the information age to every family in every community, yes, first to make sure all our schools have the technology and then that all our teachers know how to maximize it and use it, but also to make sure that adults have access as well.

I want to congratulate Mayor Menino on what Boston has done, opening more than 80 community technology centers in underserved areas to serve adults, while bringing thousands of computers into schools and setting up training and job training programs with private sector partners. We should do this all over the country. I've asked Congress for tax incentives for companies that donate computers for technology training for every single new teacher in this country, and for funding to establish 1,000 community technology centers so that adults can also have access to the information economy.

I've proposed a pilot project with industry to bring computers and the Internet to low income families, like Oakland's ClickStart or the program started by Governor King of Maine yesterday, where he's really going to try to get a laptop into the home of every family. It's an amazing thing. Let me say, he's going to do it. They will start with the seventh graders. Let me explain what the program is in Maine, if you didn't see it. They're going to start by giving every seventh grader a laptop, but the way they're going to do it is to make sure that the seventh grader will also be able to take the computer home and to try to involve the parents in it. And that, I think, is a remarkably good thing.

I never will forget visiting a program in northern New Jersey that Lucent did with a school district there, where most of the kids were first-

generation Americans and their parents were immigrants whose primary language was not English. And because they were just picking one school district, they could make sure that there were computers in the home, as well. So they got all these people who would never dream of using a computer to start using it in a way that enabled them to E-mail the teachers, E-mail the principal, and they had a dramatic drop in the school dropout rate and a dramatic increase in the student performance rate because of the connections between the two.

So it will be interesting to follow how the Maine program works out. I want to give credit where credit is due. Governor Caperton, when he was Governor of West Virginia, was the first Governor in the country to virtually computerize all of the elementary schools in his State and give all of his kids access to this kind of technology, and most of us were just trying to follow in the wake here. But this is very exciting stuff.

But again I will say to you, I don't think education is enough here. We have a chance to bring the benefits of enterprise to areas that have been left behind. We've got Indian reservations in this country where the unemployment rate is 70 percent. The unemployment rate in this Nation is 4.1 percent today. We have lots and lots of urban neighborhoods and rural areas where unemployment is still in double digits, where people want to work and can be trained. And a part of making people, especially those who are physically isolated because they're in rural areas or distant Indian reservations or physically isolated in cities because they don't have cars to get around—a part of bringing them into this economy is using technology to bridge the distances, not only between what they know and what skills they have but actually where they are.

So I think this is a big deal and, as I said in the State of the Union Address, if we don't do this now when we've got the strongest economy in our lifetime, when will we ever get around to it? We actually have a chance to let everybody ride along with the American economy. Doubtless it will slow down someday; doubtless we'll have another recession someday. But at least people ought to have a chance to take the elevator up, since they get to stay on the ground floor when it's down. And we'll

never have a better chance than we have now to do this.

So, in closing, let me just say, if I could make one request of every technology whiz in this room, it would be this: Your skills and your ideas and the companies that you have created have the potential for so much good. But no sector of the economy can be totally isolated from the health of the overall society. So this is a case where what is morally right and what is economically intelligent coincide. We have to think about how the networks that you dominate can close the gaps that divide us, light the darkness that clouds us, and spread the freedom that lets each of us have the chance to live our dreams.

If we do it right, if we can make every American technologically literate, if we can make our Government wise not only in its own use of technology but in setting those conditions and giving those tools, if we keep building the right kind of information economy which respects privacy and has security but is an entrepreneur's dream, then what we have achieved in the last 7 years will be just a small prolog of what will occur in the years ahead.

But I'm absolutely convinced we'll do it only if we're committed to doing it together, if we believe everyone counts, if we believe everyone should have a chance, if we believe everyone has a role to play, and if we believe we all do better when we help each other. That's a pretty old-fashioned statement to end a new economy speech on, but it's the very best I can do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the Silicon Valley Conference Center at Novell Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer, Novell; Elmer W. Johnson, president, Aspen Institute; Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; Mayor Ron Gonzales of San Jose; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA; former Governors Roy Romer of Colorado and Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; former Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, MD; Paul M. Romer, professor of economics, Stanford Graduate School of Business; and Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine.

Memorandum on Action by Federal Agencies To Safeguard Against Internet Attacks

March 3, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Action by Federal Agencies to Safeguard Against Internet Attacks

America and the world have benefited tremendously from the amazing advances we have seen with the Internet and computer technology. But with every new technological advance there are new challenges, and we must meet them—both Government and the private sector—in partnership.

Following recent Internet disruptions, I met with experts and leaders of the information technology industry so we could work together to maximize the promise of the Internet, while minimizing the risks. These Internet disruptions highlight how important computer networks have become to our daily lives; and how

vulnerabilities can create risks for all—including the Federal Government.

Accordingly, I ask that each Cabinet Secretary and agency head renew their efforts to safeguard their department or agency's computer systems against denial-of-service attacks on the Internet. Within legal and administrative limits, attention should also be paid to contractors providing services. The Federal Computer Incident Response Center (FEDCirc) and the National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) have available software tools to assist you in these efforts.

I have asked my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, to coordinate a review of Federal Government vulnerabilities in this regard and to report back to me by April 1.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Exchange With Reporters in San Jose

March 3, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the idea of a Gore-Feinstein ticket?

The President. I think very highly of it. And I think she is immensely talented and would be good at anything. But this is a decision that the Vice President should make after he wins the nomination. And it's not done yet. So I would recommend that all these questions be deferred until after we know for sure that he's the nominee, and then you should ask him.

Q. How would you assess the Republican strategy using you to tarnish their Presidential candidates? How do you assess it?

The President. I don't know. You know, they've got to do what they've got to do. I wish—when I saw the Vice President and Senator Bradley in their last debate, I know that the conventional wisdom was, it wasn't very interesting because they agreed on too much. But what I thought is, how fortunate we are to have people that know that much and care that much

about things that will actually affect people's lives, instead of grab the day's headlines.

And I thought there was quite a remarkable contrast between the substantive level of knowledge and discussion in that debate and the one I heard last night. That's the only observation I want to make. I shouldn't—they can run their own campaigns. They don't need to have me commenting. I shouldn't get in the way of the Republicans or the Democrats right now. I'm not running. I'm enjoying watching it.

Q. But is this a campaign—[inaudible].

The President. Well, time will tell, won't it? The voters are in charge in this deal, not me.

Maine Initiative on the Digital Divide

Q. Can I clarify? The seventh graders who are going to get the laptops, can you tell me more about—

The President. Oh, yes. That's Maine. It's a great story. Angus King in Maine, it's great,

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he's got a system to give every seventh grader in the State—[inaudible].

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:30 p.m. at the Novell Headquarters. In his remarks, the Presi-

dent referred to Senator Dianne Feinstein; former Senator Bill Bradley; and Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in San Francisco, California

March 3, 2000

Thank you very much. The first thing I would like to say to all of you, after thank you for the warm welcome, is that this is not the first time I have come here to campaign for Senator Feinstein's reelection. In fact, I'm an old hand at this. I came here in '94 to campaign for Senator Feinstein's reelection, and she stayed in Washington. I had to do it all by myself. [Laughter] So it's nice to be here with the evidence of my argument. I thank you very much.

I also want to thank Senator Barbara Boxer and Stu for being here, and Representative Barbara Lee, who is also off to a very fast start. The women from California in the Senate and the House have defied all of the preconceptions about how long it takes to become effective in the Congress. It could have something to do with that practical instinct of worrying more about what you're doing than where you're sitting. And they have really, really done a good job.

I thank the McCarthys for chairing this event. And as you said, I can't remember anybody who ever got more done in her first term in the Senate than Dianne Feinstein. And I want you to know, I'm here for many reasons—and I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—and on most days I'm okay with it. [Laughter] But I care a great deal about not whether we're going to change but how we're going to change and where we're going from here.

And one of the things that I always admired about Dianne Feinstein and her husband, Dick—who's been giving me training in how to be a Senate spouse—[laughter]—Stu Boxer and Dick and I decided that we would start right now planning for next year. We're looking for a fourth—[laughter]—for golf, for tea, for whatever; we're open. [Laughter] Life's funny, isn't it? I mean, really, it's great. [Laughter]

Let me say, one of the things that I really admire, maybe the thing I admire most about Dianne Feinstein is, first of all, she cares about a lot of things. How many conversations have we had about China, about Tibet, about different parts of the world; about saving the California redwoods, which meant a lot to me, too; about setting aside the desert—now we have two national parks—it's meant a lot to me, too; about taking on this gun issue, which I started to try to do with the Brady bill concept as Governor more than 16 years ago, and I backed off, to my everlasting regret. When I became President, I promised myself as long as I was standing I would do it. And she's been a great ally, and I thank her for that.

But one thing that Dianne does that sometimes politicians in both parties, especially when you get in Washington and you get all caught up in this atmosphere, you know, and you spend all your time watching talk shows—[laughter]—do you realize that if you've got a halfway good cable selection, you don't ever have to watch anything but talk shows anymore? [Laughter] And do you realize, to get on one, all you have to do is take a firm position and never change your mind, and it's better if you don't know anything. [Laughter] Actually, if you have any evidence, any background, any real policy knowledge, it's a terrific encumbrance because you're supposed to be shouting to great effect on these programs. [Laughter] Now, we're all laughing, but you know it's pretty close to the truth. [Laughter]

And Dianne, you know, she's like me. We're still under the illusion that when you elect us to these things, they're actually jobs, and we're supposed to get up and go to work every day. And like your job, it yields to effort. I mean, it really makes a difference if you pass a few

days in the headlines to figure out what actually ought to be in the bill. And then if you actually pass a law, it can really change people's lives.

Now, you're laughing, but I'm telling you, you have no idea how hard it is to concentrate on your job if you live in Washington today. Barbara is nodding her head. Representative Lee is nodding her head. We live in this sort of constant culture of critiquing and carping and talking and who's up and who's down and who's in and who's out. And I wanted to be here tonight; I'm proud to show up for somebody who still believes being a United States Senator is one of the most important jobs in the world, and with effort you can get results which change people's lives for the better. And that is the measure of public service, and she fulfills it in an astonishing way.

Now, the second reason I'm here is to tell you I want you to go vote on Tuesday. I can't vote in this primary, but I hope you'll vote. You've got a big ballot. You'll have an opportunity to vote for things that will affect your future and to send a signal where California is. I hope you'll vote, as Dianne said, for proposition 26. Why? Because it'll build people up; because we're going to have 2 million teachers retire in the next few years as our student bodies get larger; because we've got, already, untold numbers of kids in schools that are either overcrowded or tumbling down; and because California has shown a commitment to turn around failing schools, to adopt charter schools, to try things that will work. And you need to get all the roadblocks out of your way to building your children's future.

And for me, I hope you'll vote against proposition 22 because—[*applause*—now, wait a minute. Calm down. I want to say—I'll say more about this in a minute—because however you stand on the question of gay marriage—and I realize that San Francisco is different from the rest of California, is different from the rest of America. But that's not what is at stake here. This initiative will have no practical effect whatever. This is a solution in search of a problem that isn't there.

So people are being asked to vote on this to get everybody in a white heat and to divide people at a time when—you know, look around, folks, we just had this little 6-year-old girl killed in Michigan by a 6-year-old boy who got a gun that was stolen, that he shouldn't have been able to get his hands on. That's a problem we

ought to be working on. You had a guy flip out in western Pennsylvania and start shooting people at random, apparently out of his imagined grievance that had some racial basis. You had a guy in Los Angeles shoot at Jewish kids—kids—who were going to school, just because they were Jewish. And then he killed a Filipino postal worker just because he was a Filipino and he worked for the Federal Government; he had double satisfaction. You had Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming. You had James Byrd dragged to death in Texas. You had this guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God, but did believe in white supremacy, kill a Korean Christian walking out of his church and the former basketball coach of Northwestern, an African-American, last year. And I could go on and on.

We've had all the turmoil in New York City over this Diallo case. And I don't want—as I said before, I don't pretend for a moment to second-guess the jury. I didn't sit there and listen to the evidence. But I know most people in America of all races believe that if it had been a young white man in a young, all-white neighborhood, it probably wouldn't have happened. Now, that doesn't mean they were guilty under the criminal law. And the Justice Department is looking into that, in the Civil Rights Division, and that's the way to handle that.

But what it does mean is, there's this huge gulf out there still, in too many places, where people wonder if they can be treated fairly. So what I'm trying to do—the reason I ran for President was that the country was in trouble. California was in real trouble back in '92, and Washington was dominated by sort of a talk show mentality—and the Congress, too, and in the White House. “Did you get your 10 seconds on the news tonight?” And the only way you could get it is if you were bombing the other side. And there was the liberal position, and there was the conservative position. There was the Democrat position, and there was a Republican position, and we were supposed to get in here and basically fight. And it didn't matter if anything ever got done.

And I thought to myself, you know, I've been a Governor for 10 years. I thought, if I ran my State that way, we'd be in the ditch; if you ran your business that way, you would be broke; and if we ran our homes that way, the divorce rate would be 100 percent. I mean, this is—it was crazy. And what I want you to think

about tonight is this. I thank Dianne and others who have been so generous. So many of you said to me tonight kind things about my service for which I am grateful. But I want you to think about that tonight.

Elections are about the future. America has stayed young by thinking about tomorrow. And the point I want to make to you, if you like the fact that America is doing well, the only way we can continue to do well is to keep striving to do better, because the world is changing very rapidly and because there are still unsolved problems and unseized opportunities in this country. And that's what this election is about.

Dianne mentioned a few of them. How are we going to keep the economy going? How are we going to bring economic opportunity to people in places that have been left behind: the Mississippi Delta, where I come from; the Rio Grande Valley, where I was last week; the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and other reservations, where unemployment runs as high as 70 percent; the inner-city neighborhoods in California and elsewhere, where there is still an unemployment rate 2, 3, 4 times the national average. What are we going to do to reach them? The rest of us need that. If you want to keep doing well, you've got to try to do better. Why? Because if you invest there, you get inflation-free growth that benefits everyone else. We're living in a time where, economically, doing the morally right thing happens to be good for you, too. Equal pay for equal work for women is morally right; it's good for the economy. Raising the minimum wage is good for the economy. Closing the digital divide is good for the economy.

I was out in northern California a couple of months ago, and I was with some eBay executives who informed me that 20,000 Americans now make a living on eBay—not working for eBay, trading on eBay. And they've done a profile of these people and, lo and behold, they found that a lot of them used to be on welfare. So what happened? That little computer—when the digital divide was bridged—I believe intelligence is equally distributed across racial and income lines. And I grew up in one of the poorest places in America, and some of the smartest people I ever met I had known by the time I was 10 years old. I've always felt that luck had something to do with the fact that I was standing here, even though all politicians want you to believe they were born in log cabins they built themselves. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, consider this. What does it mean that 20,000 people are making a living on eBay and some of them used to be on welfare? It means if you bridge the digital divide, you collapse the distance not only between people who are physically isolated from markets and opportunities but may be isolated from bank loans, isolated from education, isolated from other things. So it's a big question.

How are you going to educate all these kids? I mentioned proposition 26. California is doing better, with the most diverse student body in the country. But I can tell you, we've got a lot to do. But we know what to do. I was laughing with some of my old Governor friends the other day; we didn't always know what to do. Now we know how to turn failing schools around. It's just a question of whether we're prepared to invest the money and the time and the effort and the discipline and the accountability and give the support to the kids in trouble with after-school and summer school and mentoring and other programs to do what needs to be done. But we know what to do now.

How are you going to help people to balance work and family? Are we going to do more about child care or not? I could go on and on. How are we going to make efforts to continue to grow the economy and improve the environment? It is now no longer necessary to degrade the environment to grow the economy. This is a digital economy. We don't have to do that anymore.

And for those of you that are younger than me, I'll make you a prediction: Within 20 years it will become clear, and probably within a decade, that the only way to improve the economy is to continue to improve the environment. There is a trillion-dollar market out there for people who are committed to new technologies to combat global warming.

Now, how are we going to make the most of the scientific technical revolution? What does it mean that we're going to sequence the human genome? What will it be like when we can cure all kinds of cancers when there are just a few cells forming, so there's no possibility of metastasis? What will it mean when we can block the defective genes that cause Alzheimer's or diabetes or Parkinson's? What will it mean? If you live to be 65 in America, your average life expectancy is already 82. Dianne told me tonight that there were three people that she knew of that were 90 years old in this audience. Can

you imagine? Just 10 years ago you'd never go to a group like this, at this hour of the night, and find three people who were 90 years old. True. [Laughter] Ten years from now—10 years from now you will come to a meeting like this, and there will be 25 people that are 90 years old. Now, what does all this mean to us?

What does it mean to say we're in a global economy, in a global society? What are our responsibilities to those poor people that are clinging for life on those trees in Mozambique tonight? Was I right or wrong to send the NATO planes, the American planes in so that the people could go home in Kosovo? These are big questions. What are our obligations to the peace process in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in the tribal wars in Africa? What is it that binds us together as a people?

That's what this election is about. You've got to think about these big things. Don't get into this sort of old, broken-record, kind of cheap-slug mentality in this election. This is a big election. And it's not about what will get you 15 seconds on the evening news or what makes for a hard punch on a talk show.

This country is doing well because we have been animated by good ideas, new ideas rooted in basic values: opportunities for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. It's working because we have—our crowd does, in Washington—some basic ideas. We think everybody is important, everyone matters. We think everybody ought to get a chance. We think everybody's got a role to play. We think we all do better when we help each other. That's what we believe.

Now, the results are pretty encouraging. But I am imploring you: Do not be lulled into a false sense of confidence or think for a moment it does not matter whether you keep looking to tomorrow or whether you exert particular efforts to vote in the elections this year.

I want to close with a little story which will betray my age. [Laughter] Over Thanksgiving I had the kids of friends of ours over—Hillary and I had a couple friends and their kids come stay with us. And this one beautiful little girl looked up at me—she was 6 years old—and she said, "How old are you, anyway?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, Mary, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [Laughter]

And to those of you who are younger I will say—and to those of you who are older, you know what I'm saying—it is a lot, but it doesn't

take long to live a life, no matter how long it is.

When we passed this milestone this month and we had the longest economic expansion in history, I went back and studied the last economic expansion in history. Do you know when the record was that we broke? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, let me tell you a little something from my 53 years of life.

In 1964, I finished high school. Our country had been heartbroken by President Kennedy's assassination, but then we had rallied behind President Johnson. And he was wildly popular because we had an economy we thought would go on forever: high growth, low inflation, low unemployment. We were passing civil rights bills right and left in the United States Congress. And most people believed we would actually solve the problems of race through the laws, through Congress and the courts. The Vietnam war had not yet manifested itself in the way it later did. And most people believed that we would prevail in the cold war, which we subsequently did, but most people thought we would do it without torment, turmoil, and division. We were feeling pretty cool in the summer of 1964. We thought we'd have social justice, economic progress, and freedom and national security in the world—and it would just happen. That's what we thought when I graduated from high school.

Not long after that, we had the Watts riots. Not long after that, the streets of every major city were filled with antiwar demonstrations. Within 4 years, when I graduated from college at Georgetown, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King had been killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. Our country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war. And in just a couple of months, President Nixon would be elected President on the first of our campaigns of division. You may remember, he said he was representing the Silent Majority, which meant the rest of us, I guess, were in the loud minority. [Laughter] But the message was clear: "America is divided into two camps, 'us' and 'them.' And anybody who's not with us is 'them.'" And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" ever since, in some way or another.

And ever since I ran in 1992, I have done my best to heal those breaches and to bring us together and to get us to let go of some

of that stuff, that poison, that venom, that need we always seem to have to be divided one from another.

But I tell you this because when I was 18 in 1964, times were just about like they are now, and I thought it would all be fine. And in next to no time, all the wheels ran off, and by 1967 everything was divided. And within a few more months in 1968, within a few more months our expansion came to an end.

I say this to you not as your President but as a citizen. I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children that all of us could be a part of, not just those of us that are wealthy enough to come here but the people that were good enough to serve us tonight, not just those of us that are doing great and have lived most of our lives but those of us that are just beginning.

But I remember. Don't you be overconfident. Don't you be overcasual. You know, in life we're always lucky when we get a second chance, and most of us are lucky enough to have had more than one. But a country is indeed graced by God to get a second chance. I'm glad I helped to build America's second chance these last 7 years. We've got it now. I've waited 35 years to see it.

That's why I'm for Dianne Feinstein. That's why I'm traipsing all over the country trying to get people to think about this. And when

this political debate goes on, don't you get caught in all this little stuff. You lift this country up; lift the people in your community up. Tell the people why they ought to vote. Remind them of how we lost our last expansion. Think about all the possibilities for the future. Be big. Be big and remember: We all do better when we help each other, and the only way to keep doing well is to be committed to doing better.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. in the Peacock Court at the Mark Hopkins InterContinental Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Stewart Boxer, husband of Senator Barbara Boxer; dinner chairs Robert J. and Suzanne McCarthy; Richard Blum, husband of Senator Dianne Feinstein; Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Ronald Taylor, who allegedly went on a deadly shooting spree in Wilkinsburg, PA; and West African immigrant Amadou Diallo, who died after being shot in the Bronx Borough of New York City by four police officers, who were acquitted of all criminal charges on February 25 in Albany, NY. The President also referred to California's proposition 26, School Facilities Local Majority Vote, to permit a simple majority for school bond issues as opposed to the super majority currently required; and proposition 22, Limit on Marriage Initiative, to ban gay marriages in California.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in San Francisco

March 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, I want to thank Sandy and Jeanne for having me back in this wonderful old home, which I love so much. And I thank the Staglins for cohosting this event and for the wine, which I could not resist tasting even though I've been up since 3 o'clock in the morning your time. And I was glad Dianne sort of gave you a little profile of my day, so that if I collapse while speaking, you will be generous enough to make a few exceptions for me. [Laughter] And thank you, Eric, for the great time we had earlier in the day with the Aspen Institute over at Novell.

Tonight I'm—here and at the next stop I have to make, I'm trying to help the people who, unlike me, will be running for office in 2000. And I normally get a laugh when I tell people that. Sometimes I wonder why I'm doing this; I'm not running for anything anymore, and most days, it's okay with me.

But I'm here tonight because I want to see the work we've done for the last 7 years and a couple of months continue. I'm here because I remember what California was like in 1991 when I came here, and I see what it's like today. But I also see underneath that the

continuing challenges that Dianne mentioned and others, but let's just take the two she talked about: the challenges of the children in the schools and how it manifests itself, ultimately, in your needing 280,000 high-tech workers you can't get; and the challenge of the safety of our streets and our neighborhoods, our homes and our schools.

Let me say, I'd like to make a couple of points very briefly. With regard to education, I've been working on this stuff for over 20 years now, proudly. I was first elected Governor—in 1979 I became a Governor. And I just had the Governors to the White House. It was my 20th Governors' conference, as both a Governor and a President. I never got tired of being Governor, either. I loved it. But when we started out, I think it's fair to say that we didn't really know what it would take to turn these schools around. We don't have that as an excuse anymore.

Dianne talked to you about Chicago. In the Robert Taylor Homes project, which is the poorest part of Chicago, there is an elementary school that has had all the things you talked about, where the district—you heard her say the district has increased its scores by 12 and 14 percent. The poorest schools in 2 years have doubled their reading scores and tripled their math scores. And they were at a very low base, but the point is, that's quite astonishing.

And it is true that in Los Angeles—it's not practical to just ban social promotion anywhere unless you can find the resources to give every child who needs it an after-school program and every child who needs it a summer school program. In Chicago, if they tell you—if you fall within the social promotion standard and you can't be promoted, you do have the option of going to summer school. And you, in all probability, based on their experience, won't be held back if you go to summer school. The summer school in Chicago is now the sixth biggest school district in the United States of America—the summer school.

Now, the point I want to make is that, simply—or let's take—Dianne mentioned the charter schools. When I became President, there was one charter school in all America, in Minnesota. And we began to promote them, and we began to provide funds for States to start them. And now, there are about 2,000. And my goal was to have 3,000 in America by the

end of this year; I think we're going to make it.

But we also know we're going to have 2 million teachers retire. What she said about paying the teachers more is absolutely right. There is a National Board of Professional Teaching Standards that certifies master teachers. My goal is to get one in every school building in America. If we could do that, we could change the culture of teaching. But they should be paid much more.

When I started the NetDay, the effort to hook all the schools up to the Internet—the Vice President and I were out here in '94—only 3 percent of our classrooms were hooked up to the Internet; today, 63 percent are; 11 percent of our schools then, today 90 percent of our schools. But there are schools so old and decrepit they can't even be wired. And there are other schools—I visited an elementary school in Florida that had, count them, 12 house trailers out behind it—12, not 1 or 2, 12—full of kids.

That's why it's so important that you pass this proposition 26. We need to do more at the national level, but you do, as well.

Now, what's all that got to do with this election season? Because we could talk about all this stuff until the cows come home. The important thing about every election is that it is a job interview. But the difference is that the people have to redefine the job at every election. So that, in a way, the person they select for the job depends upon how they define the job.

Whenever anyone comes to me and says, "Mr. President, should I run for this, that, or the other job?" I say, "Why do you want it, and what would you do?" It's a job interview. That's what an election is. And when you get it, it's a job. I told the group that we were with earlier that one of the reasons I'm a huge fan of Senator Feinstein is that she really thinks she has a job to do. You heard her up here talking. She is what they derisively refer to as a policy wonk in Washington, as opposed to a talk show maven. And that's what I love about her. That's why the first—you know, she's been in the Senate just a couple of years, and she succeeded in passing that California desert protection legislation and saving the redwoods and passing the assault weapons ban—because she works.

So the first thing I would like to suggest to you, the most important thing you can do as citizens this year is to figure out what you want to do with all this prosperity we have. What

do you think the big challenges of America are? What do you think the big opportunities are? If somebody asked you tomorrow why you came here, are you going to say that “the sponsors made me,” or “I owed it to them,” or “I wanted to see this house,” or “I want to see Clinton one more time before he rides off in the sunset”? [Laughter] I mean, what reasons will you give?

Think about this. This is very important, because the movement of democracy through time depends upon people taking these moments at election time to be heard. And the choice of the American people for President, for Senator, for Representative, for the Governors, it depends upon what you think it's about.

And the whole reason I ran for President in '91 and '92 is I thought that Washington had become clueless. It had become sort of turned in on itself, obsessed with who was up, who was down, who was in, who was out. You had to have a liberal position or a conservative position or a Republican position or a Democratic position, never the twain will meet. “For goodness' sake, don't confuse me with new ideas, and just give me my 15 seconds on the news at night.”

And it might have been very satisfying for the people who played the political game inside the beltway, but it wasn't working very well in California or Arkansas or any place else I could see. So we did some really dramatic things. We put arithmetic back into the budget. Somebody asked me what was the main economic contribution I made to America in this high-tech age. I said, “I restored arithmetic to Washington.” [Laughter]

But I think it's very important that you think about this. And what I would like you to at least think about saying to people, if they ask you tomorrow why you came, is that you care about what happens in this election and you believe in some ways this election is more important than the two that preceded it, because of our prosperity and because our prosperity has given us the opportunity and the responsibility to define and build the future.

I mean, in '92, let's face it, folks, we just had to stop the ship from sinking. It took 2 or 3 years to quit bailing out of the ship and then to turn it around, to turn the ship of state around. But no one seriously thinks our country will become—so just take the two issues Dianne talked about—until we can give all of these kids

a world-class education, have some standards, have some accountability, have adequate support. We know what works. We don't have an excuse anymore. It's just a question of whether we're going to do it.

No one seriously thinks we'll be what we ought to be as a nation until we're much, much safer. And we have to face the fact that a big—and I have worked hard to put 100,000 police on the streets. I'm trying to put 50,000 more out there today in the high crime areas. Dianne and I had an announcement out here in California several years ago on zero tolerance for guns in schools. We've spent fortunes of your money helping schools establish school safety programs.

But it is not rational that we continue to be in the grip of an ideology and a political interest group that says that you can't even put child trigger locks on guns; that you can't extend the background check law, that applies if you go to buy a handgun in a gun store, to gun shows that occur on the weekends at these urban flea markets; that we can't have automatic, large capacity ammunition clips made in America, but we can import all the ones we want and hook them up to our guns; that you have to get a license that proves you can drive a car, but you don't have to get a license that proves you've got a clean background and you know how to use a gun. I mean, these things don't make sense, not if you really want a safe country.

But the larger generic question is, what do you propose to do with our prosperity? And I'm as interested in this election as a citizen as I am a President, because I'll be a citizen after the next election. And I feel very privileged to have served, to have played a role in this, to have had something to do with establishing the conditions within which so many of you have built a new economy. You're trying to give Americans the tools to succeed in that new economy, to balance work and family.

We've at least pointed the Congress in the direction of what it would take to get the country out of debt, to save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation so we don't bankrupt our kids and our grandkids, to grow the economy and improve the environment and meet the challenge of global warming, to maximize the impact of science and technology, to deal with the challenges I talked about out at Eric's place today, to the Aspen Institute,

about how do you preserve privacy and security of certain records and still lead to entrepreneurial genius, the Internet—all these big questions.

But I hope you will say, “Look, I’m more interested in politics than ever, because I think we have a special obligation to make the most of this prosperity and a special opportunity to do this.” I mean, aren’t you proud that you’ve got a Senator that could go all the way to Chicago, look in a poor school just to see whether what works there might work for kids in California? I mean, see, that’s what Senators are supposed to do, not scream at people at 9 decibels and—it’s like a version of space aliens, some of these talk shows here. [Laughter]

I mean, that’s what public service is all about. So I hope you will say that. It’s obvious, I think, to you what I—I believe our approach is good. I think saying the role of Government is to provide conditions and give people the tools to make the most of the new economy, to keep us moving forward, to help balance work and family, to get rid of poverty among children, to make this the safest big country in the world, to prove we can improve the economy and improve the environment, and indeed, that we have to, that the two will become more and more interdependent.

You think I was right in Kosovo? You think I was right in Bosnia? What do you want the next President to do about that? What are our obligations to stand against racial and religious and ethnic and tribal hatred and slaughter? Think I did the right thing to send helicopters to help those people clinging to life on those trees in Mozambique? If you do, that’s all part of your world view, what you want America to be like in the 21st century.

And Dianne talked about what I said before. I won’t try to replicate the speech I gave, but what moved the audience—and I will say it in less eloquent terms here, because I want you to think about this. The thing that bothers me about this election, I listen to the Republican debate, you know, and I think all four of the candidates that are left in this race crossed the real threshold, the first threshold, which is, could you look at these people and imagine them being President? The answer to that is yes. I mean, these are people with some achievement and some real seriousness, and they lived lives that are worthy, nearly as I can tell, you know, even the ones that say bad things

about me because they have to, to get votes on the other side. [Laughter] Okay, so they crossed the threshold. Then the whole issue is, your employment decision here is based on what you think this election is about, because in theory you could hire any of them.

And I’m telling you, the point I tried to make earlier tonight—I’ll just leave you with this—is that I think this should be a time of urgency. I think it should be a time where the American people say the only way we can keep doing well is if we keep trying to do better, if we keep trying to expand the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of freedom, to strengthen the bonds of our community. That’s the only way we can keep doing well because the times are dynamic and because everyone who has lived any length of time knows that life can get away from you in a hurry.

And what I said that got the crowd’s attention was that when we were celebrating this last month, in February, the fact that this is now the longest economic expansion in our Nation’s history, I said, “Well, I want to go study the last longest expansion, you know, the one whose record we broke.” And it was the 1960’s, 1961 through 1969.

I graduated from high school in ’64. President Kennedy had been killed; the country was heartbroken. We united behind President Johnson. There was enormous optimism. We were passing civil rights bills right and left in the Congress. The Vietnam war was not yet dividing our people, and everyone assumed that the economy would go on forever, high growth, low unemployment, low inflation. Everybody assumed we’d solve civil rights in the Congress. And of course, everybody assumed we’d prevail in the cold war without dividing the country.

A year later, Watts; 2 years later, demonstrations in every major city in the country. Four years later, I said, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Bobby Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn’t run for reelection. Every city in the country was divided right down the middle over the Vietnam war. Richard Nixon got elected then a few months later, as the candidate of the Silent Majority, which meant those of us that weren’t for him were in the loud minority. It was the first election between “us” and “them,” a tactic that people have perfected since then, dividing the electorate between “us” and

“them.” No more “we” in American politics; you “us” and “them.” That was the salience of this whole Bob Jones University thing in the primaries—for those of us that are southerners, anyway, that went through that.

And what’s happened? We’ve been living with that legacy ever since. And one of the reasons that I ran for President is I didn’t like “us” and “them” politics. I didn’t mind disagreeing with the Republicans, but I don’t think I should have to demonize them, and I don’t think I should ever shut my door to them. And if they’ve got a good idea, I don’t think I ought to run away from it. And I believe we ought to build this country with anybody’s new ideas, as long as you believe everybody counts, everybody should have a chance, everybody’s got a role to play, we all do better when we help each other. That’s what I think.

And the point I was trying to make today, I’ll just make it to you—I want you to think about this tonight. I’m telling you in 1964 when I graduated from high school, we thought we were on automatic. We thought that sucker was going to fly. And it came apart. The wheels came off in no time. And every one of you, if you’ve lived long enough, can remember a personal incident in your life or your business life when the wheels came off because you thought everything was going so well, nothing bad could happen.

This is a time for vigilance, for devotion, for patriotism in the best sense. I’ve waited for 35 years for this, and I’ve worked hard for 7 years to give you the chance to finish building this bridge to tomorrow, building the future of our dreams for our children. But just as a citizen, I think America got a second chance in my lifetime. That’s what this election is about. That’s why you want people like her in office, people that know it’s a job; it’s about ideas; it’s about work; it’s about people; it’s about giving everybody a chance.

And if you define the election in the right way, with a sense of urgency, you will predetermine the winner. This election cycle—you mark my words, from President through all the congressional races down to every other one, the winner will be determined by how the employers—that’s you, now—define the job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner cohosts Sanford R. and Jeanne Robertson and Garen and Sheri Staglin; and Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer, Novell. The President also referred to California’s proposition 26, School Facilities Local Majority Vote, to permit a simple majority for school bond issues as opposed to the super majority currently required.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in San Francisco March 3, 2000

Thank you. I want to—you’re looking here at a medical miracle. I got up this morning at 3 o’clock in the morning your time, and I’m still going. [Laughter] I’m glad to be back with Susie and Mark, and I’m glad to be here with all of you.

The major thing I would like to do tonight is have a chance to visit with you, so I think I’ll forgo the speech and come around and just visit, and we’ll all talk about whatever you’d like to talk about.

And Mayor Rendell, thank you for being here. Let me say, I’ve had a great night tonight. I made two appearances for Senator Feinstein and the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee,

and we had very good crowds, and we talked a lot about what’s going on in America today. So maybe we can have some visits about it, and I look forward to it. Thank you very much for coming.

And give us some more music. I love that. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Susie Thompkins Buell and Mark Buell; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address

March 4, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about the senseless and heartbreaking gun violence that has shaken our Nation once again.

Yesterday, the community of Mount Morris Township, Michigan, held memorial services for a beautiful little girl who was shot to death in her first-grade classroom on Tuesday. Kayla Rolland was only 6 years old. When she walked to school with her older brother and sister, her backpack looked almost as big as she was, but she loved to carry books and read. In the words of her grandmother, she was a bright light who lit up everything wherever she went.

The community of Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania, was also devastated this week. On Wednesday, a gunman unloaded his fury and a .22 caliber revolver in a busy commercial center. Five men were killed or grievously wounded, including a young college student and a man who served his community as a priest for 23 years.

These tragedies were not isolated events. From Littleton to Fort Worth, Paducah to Pearl, gun violence has stolen the lives of young and old alike. It has desecrated churches and classrooms and day-care centers. It's kept parents up at night and made schoolchildren afraid to get on the bus in the morning.

Every day, gunfire takes the lives of a dozen children in America. One University of New Hampshire survey showed that 60 percent of 15-year-olds said they could get hold of an unlocked gun. If you look just at the accidental gun deaths among children under 15, the rate in the United States is 9 times higher than in the other 25 industrial countries combined. This is intolerable, and we must act, because we can do something about it.

Last year, with a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Gore, the Senate passed a juvenile crime bill that would go a long way toward strengthening our gun laws, requiring child safety locks, banning large ammunition clips, and closing the gun show background check loophole. The House passed a much weaker bill. And for the past 8 months, the leaders in Congress have simply failed to get together to complete a final bill for me to sign.

I've called on congressional leaders to join me at the White House on Tuesday to break

that logjam. In that meeting I'll insist that they get the job done. I want Congress to send me a final bill that closes the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows, bans the importation of high capacity ammunition clips, holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns, and requires child safety locks for all new handguns, the kind of locks that would have prevented a first grader from taking Kayla Rolland's life.

I'll also ask for support on three other vital measures: to develop smart guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them; to require that new handgun buyers first get a photo license showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course; and to hire 1,000 new gun prosecutors. Gun crime prosecutions already are up 16 percent since I took office, but we should do more.

In a country of 270 million people, no law can stop every act of gun violence. But we can't just throw up our hands as if gun safety laws don't make a difference. We all have a responsibility to do our part, parents, community leaders, members of the gun industry, and yes, Members of Congress, too.

When we passed the Brady bill, people argued it wouldn't make any difference because criminals don't buy guns at gun stores, they said. But it turned out a lot of them did. Brady background checks have now blocked gun purchases by 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers. And gun crime is down by more than 35 percent since 1993.

The only reason Congress hasn't already sent me a bill with comprehensive gun safety provisions is because of the pressure tactics and the threats of the NRA. In fact, the NRA now is launching a \$20 million campaign to target and to defeat Members of Congress who support responsible gun safety laws. But when first graders shoot first graders, it's time for Congress to be guided by their hearts and their heads, not by a fear or the pressure tactics of the NRA.

It's time for all of us to make our voices heard in the Halls of Congress. The very least we can do to honor the memory of little Kayla

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Rolland and all the other tragic victims of gun violence is to pass sensible gun safety legislation right now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on March 3 in the Los Gatos Room at the Silicon

Valley Conference Center at Novell Headquarters, San Jose, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Los Angeles, California

March 4, 2000

Thank you, Neil. I want to begin by just telling you that from the moment I got out of the car, I realized that I was going to have a wonderful time this evening. I thank the Nazarians, the Farahniks, and the Kadishas, and all of you for being here.

Gray Davis was talking about this being the Governor's Mansion. When I walked in here and looked up at the spiral staircase, I said, "You know, I really do live in public housing, after all." [Laughter]

Seriously, let me say to all of you that I am profoundly honored to be here with you tonight because what our host said in his opening remarks, about coming here from Iran with nothing and how well he has done, and all of you have done, is a testament to the power of faith and family and work. Thank you for having the rabbi here tonight. He even gave me a book to read tonight. [Laughter] I promised to read it as quickly as I can.

I ran for President because I felt that this country had the best system in the world if people were given the conditions and the tools in which their faith, their family, their work could flourish. And it has been a joy and an honor to serve. For whatever role I have played in our prosperity and our improving social progress and our role in peace around the world, I am very grateful. But I want you to think tonight about, also, the role you can play. There is no such thing as a time to completely rest, maybe a day, a week, but not a long time. And a country becomes great by always trying to do better, sometimes in small steps, sometimes in large steps.

I believe some very basic, simple things. You said that the President is not royalty yet. Most

of the people in the national political press certainly agree with that statement. [Laughter] But I came from the heartland of America. I was the first person in my family ever to graduate from college. But I was taught to believe something as a child I still believe. And I look around here, and I see the living embodiment.

I believe every person counts, that everyone should have a chance, that everyone has a responsible role to play in life, and that we all do better when we help each other. I believe that freedom is the best system of government to allow the values that any of us have to flourish. And the fact that you can come here, preserve your community, and be a part of the larger American community is stunning evidence that that is right.

I regret that so many of you had to leave your native land, one of the most wonderful places in all of human history, one of the most important places, culturally, in all of human history. And I hope and pray that what we have seen in three elections now, there, means that there is a movement toward openness and freedom there, too, and that someday all of you will be able to go home to visit and have two homes, complete and open and free.

I have done my best to support that process in the limited way any American President can. I have also done my best to stand against the forces of religious and racial and ethnic and tribal hatred throughout the world, as you pointed out, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Africa to the Balkans. I have tried to protect the right of every person in this country and to advance the right of every person in every country to practice their faith as they see

fit. And I have found more than ever that usually, when you do the right thing, it turns out to be the practically beneficial thing.

And so, as I think about this moment—here we are on the eve of another set of elections—it seems like only yesterday I first took the oath of office. And this is the first election in almost 30 years that I have not been involved in as a candidate. And on most days, I'm all right. [Laughter] But tonight I speak to you not only as your President but as a citizen. I believe that our obligation in this election is to show that we are grateful for our prosperity, and we intend to do something with it. I believe our obligation in this election is to show that we are not arrogant about our progress, because we realize we'd have profound challenges here and around the world that we can still have an impact on, and we should shoulder those challenges and embrace them eagerly.

I believe that this election will be determined by what the people of this country decide the election is about. If they decide it's about who can offer the most immediate, short-term gratification, we'll be in trouble. If they decide that this has been a pretty good 7 years because we continued to take the long view and we asked people to save a little so that we could get the country out of deficits, and now we're trying to get the country out of debt—and lo and behold, it turned out to be good social policy, because when interest rates dropped, more jobs were created. And more poor people worked themselves into the middle class, and the welfare rolls were cut in half. And we were still able to double our investment in education. So that's what I am concerned about, as your President and as a citizen.

You came here, some of you came here directly from Iran after a terrible upheaval. You know, therefore, that you can never take life's blessings for granted. I don't want the American people to take life's blessings for granted. I want them to take this as an enormous opportunity to build the future of our dreams for all the children of this country. If we do that, we'll be just fine.

Tomorrow I'm going, at 5 o'clock in the morning, to Selma, Alabama, where 35 years ago tomorrow, 600 brave Americans walked across a bridge for the right to vote. Some of them were killed for it. Many of them were brutalized for it. But because they walked across that bridge, this country is a better place.

What I want to say to you is, at the time that happened, most of you were not in this country then. Most of you in this room weren't even born then. But I was just a young boy. I believed that my President was doing a great thing to give every American the right to vote, something that had been too long denied. I believed that my Congress was doing a great thing to guarantee the civil rights of all Americans. And I believed that we were in an economic period of opportunity that would go on forever.

You may know that last month we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of America. I'm proud of that. The last longest economic expansion in the history of America was the decade of the 1960's, and because we were not careful, it got away from us. And instead of passing civil rights laws in Congress, we had riots in the streets. Instead of winning the cold war by the power of our example and our values and our strong defenses, the country was torn apart over the war in Vietnam. Instead of electing people that we admired, we saw Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King killed just before I graduated from college.

I say that not to depress anyone but just to remind you of what you who are immigrants and who had to flee your country know: Opportunities in life are not to be taken for granted; good fortune is not to be taken for granted. We are never to believe that we deserve everything we have. Instead, we are to ask ourselves, what is our responsibility? And the greater our good fortune, the greater our responsibility. It is not only true for families and communities, it is true for a country.

This country has never had the chance it now has to literally build the future of our dreams and to be a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. For all of you who have helped me to serve, I am very grateful. I worked as hard as I could to turn it around and to get things going in the right direction. And I'm not done yet. I get a little queasy when people start thanking me for doing a good job. I feel as if I'm hearing a eulogy, and I pinch myself—[laughter]—and I feel perfectly alive and still very much in harness. But you do have to think to the future. You are having elections. You are planning for the future.

The reason I like this Governor and the reason my wife, who wishes she could be here tonight, told me—when most people thought he had no chance to win, she said, "He'll win,

because he's serious about the job, and he has thought more about what he would do if he got it." And Vice President Gore and I, we've worked hard to be serious about the job, to do things that would advance the values that we share.

And so I say to you, I thank you for your help. We'll do our best to invest your contributions wisely. But I hope you will continue to talk to your friends and neighbors. If somebody asks you tomorrow or the next day or the next day, why were you here tonight, don't say, "Father made me come." [Laughter] Tell them you

came because you understand that this good fortune has to be nourished. You understand that it carries with it responsibilities, because you want every American to have the same chances that you have had, and because we all do better when we work together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:46 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception cohorts Neil and Dora Kadisha, Parviz and Poursan Nazarian, and Leon and Debbie Farahnik; and Gov. Gray Davis of California.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles March 4, 2000

Thank you very much. I don't know about you, but I've been to one or two of these events in my life—[laughter]—and I had a wonderful time tonight. This is a marvelous restaurant. I've never been here before, in all my years of traipsing around L.A., and I think we ought to give them a hand for making us feel so welcome.

I want to thank Mayor Rendell and our national finance chair, Joel Hyatt, for coming out here with me. I especially want to thank Chuck and Elizabeth and the Zimons, the Nathansons, all the others who have worked so hard. I want to thank all the people from the entertainment community who came. Kenneth and Tracy, thank you for being here. I want to thank especially Gregory and Veronique Peck for being here. And all the rest of you.

Mac Davis, thank you. I'm sure you remember this, but your show was on in Washington about the time I became President the first time. And in the last year of her life, my beloved mother got to go, and she thought you were the best thing since sliced bread. And I will always be grateful to you for the joy you gave to my mother when she was very ill, and I thank you for that.

And Olivia, I did my best not to sing along with you tonight. [Laughter] But when you started singing, I looked at Marc Nathanson; I said, "How many of her albums do you have? I mean, the old albums." [Laughter] I said, "I've still got that one where she comes up out of the

water." [Laughter] And I still look at it every now and then. [Laughter]

So I want to thank you not only for your work as an artist, but especially because of my family's experience, I thank you for your continued fight against cancer, for children, and for being a role model for women all over this country by going on. Thank you very much.

And I don't know what to say about Governor Gray Davis, except I think we ought to maybe change his first name to "Red Hot" after tonight. [Laughter] You know, it's okay for you to get a little funny, but if you get any better, your shtick won't work anymore. [Laughter] That was a pretty good rap.

But you're also—I might add—Hillary and I were talking about the California Governor's race when it started, and we knew his primary opponents and liked them. But I had known Gray for years and years. And I said, "Hillary, what do you think is going to happen in that race?" She said, "Oh, I think Gray Davis will win." And I said, "Why?" She said, "Well, because he really wants to do the job, and he has a really good idea of what he would do if he got there, and that will communicate itself over the course of the campaign and build a lot of confidence among the voters." And I think that pretty much says it, and I think the confidence of the voters has been well placed.

I'll try to make this fairly brief tonight, but I want you to think about why you came and what you'll say tomorrow if somebody asks you

why you came. And I want to begin by telling you what I'm going to do tomorrow. About 4 o'clock tomorrow morning I'm going to get out of bed here in L.A., and at 5, I'm going to leave, and I'm going to fly to Selma. And I'm going to walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge at Selma on the 35th anniversary of the great march that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in America, with Congressman John Lewis, my friend and brother who was there 35 years ago.

And for me, as a southerner, it will be the experience of a lifetime to be able to go there as the President of my country, having lived through it as a young boy. I don't even have the words to say to you what it means to me. But I would like to remind you that people actually died to get the right to vote, in my lifetime. It's a big deal.

And so we're going to have this millennial election this year, at a great time of prosperity and progress. And if I have had any role in all of that, I am profoundly grateful for the chance I've had to serve. This will be the first election just about in over 25 years that I haven't been on the ballot somewhere. [*Laughter*] Most days I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] But I care a great deal about how it comes out.

And I have learned something about this mystical process of democracy. This is basically America's greatest job interview. You're going to hire a President. You're going to hire Senators. You're going to hire Members of Congress. A few Governors will get hired. And what I have learned is that the difference in this job interview and a lot of things is that in every election, the bosses—the employers, you, the people—you've got to define what the job is. And the decision in terms of what the election is about will determine who wins, assuming all the candidates cross what I always thought of as the basic threshold.

And the four that are left, they cross that threshold. That is, if you look at them for a couple of minutes, can you imagine them being President? And if the answer to that is no, you can spend \$500 million and campaign for 30 years, and you'll still never get there.

But half of them have to say bad things about me because that's what their party requires of them, but the truth is, they all pass that threshold. They are people that have lived good lives. They've accomplished things. They have things

they can say they've done as public servants that they're proud of, and they have honest differences. So how this comes out depends on what you think the election is about.

And so I want to begin by saying, tomorrow morning, I want you to think about this tomorrow, and I want you to watch for it on the news. And I want you to see us all walking across that bridge and remember 35 years ago when people did it, they were risking their lives just to be able to vote. So you ought to do it, and you ought to take it seriously. And it matters what you think it's about.

Now, what I think it's about is, what are we going to do with this magic moment? I worked as hard as I could. You remember what it was like here in California in '91 when I showed up here. How in the world did I carry this State? I would have never had a chance to carry this—I was just the Governor, as President Bush used to affectionately refer to me, as the Governor of a small southern State. And I rather enjoyed being the Governor of a small southern State, and I learned a few things about human nature and basic economics that have stood me in pretty good stead. But I worked hard to help you turn this country around.

And so what do you think we ought to do? That's the most important thing. What I believe with all my heart is that we have this opportunity that is also a big responsibility. People—listen to the speeches these people are making in this election. They could have never even talked about this stuff 8 years ago. Why? Because we can now make the future of our dreams for our children. We can be a systematic, consistent force for good and decent things around the world, for freedom, for democracy, for liberating millions of people from disease in Africa and Asia and throughout the world. We can do things.

You know, what I think it's about is keeping the economy going. Gray talked about how I changed the way people thought about Democrats. I'm passionately committed to social justice, but the best social program is still a decent job and being able to support your family and letting poor people work their way into the middle class. And it matters.

So how can we keep the economy going? Should we pay the country out of debt for the first time since 1835? I think we should, because it keeps interest rates low, investment high, more businesses being started, and more people

being hired, more wealth being spread more widely. I think we should.

Should we take this moment and for the first time maybe ever bring economic opportunity and enterprise to people in places that have been left behind? On the Indian reservations, the unemployment's as high as 70 percent. There are urban neighborhoods and rural areas in this country—in the Mississippi Delta, where I come from, or in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas—where the unemployment rate is still 2, 3, 4 times the national average. I want to give people like you the same incentives to invest there you have to invest in poor areas around the world, because if we can't bring those people economic opportunity now, we will never get around to it.

And I'm telling you, I grew up in a place like that. Intelligence is equally spread. There are people down there just as smart as anybody anywhere, who can do anything anybody anywhere can do, and who are dying to have a chance to do it. And we need to bring economic opportunity to the places that have been left behind. That's what I think this election ought to be about.

For over 20 years now I have had a serious interest in education. And I can tell you that I now know something I didn't know over 20 years ago when I started. And when Hillary and I started going around to all the schools in our State, trying to figure out how to improve them, we didn't really know how to do it. We do now. I could take you to schools in the poorest, most dangerous neighborhoods in this country that are performing at a world-class level. We know how to do it.

But we have never figured out a way to systematically replicate educational excellence. One of the things that I promoted were these charter schools that California has been a leading proponent of. There was one when I became President. There are 2,000 today, and there are going to be 3,000—I hope—before I leave office, because that was my goal for the country.

The main thing I want to say to you is, it's one thing to talk about it, and another to do it. But you don't have to be skeptical anymore. We can turn around failing schools, and all kids can learn. You have to have high standards. You have to have accountability. I believe we should stop social promotion, but not until we can give every kid who needs it after-school programs,

summer school programs, and mentoring programs to make sure they can succeed.

Chicago stopped it, but they didn't make the kids failures. Instead, they created a summer school that is now—listen to this—the sixth biggest school district in the United States of America—the summer school of Chicago. Needless to say, as a peripheral benefit, the juvenile crime rate dropped like a rock because people were doing positive things.

I think everybody that wants to go to college ought to be able to go and stay 4 years. We gave a tax credit called the HOPE scholarship that allows basically 2 years of community college to be made available universally in America. Now I want to allow tuition to be tax deductible. And if I don't pass it, the next President ought to, because we ought to make it possible for people to go 4 years. You've got to decide whether you think that's what this election is about.

We have a remarkable opportunity to help families balance their responsibilities to their children and at work. Equal pay for women, increase in the minimum wage, more child care, doing something to lift all of our children out of poverty—I think that's what this election is all about.

I think we can grow the economy and improve the environment for the first time in history. The digital economy means you can get rich without burning up the air. And we now have cleaner air, cleaner water. We've set aside more land than any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelts, in the continental United States. And the economy keeps getting better. And yet, some people in Washington think my crusade against climate change is some dark conspiracy to wreck the American economy. You have to decide. I think you ought to vote for somebody who is a committed environmentalist who also believes you can grow the economy. I think it's a big issue. You have to decide that.

These are just some of the issues that I think are important. But you have to decide what you think. I think it's a good thing that America has been a force for peace from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Kosovo to Bosnia to the tribal wars in Africa. So I disagree, respectfully, with one of the Republican candidates who said we had a feckless foreign policy. I think when we sent a million people home who were run out of their homes just because

they were Muslims in Kosovo, without losing a single American soldier in combat, that was not feckless. That was a moral, good, decent thing to do. But you have to decide whether you agree with it. You've got to decide.

And you know, I do think a lot of my Vice President. And I didn't come here to make a campaign speech, and the nominating process is not over, but you have to decide whether you believe this is a job. One of the reasons I wanted to go to Washington is that I thought Washington had become turned in on itself. I thought it was dominated by talk show mentality instead of a show-up-for-work mentality.

I did an event for Senator Feinstein last night, and I said, "You know, even when Dianne gets mad at me, I like her because she has this idea, this crazy idea that being in the Senate is a job—[laughter]—and that she's supposed to show up for work and say, 'Here's what I intend to do,' and then she goes out and does it." So as a first term Senator, she passes the California Desert Protection Act, the assault weapons ban, and then we saved the redwoods. Why? I'll tell you why, because she was more worried about passing those bills than her 15 seconds on the evening news or who was up or who was down or who was in or who was out.

You realize that you can actually go crazy on your own initiative now; you can watch talk shows 24 hours a day. And you won't ever learn anything, because to get on one you've got to take one position, and you can't ever say you might be wrong, and you can't ever change your mind. And you've got to be talking real loud by the time the other person's making a good point so no one can hear it. [Laughter]

Now, this is true. Now, you watch these things; now, if you ran your business that way, if you made movies that way, if you made records that way, if you ran your home that way, everybody would be bankrupt, the divorce rate would be 100 percent, and every kid would be a school dropout. I mean, I wanted to change that.

So you've got to decide whether—you know, Gray makes fun about this charisma quotient business—I think it's pretty charismatic when children learn more. Children are going to learn more because of what he did in the California Legislature. That gets my blood going.

You know—but you have to decide this. I just want to leave you with this thought, because

people are going to ask you, "Why did you come here?" And I'm thinking about it because of tomorrow. But in February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of the country and the only one of anything like this duration with no war. And I was profoundly proud of that. But I was feeling sort of reflective, so I did a little research into the last longest economic expansion, the one whose record we broke. And some of you in this audience, you're old enough to remember it. It was 1961 to 1969. Now, I want to tell you something about that expansion, how it came to end, and what happened. And I want you to think about it in terms of your responsibility in this election.

I graduated from high school in 1964. My President, John Kennedy, had been murdered, but our country rallied around President Johnson. He was overwhelmingly reelected. We passed a civil rights law; the next year we passed the Voting Rights Act. And when I finished high school, we were all happy as clams. We thought the following things were true: We thought this economy would go on forever, low unemployment, low inflation, and high growth; we thought we would win the cold war just in the ordinary course of things; and we thought we would solve our civil rights problems in the Congress and the courts, and we would become a just and decent society in the course of things.

So I finished high school. It wasn't too long that we had riots in Watts. It wasn't too long after that we had demonstrations in every city in America against the Vietnam war. By the time I graduated from college on June 8th, 1968, it was—

[At this point, microphone feedback interrupted the President's remarks.]

The Republicans got ahold of the mike. [Laughter] Listen to this. I want you to listen to this. I graduated from college—in '64, everybody thought things were just going to be on automatic. In 1968, I graduated from college, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson, who won with the biggest majority in modern history, couldn't run for reelection. The country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war. And we had an election for President that was determined on a slogan called the Silent Majority. Do you remember that? And if you weren't in the Silent Majority, you were in the loud

minority. That was me. [Laughter] And there was something wrong with the loud minority. It was like “us” and “them.” And we’ve been having those “us” and “them” elections ever since. We’ve been “us-ing” and “them-ing” ourselves to death.

And I tried to end that. But I haven’t entirely succeeded, not when these Jewish kids get shot going to their school in Los Angeles just because they’re Jewish, or Matthew Shepard gets stretched out on a rack and killed just because he’s gay, or James Byrd gets dragged to death in Texas because he’s black, or a white supremacist in the middle of the country kills a Korean Christian coming out of a church and the black former basketball coach at Northwestern, and he says he belongs to a church that doesn’t believe in God but does believe in white supremacy. We haven’t gotten rid of all that.

What I want to tell you is—I say this as a person, not a President—I have waited for 35 long years for my country to be in a place to build the future of our dreams again. And it’s easier for us now, because we don’t have the civil rights crisis at home. It’s easier for us now because the cold war is behind us now. It’s easier for us now because we’re a nation of many, many nations growing more diverse every day, with California leading the way.

But the stakes are still very high. And we should be humbled, as well as happy, by this

good fortune. And we should feel responsible, not entitled, as a result of this prosperity. I’m telling you, I lived through it before. It can go away in the flash of a moment. We should cherish this. And you should understand—and I want you to think about it tomorrow when they walk in Selma. People died for the right to vote. You’ve got to go vote. You’ve got to go get your friends to participate. But you’ve got to make the right decisions about what is this about.

And I’m telling you, we’ve got a second chance as a country in my lifetime. Most of us have gotten second chances as people. Most of us are darn grateful for it. That’s the way we ought to feel as citizens. And if we do, everything will turn out just fine.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 p.m. at the Cafe des Artistes. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Chuck and Elizabeth Meyer and Richard and Daphna Zimon, dinner hosts; Marc Nathanson, chair, Mapleton Investment Corp., and his wife, Jane; singer Kenneth Edmonds, popularly known as Babyface, and his wife, Tracy; actor Gregory Peck and his wife, Veronique; singers Mac Davis and Olivia Newton John; and Gov. Gray Davis of California.

Remarks on the 35th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights March in Selma, Alabama

March 5, 2000

Thank you. This is a day the Lord has made for this very purpose. Congressman Lewis, Mrs. King, Reverend Jackson, Reverend Harris, Congressman Houghton, and Congressman Hilliard, and all the Members of the Congress who are here. I thank all the members of my administration who are here, especially Harris Wofford, the head of our AmeriCorps program, who was here with you 35 years ago today. I thank young Antar Breaux. Didn’t he give a fine speech? [Applause] When he was speaking, John leaned over to me and he said, “You know, I used to give a speech like that when I was young.” [Laughter]

I thank Senator Sanders and Rose Sanders for the work they are doing with this magnificent Voting Rights Museum. I thank Joe Lowery and Andy Young and Julian Bond and all the others who have come here to be with us. And I thank you, Hosea Williams and Mrs. Boynton and Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Brown and Mr. Doyle and Reverend Hunter, all the heroes of the movement from that day, those here on this platform and those in the audience.

I bring you greetings from three of my partners, the First Lady, Hillary, and Vice President and Mrs. Gore, who wish they could be here today. I thank Ambassador Sisulu for joining

us. I thank Governor Siegelman for making us feel welcome. And I thank Mayor Smitherman for the long road he, too, has traveled in these last 35 years.

Now, let me say to you a few things. I come today as your President and also as a child of the South. The only thing that John Lewis said I disagree with is that I could have chosen not to come. That is not true. I had to be here in Selma today.

Thirty-five years ago, a single day in Selma became a seminal moment in the history of our country. On this bridge, America's long march to freedom met a roadblock of violent resistance. But the marchers, thank God, would not take a detour on the road to freedom.

By 1965, their will had already been steeled by triumph and tragedy, by the breaking of the color line at Ole Miss, the historic March on Washington, the assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and President Kennedy, the bombing deaths of four little black girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On this Bloody Sunday, about 600 foot soldiers—some of whom, thankfully, remain with us today—absorbed with uncommon dignity the unbridled force of racism, putting their lives on the line for that most basic American right: the simple right to vote, a right which already had been long guaranteed and long denied.

Here in Dallas County, there were no black elected officials because only one percent of voting-age blacks, about 250 people, were registered. They were kept from the polls not by their own indifference or alienation but by systematic exclusion, by the poll tax, by intimidation, by literacy testing that even the testers themselves could not pass. And they were kept away from the polls by violence.

It must be hard for the young people in this audience to believe, but just 35 years ago, Americans, both black and white, lost their lives in the voting rights crusade. Some died in Selma and Marion. One of the reasons I came here today is to say to the families and those who remember Jimmy Lee Jackson, Reverend James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, and others whose names we may never know: We honor them for the patriots they were.

They did not die in vain. Just one week after Bloody Sunday, President Johnson spoke to the Nation in stirring words. He said, "At times,

history and fate meet in a single time and a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama. Their cause must be our cause."

Two weeks after Bloody Sunday, emboldened by their faith in God and the support of a white southerner in the Oval Office, Dr. King led 4,000 people across the Pettus Bridge on the 54-mile trek to Montgomery. And 6 months later, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, proclaiming that the vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men. It has been said that the Voting Rights Act was signed in ink in Washington, but it first was signed in blood in Selma.

Those who walked by faith across this bridge led us all to a better tomorrow. In 1964, there were only 300 black elected officials nationwide and just 3 African-Americans in the Congress. Today, those numbers have swelled to nearly 9,000 black elected officials and 39 members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Today, African-Americans hold the majority in Selma's city council and school board, because the number of African-American registered voters in Dallas County has risen from 250 to more than 20,000.

There's another point I want to make today. Just as Dr. King predicted, the rise of black southerners to full citizenship also lifted their white neighbors. "It is history's wry paradox," he said, "that when Negroes win their struggle to be free, those who have held them down will themselves be free for the first time."

After Selma, free white and black southerners crossed the bridge to the new South, leaving hatred and isolation on the far side—building vibrant cities, thriving economies, and great universities, a new South still enriched by the old-time religion and rhythms and rituals we all love, now open to all things modern and people of all races and faiths from all over the world, a new South in which whites have gained at least as much as blacks from the march to freedom. Without Selma, Atlanta would never have had the Super Bowl or the Olympics. And without Selma, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton would never have been elected President of the United States.

The advance of freedom and opportunity has taken our entire Nation a mighty long way. We

begin the new millennium with great prosperity and the lowest levels of African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, with greater diversity in all walks of life and a cherished role in helping those beyond our borders to overcome their own racial and ethnic and tribal and religious conflicts. We have built that bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across. We come here today to say, we could not have done it if brave Americans had not first walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Yes, we have come a mighty long way. But our journey is not over, for despite our unprecedented prosperity and real social progress, there are still wide and disturbing disparities that fall along the color line, in health and income, in educational achievement and perceptions of justice. My fellow Americans, there are still bridges yet to cross.

As long as there are people and places, including neighborhoods here in Selma, that have not participated in our economic prosperity, we have a bridge to cross. As long as African-American income hovers at nearly half that of whites, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-American and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to live in poverty and less likely to attend or graduate from college, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-Americans and other minorities suffer 2, 3, even 4 times the rates of heart disease, AIDS, diabetes, and cancer, we have another bridge to cross.

As long as our children continue to die as the victims of mindless violence, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-Americans and Latinos anywhere in America believe they are unfairly targeted by police because of the color of their skin, and police believe they are unfairly judged by their communities because of the color of their uniforms, we have another bridge to cross.

As long as the waving symbol of one American's pride is the shameful symbol of another American's pain, we have another bridge to cross. As long as the power of America's growing diversity remains diminished by discrimination and stained by acts of violence against people just because they're black or Hispanic or Asian or gay or Jewish or Muslim—as long as that happens to any American, we have another bridge to cross. And as long as less than half our eligible voters exercise the right that so

many here in Selma marched and died for, we've got a very large bridge to cross.

But the bridges are there to be crossed. They stand on the strong foundations of our Constitution. They were built by our forebears through silent tears and weary years. They are waiting to take us to higher ground.

Oh, yes, the bridges are built. We can see them clearly. But to get to the other side, we, too, will have to march. I ask you to remember Dr. King's words: "Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God."

My fellow Americans, this day has a special meaning for me, for I, too, am a son of the South, the old, segregated South. And those of you who marched 35 years ago set me free, too, on Bloody Sunday, free to know you, to work with you, to love you, to raise my child to celebrate our differences and hallow our common humanity.

I thank you all for what you did here. Thank you, Andy and Jesse and Joe, for the lives you have lived since. Thank you, Coretta, for giving up your beloved husband and the blessings of a normal life. Thank you, Ethel Kennedy, for giving up your beloved husband and the blessings of a normal life.

And thank you, John Lewis, for the beatings you took and the heart you kept wide open. Thank you for walking with the wind, hand in hand with your brothers and sisters, to hold America's trembling house down. Thank you for your vision of the beloved community, an America at peace with itself.

I tell you all, as long as Americans are willing to hold hands, we can walk with any wind; we can cross any bridge. Deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. In his remarks, he referred to Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Rev. Jerome Harris, who gave the invocation; Antar Breaux, member, 21st Youth Leadership Movement, who introduced the President; State Senator Henry (Hank) Sanders and his wife, National Voting Rights Museum President Rose Sanders; Joseph Lowery, former president, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; former

United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young; Julian Bond, chair, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; South African Ambassador to the U.S. Sheila Sisulu; Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Mayor Joe T. Smitherman

of Selma; Ethel Kennedy, widow of Senator Robert F. Kennedy; and 1965 voting rights march participants Hosea Williams, Amelia Boynton Robinson, Marie Foster, Lillie Brown, Earnest Doyle, and Rev. J.D. Hunter.

Statement on Legislation To Award the Congressional Gold Medal to John Cardinal O'Connor

March 5, 2000

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor bestowed by the U.S. Congress. Today I am proud to sign legislation ratifying the decision of the Congress to present this award—the first Gold Medal of the new millennium—to His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor.

For more than 50 years, Cardinal O'Connor has served the Catholic Church and our Nation with constancy and commitment. From his early days performing parish work in his native Philadelphia, to his long service as a military chaplain in places like Korea and Vietnam, to his 16 years leading the Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal O'Connor's journey of faith has been America's blessing.

Whether it was the soldier on the battlefield or the patient battling AIDS, Cardinal O'Connor

has ministered with a gentle spirit and a loving heart. Through it all, he has stood strong as an advocate for the poor, a champion for workers, and an inspiration for millions. He has worked tirelessly to bridge divides between those of different backgrounds and faiths, reminding us that the most important thing we share is our common humanity.

Cardinal O'Connor has always had the courage to speak his mind and act on the firmness of his convictions. In recent months, we have seen his courage on display once more in the face of illness. Today, as our Nation salutes Cardinal O'Connor, we thank him for dedicating his life to lifting the lives of others.

NOTE: H.R. 3557, approved March 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106-175.

Statement on the Sale of F-16 Aircraft to the United Arab Emirates

March 5, 2000

I welcome the news that the negotiation for the sale of F-16 aircraft to the United Arab Emirates has been successfully concluded and that the agreement has been signed. Completion of this sale is another significant step in the strategic relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates and reflects the importance we attach to strengthen the defen-

sive capability of one of our most important friends in the Gulf. This sale is also important for the viability of our defense industrial base and will benefit American workers. I want to personally thank President bin Zayid for his commitment to making this aircraft sale a reality.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority To Report on Cooperative Projects With Russia

March 3, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Transmit Report on Cooperative Projects With Russia

By authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Defense the duties and responsibilities vested in the President by section 2705(d) of Division G of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277; 112 Stat. 2681-844). Such duties and responsibilities shall be exercised subject to the concurrence of the Secretary of State.

The reporting requirements delegated by this memorandum to the Secretary of Defense may

be redelegated not lower than the Under Secretary level. The Department of Defense shall obtain clearance on the report from the Office of Management and Budget prior to its submission to the Congress.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provisions of any Act shall be deemed to be referenced to such Act or its provisions as may be amended from time to time.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 6. It was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Statement Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

March 6, 2000

Thirty years ago—March 5, 1970—the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force. The countries that negotiated the NPT had clear and important goals. They wanted a safer, more secure world in which states not possessing nuclear weapons would forswear their acquisition, and in which states with nuclear weapons would work toward eliminating them. They wanted an effective verification system to confirm these commitments. And they wanted to ensure that countries could use the atom peacefully to improve the lives of their people without spurring nuclear weapons proliferation.

On that day in 1970, 43 countries committed themselves to the vision of the NPT. Today, there are 187 parties. Over the past 30 years, the NPT has served as an increasingly important barrier to the spread of nuclear weapons. The United States remains committed to achieving universal adherence to the NPT and will con-

tinue working to bring all remaining countries into the treaty.

The strength and effectiveness of the NPT today are a legacy of countless individuals who crafted and promoted this irreplaceable treaty. I am proud that during my administration the parties to the NPT made a major contribution to lasting peace and security by agreeing in 1995 to make the treaty permanent.

Adherence to the NPT, together with inspections called for in the treaty by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), provide assurance to countries that their neighbors' nuclear programs are peaceful. The United States strongly supports the IAEA and calls on other NPT parties to work with us in strengthening the IAEA's ability to ensure compliance with the treaty.

Such compliance allows countries with nuclear technology to share the many peaceful benefits

of the atom, reducing the risk that this cooperation will not result in weapons activities. Improved human health, increased food production, and adequate supplies of clean water are only a few of the many ways in which nuclear techniques contribute to a better world.

The NPT also calls for parties to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” Remarkable progress in nuclear disarmament has occurred since the end of the cold war. Under the START process, the United States and Russia have committed to reduce deployed strategic nuclear warheads by approximately two-thirds from cold war levels. We have agreed to a START III framework that would cut these arsenals by 80 percent from those peaks, and we will intensify our efforts to work with Russia to bring this agreement into effect. Already, the United States has eliminated some 59 percent of our overall nuclear weapons, and many U.S. facilities once dedicated to the production of nuclear weapons have been shut down, deactivated, or converted to other uses. Our nuclear weapons are no longer targeted against any country; our Army, Marine Corps, and surface and air Navy no longer deploy nuclear weapons; and our bomber force no longer stands on alert.

NATO has reduced the number of nuclear warheads dedicated to its sub-strategic forces in Europe by 85 percent, and NATO’s dual capable aircraft, the Alliance’s only nuclear forces, are no longer maintained on alert status, and their readiness levels have been reduced from minutes to weeks.

The United States and Russia are cooperating to ensure no further production of weapons-usable material, the safe storage of existing quantities of such material, and internationally supervised elimination of surplus stocks of nuclear materials.

We will continue the U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing and work to establish a universal ban through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Conference on Disarmament should take the next essential step for global nuclear disarmament by negotiating a fissile material cutoff treaty now, without conditions.

The United States is committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons. Achieving this goal will be neither easy nor rapid. Accordingly, the United States rededicates itself to work tirelessly and expeditiously to create conditions that will make possible even deeper reductions in nuclear weapons and, ultimately, their elimination.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

March 7, 2000

Gun Safety Legislation

The President. Good afternoon. Given what I want to talk about today, it seems fitting that I am speaking to you in the briefing room we have just named for Jim Brady.

Last spring, the brutal shootings at Columbine gave a life-and-death urgency to the call for strengthening our Nation’s gun laws. The Senate responded to that call, in spite of fierce pressures by the gun lobby. With a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President, the Senate passed an amendment to close the gun show loophole and pass other commonsense provisions that require child safety locks and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Unfortunately, the House narrowly defeated the McCarthy amendment to close the gun show loophole and passed a much weaker bill than the Senate did. Now, for the past 8 months, the leaders in Congress have done virtually nothing to complete a final bill.

That’s why I called upon Senators Hatch and Leahy and Representatives Hyde and Conyers to come to the White House this morning. I met with them in the Oval Office for nearly an hour. We had a very good discussion. My message was simple: Congress has kept the American people waiting long enough. I want Congress to finish the gun bill and send it to me by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, April 20th.

In the meeting this morning, I told the leaders the final bill needs to close the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows, without opening any new loopholes in the process. I said I wanted a ban on the importation of ammunition clips that allow shooters, including those in Littleton, to spray bullets across a wide killing zone in a matter of seconds. And I said a final bill needs to require child safety locks and should hold adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns, two measures that are particularly relevant in light of the heartbreaking shooting of Kayla Rolland last week.

I know the gun lobby is cranking up pressure on Congress again. But when first graders shoot first graders, it's time for Congress to do what's right for America's families.

All four Members of Congress I met with this morning expressed their desire to work with us in good faith. I'm grateful for their willingness to meet with me today and to continue working together. But let's be clear here: 8 months is long enough. There's no more time for delay. The conference committee should meet and work out their differences and send me a good bill. We owe it to our children and to the victims to get this done by April the 20th.

When I talk to the parents of victims, they just can't understand why people in Washington are always talking about what we can't do instead of what we can do. I'm not interested in talking about how little we can do. I'm interested in how much we can accomplish to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, did you get any kind of commitment from the leaders—

Q. Mr. President, if Congress—

The President. I'll take both of them.

Q. If the congressional leaders and the gun lobby were not swayed after the Columbine shooting, what makes you feel that the time is, so to speak, more right now?

The President. Well, how many more people have to get killed before we do something? I mean, we had a pretty rough week last week.

And let me say, one of the things that I did in preparation for this—because, as you know, before last week we were pushing to try to get a conference on the juvenile justice bill—I actually read the proposal made by Mr. Hyde on this subject and the counterproposal made

by Mr. Conyers. And the Conyers proposal, I think, is workable, and would keep—would go a very long way toward, in fact, closing the gun show loophole. The Hyde proposal is a substantial movement away from just the total—what you might call the complete NRA position.

So I think that if we could get a conference meeting and they could start working on the things everybody agrees on and get these two leaders to work through this and give us a provision that would actually work—there's more than one way to do this; we need something that will actually work—I think that it's quite possible that that could occur.

Keep in mind, there's a reason that there's such an effort to keep this conference from meeting. I think they know now that if a bill came out that had a reasonable gun show provision, loophole provision, in it that actually closes the loophole, that it would pass the House and the Senate because the American people want it.

So we can't pretend that it's not the same as defeating the bill just to never have the conference meet. The conference needs to meet. And what I believe will happen is that you will have more talking and more thinking and less shouting if the conference committee will meet. That's what Congress hires on to do, to write laws.

And I think it's very important that this be done, and I hope that the conference committee will meet soon. And I believe that there's a way to work through this that will satisfy some of the practical concerns that people who are interested in the gun shows have, and still allow us to have an airtight guarantee that we're going to keep the guns away from the criminals and the other categories of people covered by the Brady law.

Yes, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]?

Q. Mr. President, did you get any commitment from the Republicans today that they would actually have a meeting, that there would be a conference? And would you be willing to accept any bill that did not include the gun show background check?

The President. First of all, where we left it was that—I think that Leahy, Conyers, and Hyde, I believe, were willing to start the conference. I believe that. I don't want to speak for Mr. Hyde, but I think that's accurate. I believe that—Senator Hatch said that he thought he had to go back and consult with

the Republican leadership and the members of the caucus, and he would try to give us an answer in the next little bit here.

I think that Senator—I mean, Mr. Conyers said he would work with Mr. Hyde to try to work out the gun show issue, but he didn't want to do that as a way of putting off the conference, and I agree with that. He said he thought we ought to have a conference; the conference ought to approve everything else, including the child trigger locks, the ammunition clip ban, which is a big issue in view of some of the other things that have happened here lately, and these other issues; and that, meanwhile, he would work with Mr. Hyde to try to work through this.

Now, all I can tell you is, I think it would be a big mistake for Congress not to close the gun show loophole. Keep in mind—let's everybody remember this—one of the principal arguments used against the Brady bill, when we passed that and I signed it, was that criminals don't buy guns at gun stores; they buy guns at gun shows. You go back and look at the debate. And one of the things they said, "Oh, the criminals don't buy—they either get them on one-on-one sales, or they get them at these gun shows or urban flea markets."

Well, it turned out that was wrong. We've had almost a half-million gun sales not approved through gun stores. But the same people who were telling us 7 years ago, or 6 and 7 years ago, that we didn't need the Brady bill because all the criminals were buying their guns at gun shows, now tell us we can't stop the criminals from buying guns at gun shows. I mean, I think it's very important to understand, there are people's lives at stake here. This will save lives.

Now, people that are very solicitous and understanding of all the sort of practical problems for these rural gun shows—I'm telling you, there are ways to work through that. I've actually been to these rural gun shows. I know what they look like. I understand what these people are saying. I'd been to them when I was Governor; I know. You have something off in a field in the country, and you've got all the pickups and the cars opened up, and two or three thousand people come through in a day. I understand that. We have the technology to do the background checks, and we can do it, and we can do it without shutting these things down and all the law-abiding people that are involved in them down.

But if we act like because there are practical problems, we're just not going to save these people's lives, and we're going to let all these criminals buy guns, I think that is, to me, it's unconscionable to walk away from that.

Q. When you meet with the mother of the Michigan child this afternoon, do you think that you can reasonably assure her that there will be a bill this year? And secondly, can you make that kind of commitment knowing that there are as many Democrats as Republicans needed still to get support for something like this?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think that is true. I think that if—among the Democrats that voted for Mr. Dingell's bill, I think if some practical changes were made in the law which would not undermine that ability of the checks to actually keep guns out of hands of criminals, felons, fugitives, and stalkers, I think that most of the Democrats would vote for that bill. And I think a lot of Republicans would, and I believe it would pass. So that's what I believe would happen.

Now, what I'm going to tell her when I see her, first of all, is that as a parent my heart goes out to her, and as President I'm going to do everything I can to see that it doesn't happen to other children. That's all I can do.

I can't—do I know whether the Republicans will permit a bill to pass this year or whether they will be willing to stand up to the NRA? No, I don't know that. But I think that if we could get a bill out of that committee that was a good bill, this year, I think it would pass. And I think that may be what is going on now. That may be why there's so much pressure on Senator Hatch not to call a meeting.

But that is no way to do it. They ought to vote, vote up or down, declare themselves. If they don't want this bill to pass, they shouldn't be ashamed to tell America they don't want it to pass. And if they do, they ought to get together and pass it.

President's Upcoming Visit to South Asia

Q. Mr. President, regarding your trip to India, there are now reports that you will make a brief stop in Pakistan. Are those reports true?

The President. I should have an announcement on that probably within a day. I'm working that, and we're about to finalize the arrangements, and as quickly as I know—as I can do so, when I finish the calls I'm making, I'll be glad to release that.

Colombia Assistance Package

Q. Mr. President, aid to Colombia is facing problems in the Congress of the United States. There are some people who doubt—they think it might be another Vietnam. Some people think that the military aid will end up in violation of human rights and talks of collusion between the military and paramilitary forces. What are you doing to try to get this aid passed that Colombia has been waiting for a long time and you've been pushing for a long time?

The President. Well, I still believe the package will pass. I think the questions which are being asked are legitimate questions and should be asked. I mean, if I were a Member of Congress and I just heard the administration were to give this amount of money to Colombia and it was generally going to be used to fight drugs and do some other things, I would ask the same questions.

But all I can tell you is that it's not like Vietnam in the sense that we are not making a commitment to train soldiers in a way that we will then be called upon to come in and replace them or fight with them or work with them. This is—to deal with a guerrilla war, which is what happened in Vietnam.

In this case, we will be using some of the funds to train soldiers to support police officers who will be doing antinarcotics work. And the units that will be involved in this will have to be particularly vetted to make sure that they don't have the pattern of abuse that you referred to.

So we have worked as hard as we could to do this. Now, can I tell you that there will never be a dollar of this that would be spent in a way that I wouldn't want? Nobody can say that. But I can say this: I think that we're a lot better off trying to help stabilize Colombia and save democracy there and help them fight narcotics there and keep more drugs out of this country, than if we walk away from it. I think the consequences, if we walk away, are pretty clear. And if we help them, we just might make it and turn the situation around. That's what I think we ought to try to do.

Mary [Mary McGrory, Washington Post].

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, the argument is made that the bill under consideration, all the other bills would not have prevented either Columbine or

what happened in Flint. Have you ever considered advocating abolition of handguns, as advocated by the late Senator John Chafee, who spoke of the insanely easy access to guns in this country?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, I'm not sure that's true. I just have a statement here by the young woman that bought the guns used at Columbine, and she said, "I wish it had been more difficult. I wouldn't have helped them buy the guns if I had faced a background check."

So, first of all, this works. And I also believe we should license handgun owners, and when they buy guns, I think they ought to have to pass a Brady background check and show they've taken a safety course. I think we should do more than we're doing. But I believe that it is best for me as President to focus on what we can get done to save lives.

John Chafee, as you know, was a wonderful man and an aberration in the present Republican Senate caucus. But I don't think there would be many votes for that in the Congress. And what I should be doing is trying to pass the strongest possible legislation I can pass to save the largest number of lives I can save.

I do believe, Mary, if we can—one of the things that we ought to do if we can get this legislation on the books is to be much more aggressive in these gun buyback programs, as well, to try to reduce the total stock out there of the kind of loose guns that are running around. I mean, when you hear over 200 million guns are held in America, it's trembling; it's a staggering figure. But a lot of them are held by collectors and hunters and others with big supplies who are responsible people. But if we had, I'm convinced, if we had a more aggressive use of gun buyback programs, we could draw down a lot of these guns that are used in crimes.

Yes sir.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Page one of the usually reliable Washington Post reports this morning that you regularly—

The President. Is that an editorial comment? [Laughter]

Q. —you regularly advise the campaign of Vice President Gore. Did you advise Mr. Gore to allow no media questions for the past 17 days, particularly because of the Maria Hsia case, including Gore's appearance in Buffalo on

Saturday, where I found that the gymnasium was one-third empty, Mr. President?

The President. No. [Laughter] No.

Q. Don't you think he ought to answer media questions like you do?

The President. Well, since I didn't advise him privately, I don't think I should advise him publicly. [Laughter] It looks to me like he's doing a pretty good job with his campaign. But I did not—I haven't talked to him about that at all.

Go ahead.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, back on guns for just a moment. You said what we need to do is pass the strongest legislation we can pass. The leaders who came out were not all that specific, other than to say that the gun show loophole was the main thing hanging this up. In your view, what has to be done to close that loophole? Is it 3 days? Is it 24 hours? Is it less than 24 hours? What in your view needs to be done to close it?

The President. Well, first of all, let's look at the facts here. The answer may be a combination of both. That is, if you have an Insta-check system—today, when we do the background checks, over 90 percent of them are completed within a day. Over 70 percent of them are completed within an hour, I think.

But you have to have some provision for dealing with the leakage. That is, suppose you're meeting over the weekend, and the records are not in the national crime database; suppose you're dealing with mental health records, for example, that would have, under the Brady bill, would disqualify someone from getting a handgun but aren't available; suppose you're dealing with records that are in a local police department that might not be in the database, where you have to make a phone call. So the answer is, if you had 24 hours, you'd get most people. But the thing is, the people you don't get—the people you don't get in that last 5 percent—listen to this—are 20 times more likely to be turned down than the population as a whole.

So what you need—I have no objection to some provision which would say, okay, everybody that clears, do the 24 hours, and let it roll. But you have to have some other provision there to deal with the 5 percent you can't—or however, whatever the percentage is; it's less than 10—whatever the percentage is you can't get done in 24 hours, because a significant per-

centage of the people that shouldn't be getting the guns are in that percentage.

So that's why I say, you guys would have—it would be great for you if they would actually have this conference and start debating this. And instead of debating the Senate provision or the Dingell bill, or the Senate provision or nothing, you could hear this debate between Conyers and Hyde, and we could get down to the facts. And it would be—you'd really have something to get your teeth into and talk about in terms of, what does it take to save lives?

My criteria is, does it work? You know, I don't mind being—like I said, I've been to these country gun shows. I know what they're like, and I understand what some of the practical questions raised are. But I'm just telling you, with a minimum of effort, we can save lives, and we can take care of all these cases that the Brady bill takes care of.

So I'm not giving you an evasive answer. I'm telling you, this is a fact question. But you don't want to just—the problem with the 24-hour thing is, you do over 90 percent of the checks, but of the ones that leak, they're 20 times more likely to be turned down. So, therefore, I think we have to have some provision to deal with them.

Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, when do you plan to act on a request by Taiwan for new weapons systems? Do you think that granting such a request could help you with your China trade legislation on the Hill? And do you think the Taiwanese perhaps deserve the weapons, given recent Chinese saber rattling in the area?

The President. I think my answer to the first question will answer the next two. I don't know because I have not sat down and looked at the facts. Any decision I make has to be made consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and with our general policy in the area. And I will do what I think the right thing to do is. But I literally have not had a meeting on it. We haven't discussed timing or anything. I have had no meetings.

Go ahead, April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, today is Super Tuesday, and it's the weeding-out process. What are your hopes for the candidates that are left standing?

And since John McCain has been talking about George Bush's morals and ethics, have you been reminded of that cruel joke that he told about Chelsea a couple years ago, and what are your thoughts about that?

The President. He asked me to forgive him, and I did.

Q. Do you think that he makes an appropriate Presidential candidate—

The President. He asked me to forgive him, and I did. And since I have asked people to forgive me, I would be in a poor position if I refused the same thing. And I believe him to be a good man. And he asked me to forgive him, and I did.

And I think the—you know, what I think—I have a slightly different take on this than most people, I guess, but since I'm not a candidate, maybe you will believe me when I tell you, since I'm not running. When people fight with each other over issues that they disagree with and they advertise about it, I don't consider that necessarily negative campaigning. When people say to each other that they're somehow—that their opponents are morally inferior or that they're morally superior, that can be negative campaigning. It's also very hazardous.

You know, there are lots of verses in the Bible. One of them says that you've got be careful when you're standing not to brag about it; otherwise you might find yourself on your knees. I mean, you know—but I think the fact that this has been a vigorous campaign fight over differences of opinion on campaign finance, the nature of a tax cut, what kind of education policy we should have, in all these primaries, I think that's been good for the American people. And my only wish today is that there's a real big turnout. I just hope they all go out and vote, and I hope they'll continue to vote all the way to November.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thanks. Thank you.

Q. And your hopes for those who remain standing?

The President. What did you say?

Q. The hopes for those who remain standing after this weeding-out process?

The President. I think they ought to go before the American people and say this is the millennial election, and they ought to say what they say. You know who I'm for and what I hope happens in the election. But the main thing is, I want this election to be fought out over

the issues. And if they fight over the issues and criticize each other over the issues, I don't consider that to be negative campaigning. That's debating. That's the way the system works.

I would like to see this election be given back to the American people. I'd like to see the fights over things that affect them and not over whether one candidate should have gotten more merit badges than another.

Oil Prices

Q. On gas prices, just one last quick question. There are predictions that it could go to \$1.80.

The President. Yes.

Q. Today I paid \$1.70 for a gallon of gas. Well, I can afford it. Many Americans can't. [Laughter] It's a serious thing for many people who are on tight budgets.

The President. First of all, let me say—I've told you this before, and as time goes on we'll have more to say about this. I've been working on this issue. I think what we want are stable oil prices that aren't too high, and I think that's what the oil-producing countries should want. Because what's going to happen is, there will be all kinds of reactions—we have our options; others have theirs—but some countries will just have their economic growth slowed if you have oil prices that are too high.

And then what's going to happen? One of two things, or both, will happen. You will either have a big drop in demand for oil prices, which will drive the price back down just because people won't be buying as much anymore, and it will cut the revenues of the oil-producing countries below where they would have been if they have maintained stable prices at a lower level. Or you will have a lot of non-OPEC members who aren't subject to their agreement start increasing their production, taking market share away from them, and that will also cut oil prices and lower their revenues, because they'll have less market share.

Now, one of those two things is going to happen unless there's more equilibrium in this market. And I think everybody recognizes that they're too high. There's a reason they're too high now, because we're producing 73 million barrels a day and consuming 75 million. Therefore, the price is continuing to rise, because demand exceeds supply. And demand exceeds supply because of, in effect, artificial decisions made by the producers.

So this would be kind of like deregulation in America in telecom and a lot of other areas, once you get other producers. Either that or supply will drop because—I mean, excuse me—demand will drop because they won't be able to sustain the price. So I think, sure, I want oil prices to go down some. But the producing countries should want them to go down some, too.

Now, on the other hand, Americans should not want them to drop to \$12 or \$10 a barrel again, because that puts you in this roller coaster environment which is very destabilizing to the producing countries and not particularly good for our economy and takes our mind off our business, which should be alternative fuels, energy conservation, reducing the impact of all this on global warming.

But we need stable prices at a lower level, and that's what we're working for. And I hope

that's what the producing countries will see is clearly in their best interests, because it is.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan; Veronica McQueen, whose 6-year-old daughter, Kayla Rolland, died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Robyn Anderson, who allegedly purchased several handguns that were used in the shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, on April 20, 1999; and Republican Presidential candidate John McCain. A reporter referred to Maria Hsia, who was convicted of illegal campaign fundraising practices.

Statement on Senate Action on Judicial Nominations

March 7, 2000

I am pleased that the United States Senate, by a vote of 93 to 0, has confirmed Julio Fuentes to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Judge Fuentes, whom I nominated one year ago tomorrow, is a richly experienced State court judge from Newark, New Jersey. He will be the first Hispanic judge to serve on the Third Circuit.

Despite this positive step, however, the Senate still must act on the 38 judicial nominees currently awaiting hearings or floor votes. In

particular, the Senate is poised to act this week on the nominations of Richard Paez and Marsha Berzon to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Paez, the first Mexican-American ever to serve as a Federal district court judge in Los Angeles, has awaited a vote for more than 4 years, longer than any judicial nominee in modern history. Berzon has been before the Senate for 2 years. Both are highly qualified individuals who will serve the courts and our country with distinction.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 7, 2000

Dear _____:

I am writing this letter to strongly encourage Congress to pass clean, straightforward legislation to raise the minimum wage by \$1—from \$5.15 to \$6.15—in two equal steps. Working families across this country deserve an increase that simply restores the real value of the minimum wage to what it was in 1982.

Those who argue this modest pay raise would harm the economy could not be more wrong. Since 1996, when I worked with Congress to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents over 2 years, the unemployment rate has fallen from 5.2 percent to 4.1 percent—near the lowest level in 30 years, more than 10 million new jobs

Mar. 7 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

have been created, and economic growth has averaged 4.3 percent.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, some in Congress are insisting on a lengthier 3-year increase in the minimum wage—a delay that would cost a full-time, year-round worker more than \$900 over 2 years. Others have chosen to use the minimum wage increase as a vehicle to repeal important overtime protections for American workers. And finally, some are using this minimum wage increase to pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security and pay down the debt by 2013.

Let me be clear—this is the wrong approach. I will veto any legislation that holds this minimum wage increase hostage to provisions that delay this overdue pay raise or jeopardize our ability to strengthen Social Security and Medi-

care and pay down the debt by 2013 for future generations.

All Americans should be able to share in our current economic prosperity. For a full-time worker at the minimum wage, this increase would provide a \$2,000 annual raise—enough for family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months. More than 10 million workers would benefit from this proposal, the majority of them women. Congress should do the right thing and give these workers a raise.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

March 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you a report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period December 1, 1999, to January 31, 2000. The previous submission covered events during October and November 1999.

The United Nations convened 12 days of intensive talks to resolve the Cyprus dispute in early December. United Nations Secretary General Annan reported that both parties engaged seriously on the whole range of issues that divide them. My Special Envoy for Cyprus, Alfred H. Moses, and his team provided critical diplomatic support for the United Nations efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement.

Talks resumed in Geneva on January 31 where United Nations Special Advisor Alvaro de Soto held a series of meetings with both sides. The parties will continue discussions on May 23 in New York. We welcome this important process, and we will continue to work with the United Nations to reach a solution for all Cypriots based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Memorandum on Dedicating Federal Housing Administration Revenues for Affordable Housing

March 7, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Director, Office of Management and Budget, Director, Domestic Policy Council

Subject: Dedicating Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Revenues for Affordable Housing

One of the fundamental goals of my Administration has been to reinvent government, to make it serve the public better and restore public confidence in the institutions of government. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has met these goals well. HUD's 2020 Management Reform Plan has transformed HUD from top to bottom, and helped HUD improve performance even as it has reduced the number of its employees. The Department has twice been recognized by the Kennedy School of Government for innovation in government.

Nowhere is the turnaround at HUD more evident than in FHA. In the early 1990s, FHA was in near-bankruptcy. Today, FHA and its Mutual Mortgage Insurance (MMI) Fund are financially healthier than they have been in decades. On March 6, HUD released the results of an actuarial review showing that the total value of the Fund in Fiscal Year 1999 was more than \$5 billion above the total value reported

for Fiscal Year 1998. These improvements in the Fund are due not just to recent economic prosperity, but also to fundamental changes in FHA. The Office of Management and Budget will assess the actuarial review to determine its accuracy, its implications for the overall status of FHA finances, and its consistency with my Administration's economic assumptions.

As you know, my Budget for Fiscal Year 2001 substantially expands our efforts to provide affordable housing. The Budget provides a total of \$32 billion—\$6 billion more than last year—with increases for all of HUD's core programs. And as the improved administration of HUD and the FHA make available additional resources, we will have the opportunity to do even more to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable housing.

Therefore, I direct you to report to me within 160 days your recommendations on how newly available funds can be used to further strengthen Federal housing programs and develop a plan to enhance comprehensive affordable housing opportunities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 8.

Remarks on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 8, 2000

The President. Wasn't she great? I don't think the rest of us need to say much. [Laughter] I want to thank Senator Kennedy and Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, and all the Members of the House who are here with us today. I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, in addition to Mr. Podesta: Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Gene Sperling, Deputy Labor Secretary Ed Montgomery. I thank the religious leaders who are here, including Reverend Paul Sherry, the

former president of the United Church of Christ; the Reverend David Beckmann, the president of Bread for the World; and the other community leaders.

But most important of all, I want to thank Cheryl Costas for being here, because we're here today on behalf of her and so many people like her all across our country. People who work for the minimum wage often don't get a chance to see the White House. They don't have time to come, even for the public tours. They work

hard every day. They stock our store shelves, wash dishes at our restaurants, clean our offices at night, care for our kids during the day. They're in every town and every city in our country. They're of every racial and ethnic and religious group. They have in common the minimum wage. And they need a raise, and as you saw, they deserve a raise.

We are here today to ask Congress to give it to them. Ever since I ran for President in 1992, I've had a vision of making our Nation a place where everyone—everyone—responsible enough to work for it could have a share of the American dream. Over the last 7 years, with the help of a lot of you here today, we've made a lot of headway toward that goal, turning the economy around and continuing the longest economic expansion in our history. I want to continue doing that.

I want us not to squander the surplus but to save Social Security and Medicare, to invest in education, and to pay our debt down. I also have tried very hard not just to generate jobs but to help people who are working hard for less. That's why we expanded the earned-income tax credit, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. That's why we passed the family and medical leave law, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. And that's why, with bipartisan support in 1996, we raised the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour, over 2 years. And now it's time to do it again, to \$6.15 an hour.

We have bipartisan support again in Congress, but once again, the Republican leadership is trying to stop us. They know they can't win on the facts. Back in 1996—listen to what was said the last time we tried to raise the minimum wage. In 1996, Republican leaders said that a higher minimum wage, and I quote, “was a job killer cloaked in kindness.” They warned that it would throw young minorities out of work and lead to—listen to this—a juvenile crime wave of epic proportions.

Time has not been kind to their predictions. [Laughter] Today I release a report from the National Economic Council that puts to rest any of the lingering myths about the minimum wage. Since the minimum wage was raised in 1996, our economy has created over 10 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 30 years. The employment of minority youth has gone up. Juvenile crime has gone down. We now have the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest African-American

and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. We've cut the welfare rolls in half. And, thanks in part to the minimum wage increase, millions have moved from welfare to work, and incomes for even the poorest Americans are rising for the first time in decades.

Now, that's what happened the last time we raised the minimum wage. There are no facts on which to base this opposition anymore.

The new report I release today also dispels another myth about the minimum wage, that those who benefit are mostly middle class teenagers working for gas money. Cheryl probably feels a lot like me; I wish I were still a middle class teenager working for gas money. [Laughter] But the fact is that 70 percent of the people on the minimum wage are adults; 60 percent are women; and almost half work full-time. Many are the sole breadwinners, struggling to raise their children on \$10,700 a year. And I think Congress ought to think about them when this vote comes up.

Today, there are more than 10 million Americans like Cheryl working for \$5.15 an hour. You heard her say it's hard to live on that, especially if you have children. But no Americans who work full time should raise their children in poverty. This modest increase would simply restore the minimum wage to what it was in real dollar terms in 1982. People who are against this should have to confront that fact.

For a full-time worker, however, this would mean another \$2,000 a year. And if you're on the minimum wage, that's real money, enough money for a family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months.

This is the right thing to do for working families, the right thing to do for our economy, at a time when we've got labor shortages that will draw more people back into the labor market. Studies from Princeton to my own Council of Economic Advisers show that's exactly what happens when you raise the minimum wage: Increase the reward for work, and people who weren't looking for jobs decide to look and go to work.

There are a dozen good reasons to raise the minimum wage and not a single good argument against it. Even the Republican leadership understands that. So instead of arguing the facts, they're playing legislative sleight of hand. For example, they're now using the minimum wage as a vehicle to repeal worker protections and pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten

our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to save Social Security and Medicare and pay the debt down by 2013.

They also say they want to put this in over 3 years, not 2. That would mean \$900 less in wages for a full-time minimum wage worker. If Republican leaders send me a bill that makes workers wait for another year for their full pay raise and holds the minimum wage hostage for risky tax cuts that threaten our prosperity, I'll veto it.

It is time to stop nickel-and-diming the American working people out of the money that they need and deserve. This is just wrong. This is wrong. We have destroyed every single argument against raising the minimum wage. They're gone. All you've got now is legislative game playing, and it's wrong.

I want a clean, straightforward bill to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years, and I intend to sign it.

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly grateful for the prosperity our Nation enjoys today, grateful for the opportunity that our administration has had to play a role in it. But I will never be satisfied as long as there are people like Cheryl out there. I mean, what else can you ask this woman to do? She's kept her family together. Her husband has a disability. She's supporting four kids. She's going to school full time. Now, how can Congress justify saying no to her? That's what I want to know.

Let's play games on another bill. They're going to pass a lot of other bills. Can't we put

the working people of this country first for a change here and put political games second?

I'd like to now introduce to speak the first of a series of Members of Congress, without whom this fight could never be waged. And I am profoundly grateful to Representative David Bonior for nearly 25 years of fighting for people like Cheryl Costas.

Congressman Bonior.

[At this point, Members of Congress made brief remarks.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, all that needs to be said has been said. But what needs to be done has not been done. So I ask you to leave here remembering the stirring words of our leaders in Congress and the profoundly moving story of Cheryl Costas. And just remember, there's a lot more people like her out there. Remember what Dick Gephardt told you: Just ask every Member of Congress to imagine how long they could live on the minimum wage.

This is the right thing to do. We're still here after over 220 years because when the chips are down, we mostly do the right thing, in spite of ourselves. Ask them to do the right thing.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to minimum wage earner Cheryl Costas, who introduced the President.

Exchange With Reporters on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 8, 2000

The President. Hi, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Do you have the votes?

The President. We don't know yet.

Q. How are the votes going?

The President. We don't know yet. That's why we're here today. We're working it.

Q. You don't know?

The President. If we can get the right bill before them, we have the votes. I don't know

if we've got the votes to get the right bill before them, you know, to get through all the thicket of rulemaking. But we're working it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:09 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
March 8, 2000

Thank you very much, President Brody, Dean Wolfowitz. I thank all the members of our administration who are here—Secretary Daley, who is coordinating our efforts in the Congress; Secretary Summers; Secretary Glickman. I want to say a special word of thanks to Ambassador Barshefsky and National Economic Adviser Gene Sperling who negotiated this agreement with China and wrung the last drop of blood out of it. And my National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, I thank him for his great advocacy; Ambassador Holbrooke; to our OPIC President, George Muñoz.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of a very important member of our economic team, Lael Brainard, because her mother works here at SAIS, and I want her mother to know she's done a good job. She may never speak to me again, but her mother will be happy. [Laughter]

I want to thank all the distinguished people in the audience, who care so much about China, and the faculty and the students here of this magnificent institution. And I want to thank my longtime friend Lee Hamilton. If I had any respect for this audience, I would just ask you to wait 5 minutes; I'd run out and copy his speech, hand it to you. He said exactly what I wanted to say in about 2,000 fewer words. [Laughter]

I also want to say, President Brody and Dean Wolfowitz, how much I appreciate the involvement of Johns Hopkins and the School for Advanced International Studies in China, in particular, at this moment in history and for giving me the chance to come here and talk about what is one of the most important decisions America has made in years.

Last fall, as all of you know, the United States signed the agreement to bring China into the WTO on terms that will open its market to American products and investments. When China concludes similar agreements with other countries, it will join the WTO. But as Lee said, for us to benefit from that, we must first grant it permanent normal trading status, the same arrangement we have given other countries in the WTO. Before coming here today, I submitted legislation to Congress to do that, and

I again publicly urge Congress to approve it as soon as possible.

Again, I want to emphasize what has already been said. Congress will not be voting on whether China will join the WTO. Congress can only decide whether the United States will share in the economic benefits of China joining the WTO. A vote against PNTR will cost America jobs, as our competitors in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere capture Chinese markets that we otherwise would have served.

Supporting China's entry into the WTO, however, is about more than our economic interests. It is clearly in our larger national interest. It represents the most significant opportunity that we have had to create positive change in China since the 1970's, when President Nixon first went there, and later in the decade when President Carter normalized relations. I am working as hard as I can to convince Congress and the American people to seize this opportunity.

For a long time now, the United States has debated its relationship with China, through all the changes, particularly, of the last century. And like all human beings everywhere, we see this relationship through the prism of our own experience. In the early 1900's, most Americans saw China either through the eyes of traders seeking new markets or missionaries seeking new converts. During World War II, China was our ally; during the Korean war, our adversary. At the dawn of the cold war, when I was a young boy beginning to study such things, it was a cudgel in a political battle: Who lost China? Later, it was a counterweight to the Soviet Union. And now, in some people's eyes, it's a caricature. Will it be the next great capitalist tiger with the biggest market in the world, or the world's last great communist dragon and a threat to stability in Asia?

Through all the changes in China and the changes in our perception of China, there has been one constant: We understand that America has a profound stake in what happens in China and how China relates to the rest of the world. That's why, for 30 years, every President, without regard to party, has worked for a China that contributes to the stability of Asia, that is

open to the world, that upholds the rule of law at home and abroad.

Of course, the path that China takes to the future is a choice China will make. We cannot control that choice; we can only influence it. But we must recognize that we do have complete control over what we do. We can work to pull China in the right direction, or we can turn our backs and almost certainly push it in the wrong direction.

The WTO agreement will move China in the right direction. It will advance the goals America has worked for in China for the past three decades. And of course, it will advance our own economic interests.

Economically, this agreement is the equivalent of a one-way street. It requires China to open its markets—with a fifth of the world's population, potentially the biggest markets in the world—to both our products and services in unprecedented new ways. All we do is to agree to maintain the present access which China enjoys. Chinese tariffs, from telecommunications products to automobiles to agriculture, will fall by half or more over just 5 years. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China made by workers here in America, without being forced to relocate manufacturing to China, sell through the Chinese Government, or transfer valuable technology. For the first time, we'll be able to export products without exporting jobs.

Meanwhile, we'll get valuable new safeguards against any surges of imports from China. We're already preparing for the largest enforcement effort ever given for a trade agreement.

If Congress passes PNTR, we reap these rewards. If Congress rejects it, our competitors reap these rewards. Again, we must understand the consequences of saying no. If we don't sell our products to China, someone else will step into the breach, and we'll spend the next 20 years wondering why in the wide world we handed over the benefits we negotiated to other people.

Of course, we're going to continue our efforts not just to expand trade but to expand it in a way that reinforces our fundamental values and, for me, the way the global economic system must move. Trade must not be a race to the bottom, whether we're talking about child labor or basic working conditions or the environment. The more we avoid dealing with these issues, the more we fuel the fires of protectionism.

That's why we'll continue our efforts to make the WTO itself more open, more transparent, more participatory, and to elevate the consideration of labor and environmental issues in trade.

But most of the critics of the China-WTO agreement do not seriously question its economic benefits. They're more likely to say things like this: "China is a growing threat to Taiwan and its neighbors. We shouldn't strengthen it," or, "China violates labor rights and human rights. We shouldn't reward it," or, "China is a dangerous proliferator. We shouldn't empower it."

These concerns are valid, but the conclusion of those who raise them as an argument against China-WTO isn't. China is a one-party state that does not tolerate opposition. It does deny its citizens fundamental rights of free speech and religious expression. It does define its interests in the world sometimes in ways that are dramatically at odds from our own. But the question is not whether we approve or disapprove of China's practices. The question is, what's the smartest thing to do to improve these practices?

I believe the choice between economic rights and human rights, between economic security and national security, is a false one. Membership in the WTO, of course, will not create a free society in China overnight or guarantee that China will play by global rules. But over time, I believe it will move China faster and further in the right direction and certainly will do that more than rejection would. To understand how, it's important to understand why China is willing to do what it has undertaken to perform in this agreement.

Over the last 20 years, China has made great progress in building a new economy, lifting more than 200 million people out of abject poverty, linking so many people through its new communications network that it's adding the equivalent of a new Baby Bell every year. Nationwide, China has seen the emergence of more than a million nonprofit and social organizations and a 2,500 percent explosion of print and broadcast media.

But its economy still is not creating jobs fast enough to meet the needs of the people. Only about a third of the economy is private enterprise. Nearly 60 percent of the investment and 80 percent of all business lending still goes toward state-owned dinosaurs that are least likely to survive in the global economy and most likely to be vulnerable to corruption.

Much of China's economy today still operates under the old theory that if only they had shoveled coal into the furnaces faster, the *Titanic* would have stayed afloat. It is ironic, I think, that so many Americans are concerned about the impact on the world of a strong China in the 21st century. But the danger of a weak China, beset by internal chaos and the old nightmares of disintegration, is also real, and the leaders of China know this as well.

So they face a dilemma. They realize that if they open China's market to global competition, they risk unleashing forces beyond their control: temporary unemployment, social unrest, and greater demands for freedom. But they also know that without competition from the outside, China will not be able to attract the investment necessary to build a modern, successful economy. And the failure to do that could be even more destabilizing, with more negative consequences.

So with this agreement, China has chosen reform, despite the risks. It has chosen to overcome a great wall of suspicion and insecurity and to engage the rest of the world. The question for the United States, therefore, is, do we want to support that choice or reject it, becoming bystanders as the rest of the world rushes in. That would be a mistake of truly historic proportions.

You know, as we debate about China here—and we love to do it; it absorbs a great deal of our time and energy—it's easy to forget that the Chinese leaders and their people are also engaged in a debate about us there. And many of them believe that we honestly don't want their country to assume a respected place in the world. If China joins the WTO but we turn our backs on them, it will confirm their fears.

All I can say to you is that everything I have learned about China as President and before and everything I have learned about human nature in over half a century of living now convinces me that we have a far greater chance of having a positive influence on China's actions if we welcome China into the world community, instead of shutting it out.

Under this agreement, some of China's most important decisions for the first time will be subject to the review of an international body, with rules and binding dispute settlement. Now, opponents say this doesn't matter; China will just break its promises. Well, any of you who follow these WTO matters know that China is

not the only person that could be accused of not honoring the rulemaking process. If any of you happen to be especially concerned about bananas and beef, you could probably stand up and give a soliloquy on that. And now we in the United States have been confronted with a very difficult decision, because they've made a decision that we think is plainly wrong, in an area that affects our export economy.

But I will say this: We're still better off having a system in which actions will be subject to rules embraced and judgments passed by 135 nations. And we're far more likely to find acceptable resolutions to differences of opinion in this context than if there is none at all.

The change this agreement can bring from outside is quite extraordinary. But I think you could make an argument that it will be nothing compared to the changes that this agreement will spark from the inside out in China. By joining the WTO, China is not simply agreeing to import more of our products; it is agreeing to import one of democracy's most cherished values, economic freedom. The more China liberalizes its economy, the more fully it will liberate the potential of its people, their initiative, their imagination, their remarkable spirit of enterprise. And when individuals have the power not just to dream but to realize their dreams, they will demand a greater say.

Already, more and more, China's best and brightest are starting their own companies or seeking jobs with foreign-owned companies, where generally they get higher pay, more respect, and a better working environment. In fits and starts, for the first time, China may become a society where people get ahead based on what they know rather than who they know. Chinese firms, more and more, are realizing that unless they treat employees with respect, they will lose out in the competition for top talent. The process will only accelerate if China joins the WTO, and we should encourage it because it will lift standards for Chinese workers and their expectations.

There's something even more revolutionary at work here. By lowering the barriers that protect state-owned industries, China is speeding the process that is removing Government from vast areas of people's lives.

In the past, virtually every Chinese citizen woke up in an apartment or a house owned by the Government, went to work in a factory or a farm run by the Government, and read

newspapers published by the Government. State-run workplaces also operated the schools where they sent their children, the clinics where they received health care, the stores where they bought food. That system was a big source of the Communist Party's power. Now people are leaving those firms. And when China joins the WTO, they will leave them faster.

The Chinese Government no longer will be everyone's employer, landlord, shopkeeper, and nanny all rolled into one. It will have fewer instruments, therefore, with which to control people's lives. And that may lead to very profound change.

A few weeks ago, the Washington Post had a good story about the impact of these changes on the city of Shenyang. Since 1949, most of the people of Shenyang have worked in massive state-run industries. But as these old factories and mills shut down, people are losing their jobs and their benefits. Last year, Beijing announced it was going to be awarding bonus checks to Chinese citizens to celebrate China's 50th anniversary under communism. But Shenyang didn't have the money to pay, and there was a massive local protest.

To ease tensions, the local government has given the people a greater say in how their city is run. On a limited basis, citizens now have the right to vote in local elections—not exactly a democracy; the party still puts up the candidate and decides who can vote, but it is a first step. And it goes beyond Shenyang. Local elections now are held in the vast majority of the country's 900,000 villages.

When asked why, one party official in Shenyang said, "This is the beginning of a process. We realize that in order to improve social control, we have got to let the masses have a say." Well, sooner or later that official will find that the genie of freedom will not go back into the bottle. As Justice Earl Warren once said, "Liberty is the most contagious force in the world."

In the new century, liberty will spread by cell phone and cable modem. In the past year, the number of Internet addresses in China has more than quadrupled from 2 million to 9 million. This year, the number is expected to grow to over 20 million. When China joins the WTO, by 2005, it will eliminate tariffs on information technology products, making the tools of communication even cheaper, better, and more widely available. We know how much the Inter-

net has changed America, and we are already an open society. Imagine how much it could change China.

Now, there's no question China has been trying to crackdown on the Internet. Good luck! [Laughter] That's sort of like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall. [Laughter] But I would argue to you that their effort to do that just proves how real these changes are and how much they threaten the status quo. It's not an argument for slowing down the effort to bring China into the world; it's an argument for accelerating that effort. In the knowledge economy, economic innovation and political empowerment, whether anyone likes it or not, will inevitably go hand in hand.

Now, of course, bringing China into the WTO doesn't guarantee that it will choose political reform. But accelerating the progress, the process of economic change will force China to confront that choice sooner, and it will make the imperative for the right choice stronger. And again I ask, if China is willing to take this risk—and these leaders are very intelligent people; they know exactly what they're doing—if they're willing to take this risk, how can we turn our backs on the chance to take them up on it?

Now, I want to be clear. I understand that this is not, in and of itself, a human rights problem. But still, it is likely to have a profound impact on human rights and political liberty. Change will only come through a combination of internal pressure and external validation of China's human rights struggle. We have to maintain our leadership in the latter as well, even as the WTO contributes to the former.

We sanctioned China under the International Religious Freedom Act last year. We're again sponsoring a resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Commission condemning China's human rights record this year. We will also continue to press China to respect global norms on non-proliferation. And we will continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question, making absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan. There must be a shift from threat to dialog across the Taiwan Strait. And we will continue to encourage both sides to seize this opportunity after the Taiwan election.

In other words, we must continue to defend our interests and our ideals with candor and consistency. But we can't do that by isolating

China from the very forces most likely to change it. Doing so would be a gift to the hardliners in China's Government who don't want their country to be part of the world, the same people willing to settle differences with Taiwan by force, the same people most threatened by our alliance with Japan and Korea, the same people who want to keep the Chinese military selling dangerous technologies around the world, the same people whose first instinct in the face of opposition is to throw people in prison. If we want to strengthen their hand within China, we should reject the China-WTO agreement.

Voting against PNTR won't free a single prisoner or create a single job in America or reassure a single American ally in Asia. It will simply empower the most rigid antidemocratic elements in the Chinese Government. It would leave the Chinese people with less contact with the democratic world and more resistance from their Government to outside forces. Our friends and allies would wonder why, after 30 years of pushing China in the right direction, we turned our backs, now that they finally appear to be willing to take us up on it.

I find it encouraging that the people with the greatest interest in seeing China change agree with this analysis. The people of Taiwan agree. Despite the tensions with Beijing, they are doing everything they can to cement their economic ties with the mainland, and they want to see China in the WTO.

The people of Hong Kong agree. I recently received a letter from Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, who has spent a lifetime struggling for free elections and free expression for his people. He wrote to me that this agreement, and I want to quote it, "represents the best long-term hope for China to become a member of good standing in the international community. We fear that should ratification fail, any hope for political and legal reform process would also recede." Martin Lee wants us to vote in favor of PNTR.

Most evangelicals who have missions in China also want China in the WTO. They know it

will encourage freedom of thought and more contact with the outside world.

Many of the people who paid the greatest price under Chinese repression agree, too. Ren Wanding is one of the fathers of the Chinese human rights movement. In the late 1970's, he was thrown into prison for founding the China Human Rights League. In the 1980's, he helped lead the demonstration in Tiananmen Square. In the 1990's, he was thrown in prison yet again. Yet, he says of this deal, "Before, the sky was black. Now it is light. This can be a new beginning."

For these people, fighting for freedom in China is not an academic exercise or a chance to give a speech that might be on television. It is their life's work. And for many of them, they have risked their lives to pursue it. I believe if this agreement were a Trojan Horse, they would be smart enough to see it. They are telling us that it's the right thing to do, and they are plainly right.

So if you believe in a future of greater openness and freedom for the people of China, you ought to be for this agreement. If you believe in a future of greater prosperity for the American people, you certainly should be for this agreement. If you believe in a future of peace and security for Asia and the world, you should be for this agreement. This is the right thing to do. It's an historic opportunity and a profound American responsibility.

I'll do all I can to convince Congress and the American people to support it. And today I ask for your help.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. in the Kenny Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to William R. Brody, president, Johns Hopkins University; and Paul Wolfowitz, dean, and Joanne Brainard, executive assistant to the associate dean for student affairs, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The President also referred to WTO, the World Trade Organization; and PNTR, permanent normal trade relations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China
March 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Last November, after years of negotiation, we completed a bilateral agreement on accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the People's Republic of China (Agreement). The Agreement will dramatically cut import barriers currently imposed on American products and services. It is enforceable and will lock in and expand access to virtually all sectors of China's economy. The Agreement meets the high standards we set in all areas, from creating export opportunities for our businesses, farmers, and working people, to strengthening our guarantees of fair trade. It is clearly in our economic interest. China is concluding agreements with other countries to accede to the WTO. The issue is whether Americans get the full benefit of the strong agreement we negotiated. To do that, we need to enact permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) for China.

We give up nothing with this Agreement. As China enters the WTO, the United States makes no changes in our current market access policies. We preserve our right to withdraw market access for China in the event of a national security emergency. We make no changes in laws controlling the export of sensitive technology. We amend none of our trade laws. In fact, our protections against unfair trade practices and potential import surges are stronger with the Agreement than without it.

Our choice is clear. We must enact permanent NTR for China or risk losing the full benefits of the Agreement we negotiated, including broad market access, special import protections, and rights to enforce China's commitments through WTO dispute settlement. All WTO members, including the United States, pledge to grant one another permanent NTR to enjoy the full benefits in one another's markets. If the Congress were to fail to pass permanent NTR for China, our Asian, Latin American, Canadian, and European competitors would reap these benefits, but American farmers and other workers and our businesses might well be left behind.

We are firmly committed to vigorous monitoring and enforcement of China's commit-

ments, and will work closely with the Congress on this. We will maximize use of the WTO's review mechanisms, strengthen U.S. monitoring and enforcement capabilities, ensure regular reporting to the Congress on China's compliance, and enforce the strong China-specific import surge protections we negotiated. I have requested significant new funding for China trade compliance.

We must also continue our efforts to make the WTO itself more open, transparent, and participatory, and to elevate consideration of labor and the environment in trade. We must recognize the value that the WTO serves today in fostering a global, rules-based system of international trade—one that has fostered global growth and prosperity over the past half century. Bringing China into that rules-based system advances the right kind of reform in China.

The Agreement is in the fundamental interest of American security and reform in China. By integrating China more fully into the Pacific and global economies, it will strengthen China's stake in peace and stability. Within China, it will help to develop the rule of law; strengthen the role of market forces; and increase the contacts China's citizens have with each other and the outside world. While we will continue to have strong disagreements with China over issues ranging from human rights to religious tolerance to foreign policy, we believe that bringing China into the WTO pushes China in the right direction in all of these areas.

I, therefore, with this letter transmit to the Congress legislation authorizing the President to terminate application of Title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to the People's Republic of China and extend permanent Normal Trade Relations treatment to products from China. The legislation specifies that the President's determination becomes effective only when China becomes a member of the WTO, and only after a certification that the terms and conditions of China's accession to the WTO are at least equivalent to those agreed to between the United States

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and China in our November 15, 1999, Agreement. I urge that the Congress consider this legislation as soon as possible.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

March 8, 2000.

Interview With Greta Van Susteren of CNN's "Burden of Proof" March 8, 2000

Gun Violence

Ms. Van Susteren. Mr. President, thank you for joining us today. I want to first ask you your reaction—once again, this time Memphis, a fireman is dead, a police officer, and others. What's your reaction to this shooting?

The President. Well, as we're doing this interview, of course, we don't know all the facts, but it's a tragic thing for the city and for the families, because firemen and police, they put their lives on the line a lot, but they don't expect to be shot at the scene of a burning house. It's a terrible thing. And we just have to find the facts to know what happened and whether anything could have been done about it. It's very, very sad.

Ms. Van Susteren. Another tragedy was the death of the 6-year-old, Kayla, in Michigan. And you met with her mother—

The President. I did.

Ms. Van Susteren. —this week in the White House. What did you tell her?

The President. Well, first of all, I told her that as a father I could only imagine her heartbreak, that there's nothing worse in life than having your child die before you, especially in tragic circumstances. And I told her I would do what I could to reduce the chances of it happening again. And I was very impressed with her. She and her husband, Kayla's stepfather, I think they really decided they're going to commit themselves to try to do things that will make the schools safer, the streets safer, the kids less vulnerable to this sort of thing. And we talked about some of the specific things we were working on.

Ms. Van Susteren. And one of the specific things is guns.

The President. Absolutely.

Ms. Van Susteren. When you talk about guns—besides being the President of the United States, you're a lawyer—do you think that the

responsibility when a young child uses a gun and kills another child, that some of the responsibility may be cast in the direction of a parent or another adult? Should we hold them liable?

The President. I think if the custodial adult either knowingly or recklessly leaves a gun where a child can get ahold of it, then I think there should be some liability there. It's outrageous that this 6-year-old boy was able to get that gun. And of course, I think there ought to be child trigger locks on these guns. And I think that we should keep working until we develop the technology which will enable us to make handguns that can only be fired by the adults who own them, which is—it's not that far off.

I mean, the accidental gun death rate in America for children under 15 is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 countries combined. So, yes, I do. I think there ought to be some responsibility there, not if there's been a reasonable effort and the child finds a key and gets in a safe or something. But if there is—if it's just total irresponsibility or intentionally leaving a gun in a place where a child could easily get it, I think they should be held responsible.

Ms. Van Susteren. Well, you use the words "knowingly and recklessly," and that standard, it seems to me, is so different. In some parts of the country where people have lots of guns, the "knowingly and recklessly" standard is so much different from those who might be unfamiliar. How do we decide what's "knowingly and recklessly"?

The President. Well, I think maybe if Congress wanted to legislate in this area—this is normally a State law area. And I offered Federal legislation in the post-Columbine era to deal with this. The Congress could have legislative history in which they could actually cite some examples of what in their view falls on one side of the line and what doesn't. And I think

that would be helpful. Or what the Congress could do, if they feel that the circumstances are different from State to State, is to give some incentives for the States to pass such legislation.

I think there are 17 States which have passed legislation that have some form of adult responsibility if children who are below the age of responsibility get guns. But I don't know whether they're identical language or not. There are two different ways you could do that.

Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Van Susteren. You've been battling the gun—trying to get gun legislation for some time, and it seems to be a little bit of a logjam on Capitol Hill. Where's the dispute? Why can't legislation get passed?

The President. Well, I think the main source of dispute now is over closing the gun show loophole. That is, a lot of these—predominantly, the Republican Members of the House, although not all of them, are reluctant to close the gun show loophole. And a huge number of the Republicans in the Senate, although not everyone, 90 percent of them don't want to close the gun show loophole. That is, they don't want to require people at these gun shows and urban flea markets to have to do the same background checks on people who buy guns there, as gun store owners do, and people who buy guns there. And I just think they're dead wrong.

When we passed the Brady bill, 7 years ago now, almost 7 years ago, the NRA and their sympathizers said, "Well, the Brady bill won't do any good because criminals don't buy guns at gun stores." Well, it turns out 500,000 people couldn't get guns because they had a record as a felon, a fugitive, or a stalker.

So now we ought to go to the huge number of people who do buy them at these gun shows and urban flea markets, which is exactly what the NRA said they did 7 years ago. But now that we're trying to get background checks there, all of a sudden they don't want to do it.

So I think it's very important to do. Now, there is some chance of a compromise because Representative John Conyers from Michigan and Chairman Henry Hyde from Illinois have talked back and forth about whether there was a way to close the gun show loophole that the Republicans would let get out of the conference committee, and then we could pass it. And I urged

them to work on that yesterday. But I think that's the biggest problem.

Ms. Van Susteren. When I look at this loophole, it seems to me—correct me if I'm wrong—is that one side wants 72 hours to do the background check, and one side says, no, 24 hours. Is that the dispute, 24 versus 72?

The President. Well, not exactly. That's only part of it, and I'll explain that. But there is also the question of what records will be checked and what you do with the people who can't be checked within 24 hours. That is, John Conyers offered a 24-hour background check to Mr. Hyde. That is, the Democrats offered to the Republicans a 24-hour background check as long as there were some provision for holding roughly 5 to 8 percent of the applications that can't be cleared in 24 hours.

That is, believe it or not, over 70 percent of these background checks are done within a matter of an hour. Over 90 percent are done within 24 hours. But a small percentage cannot be done. And in that small percentage, the people that are likely to be rejected are—20 times the rate of rejections in the last 5 percent as in the first 95 percent. So there's a reason for holding those that can't be checked when the records aren't there.

So I think if we can work out something to do with the other 5 percent, we could agree to 95 percent of the people to have a 24-hour waiting period. It's going to be interesting to see whether they will engage us in good faith on that.

Ms. Van Susteren. So what can we do with that 5 percent? What's your idea?

The President. Well, you enable them to—you give the 72 hours for that 5 percent. And if they're at a rural gun show and they don't know what to do because they want to buy the gun and the gun dealer has got to leave and go on to another place, they should just consummate the sale and have to deposit the gun at the local sheriff's office. And then if it clears, they get their gun. And if it doesn't clear, the gun dealer gets his gun back.

Ms. Van Susteren. In my prior life as a criminal defense lawyer, I had to represent a lot of people who used guns in murders, armed robberies. And I've got to tell you, I don't think any one of them bought it at a gun show or a gun shop. What about those people? What can we do about them?

The President. Well, I think there is no clear and easy answer. What we know is that some of this happens there because we've got—the gun death rate is at a 30-year low. So we know we're doing some good with the Brady bill, and we know we'll do some more good with this. And we also know that a lot of these guns are passed among criminals or sold out of a trunk by somebody alone that wouldn't be covered by the gun show law.

I think what you have to do there is just do a better job of checking people for guns, and if you find somebody—if we do all this and you still find people with unauthorized guns, they have to be punished for that.

I still believe—I would go further. I think that people who buy handguns would have to pass a Brady background check and a safety check and be licensed. I think we ought to license handgun owners the way we license car drivers. I think that will make a difference over the long run.

The other thing I would say is, you've got over 200 million guns in this country. Now, that's slightly overstating the case in terms of the danger, because a huge number of them are in the hands of collectors who are perfectly law-abiding, who have the guns very well secured. And a lot of them are in the hands of hunters, who are law-abiding and have their guns well secured.

But one of the things that I have advocated is a big expansion of the gun buyback program, because in the places where that's occurred, it's done some good—where you must give people money to bring in their guns, and then you melt them or destroy them otherwise. And I noted just today—I was just stunned to hear that there are a number of Republicans in the House of Representatives that want to stop us from doing the gun buyback program. I can't imagine why they want to stop that.

A lot of cities with Republican mayors have done gun buyback programs. And it's totally voluntary: You bring a gun in; you get a certain amount of money. You gather the guns up, and you destroy them. You're taking that many out of circulation. So those are the kinds of things I think ought to be done.

President's Experience With Guns

Ms. Van Susteren. Do you have a gun? Have you ever owned one or shot one?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I have owned hunting weapons. I've been given—I've never bought a pistol. I've been given pistols by the State police and others, and I've never kept them. I've never kept a gun in my residence. I've always kept them under secure circumstances outside the house when Chelsea was a little girl coming up and all that. But I have owned guns. And I first—I guess the first gun I had was a .22 when I was 12. I still remember shooting cans off fenceposts in the country with a .22 when I was 12. And I've hunted on and off all my life, not a great deal. I have bad ears, so I would be careful how many times a year I'd go hunting.

But I understand this culture. I've been a part of it. And I was Governor of a State for a dozen years where half of the people had hunting licenses. But I do not think it is right for people who are law-abiding to prevent the passage of these laws that will plainly save lives. I mean, you know, it's no big deal for people who are gun owners or people who are handgun owners to have to undergo a background check. And if it's a minor inconvenience for them to wait a little bit, it's worth it to save people's lives. We now have evidence that it saves lives.

Nobody complains about going through airport metal detectors anymore, even if they have to go through 2 or 3 times, because they know it saves lives. People don't say we ought to repeal every speed limit or—you could say, "Well, most car drivers are law-abiding, so let's just stop licensing car drivers. Let's stop giving them driver's license tests, because most of them are law-abiding." Well, there would be an uproar if you did that.

So we should do more without eroding law-abiding gun owners' rights to hunt or sport shooting. We should do more to protect ourselves as a community, a lot more. We're the only country in the world that's not doing more, and we've got the death rates to show it. And if we want to save lives, we're going to have to continue to do more. We've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years because we've done more. And we've got to be better. We've got to do more.

Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Van Susteren. Taking a look at what happened last week, if you had the legislation that

you want or if we had the legislation the Republicans want, Kayla would still be dead. The legislation wouldn't have prevented that gun from getting into that young boy's hands.

The President. No, but if you had adult responsibility legislation that was clear and unambiguous, at least people would think about it; guys like that would think about it. Even if—suppose this was a drug house, like they say—also, depending on how old these guns are, they would come with child trigger locks if you required them for all gun sales, prospectively. And I'm not at all sure that even a callous, irresponsible drug dealer with a 6-year-old kid in the house wouldn't leave a child trigger lock on a gun.

Ms. Van Susteren. Which raises the other question. Trigger locks are for guns that are from this day forward. What do we do with these millions of guns that are already out there?

The President. One of the things I think we ought to look at is see how you retrofit them, where we could sell them, what we should do with them. And I'm just—if I could pass this, then I'd start looking at what to do with the guns that are out there now, whether we could get trigger locks for them and how we'd do it.

Right now, I've been waiting—we've been waiting 8 months. Columbine happened almost a year ago. Then the Senate passed a bill; the House passed a much weaker bill. We've been waiting 8 months for these people to get together with the Senate and the House and come up with a bill and send it to me.

And so, I've always tried to focus dealing with the Congress not just on what I thought was ideal but on what we would actually achieve. And I think every American now knows that the intense lobbying of the NRA and the other gun groups has had a profound impact on the House and on the Republican caucus in the Senate. But still, there are some people who are brave enough to stand up against it and to do reasonable things. So let's get this done, and then let's see where we go.

Ms. Van Susteren. I spoke to a representative of the NRA today who said that last summer, they had completely agreed on the bill in Congress, but that it was the Democrats and the White House that felt that the legislation in the House should be aborted. Is that right?

The President. No, they agreed on the House bill because it didn't do anything to close the

gun show loophole. They didn't want—we've got to close the gun show loophole. We feel we do. I think they would come along now with child trigger locks. I think they would, and I know they support the custodial parent being held responsible when there's an egregious act there of intentional or reckless—allowing a child to have a gun. And I appreciate that.

I think they support more gun prosecutors and law enforcement officials, and I appreciate that. I don't know where they are—maybe they would go along with the banning of the large ammunition clips. They've never been for that before, but they might be for that. But their new big bottom line is we must never, ever, ever do a background check on somebody at a gun show unless you can do it in 30 seconds or something.

I don't mind going to 24 hours, as long as you've got an escape hatch for the people you can't clear in 24 hours, because I'll say again, they are 20 times more likely to be turned down, that small percentage of people, than the general population that we can clear in 24 hours.

Ms. Van Susteren. One final question. The Vice President wants—or has suggested that we have photo licensing. What is your reaction to that?

The President. I think it's a good idea.

Ms. Van Susteren. Why?

The President. Because I think that it will establish a nexus between—first of all, to get a license, you ought to have to pass a safety course and the Brady background check. I think that's good. And I think then it will be easier to track the guns. We're trying to develop technology to track all guns and all bullets used in crimes and ultimately get them back to where they started. And I think for that reason—for crime control reasons and for safety reasons, it would be a good thing to do.

Just like with licensed drivers, I think it's a community safety requirement that we ought to do. I think he's absolutely right about it. And there's not a good argument not to do it.

Ms. Van Susteren. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to 6-year-old Kayla

Mar. 8 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; and her mother and stepfather,

Veronica and Michael McQueen. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the National Money Laundering Strategy March 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 2(a) of Public Law 105-310 (18 U.S.C. 5341(a)(2)),

I transmit herewith the National Money Laundering Strategy for 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 8, 2000.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters March 9, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you, Senator Daschle. Thank you, Senator Akaka, Senator Breaux, Senator Bryan, Senator Dorgan, Senator Sarbanes, and Senator Wyden, for joining us today. And thank you, Secretary Shalala, for the leading role you've played in the development of our proposal to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit for seniors under Medicare.

Minimum Wage Legislation

I want to make a few comments on Senator Daschle's very fine statement and the principles he outlined. But first I'd like to say a word about another debate going on in the House today over the minimum wage. Once again, the Republican leadership has derailed what should be a simple vote on the minimum wage, with a maximum of political maneuvering. The vote is yet to be taken, but we all know the results are already in. The special interests will win, and the national interests will wait.

We will raise the minimum wage but not with the Republican bill that stacks the deck against our workers. It is loaded with poison pills that penalize workers and with risky tax cuts that threaten our prosperity and the future of Social Security and Medicare.

The combined actions of the majority in the House and the Senate on all their tax cuts is now far in excess of what I have recommended and in excess of what we can afford and still pay down the debt and reform Social Security and Medicare and continue to invest in education.

Congress should send me a bill I can sign, not one I'll have to veto, a clean, straightforward bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years. If you remember the incredible day we had yesterday with Cheryl Costas, there are 10 million people that deserve this, and they ought to get it.

By the end of the day, two things will be clear about the minimum wage: We do have the votes to pass it, but the Republicans still have the votes to kill it. Today's vote, however, is not the final word, and I will continue to work with a bipartisan majority in the Congress that supports a real increase in the minimum wage.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Now, with regard to the statement Senator Daschle just made, the Senate Democrats have come today to say that they are together on principles for a voluntary Medicare prescription

drug benefit, something so many seniors need and far too few have. There have been a lot of proposals on the table, a good number of good ideas. Today we are moving forward together by uniting around common principles, setting standards that any prescription drug plan should meet. That is a significant step, moving us further toward the day when every older American has the choice of affordable prescription drugs.

More than three in five seniors and people with disabilities still lack prescription drug coverage that is dependable, coverage that could lengthen and enrich their lives. Our budget would extend them that lifeline and create a reserve of \$35 billion to build on this new benefit to protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

Most important, our plan, as Senator Daschle said, embodies the essential principles articulated here today and embraced by the Senate Democrats. I think any plan Congress passes should do the same. It should be optional, affordable, accessible to all. It should use price competition, not price controls. It should boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best prices possible. It should be part of an overall plan to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

I think the bargaining power issue is especially important when we read story after story of American senior citizens crossing the border into Canada to buy drugs, made in America, in Canada at much less cost. And if this is not done, then sooner or later, the voters of this country will vote with their feet, and the Congress will have a follow suit, and you will see huge numbers of people bringing those drugs in from Canada.

No American can understand why you can go to Canada and buy a drug made in America for dramatically less than you have to pay for it in America. And if our seniors had the bargaining power they deserve under this proposal, that gap in prices would evaporate quite quickly.

We owe it to our people, especially to our seniors, to pass a good prescription drug plan. We shouldn't be satisfied with half measures. Keep in mind that a tax deduction would help only the wealthiest seniors, and a block grant, which some in the majority have proposed, would help only the very poorest. Neither alternative would do anything for the seniors with modest middle incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000 a year.

As Secretary Shalala reminded me today, over half of the seniors who lack prescription drug coverage, especially a lot of them in rural areas—and you have a lot of these Members here who represent—these Senators—States with significant rural areas—over half of those without the coverage have incomes in excess of 150 percent of the poverty rate.

So I would like to, again, urge the majority to work with us on something that covers everyone, that people can buy into. There is no better time to get this done. The economy is strong. People have a sense of purpose over this. People talk to me about this everywhere I go. And we have an opportunity now not just to pay down the debt and extend the life of Social Security and Medicare but to extend the lives of a lot of seniors by adding this prescription drug benefit. And I certainly hope we'll do it.

Thank you.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, today is the day that the case of Elian Gonzalez, after many delays, is being heard in a courtroom in Miami. I would like your opinion on the subject. You've always said it must go to the courts. Do you think we'll get a solution soon?

The President. Well, I hope so. I can't believe it's in the young man's interest for this to be dragged out much longer. But it is in the courts, and I think while it's in the courts, we shouldn't comment.

John [John Palmer, NBC News].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. We'd like to get your comments on the Bradley decision to pull out of the race and his decision to not release his delegates. We're curious to what you think about that.

The President. Well, I thought, first of all, he made a very fine statement. I heard most of it this morning before I had to pull away, and I was very moved by his statement and very grateful for the tone and tenor of it and for his support for the Vice President.

The second thing that occurred to me was that if you looked at the issues he raised and the way in which he raised them, it recalled again how very much more substantive, in my judgment, the debate was on the Democratic side on the issues and how much more agreement there was. On the Republican side, there was far more disagreement, I think, and it was

far less rooted in issues that will really affect the American people and move forward. So I'm very grateful.

As to the delegates, I think that he knows the Vice President will have enough votes to win on the first round. He wants those people to be able to go to the convention pledged to him. They ran pledged to him. And then what typically happens at a convention is that if there is a united party, is at the appropriate time the vote is made unanimous.

But I can understand why a lot of them probably—I imagine he was talking to—a lot of them called him and said, "Look, we'd just like to go pledged to you. We're all going to be together. We're going to honor your wishes. We're going to support the nominee of our party." But this is, I think, a matter of pride for what they have accomplished to date. I don't think you should read too much into that. I certainly didn't. I thought he gave a very fine statement, and I wish him well.

President's Upcoming Visit to Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, your trip to Pakistan, is this some kind of an endorsement to the military government? That's what he said in Karachi. And also, if it's support for his government, how can you still, Mr. President, answer to Nawaz Sharif, who's in jail, and he came specially on a special trip to Washington on the Fourth of July? And he did say that—and I think Mrs. Sharif also wrote a letter to you, and you have spoken with all these leaders. Sir, what do you expect from this visit also?

The President. Well, first of all, it's certainly not an endorsement of the military coup. I've made that clear. We made it clear yesterday. But it is a recognition, in my judgment, that America's interests and values would be advanced if we maintained some contact with and communications with the Pakistani Government. And I think that our ability to have a positive influence on the future direction of Pakistan, in terms of the restoration of democracy, in terms of the ultimate resolution of issues in the Indian subcontinent, and in terms of avoiding further dangerous conflicts will be greater if we maintain our cooperation.

After all, Pakistan was our ally throughout the cold war. Since I've been President, Pakistan on more than one occasion has helped us to arrest terrorists, often at some risk to the regime. And as you pointed out, the then-Prime

Minister, Sharif, pulled the Pakistani troops back across the line of control after a July 4th meeting with me last year. So I think it would be a mistake not to go, but it would be a grave mistake for people to think that my going represents some sort of endorsement of a non-democratic process which occurred there. That's not true.

You, and then the little boy there.

Minimum Wage Legislation

Q. You said that there will be some room for negotiation on the minimum wage issue in terms of—obviously, your plan, the Democrats plan is for 2 years, the Republicans is for 3 years with a tax cut. Do you think ultimately we'll see a compromise?

The President. I would like to see a bill we can all sign. Our side—not just me but our Members of Congress—we offered them some very helpful small-business tax cuts. We're not unmindful of the fact that one of the reasons we've had this recovery is that every year we've had a record number of new small businesses starting, that not all of them make a lot of money, especially in the early years. And we responded to their desire to have small-business tax incentives and cuts with a rather generous proposal, and we got nowhere. They, instead, put this highly regressive, overly expensive program through that would increase inequality in America at a time when we're trying to reduce it and having nothing to do with the minimum wage.

There are also—let me say, there are other provisions in this bill which actually try to make the rest of America's work force pay with reductions in worker protections in return for the minimum wage workers getting a pay increase, and I don't think that's right, either. We shouldn't be pitting one group of workers against another.

And are we willing to talk? Of course. Always. Keep in mind, I had the conferees here on the gun safety issues this week, and we're trying to get the conference up and going there, and we're working our hearts out on it. But we have to—yes, we're willing to work on it. But I'm telling you, it is wrong, as well as this country is doing, with the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, more wealth being created than any time in history, any time in the history of this country, any time in the history of the

world, not to raise the minimum wage. It's wrong.

Young man, did you have a question?

President's Autograph

Q. May I please have an autograph for my little sister?

The President. Absolutely. [Laughter]

Gays in the Military

Q. There is a report this morning that there is a rise in the military of harassment, both physical and verbal, of gay and lesbian members of the military. First of all, are you concerned about that report? And do you believe that the military is doing enough to prevent this from happening?

The President. Well, I'd like to make a couple of points. I'm concerned about the report. I haven't read it. Secretary Cohen hasn't read it. We will read it and take appropriate action. I do want to point out that in the last several months the Pentagon has issued new guidelines for implementing the policies related to gays in the military, specifically designed to reduce harassment. They have started new training programs, and the Secretary of Defense has made it absolutely clear what the policy is and is not.

So if—I expect—let me just say, if this report is accurate, I would expect to see a substantial improvement this year—substantial. But I also want to make sure that we study the report in the White House, that the Secretary of Defense studies it, and that we take any appropriate action that might be called for. But I knew nothing about the report until I read the morning press reports, so I can't comment further than that.

Yes.

2000 Census

Q. Mr. President, the census has started, after being politicized over the last couple of years. At some point, should this debate of statistical sampling versus pure enumeration be resolved so that there's a consistency between congressional funding—between Government funding and the congressional redistricting?

The President. Well, of course, it should be. But I think it ought to be resolved in favor of what will give us the most accurate count. Look, the only reason I favored statistical sampling is because the National Science Foundation said that was the most accurate way to

count people and that we undercounted large numbers of Americans in many States last year. I'm for whatever's most accurate.

And I don't think it should be a political deal. I remember one prominent House Member, who should remain unnamed, I think, once suggested to me that I was taking a foolish position here, that I ought to be for hiring 2, 3, 4, million people who were overwhelmingly Democratic voters, in an election year, to go out and knock on doors and count people, that this didn't make any sense. And I said, if he thought that was such good politics, why was he on the other side of it? And he confessed that it was because he thought they would count fewer than were actually there, that the statistical sampling would give us larger numbers.

I don't think this ought to be a political issue, not for us, not for them. We ought to try to find what is the most accurate way. And of course, then these constitutional issues have been raised, but I can't believe that can't be dealt with.

Go ahead, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

White House E-Mail

Q. Sir, what's your response to Congressman Burton on the issue of these E-mails?

The President. Well, I just got the letter, and my understanding is that there will be a response to him, and that it will all be handled in an appropriate way. And I have referred all the questions to the Counsel's Office, but I think they will handle it just fine.

Yes, go ahead.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Q. On prescription drugs, have you had any, in light of the principals here, have you had any conversation with the Republican leadership, either in the House or Senate, on this, and do you have any sense of how close you might be?

The President. I haven't talked to them in the last couple of weeks. But earlier, I did when we were getting the year started off. And I think that we might be able to do something. There is some interest there in doing something.

Now, some of the Republicans said they wanted to do a very limited program only for very low income seniors, and the problem for that, as I said, is that half the people that can't get coverage are above 150 percent of the poverty line. If you've got a substantial drug bill and

you're 75 years old and you're living on \$15,000, that's not all that much money.

Look, this is, again, this is like this gun issue. This is something that, if we want to get an agreement that moves the American people forward and makes this a more just and a more healthy society, we can get an agreement. Everybody wanted an agreement in '96 on welfare reform. We got it. We wanted an agreement on the minimum wage. We got it. We wanted an agreement on the balanced budget in '97, which had substantial tax cuts that benefited middle class American families, and we got it. If they want an agreement, we'll sit down, and we'll work through this, and we'll get an agreement. We can do this.

Q. Will the pressures of an election year work for or against getting something done on prescription drugs?

The President. I think, on balance, in favor, if we all work at it. That is—that's what I think. Do you agree with that? I'm not—see, I haven't given up on Medicare reform yet. I haven't given up on getting big things done here.

Minimum Wage Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you think that most Republicans who do vote for a higher minimum wage will do so confident in the knowledge that you would veto the bill, and that, in fact, they don't really want the higher minimum wage?

The President. First of all, I've always been reluctant in politics to evaluate other people's motives. I think you have to judge their actions and evaluate what they do. I think it's a very hazardous thing, talking about people's motives. But my belief is based on what I have heard said, is, I think some of them may be doing that, and some of them may really believe in both the weakening of worker protections that's in this bill and the shape and structure of their tax cut.

But I have to add up all these tax cuts they're passing, as well as evaluate them on the merits, and as I said, I can't allow one group of American working people to be pitted against another.

I don't think a price for raising the minimum wage should be weakening worker protections for others in the work force.

So they may believe these things, but I don't, and I can't let it happen. I don't think it's right. And so if they believe in the minimum wage, the best thing to do is to send a straightforward minimum wage bill. If they want tax relief for small business, the best thing to do is sit down and negotiate with us, and we'll give it to them, but it will be at a more affordable level in a more targeted way. But it will be very helpful, generous, and positive. So I'd like to see that done.

But it's not just me—the Congress, the Democrats in Congress have offered a small business tax relief package that I thought was quite good and one that wouldn't undermine our goal of paying the debt off and having the funds to save Social Security and Medicare.

Thank you.

Judicial Nomination

Q. Mr. President, do you have anything to say to Congress on the Paez vote?

The President. It's time, he's waited long enough. It's 4 years, and it must be a happy day for all of us. I hope that, and I believe, we have the votes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to minimum wage earner Cheryl Costas; Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; former Senator Bill Bradley; former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; and Richard A. Paez, nominee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. A reporter referred to Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'état in Pakistan on October 12, 1999. A portion of the exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee
Native American Luncheon
March 9, 2000

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. I am delighted to be here today. It's wonderful to see many of you again, and some of you for the first time.

I want to thank Congressman Kennedy and Congressman Kildee for the work they have done to build bridges of cooperation and mutual effort with the tribes of our country.

I want to thank Dick Gephardt for being a truly outstanding leader of our party in the House of Representatives. You know, I'm not on the ballot this year. [Laughter] Most days, I'm okay with it. But when I vote, it will be along with a lot of other Americans whom I believe will make him the next Speaker of the House of Representatives. And it will be a good thing for America when he is, because he's an outstanding man.

I want to thank all the other Members who have come here today to be with you to express their support: George Miller from California, a long time champion of tribal causes; Maxine Waters; Jim Maloney; and Carolyn Maloney.

And I want to thank Nancy Keenan from Montana for running. I knew Nancy Keenan before she ever thought she'd be running for Congress, and way before anybody, including my mother, thought I'd ever be President. So I am delighted to see her here as a candidate. I can tell you, she is, I think, one of the most outstanding candidates we have anywhere in the United States. And she will profoundly enrich the United States Congress if she is elected, as I firmly expect her to be. And she's over there, wearing her "Jeannette Rankin for Congress" button to remind the people of her fellow State, her fellow Montanans, that it's been too long since a woman represented Montana to Congress.

I thank Bobby Whitefeather for the invocation. It was very moving.

Some of you who have visited me in the Oval Office have seen that in front of—there are basically three windows behind the President's desk. And the one directly behind my desk, I have a table on which I keep military coins. And the one just to the right of that is filled with a drum, an Indian drum made by a tribe

in the Southwest when we were debating the NAFTA treaty. And on the face of this drum, there is a Native American, a Native Canadian, and a Native Mexican. And then I have in the drums the eagle feathers I've received from various tribal leaders around the country and other gifts.

I now have a beautiful eagle-feather headdress I received just a couple of weeks ago and a pouch of tobacco which has great symbolic significance, as all of you know. I have a number of other things that I've collected from native peoples in other parts of the world to remind me that these challenges are present everywhere, a necklace made for me by a Native Hawaiian, a baobab nut carved for me by an Australian Aboriginal.

But I have kept the Native American presents in the Oval Office from the beginning of my Presidency for over 7 years now to remind me of my solemn obligation to respect the nation-to-nation relationship that I have done everything I could to nurture, to build up, and to honor.

In my private office in the White House—and every President's got a private office on the second floor of the White House, in different rooms—I have things that mean a lot to me personally. I have an old, old painting of Benjamin Franklin, to remind me of the importance of enterprise and effort and ingenuity, in private as well as public life. I have a picture of my friend Yitzhak Rabin, 10 days before he was killed. I have a picture of Robert Kennedy in Appalachia, to remind me of the obligations of the President to people who aren't so fortunate. And I have one of Edward Curtis' magnificent pictures, this one of a chief named Long Fox. And I look at it every night to remind me of my continuing obligation to keep working until we get this relationship right and until people who live in all of our Native American areas have a chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities, as well.

So it's a great honor for me to be here today. In 1994, I invited all the tribal leaders to come to the White House to meet me, and I learned it was the first time that had been done since

James Monroe was President in 1822. And I was struck by the great good fortune that some tribes have found and by how wisely some of the tribes were investing the earnings that they were making from gaming enterprises. And I was struck that other leaders, literally, people in their tribes took a collection to make sure they could afford the plane ticket. And it reminded me again how very much we still have to do.

Now, we have, I think, a lot of hope in America today, but we also have a lot of work to do. That's the message I tried to get out at the State of the Union Address. One of the things that I've always loved about most of the wisest things I've read coming out of Native American tribes in every part of America is, there's this understanding of the fleeting nature of life and the intergenerational responsibilities we all have. And sometimes—about the only time Americans ever really get in trouble with our politics in this great democracy is when we're too focused on just this minute.

Sometimes if we happen to be mad, as you know, when people are really angry and they have to make a decision, they're more than 50 percent likely to do something wrong. If you're too obsessed with just this minute and you're really, really mad, you might make a mistake. And if you just look at this little slice of time and you're really, really complacent, you will also certainly make a mistake, because change is constant in human existence and human affairs and the life and times of a nation. So that's why I have tried to argue to the Congress and to our country that now is the time to meet the big challenges that America still faces.

And now is the time to meet the big challenges that Native Americans still face. For all the economic prosperity of some tribes, on some reservations the unemployment rate is still 70 percent. A third of American Indians and Alaska Natives still live in poverty and without decent health care. Indians are the victims of twice as many violent crimes. More than 80 percent of the people in Indian country aren't yet connected to the Internet, something which can make a big difference, which is why I ordered some Christmas presents from the Lakota craftspeople at Pine Ridge over the Internet last Christmas, to try to emphasize this as an important thing. There are many people who have found ways to make a living because of the

Internet, even though they're physically distant from the markets they must serve.

The dropout rate from high school of Native American children is still about one-third, and we've got it down; we got the graduation rate of the general population now up almost to 90 percent.

So we have to do something about this. That's why I wanted to highlight Indian country in my first new markets tour. I want to give Americans who have made money in this economy the same incentives to invest in the underdeveloped areas in America that we give them to invest in the underdeveloped areas of Latin America or Africa or Asia, not to encourage Americans to stay away from those places overseas but to look first to the people here at home who need work, who need education, who need technology, who need opportunity. And I think it's important.

I also asked in the State of the Union Address for the largest budget increase, nearly \$1.2 billion, for new and existing programs to assist tribal nations, and many of you mentioned that. I think that's important. And I think it's important that we do have bipartisan support for this, for which I am very grateful—to increase economic opportunity, health care, education, law enforcement; to more than double last year's funding to replace and repair schools on reservations, and to address the growing digital divide; to improve roads and bridges, public safety and health care; increase funding for law enforcement officers, and a substantial increase to the Indian health services. All this is very, very important.

I want to make three points. This is going to be a brief speech. Number one, I want you to help me pass the budget. It matters. And we do have some Republican support for it, which is good, and without it we can't pass it because we're still in the minority.

Number two, I want you to help me pass this new markets initiative, because ever since I've been President we have worked to try to empower the tribes of this country. As nearly as I can tell—I've spent a lot of time, since I was a little boy when I used to go to the Garland County Library in Arkansas, and I'd sit there for hours on end reading histories of the Native American tribes. I've tried to figure out what happened and what went right and what went wrong. And basically—I remember once I read this great biography of Chief Joseph

of the Nez Perce. That was in grade school; I still remember. And he made that incredible statement, "From this day I will fight no more forever." It was a noble, powerful thing. I still remember it; I was 8 or 9 years old when I read it.

But you made that pledge, and you got a bad deal, basically. You gave up your land and your mineral rights and all this, and the Government said that they would do certain things through the BIA to take care of you. And it's not good for people outside your own family and community to act like they're taking care of you. And besides that, usually people don't keep their word, because there's always something else they would rather spend the money on.

And so I say to you, I want this budget to pass, and it's important. But our real goal ought to be the fundamental empowerment of the Native American tribes in this country as envisioned by the Constitution, required by the Supreme Court. That is what I have worked for since the day I got here. And I want you to help me get as much done in the days I have left remaining to get this nation-to-nation relationship right in a way that will allow you all to be lifted up. It is about money but more than money.

The third thing I want to say is—because that's why we're here—this is a political event. The reason we don't fight in America, if you—in a way, we all, all of us citizens promised that we will fight no more forever—is that we have other ways of resolving our differences and pursuing our interests and manifesting our power. But we have to show up at the ballot box to do it.

And the truth is that while we will get some very good Republican support on this budget, and I'm grateful for that, and while there are some members of the other party in the Congress who have represented large numbers of you who have learned about this, and I'm grateful for them, our party has had a consistent, determined leadership position that goes from top to bottom throughout the entire United States Congress that we support the direction that you advocate. That's why you're here today. This is unprecedented. I am grateful for you for being here.

But this is about far more than financial contributions and money. This is about whether people will be organized and energized to go

out and vote, to recognize that when you lay down your weapons, you have to pick up your ballot; that this is not about anybody being taken care of, this is about the right kind of relationship, and it has to be one that focuses on empowerment.

I have been profoundly honored, more than any of you can ever imagine, to have had the opportunity to work with you, to learn what I have learned, to see what I have seen. And I hope I have made a difference. And I am determined to do everything I can, in every day I have left, especially with this new markets initiative, which does have good bipartisan support. But in the end, think about this: The only way we'll ever get this right is if all of you are determined to be heard, determined to vote, determined to speak, determined to educate, determined to be heard, determined to make real what was supposed to happen so long ago and didn't. That's why I think it is so important that you're here today. Your presence here today and your statement increases dramatically the chances that, at last, we will get it right.

When I was down in Selma last weekend celebrating the 35th anniversary of the civil rights march, I was researching the things that various people had said, trying to get ready for it. And I noticed something Martin Luther King said about the end of the whole legacy of slavery. He said, you know, "When finally African-Americans are freed, the white people will be free, too." And as a white southerner, I identified with that. And it's literally true for me. If that hadn't happened in the South, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton never would have been elected President of the United States.

But America still labors under the burden of the terms that we struck with the Native American tribes so long ago and the fact that the deal never worked out in a way that was fair to both sides and honorable. And in some ways, it was maybe doomed from the beginning to have problems. But now we're trying to get it right, and we've made all this progress in the last few years. That's the importance of your being here today. I want you to feel good about this.

And I want you to understand that the rest of us are getting a lot out of this. This is a part of our historical legacy we want to be proud of, and it will never be right until we get it right. You just remember, every time you come

to Washington, every time you lobby for something, every time you try to do something to empower your own people and to help them, you're doing something for the rest of us, too, because this is a country that's supposed to be founded on equal opportunity, equal justice, mutual respect, everybody having a chance, the belief that we all do better when we help each other. That's what this is all about.

So I hope you think I have done something for you. But believe me, I still remember the little boy I was in the library over 40 years ago. You've done a lot more for me, and I thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. in the Phoenix Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bobby Whitefeather, chairman, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota.

Remarks at the One America Meeting With Religious Leaders March 9, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, first of all, welcome to the White House. Welcome to this wonderful East Room, where Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis planned the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore parts of America no one had ever seen, to try to find an ocean that no one thought could be reached by land. In a way, we are here on an even grander expedition, to try to find a place in the human heart no one has ever seen, that many believe we cannot reach in this life. And so I thank you all for coming.

Thank you, Sandy, for your passionate and vigorous leadership. Thank you, Ben Johnson, for telling me that you like your job every day. [Laughter] I was afraid that I had given you an impossible job, you would only hear from people who were disappointed in us, and that you would quit on me. So I'm glad you're happy, and I appreciate you.

Thank you, Maria, for your leadership on this effort. And I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, who have been introduced. And Dr. Franklin and Judy Winston, thank you for being here. And I thank my good friend Congressman Amo Houghton for being here, for proving that this issue is not a partisan issue, and for being in Selma. Didn't we have a grand day Sunday—one of the great days of my life, and many of you were there.

I was thinking, when I was in Selma Sunday and we were walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, what an important role the faith community of that day had in the civil rights movement. And there was an elderly woman there who was 90 years old, who was telling me about

a rabbi who came to march with them. And I think it was Rabbi Heschel, but I'm not sure because she didn't remember, but I think that's who it must have been. And the rabbi had a very, very long beard, and she said, "You know, a lot of us thought God himself had come down to Earth to go with us."

I say that because even today, contemporary surveys show that the American people look to the faith community to lead us forward on this great journey. Some of you have a foot in both worlds, so to speak. I see my great friend Reverend and former Congressman Floyd Flake from New York out there. But all of you must have a foot in this world on this issue.

I also want to comment that if we had had a meeting like this 35 years ago in the White House and it had been a very inclusive meeting, there would have been probably—probably—African-Americans and Hispanics here, and European-Americans, maybe some Native Americans, although we were pretty tone deaf about that back then, and maybe—maybe—one Asian-American. And all the faiths represented here would have been Christians and Jews and maybe Native Americans.

Today we have a large number of Muslims; we have Buddhists here; we have Baha'i members here and perhaps many other faiths. I say that to make this point. I think you can make a compelling argument that getting this right in the United States and putting us in a position to play a role of leadership in the world is not just a racial and ethnic issue anymore; it is also inevitably a religious issue.

If you look around the world where I have been so involved—take my people, the Irish. There's no ethnic difference; all the differences are religious. Or if you look at our continuing efforts in the Middle East, is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? In our attempts to resolve the difficulties between Greece and Turkey and on the island of Cyprus, is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? When you see the continuing efforts to resolve the future of Tibet and the role of the Dalai Lama, is that a religious conflict or an ethnic one?

I'm sure all of you have thought about this more than I have. The most dangerous place in the world today, I think you could argue, is the Indian subcontinent and the line of control in Kashmir. Is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? So I think in order to understand this, even, and make this journey, we have to learn not only more about our ethnic and racial differences but our religious differences. How are we different? How are our world views different; how are they in common? How do we find a way through it all to reaffirm our common humanity?

We know that the three great monotheistic religions that grew out of the sturdy but difficult soil of the Middle East all say that we're supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves; that if we turn aside a stranger, it's as if we turn aside God; that we should not do to others what we would not like to have done to ourselves. And we know that in various ways, all the faiths in this room, however they define man's understanding of the divine, at least recognize the fundamental importance on this Earth of our common humanity.

So I hope that we will be able to talk today about what you're going to do, but I hope beyond that, you will be thinking today about how more and more of this racial and ethnic diversity, both within America and beyond our borders, has an inevitable religious component, and therefore how people of faith speak about it, behave about it, what their body language is, even, will have a profound impact on how this whole thing plays out in 21st century America.

If you heard the State of the Union, you heard me tell the story about the evening we had in this very room that my wife sponsored to observe the millennium, where we had one of the founders of the Internet, the man who sent the first E-mail to his profoundly deaf wife 18 years ago, Vint Cerf, talking with Eric Land-

er, one of our human genome experts. And the beginning of their whole discussion was about how we could never have uncovered the mysteries of the human gene without the revolution in computers, because it made it mechanically, scientifically possible to deal with things that small and that diverse.

But in the end, Lander just said, almost in passing, he said, you know, we're all genetically 99.9 percent the same. And if you get an ethnic group together, the differences among individuals within the group will be greater than the differences between one group and another, between African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans. The differences within the groups, genetically, are greater than the group profile from one group to another. And when I said that, there was almost a groan in the Congress, you know, because the Republicans and Democrats having to recognize they were 99.9 percent the same—[laughter]—it made them physically uncomfortable. You know, you could see that they were having real trouble dealing with this. And I think it made them understand how others have real trouble dealing with it.

But I think—one of the things I think is most interesting is how the advances of science sooner or later seem to confirm the teaching of ancient faiths, the teaching of people who maybe counted with an abacus and wrote in a language now long dead or had no writing at all. This is worth remembering.

So I wanted to make this point to you. I mean, America would have never had any of its great movements for social justice had it not been for leaders of faith—none of them. And the same can be said of many other nations as well. But as we grow more diverse, our opportunity to do good around the world is even greater if we can be good here at home.

But I would argue to you, we will not be able to do it unless we understand that this whole diversity, more than ever before, is not like bringing the preachers and the priests and the rabbis to help heal the soul of the sinful races. Now it's caught up in our entire world view and this multiplicity of faiths we now have in America. And we need to take this whole effort to a different level. And that's why I ask for your help—to begin with, understanding. It's hard to understand this, if you've never lived in a culture different from your own.

So, I've already talked a little more than I meant to, but I wanted you to be thinking about that because I think—you know, none of you are term-limited, except by the Almighty. [Laughter] And so you will be around here doing these kinds of things, presumably, when I am no longer President. But I will predict to you that the work of building one America and dealing with this diversity will more and more require a deeper understanding of the diversity of faiths and the understanding of the relationship between human nature and the divine, and how it's articulated and played out in life, than it ever has before to this day—which means your role will be even more important in the new century than it was in the pivotal struggles of our Nation's past.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the discussion proceeded.]

The President. I would like to say two things very briefly, because I want to hear more from you.

First of all, I do think this whole issue of economic equity and empowerment is important. And I believe there are two elements to that. One is, are people who are poor being given enough support from their Government and from their religious institutions; the other, that I think is the far more important question—and one to which Mr. Flake, among others, has done so much—are we doing enough to empower the poor to support themselves and to take a different path to the future? And that is what this whole new markets effort we're making this year is designed to do. So I hope you'll be involved in that.

Let me just say about the Diallo case, I tried to think of something to say which would be true, relevant, and wouldn't put us all in the position of second-guessing the jury. That is, we didn't—or looking into the hearts and minds of those police officers. That is, we didn't sit there; we didn't hear the evidence. Four African-Americans did, among others. So let's posit. The jury rendered a verdict, and it is the verdict. But the larger fact is that we all have the feeling, I think, that it probably wouldn't have happened, as I said, if it had been a white young man in a white neighborhood under the same facts.

And so the real issue here—and again, we're getting more diverse now, more racially diverse. And another thing, linguistically we're getting

much more diverse. So you're going to have people in neighborhoods that can't even communicate in tense situations with the people whose job it is to enforce the law.

Keep in mind, this also puts more pressure on the police. A lot of them believe that it's not the color of their skin, it's the color of their uniform that causes them to be distrusted and to feel like aliens. So when they get treated that way, then they feel more endangered and more threatened, and they're more likely then to do something.

So one of the things—I didn't say this earlier, but one of the things that I hope will come out of the Diallo case, if you looked at the powerful image his mother has made—she's been quite a grand person, I think, the way she has tried to free herself of what any parent would feel, to go to the larger issues. I just hope that one of the things we can all do, coming out of this, is not only to make sure that the police forces in our diverse communities are themselves properly diverse. That's important, but that's not all there is to it, because you're never going to be having a time when there won't be, let's say, black police officers who have to arrest Hispanics and Asian police officers have to arrest white people or, you know, whatever it is. There's never going to be a time when you're going to have total racial homogeneity between the police and the communities they're working. So I hope that we can come out of this so that within a period of time, a reasonable period of time, you could all stand up and say, whatever happens, "I don't believe it would have happened differently if the police and the person involved had, themselves, been of a different race." That's what I want you to be able to say. That's the big issue here.

I wish I could bring that boy back for his mother and his friends, to give him the life he should have had. But I can't do that. You can't do that. And we can't be in a position where we second-guess a jury that sat there and, I believe, honestly made their best judgment. And we didn't hear all those facts. But we do know the larger truth, and that's what I hope will come out of this, a real determination—and a lot of you can have an impact on this in your communities, to bring the police and the community together and role-play this, game this out. This is a matter of training as

well as tone. It's a matter of disciplined work as well as the heart.

You know, you'd never think about sending a police force out unless they've trained in how to use their guns, unless they knew how to put on their bulletproof vests, unless they knew how to give someone their Miranda warnings, unless they knew these things. You have to train for this. This is not just a matter of having a good heart. This is work. This is discipline.

How many times have you had to remind yourself of that in your own work? Not just enough to have good intentions, you've got to train and work for this.

I've talked more about this than I meant to, but this is a big deal. We'll never get this race issue right unless we get the police-community relations issue right. And most of these police officers—listen, they get up every day; they put on those uniforms; and they've got their lives on the line. And they—most of them really do try to do the right thing, in a decent way and an honorable way. And we shouldn't lose sight of that. And we've got to train for this so that we don't have these Diallo-type cases again.

Yes, sir. I promised to call on you. And in the back there, that gentleman.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me be very brief here. Number one, we have this national effort to reduce violence against children, especially in the schools. And we've got a lot of things going; it's a subject for another moment. If you would like to be involved in it, if any of you would like to be involved in it, if you would give to Ben or Maria a card or address or something, we'll get you involved. We've got a lot of things going on here, because there is much more we can do.

Secondly, on the perception of the United States around the world, first of all, I think sometimes people think we can do more than we can, which, when we don't do it, therefore, gives us a negative perception. And then sometimes, we try to do things, that if we do it in the wrong way, we're seen as being arrogant or high-handed. And then, we are having our own debates in this country, which you saw in the debate in the Senate over the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, for example, about what the role of the United States and the world should be.

So I think that some of this misperception is inevitable. But one of the reasons I'm about

to go to the Indian subcontinent is that I want to try to minimize—if people are mad at us, at least I want them to have an accurate perception. [*Laughter*] If they think we have a certain policy or a certain attitude, I want them to have an accurate view of what that policy or attitude is. And it's a constant effort, but I appreciate that.

I wonder if—I promised this gentleman in the back I'd call on him, but we have some people here from different religious traditions, from East Asia or South Asia who have not spoken. I wonder if any of them would like to be heard before we go.

Go ahead, sir.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. First of all, I strongly support what was done in South Africa. And I have tried on various occasions to do that for the Japanese who were interned here during the war, for the African-Americans that were subject to the Tuskegee experiments. And I wish you would work with our people, and let's try to give some shape to what your thinking is.

I do believe that it's—I was thrilled that you mentioned that old debate between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, because when people look at John Adams, they sort of have this preconceived notion of what he was like and what Jefferson was like. You would think that Jefferson was arguing for passion, and Adams was arguing for reason. And it was actually the other way around, which is maybe just their own form of denial, who knows? [*Laughter*]

But anyway, it was a great debate. And I agree that this is fundamentally a problem of the heart.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me say, I want to have a chance to greet you all individually, so we're going to have to break up. I do want to say, Bishop, that I don't believe I'll ever forget that remark that without followers, a leader is just a person out on a walk. [*Laughter*] Without you and some of our friends of the last couple years, I would have been taking a lot of walks. [*Laughter*] So I thank you for that.

I want to end this on a high note, if I might, since we're here talking about one America. After a 4-year wait, Judge Richard Paez, a Hispanic judge from California, of the Mormon faith, and Marsha Berzon were confirmed by

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the United States Senate today. They got the highest rating by the American Bar Association, and they added to the diversity of the bench. This week Judge Julio Fuentes of New Jersey was also confirmed. So I think maybe we're, by fits and starts, moving toward our one America. And we will work with you more.

I look forward to seeing you all individually. Thank you very much.

Oh, wait. We've got to have a benediction, and this is my fault. Tell them to stop the music. [Laughter]

Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste. I would like to have Jake Swamp from the Mohawks lead us in closing prayer.

The President. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sanford Cloud, Jr., president and

chief executive officer, National Conference for Community and Justice; John Hope Franklin, former Chair, and Judith A. Winston, former Executive Director, President's Initiative on Race; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research; and Bishop Chandler Owens, Church of God in Christ. The President also referred to West African immigrant Amadou Diallo, who died after being shot in the Bronx Borough of New York City by four police officers, who were acquitted of all criminal charges on February 25 in Albany, NY; and Mr. Diallo's mother, Kadiadou Diallo. Ms. Echaveste referred to Jake Swamp, founder, Tree of Peace Society. The conference was formally entitled, "The President's One America Meeting With Religious Leaders."

Statement on Debt Reduction

March 9, 2000

Today we reached another historic landmark in our fiscal turnaround. For the first time in 70 years, the U.S. Treasury Department completed a debt buyback. This buyback of debt is a striking reminder of the extraordinary progress we have made in putting America's fiscal house in order. In the last 7 years, we moved from the largest deficit in history to the largest surplus in history.

America is now on track to pay down nearly \$300 billion in debt by the end of this year and to be debt-free by 2013. In this new era of surpluses, these debt buybacks will help us continue to pay down the debt, save money for American taxpayers, and lift the burden of interest payments off our children and grandchildren.

Statement on Senate Action on Judicial Nominations

March 9, 2000

Today the Senate finally confirmed, after 4 years, Judge Richard Paez and, after 2 years, Marsha Berzon to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Both of these candidates bring extraordinary experience and diversity to the bench. Both received the American Bar Association's highest rating. Both were approved by solid bipartisan majorities today, but unfortunately both were forced to wait far too long to receive votes.

This week the Senate also confirmed Judge Julio Fuentes of New Jersey, who becomes the first Hispanic to serve on the Third Circuit. Judge Fuentes had to wait a year for his vote, but when it finally came, he was approved unanimously by a vote of 93 to 0.

I want to thank the Senate for moving this process forward. But I want to repeat that dozens of qualified judicial nominees still await confirmation. Meanwhile, caseloads rise and

backlogs mount. These fine Americans have offered themselves to serve our country—and they are entitled to an up-or-down vote. Election year politics should not be used as an excuse to slow down the confirmation process.

This is a good day for our country. But we must keep going. It's what our nominees deserve and what justice demands.

Statement on House Action on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 9, 2000

The minimum wage must be raised, but not with a bill that stacks the deck against America's working families. This bill repeals key overtime protections, could reduce pension coverage for many families, and includes risky tax giveaways that threaten our prosperity and the future of Social Security and Medicare. Once again, Republicans in the House of Representatives have

demonstrated that they would rather fight for special interests than give working families the raise they deserve.

I will veto the bill Republicans in the House passed tonight if it comes to my desk. Congress should send me a bill I can sign: a clean, straightforward bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Federal Advisory Committees

March 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (Public Law 92-463; 5 U.S.C., App. 2, 6(c)), I hereby submit the *Twenty-seventh Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees*, covering fiscal year 1998.

In keeping with my commitment to create a more responsive government, the executive branch continues to implement my policy of maintaining the number of advisory committees within the ceiling of 534 required by Executive Order 12838 of February 10, 1993. Accordingly, the number of discretionary advisory committees (established under general congressional authorizations) was again held to substantially below that number. During fiscal year 1998, 460 discretionary committees advised executive branch officials. The number of discretionary committees supported represents a 43 percent reduction in the 801 in existence at the beginning of my Administration.

Through the planning process required by Executive Order 12838, the total number of advisory committees specifically mandated by statute also continues to decline. The 388 such groups

supported at the end of fiscal year 1998 represents a modest decrease from the 391 in existence at the end of fiscal year 1997. However, compared to the 439 advisory committees mandated by statute at the beginning of my Administration, the net total for fiscal year 1998 reflects nearly a 12 percent decrease since 1993.

The executive branch has worked jointly with the Congress to establish a partnership whereby all advisory committees that are required by statute are regularly reviewed through the legislative reauthorization process and that any such new committees proposed through legislation are closely linked to compelling national interests. Furthermore, my Administration will continue to direct the estimated costs to fund required statutory groups in fiscal year 1999, or \$45.8 million, toward supporting initiatives that reflect the highest priority public involvement efforts.

Combined savings achieved through actions taken during fiscal year 1998 to eliminate all advisory committees that are no longer needed, or that have completed their missions, totaled \$7.6 million. This reflects the termination of 47 committees, originally established under both

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congressional authorities or implemented by executive agency decisions. Agencies will continue to review and eliminate advisory committees that are obsolete, duplicative, or of a lesser priority than those that would serve a well-defined national interest. New committees will be established only when they are essential to the conduct of necessary business, are clearly in the public's best interests, and when they serve to enhance Federal decisionmaking through an open and collaborative process with the American people.

I urge the Congress to work closely with the General Services Administration and each department and agency to examine additional opportunities for strengthening the contributions made by Federal advisory committees.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 9, 2000.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at a Dinner for Governor Mel Carnahan

March 9, 2000

Well, thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking Smith and Elizabeth for having us into this magnificent, beautiful place, for the Democrats again and specifically for Mel Carnahan; and for being such good friends and for being willing to be called Smith Barney and Bailey Smith and other names. *[Laughter]* I'm sure there's a reward for you in heaven for enduring those slings and arrows.

I want to thank the other Senators who have come here to express their support for you. I see Senator Boxer back there, Senator Murray, and Senator Cleland. I think Senator Harkin is here. There he is. And Senator Wellstone and Senator Daschle were here. I don't know if they're still here or not. But this is quite an outstanding turnout of your prospective colleagues.

I also want all of you to know that I have a different take on this than everybody—this race—than everybody here who is not from Missouri, because Mel and Jean Carnahan have been friends of mine for along time. Robin has worked with me, and their children I've had a chance to know. I want you to know that you did a good thing tonight, contributing to his campaign, because he was a great Governor and because he's a good man and a good friend and because he'll be a good Senator.

I'm for him in part because when only my mother thought I could be elected President in 1991—and my wife, as she never lets me forget—*[Laughter]*—Mel Carnahan was a Lieutenant Governor involved in a very difficult pri-

mary for Governor. He had all he could say grace over, and he still endorsed me for President in the Missouri primary. It was a brave and good thing to do, and I'll never forget it.

And I was the Governor of Arkansas. Missouri is my neighbor. I was raised idolizing Harry Truman. When I was a young man here in the Senate, I worked for Senator Fulbright and got to watch Stuart Symington up close. And I may be the only person here who's actually known Senator Ashcroft for more than 20 years, besides Mel. We served together as attorney general and as Governor, and we always had a very cordial, personal relationship.

But I can tell you that he actually believes all those things that the Republicans say. *[Laughter]* And I say that not to make you laugh but to say, you know, one of the things I don't like in a lot of these campaigns is, we get into all this name-calling and demonization. We act like, you know, what's really bad about our opponents is, they're doing these bad things, and they don't really believe them. That's not true about him. *[Laughter]*

We can laugh about this, but that's what they think about us. They think we're always playing to some crowd or another. And I think it's important to point out that most of us on both sides actually believe in what we're doing. And that's what makes the political system work. It's what gives the political system integrity. The main reason that I want to see campaign finance reform, since I'm not a candidate for anything anymore, and the main reason I really respect

Smith—because, you know, if we have campaign finance reform, it'll cost him a little less money, but then he'll have to open his home and have evenings where we actually debate the issues, instead of hustle you for money. [Laughter]

But the major reason we need to reform the campaign finance system, in my judgment, is that it's almost all the money goes to voter communication, and it's wrong to have unequal levels of voter communication. The people need to hear a full debate on both sides and have a full ability to evaluate the personalities of candidates on all sides in order to make good decisions. And the second main reason we need it is that the people in office and the people who want to get in office have to spend too much time raising money, and they're exhausted all the time, and they don't have enough time to read and think and talk to other people.

I would say the third reason you need it is the reason all the press says, which is, you know, the corrupting influence of big money. The truth is that over 90 percent of the time—way over 90 percent of the time—the people in both parties in the Senate and in the House vote their convictions. And way over 90 percent of the time the people that give you money never ask you for anything, except to keep in touch with them and discuss the issues and talk about things and listen to them if they've got something on their minds.

Anyway, to get back to the point I was making, I know both these men. And I don't have to demonize John Ashcroft. When we were young men together, we worked as attorney general together; we worked as Governor. I had a very cordial relationship with him. But he believes in how he's voted in the Senate, and I don't. And we should stop pretending that it doesn't make any difference who wins, or that it's all some game dominated by who gives money and all that. That's not true.

There are two great philosophical differences of opinion today, battling their way through Washington. They won in the elections of '94. We won when we beat the contract on America. The people ratified our decision in '96. We got together briefly in the welfare reform bill and in the Balanced Budget Act of '97. Then our approach was ratified in the '98 election. And then we won again when I vetoed their huge tax bill in '99, which would have undermined our ability to save Social Security and Medicare,

balance the budget, pay off the debt, and keep investing in our future.

But we have now had—we've got an ongoing debate here about what kind of country we're going to be, what our responsibilities to each other are, and where we're going. Now, I know this man very well, Carnahan. I know him very well. We worked together for years. I went to Missouri more than any other State when we were promoting welfare reform because he did the best job of any Governor in America in requiring people who were able-bodied to get training and to go into the workplace and getting big businesses to help him, but also caring about the welfare of poor people, to make sure that the children had health care and the people had a decent place to live and the child care was there and the transportation was there. He did it right. And if he's in the Senate, he will do it right. This is a very important thing.

I can also tell you that for Democrats, because we believe in activist Government, it's very important that we keep a certain number of innovative Governors coming into the U.S. Senate all the time, because they understand how this stuff works. And it's important that you have people from our part of the country elected to the Senate, so that we can defend it when we have to take tough votes on sensible gun safety measures, for example.

It's not a hard vote for people who have no significant rural voters, no significant percentage for getting the NRA mailings all the time. It'll be a hard vote for him. And he'll take it, and he'll do the right thing, but then he'll know how to defend it, which is very, very important.

So all these Senate races are very important this year. All these House races are important. But I want those of you who don't know Mel Carnahan to know you have an extraordinary opportunity here. I know this guy. He is a good man. He is a great friend. He was there with me when I was practically all alone and running fifth in the polls in New Hampshire. You want somebody that will stay hitched in the tough times and take a decision when it's not self-evidently the right thing to do.

He has been a fabulous Governor, and you heard him reel off the issues. I just want you to know this is a huge deal. These judicial votes today were just one example. Senator Ashcroft voted to kill the African-American State Supreme Court judge in Missouri, Ronnie White,

and I believe did not fairly represent his position as a judge on criminal justice issues.

But there is an honest division here. You don't have to hate anybody to take the other one's part. But of all the races we've got going where we're trying to elect a new person to the Senate, this guy has a unique ability to make a contribution to the Senate, to the policies and the politics of the Senate, that no one else does.

You did a good thing in coming here. I hope you'll ask other people to give to his campaign.

I think he's going to win, and all of us need to do whatever we can to help him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Smith and Elizabeth Bagley; and Governor Carnahan's wife, Jean, and daughter, Robin. Governor Carnahan was a candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri.

Remarks Announcing the Initiative To Reduce Air Travel Delays

March 10, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to thank Secretary Slater and Jane Garvey and the airline executives who are here, the representatives of the airline pilots, the air traffic controllers, and the other aviation leaders who have made a truly remarkable team for this announcement.

Minimum Wage Legislation

Before I talk about the air travel issue, because this is my only opportunity to meet with the press today, and because I had the unusual good fortune of letting them parade in ahead of us, here—I actually tried to get Mark Knoller [CBS Radio] to do this announcement, but he refused. [Laughter]

I want to say a few words about a very down-to-Earth issue, the proposal to raise the minimum wage. I have called for a simple one dollar increase in the minimum wage to help millions of families. Last night, dozens of Republicans joined us in forming a majority to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years.

But unfortunately, the leadership turned that commonsense act into a dead letter by insisting they would only have a minimum wage increase if we turn back overtime protections for over a million workers and use the bill to give a large tax cut, which both disproportionately benefits the wealthiest Americans and would put our prosperity at risk by making it impossible for us to continue to pay down the debt and to save Social Security and Medicare.

Now, I think the American people question why Congress can't do something as simple as raising the minimum wage without loading it up with special favors. And I think it's a good

question. The right answer is to send me a clean bill, a bill simple and clear, that could fit on one side of one piece of paper. In fact, if you look at it, that's exactly what our minimum wage bill does. It's not very big, not very complicated. And I hope that we can pass it.

I'm looking forward to working with the Congress. I have not given up on this, and I have been given some encouraging signals that we might yet be able to reach an agreement. So I will keep working on it.

Air Travel Delays

Now, let me again welcome all the representatives of the transportation industry here. And let me say a special word of appreciation to Senator Jay Rockefeller for his longstanding leadership in this area and his interest. I think it's quite important that we have airline efficiency, because it's almost impossible for someone as tall as Senator Rockefeller to be comfortable on an airline—[laughter]—and we want to make sure he can at least always be on time. [Laughter] He has worked on this for a long time.

You mentioned, Secretary Slater mentioned the meeting we had in Everett, Washington. When I took office, the airline industry was in trouble. We've all worked very hard for the successes of the last 7 years, and all the actors in the industry have.

I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to someone who is not here, Vice President Gore, who headed our Commission on Airline Safety and Security. It was part of our reinventing Government effort, and I thank him for

his efforts, and all the people who worked on that endeavor.

We know that delays pile up as flights increase and thunderstorms snarl the skies. We know, with springtime coming, that we don't want to forget, as Rodney said, that last year's summer storms were the worst, or some of the worst, on record. The air traffic control system couldn't respond fast enough. More than 1,200 aircraft were late every day last summer. Delays rose by 22 percent last year overall. It's not good for travelers; it's not good for the airline industry; and it's not good for the overall economy.

Of course, when it comes to air travel, safety is the most important thing. In severe weather, flights will be canceled or delayed for safety reasons, and passengers wouldn't have it any other way. But as we work to keep the travel as safe as it can be, we should also do everything we can to make it as efficient as it can be.

After last summer's record delays, the Federal Aviation Administration put together an extraordinary partnership with the airline industry, the pilots, the workers who keep the planes in the air, the air traffic controllers who bring them home safe. Together, they developed a faster, more efficient response to storms. And they came here today to brief me on the improvements we can all expect this summer.

First, better communications will let pilots and passengers know promptly whether they can expect a delay measured in minutes or in hours. Second, centralized air traffic decisionmaking will let us respond better to the really big storms that can stretch the length of the east coast or from Houston to the Great Lakes. Third, new technology will help FAA and airline experts use airspace more efficiently, detect storms sooner, and keep runways working even in bad weather. Fourth, FAA and airline representatives will share information several times a day, working off the same state-of-the-art weather forecast. And finally, next month the FAA will open a website with up-to-the-minute weather information for consumers.

I want to thank all the organizations represented here for working together. And I thank all the Members of Congress who have supported these reforms.

Let me also mention that Congress is close to finalizing the FAA reauthorization bill. I know it's important to Secretary Slater, because he sent me a memo about it yesterday. *[Laughter]*

This will provide ample funding to upgrade facilities and equipment at airports and air traffic control centers. If we want to minimize delays and maximize safety, we need this FAA reauthorization and this funding. I think everybody here who's done a lot of air travel knows that we need to upgrade the facilities and the equipment and the air traffic control centers.

But I am concerned that too little funding will be available for air traffic control operations. That's the bedrock of efficiency and safety. And although the bill contains some first steps forward, it doesn't go far enough toward the system-wide reform we need.

We must bring the air traffic control system and the way it's managed into the 21st century. We have the safest air travel in the world, but as more and more Americans take to the air, we need to make our system as efficient as it safe. The FAA expects passenger traffic to rise by more than 50 percent in the next 10 years. Freight traffic will almost double in the same period. Busier skies means we have to work harder to keep our skies safe and to keep planes flying on time.

So today I'm directing the FAA to develop a plan for broader reform of the air traffic control system and to report back to me in 45 days, building from fundamental principles. America's 21st century air traffic control system should provide 21st century high-tech service. The system must work better with its customers, the commercial airlines, and others who pay for the system. It must be able to look beyond next year's budget cycle and fund new technology we need over a multiyear period.

We must meet these challenges in a way that helps, not harms, everyone who is a part of the air traffic control system. And we must always keep safety at the top of our agenda. With other Government agencies and the private sector, I ask the FAA to look ahead to our ultimate goal, putting together a seamless, state-of-the-art system from coast to coast.

Now, until we work out a way to get Mother Nature to cooperate, storms, delays, and cancellations will always be with us. And the American people understand that. But they also understand that if we can photograph and analyze weather patterns from space, we ought to be able to tell passengers why they're delayed and for how long. If we can guide the space shuttle into orbit and back, we ought to be able to guide planes around thunderstorms safely.

Mar. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

We can do a better job. Starting next summer, with the help of everyone here today, we will.

Again, let me say, Secretary Slater and to Jane Garvey and to all the people standing with me and all of you sitting out in the audience who had anything to do with this, this is the way our country ought to work in a lot of other contexts. I thank you for what you have done.

I think we have to do more. But this summer a lot of people will benefit from the enormous efforts you have made, and I am very, very grateful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Statement on the United Negro College Fund's Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign

March 10, 2000

Today the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) announced the creation of its Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign, a technology initiative that will bring digital opportunity to historically black colleges across the Nation. Through a \$50 million contribution by Microsoft and key commitments from IBM and AT&T, UNCF will help empower students, faculty, and staff at all 39 UNCF member colleges by strengthening technology infrastructure and improving computer access. I applaud the creation of this partnership and strongly support the efforts behind it.

While computer and Internet access has exploded in recent years, America continues to face a "digital divide"—a gap between those who have access to information age tools and the skills to use them and those who don't.

We cannot allow unequal access to deepen divisions along the lines of race, income, education level, and geography. I believe we can use technology to help make the American dream a reality for more citizens, and that is why I have made the effort to bring digital opportunity to all Americans a top administration priority.

My administration is committed to doing its part to ensure that all Americans benefit from opportunities created by information technology. But the Government can not and should not do this alone. That is why I will lead a new markets trip the week of April 9th—designed to mobilize significant private and public efforts to close the digital divide. Efforts like the Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign are inspiring examples of what can be done in partnership to meet this important goal.

The President's Radio Address

March 11, 2000

Good morning. In just a few days, Congress will begin to write the next year's budget. This is an important challenge we in Washington take up every year, with important consequences for the American people. Today I want to talk to you about the outcome I seek for our families and our future.

I've always thought you could tell a lot about people's priorities by what they do first. For me, above all, that means maintaining the fiscal discipline that has brought us to this point of unprecedented prosperity, with 21 million new

jobs, the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the longest economic expansion in history. It means staying on the path to make America debt-free by 2013. It means saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare, modernizing it with a voluntary prescription drug benefit that so many of our seniors need and too few can afford. And it means continuing to put the education of our children first, with higher standards, more and better trained teachers, after-school and summer school programs, modernizing our schools.

These are my first priorities. I think they're most Americans' first priorities. But it seems the congressional majority has hardly given them a second thought. Before Republican leaders have put a single penny toward strengthening Social Security or Medicare, before they put a single penny toward a prescription drug benefit, before they put a single penny toward educating our children, they've allocated nearly half a trillion dollars to risky tax cuts. More than half our money already spent—and not a penny on our most pressing priorities.

Unfortunately, the majority tried to take us down this road before. Last year, they went for one big tax cut with one big grab. This year, they're doing it piece by piece, one tax cut after another. Just this week, we saw Republican leaders attach special-interest tax breaks to what should have been a simple raise in the minimum wage. Now, all these cuts together add up to a serious threat to Social Security and Medicare. They would make it impossible to pay down the debt by 2013 or make vital investments in education, fighting crime, protecting public health and the environment, and other urgent national priorities.

As the budget process begins, I urge Republican leaders to change their course and steer clear of a fiscal dead end. It's wrong for America. It was wrong last year, and it's wrong this year. Let's do first things first.

I urge Congress to write a budget that puts aside enough funds from our hard-won surplus to eliminate the debt by 2013; to write a budget that strengthens and modernizes Medicare with a prescription drug benefit; to write a budget that extends the solvency of Social Security; one that invests in education, extends health coverage to more American families, and meets other pressing priorities.

Of course, Congress still has plenty of time to get its work done right and get it done on time. I hope it will do so. If Congress takes care of first things first, we can also give targeted tax relief to America's families: a tax credit to help pay for college or save for retirement; a tax credit to help care for aging or ailing loved ones; a tax relief to reduce the marriage penalty; tax relief to reward work and family with an expanded earned-income tax credit; an increased tax credit for child care expenses.

I will work with any Member of either party to get these things done. We can get them done, but only in the context of a realistic, responsible, balanced budget, one that maintains our fiscal discipline and makes the most of this great moment of prosperity. Now, that's a budget that makes sense, one that works for working Americans.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Interview With Sam Donaldson of ABC's "This Week"

March 10, 2000

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Donaldson. Mr. President, thanks very much for letting us come over and talk to you today.

The President. You're welcome, Sam.

Mr. Donaldson. You know, among your top legislative priorities, everyone understands, is gun control. You want trigger safety locks; you want a 3-day waiting period for the sale at gun shows; you want photo ID's, among other things. Going to be tough to get?

The President. It's tough to get. We were able to get the Brady bill passed in '93 and the assault weapons ban in '94. And unfortu-

nately, several of the Members who voted for those were defeated because they did. But it's a safer country because of that. We've had half a million people who couldn't buy handguns because they were felons, fugitives, or stalkers, and we've got the gun death rate down to a 30-year low.

So I think nearly everybody who has looked at it thinks we ought to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks on the guns, and ban the importation of these large ammunition clips. I hope we can do that.

Mr. Donaldson. The NRA says that the gun manufacturers have trigger locks now. They say

all of the guns being manufactured in this country, the handguns, have the trigger locks. So what's the big deal?

The President. They don't all, actually; most of them do now. We've had good—we've worked with a lot of the gun manufacturers, and they deserve a lot of credit. For the first time, they really showed some genuine independence from the NRA line that nothing ever needs to be done, ever. And they came up with the gun—the child trigger locks.

What our legislation would do would be to require the remaining manufacturers to do it. I would also like to see them make those available to retrofit guns, because a lot of people who have guns now in their homes would like to buy them, would like to protect them in that way. But I think that it would be important.

But closing the gun show loophole is really important because a lot of people who now know they will be checked in gun stores can go to the urban flea markets or to the gun shows and buy a gun and have no background check whatever. And I think it's a big mistake.

Mr. Donaldson. Well, of course the NRA says, "We're for that. We're for an instant check at gun shows." And they say, "The Congress appropriated money for you to put into the system so that the insta-check, just like our credit cards, can go through." And they say, "Why hasn't he done it?"

The President. Well, not all the records are subject to insta-check. For example, we offered, by the way—most of their allies in Congress want a 24-hour, not a 72-hour waiting period at gun shows. And there's something to be said for that if it's a weekend show and the people are moving on to somewhere else, and all that. So what we offered them was, okay, 24 hours for every one you can check within 24 hours, but over 90 percent of them you can check in 24 hours. But for those you can't check because of some problem with it, we ought to be able to hold them up to 3 days, because the ones that don't check out within 24 hours are 20 times more likely to be rejected because of a problem in the background.

So I think we can work this out. You know, when I brought the Congress in there the other day, the Republican leader in the House, Mr. Hyde, and the Democratic leader, Mr. Conyers, had competing proposals that were much closer together than the rhetoric of the debate would

suggest. So I'm still hoping we can work this out.

I think it's fine to let the ones go in 24 hours if you can do the check. But if there is some problem with the records, getting the records, there ought to be some provision to deposit the gun in a neutral place, like the local sheriff's office or something, and finish the check.

Mr. Donaldson. When it comes to photo ID's, the NRA says what they say of a lot of your proposals. That is, the criminals are not going to line up; the criminals are not going to come in and say, "Take my picture; here's my picture." It's the law-abiding citizen that you're going to penalize, who is not going to misuse that gun, with all of this stuff.

The President. First of all, under my proposal, they would only do it as they buy new handguns, where they would get a photo ID license for showing that you passed a background check and they'd taken a safety course.

Now, therefore that would make it even less likely that people with criminal backgrounds would try to buy handguns. And I think over the long run, licensing handgun owners is no more unreasonable than licensing people that drive cars, licensing people that do any number of other things, licensing people who want to go hunting or fishing. I don't think there's a thing in the world wrong with it, and I think it will help make us a safer society.

Mr. Donaldson. I can't help but remember the little dust-up you had with my colleague Charlie Gibson, who said, "Well, how about registration? I mean, why aren't you for that?" Have you changed your mind about that since Kayla Rolland and these other terrible tragedies?

The President. Well, one of the things that I think—the argument for registration, of course, is that it would make it easier to trace these guns through their various incarnations, and I think you can make a strong argument for it. What I have said is that—look, I can't even pass a bill closing the gun show loophole through this Congress. If the people want more done, I think that should be heavily debated in this Presidential election.

The Vice President and Governor Bush are from dramatically different positions on the whole issue of guns, and I think it ought to be a big issue in the Presidential elections, so—because it's one of the things that will determine the shape of 21st century America—how we

handle safety, whether we keep bringing crime down.

But right now, I think it will be a great thing if we can close the gun show loophole, ban the big ammunition clips, require the child safety locks, and require licensing for new handgun owners, including photo ID's and Brady background checks and a training course, safety training course.

Mr. Donaldson. But, of course the gun that killed Kayla Rolland, I think it was a .32. Apparently, it had been in the home, for some time, of the little boy who used it. None of this would have stopped that.

The President. Well, one thing that might do something that—was another provision that I asked the Congress to pass—that I asked them again to pass—which is to impose upon adults some responsibility for gun crimes committed by young children if the adults knowingly or recklessly permitted the child to get ahold of the gun. I think that should be a part of the law.

Now, some people say, “Oh, we shouldn't federalize the criminal laws; the States ought to do this.” About 17 States have. So what I would—maybe if they don't want to do that, we ought to give some States some incentives to adopt these laws on their own. But it is wrong for adults to leave guns lying around that 6-year-olds can use to kill other 6-year-olds or to kill themselves, which is what most normally happens.

If people are going to have handguns in their homes, they should be rigorously secured and protected. And if they don't have these child trigger locks because they bought them before the child trigger locks were provided, they ought to have to lock them up someplace where the kids can't reach.

In addition—we're talking mostly now about killing. But the accidental gun death rate of children under 15 is 9 times higher in the United States—9 times higher—than that of the next 24 biggest industrial countries combined. So I think there ought to be some responsibility on adults to keep these guns away from children. And that would make a difference.

Juvenile Gun Offenders

Mr. Donaldson. By the way, the last time you and I talked about this was after Jonesboro, and one of those shooters there was, I think, 11 years of age. Now we have a child 6 years

of age. What should we do about that child, that little kid?

The President. Well, first, I think that what happens to this child in terms of custody—who has custody over this child; where is this child going to go—ought to be very carefully debated. Apparently, he was in miserable circumstances. I think that in addition to that, he's clearly below the age of criminal responsibility.

Mr. Donaldson. We can't punish that 6-year-old, can we?

The President. No, but he—human nature being what it is, he will probably wind up punishing himself as time goes on and he comes to realize what he's done.

Mr. Donaldson. And do you think people, as he grows up, will point at him and say, “That was the boy who shot that little 6-year-old many years ago”?

The President. If they know. But even if they don't, he'll know. He'll know. And one of two things will happen, unless he's very fortunate. Either he will grow up with no conscience because he won't be able to live with it, and then he'll repeat bad acts, or he'll grow up consumed with guilt for something that was beyond his ability to understand when he was 6. So that child is going to need a lot of help and needs to be in a more constructive upbringing.

But look, all of our sympathies are with the child that was killed and with her family and to try and prevent that. But the idea that 6-year-olds can get ahold of guns is outrageous, and I think the adults should be held responsible in some way.

President's Experience With Guns

Mr. Donaldson. By the way, do you own a gun today? You used to, I know.

The President. Yes, but I don't have them here in the White House. I have owned—when I was a boy, I had a .22, when I was 12. And then I had a shotgun. And I've owned a handgun or two that have been given to me. But I've never kept them in the residence where my daughter slept.

Mr. Donaldson. Do you still shoot them today?

The President. No. When—I've gone hunting a few times since I've been President, but I've always just gone with friends and borrowed a shotgun when I got there.

Mr. Donaldson. Recently?

The President. When was the last time I went duck hunting? A couple of years ago, I guess.

Mr. Donaldson. Well, we started by—

The President. Let me say that, you know, I grew up in this culture. I've never called for banning guns, banning hunting. I've never been against sport shooting. I believe that people ought to have the right to do these things. I even had a good relationship with the NRA at one time when I was Governor. They did a lot of good things in my State. They helped train people in gun safety courses, young hunters, for example. They helped to resolve property disputes in rural areas of my State, where we were worried about people hunting in various areas.

I just think that their knee-jerk reaction to any gun safety measure is wrong. That's what I think is wrong. We can't pretend that America can have no prevention, that the only answer here is just to find whoever does something wrong and throw the book at them, but the last thing in the world we'll do is have any prevention. We were all raised to believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And this is the only area where we're told there must be no prevention. I just think that's wrong.

National Rifle Association

Mr. Donaldson. Well, sir, you may have once had a good relationship with the NRA, but you don't have it today. I'm sure you're aware of the new television ads that they are running—Charlton Heston, himself, very effective, looks in the camera—and let me just read a portion of one of them. He says, "Bill Clinton says the NRA stands in the way of sensible gun safety. But it was the NRA who pioneered the criminal background check on gun buyers, not Bill Clinton." He goes on, but he concludes this way, sir: "Mr. Clinton, when what you say is wrong, that's a mistake. When you know it's wrong, that's a lie." Now, that's tough. That's tough, sir.

The President. Here's the—let me—true or false: The NRA was opposed to the Brady law. True.

True or false: The NRA was opposed to the assault weapons ban. True.

True or false: The NRA happily ended the congressional careers of brave Members of Congress of my party who stood up to them and

voted for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. True.

Now, they can say they pioneered background checks. You know, that's a little sleight of hand, artful wording designed to cover up the fact that they were opposed to the Brady bill. They were opposed to measures that are necessary to, in fact, close the gun show loophole. They're saying, "If you can do an insta-check, it's okay with us. So we don't mind you checking, as long as we're not put to any inconvenience whatever. But the public safety is not nearly as important as our convenience."

Well, you know, we all go through these airport metal detectors all the time. And a lot of us have to go through two, three, four times if we have a money clip or something. And it's a minor inconvenience, but we like it because we all get to stay alive that way. My view is, I have not asked the hunters and sports people of this country or the sellers at these gun shows to undertake inordinate inconvenience but some little inconvenience to preserve the public safety and to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

And you know, all this sort of wounded rhetoric by the NRA, given how ruthlessly brutal they were to Members who were brave enough to vote for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban is—these crocodile tears, I don't think it will wash with the voters—even with Moses reading the script.

Mr. Donaldson. I've been around a long time. I'm old enough to remember people calling Harry Truman, when he sat there in this office, a Communist and a lot of things. But I don't recall a series of well-produced television ads which called the President of the United States a liar. How do you feel about that?

The President. It's the way they've treated me for more than a decade. I remember in 1991, the NRA lobbyist in Arkansas came up to me and wanted me to sign a bill that would have prohibited any city in Arkansas from having gun control legislation stronger than the State had. Little Rock, at the time, was being deluged by these gang members coming back with serious weapons and cop-killer bullets. They didn't want cop-killer bullets banned—remember this is the same NRA. True or false: They didn't want cop-killer bullets banned. I heard that—true. They didn't want to ban them.

So I vetoed the bill. And this young NRA lobbyist, in the lobby of the State Capitol in

Arkansas said, "Governor, you're going to run for President in 1992. And if you veto this bill we want, we will wipe you out in Texas." And there were 50 people watching; they were just aghast that this lobbyist would talk to a Governor this way. And I knew I was growing up when I didn't hit him. I smiled, and I said, "Young fellow, if that's the way you feel, you saddle up, you get your gun, I'll get mine, and I'll see you in Texas." The rest is history.

You know, they basically win through intimidation. People are scared of them.

Mr. Donaldson. They have almost 3.5 million members.

The President. Yes, but there's more people than that in America. And look, I think the reason that they intensely dislike me is because I have hunted in my life, because I'm not anti-gun, I'm not anti-sportsperson, I'm not against the legitimate use of guns. And I actually give them credit for the good things they've done in my experience.

But they've got all these charts on the wall—they're domino theory people, you know. If you do one little thing that requires any accommodation to the public safety that requires any effort on the part of gun owners, they think it's the end of the world. And I just think that's wrong.

Maybe technology will give us insta-checks for everything, but there are some of these mental health records you can't get instantly. There are some of the criminal records that are not accessible instantly. I offered them—let's go back to the facts here, get out of the name-calling and politics.

More people will stay alive if we can close the gun show loophole, just like more people are alive because we passed the Brady background check. When a half million people can't get handguns because they're felons, fugitives, or stalkers, there are more people out there alive today. That's all that I care about. I don't want to get into name-calling with the NRA.

Now, there's a big loophole. I would remind you the NRA—go back and look in '93, when we were trying to pass the Brady bill. They said, "Oh, the Brady bill won't do any good because all the criminals buy their guns somewhere else, at these gun shows or urban flea markets or out of the back of a pickup or the trunks of cars." So now that we want to close that loophole, oh, they don't want to do that—or only if it's an insta-check so there's no inconvenience.

Well, you can't get to all the records instantly. So I say, let's sit down and work this out so that there is a meaningful closing of the gun show loophole. That's all I care about. Then they—if we could do that, we save lives. They can call me anything they want and I'd be happy as a clam.

Mr. Donaldson. Well, let's forget the name-calling. The NRA spokesman said to me, "We'd like to debate President Clinton." Would you consider debating Charlton Heston on this issue? No name-calling, debate the issues.

The President. Well, I'll tell you what I want to do. I want to see the issues debated in the Congress. We've had the debate. They came after me in '92; they came after me in '96; we had the debate. They came after the Congress in '94, and they won that one. They elected the Gingrich Congress with the Contract on America. They had a big role in it, because they scared all these hunters into believing I was going to take their guns away.

By '96, the country knew that we were doing background checks and it was working pretty well, and nobody lost their guns. And I went to New Hampshire and said, "You know, they told you I was going to take your gun away, and if you missed a day in deer season, I want you to vote against me. But if you didn't, they didn't tell you the truth, and you need to get even." And that's what happened.

So they got rid of a Congressman in New Hampshire because he voted bravely for the Brady bill, and 2 years later they knew it was a bunch of hoey and they voted with me. So we've had these debates. What I want to see—I don't want to turn this into a circus. I want to turn this into saving lives. I don't want to take the extreme positions and the hot rhetoric.

Henry Hyde, who basically represents a lot of their point of view, offered a way to try to close the gun show loophole. We thought there were serious problems with that, but it was a good-faith offer. So John Conyers made a counteroffer. Now, here is where the rhetoric is, way out here. Here's where the facts are, right here. And I was disappointed that Senator Hatch wouldn't agree to let them all get together and try to debate these two issues and try to resolve it.

There's got to be a fix here that will save people's lives. That's the only thing that counts. Nothing else matters. The rest of this stuff is all politics; it's inside baseball.

Mr. Donaldson. Mr. President, thanks very much for letting us sit down with you.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 2:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on March 10 for broadcast on March 12. In his remarks, the President referred to 6-year-old Kayla Rol-

land, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. The transcript of this interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 12. Portions of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the National League of Cities' Congressional City Conference March 12, 2000

Thank you very much. Mayor Knight, thank you for your leadership of the NLC and for your focus on eliminating racism. Mayor Archer, thank you for your speech and your many years of friendship to Hillary and me. Mayor Anderson; Executive Director Borut; we have the NACo president, Vernon Gray, here today, I know. And I want to thank Mickey Ibarra from the White House for being a good liaison for you and keeping me in touch with you over these years.

Appropriately enough for your commitment, Mr. Mayor, to eliminate racism, I'm thinking today that last Sunday at this time I was in Selma, Alabama, commemorating the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, with John Lewis, Hosea Williams, and many others, and the mayor of Selma, Governor Siegelman. And this time, when the marchers went across the bridge, the State police saluted them rather than beating them up. It was a great, great day.

I was talking last night with a gentleman who's worked in the White House for 28 years—not much older than me—and we were saying that it was hard to believe that when we were young men, people could still be killed for trying to vote in this country. So it's important that we recognize we have come a mighty long way. It is important that we recognize that in the last 7 years, as Dennis outlined, we have come a long way economically and socially.

But I want to focus—even though you were kind to say that, Dennis, I always feel when people talk about me now, I feel like I'm a witness at my own funeral. [*Laughter*] You know, I have nearly a year left in office and

a lot of energy, and I've got a few ideas about what to do with the remaining time.

So I want to talk to you very briefly today about what I think we should do to be your partner in the endeavor to build this one America, devoid of racial bigotry, and what is involved economically and socially to make that happen. Dr. King said 35 years ago that we would never truly overcome until there was equal economic opportunity and hope for every American. So the first thing I would like to say is, I think it's quite important that we keep this economy going and that we spread its benefits to people and places who have been left behind.

And to me, that means we have to have a big strategy, which is to keep interest rates as low as possible by continuing to pay down the debt; to continue to open markets around the world, which is why I think this China trade agreement's so important. We give up no market access, and they give us unprecedented market access for our farmers, for our manufacturing products, for our services. It's why I think it's important to save enough of this surplus to make sure we can accommodate the retirement of the baby boomers by saving Social Security and Medicare, because I think this is very important to maintain the overall health of the economy and structure of opportunity.

Then I think we need to build on the work that Vice President Gore and I have done for the last 7 years to expand the winner's circle. We increased the earned-income tax credit, which helped lift a couple million more Americans out of poverty. We raised the minimum wage. We passed the family and medical leave law that 20 million Americans have now used to take some time off from work.

But I think we should raise the minimum wage again, and I hope that all of you will support that. I believe we should increase the earned-income tax credit, and particularly try to do more to help parents who have more than two children, because they're actually disadvantaged by the law the way it works today. I think we should increase the number of empowerment zones and enterprise communities, because those that have done it have worked so well.

And I hope you will help me to pass my new markets initiative, which is designed to give businesses the same incentives to invest in Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta and the Rio Grande Valley and our Indian reservations that they now have to invest in Latin America or in Asia or in Africa. I want to continue to push this.

We also supported a special investment of over \$100 million in the Mississippi Delta, which is now the poorest part of America outside the reservations, and another \$1 billion initiative in Indian country, a Southwest border initiative designed to encourage further economic development along our border. All these things are profoundly important, because—you know, it's easy to minimize, and not all our problems are economic, but if people have the dignity of a job, if their children can get education, if there's something to get up in the morning and look forward to, it's a lot easier to bring people together, to eliminate social problems, and to move forward.

One big part of this division we have has become known by the slogan "the digital divide." What it basically means is that access to computers, understanding of how to use them, and access to the Internet and all of its economic and educational opportunities is still divided in this country by region, by income, by level of education, and by race. That's the digital divide.

The bad news is that as we have become a more information-oriented economy, education has acquired a premium, the density of population has been an advantage, and a lot of people have been left behind, and inequality increased for several years. The good news is that the very forces that are powering this economy, education and technology, if made available to people everywhere, can reduce inequality and lift people up.

I'll just give you one little example. I was in Silicon Valley, oh, a couple of months ago, with a lot of executives, young executives from eBay, the Internet trading company. A lot of you have probably bought and sold stuff on eBay. And I learned there that there are 20,000 Americans making a living on eBay, and that—not working for the company, making a living trading on eBay—and that a very significant number of them, according to the company's research, were on welfare not very long ago.

So we can use technology to liberate the energy, the intelligence of the poor, of people who've been left behind—if they have access to it, if they know how to use it, and if the educational opportunities are out there. So bridging the digital divide is a profoundly important part of our ability to build one America, to reduce racial and ethnic tensions, and to give everybody a chance to fulfill their dreams. So I hope you will support that.

And I know many of you are working in your own communities to just do that. In our budget, we have funds to establish 1,000 community computer centers so that adults as well as children—who will benefit from hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet and training all the teachers, another part of our initiative—but adults should be able to benefit as well.

And finally, let me say, I think it's very important that we continue our commitment to educational opportunity, to put more teachers in the classroom, to make sure they're better trained, to get the class size down in the early grades, to give after-school and summer school programs to every child who needs it in every difficult environment in the entire United States, to modernize and repair and build schools so that our kids are in school buildings that are worthy of their dreams. All these things are important.

And one other point that I would like to make that I think is very important is that you have done a magnificent job of making our streets safer. The crime rate is down to a 25-year low, the murder rate to a 30-year low in America. We've tried to be good partners with you: with the 100,000 police on the street—we're trying to give you 50,000 more, now, for high crime areas; with the other support we've given; and the Brady law, which has kept half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns; and the assault weapons ban. I think these things have made a difference.

But as we have seen again in recent weeks, with the heartbreaking death of little Kayla Roland, the result of a gunshot fired by another little 6-year-old, her own age, and the deaths in Memphis and elsewhere, this is still a country where the crime rate is too high and where there's too much violence.

And I asked the Congress, as soon as the terrible Columbine tragedy hit, to put legislation to do more to protect our children from unnecessary gun violence on a fast track: to close the gun show loophole, to require child safety locks, to ban the importation of large ammunition clips—it's bizarre, you can't make them and sell them in America now; we still allow them to be imported, which undercuts the assault weapons ban—and to hold adults accountable when they knowingly or recklessly allow little children access to guns.

A few days ago, I met with the congressional leadership, the Republicans and the Democrats from the House and the Senate who have control over this bill. And I pointed out that the House and the Senate passed versions of this bill 8 months ago, and the conference committee has still not met once. And that is wrong.

Now, I know that they are under a lot of pressure not to meet. And you know why: because those who don't want any legislation don't want to get caught killing it. So if they don't meet, then hopefully you'll think about something else tomorrow. And this is wrong. This is wrong.

I remember when I signed the Brady bill, after it had been vetoed in the previous administration, you know, there were all these attacks saying this was just a cheap publicity stunt by me, and criminals didn't buy their guns in gun stores, and it wouldn't make any difference at all. Lo and behold, 6½ years later we've got 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers that couldn't get guns. Who knows how many people are alive because of that?

Now, the same people who then said criminals didn't buy guns in gun stores—they bought them from other criminals on the street or at urban flea markets or rural gun shows—now say we shouldn't do background checks at rural gun shows or urban flea markets, unless we can do them instantaneously, because we don't want to inconvenience anyone. Now, let me say to all of you, I actually—I've been out in the country, I mean, in the real country, at one of these rural gun shows. I come from Arkansas.

And I'm missing the SEC championship game right now, talking to you. [Laughter] But so is everybody here from Alabama, too, so I forgive you.

So I've been there. There is something to this. But look, there's a way to handle this. And I want to say exactly what the issue is here. We can do 95 percent of the checks we need to do, background checks on people that buy guns at gun shows and urban flea markets, in a day. Ninety to 95, somewhere—anyway, less than 10 percent can't be cleared in a day. But there's some people—particularly since a lot of these occur on the weekends—that can't be cleared in a day, that involve mental health records or certain criminal records. And here's what the hangup is: Of the somewhere between 5 and 10 percent you don't clear in a day, the rejection rate for them under the standards is 20 times higher than the rejection rate of the other 90 percent. So this is not an idle deal here. I don't know about you, but I don't mind being inconvenienced a day or two if it saves another child's life and if it'll save hundreds of children's lives.

So this is profoundly important. And again, I don't think this is much of a partisan issue out there in the cities of America. And it shouldn't be here. Now, I asked the Senate and the House to take action by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, on April 20th. And I hope and pray that they will. But we could use a little help from our friends. You could just nudge them along there.

And you need to know that after I had this meeting the other day—I was stunned by this, but after I had this meeting the other day and I thought we were making progress, I then found out there was a movement in the Congress to stop us from giving you money for the gun buyback program. Now, a lot of you have run these gun buyback programs. And I think that's very important, because while you hear all these stories about, "Oh, there are over 200 million guns in America. There's nothing we can do about any of this anyway"—come on, that's true but it's misleading, because a lot of guns are in the hands of serious hunters and sports people, and they're totally secure, and nothing's ever going to happen. A lot of these guns are in the hands of serious collectors, and they're very responsible, and they're protecting them. And a lot of them are out there rolling around, and they're very dangerous. And

a lot of cities, under Republican and Democratic mayors' leadership, have had these gun buyback programs which have actually helped reduce the number of these guns that are out there rolling around.

So again, I ask for your help here. I think we ought to be giving you more money for gun buyback programs, not less. It's totally voluntary, and I think they work.

So, I've said enough about that, but it's a big deal. It's a big deal. I see my friend Mayor Menino down here, and you know, I've been in Boston a lot. I've spent a lot of work and time in Boston. I've watched the crime rate go down there. I saw them go nearly 2 years without a single kid under 18 being killed by a gun. And I saw them do it, and I actually believe racial relations within the community were improving, which is something we—again, I would argue, if you want to build the safest big country in the world, you've got to succeed at the mayor's project here. You can't have the communities pitted against one another. You can't have people who believe the quality of the justice they get and the way they're treated by the police depends upon the color of their skin. And you can't have police believe that they can't be respected in the community because of the color of their uniform.

And the mayors, of all people, and those of you who are in city government, you know this. And if there was ever an argument for getting rid of racism and working through this, it is our desire to make America the safest big country in the world. We will never get there if we don't get there together. And so this whole crime issue is still, I believe, profoundly important.

And finally, let me just say that the longer I serve here and the older I get, and maybe the shorter my tenure of service gets, the more I try to focus on, you know, the big things, the things that will really make a difference over the long run to America. And I—the reason I think this issue of race is so important is that I think it sort of is a magnet for all the fears that people have. It becomes a convenient explanation for all the problems that people have.

And it's not just in this country. You think about the troubles in this old world today. We thought—oh, probably 15 years ago, naively—if we could just win the cold war and nobody believed in communism anymore, then nobody

would want to have these big old bombs and blow people up anymore, and we could go on together to bring the Earth forward. And what have we seen since then? From the Middle East to the Balkans, in Bosnia and Kosovo, to Northern Ireland, to the tribal conflicts of central Africa, all over the world, we see people—and what are they fighting over now? They're fighting over their racial, their ethnic, their religious, their tribal differences, their primal differences, the oldest problems of human society. In the Internet age, people are fighting over our difference from other people.

And once you decide that what's different about you is more important than what you've got in common, then it's not very far from different to dehumanization. And once you get to dehumanization, it's not very difficult to justify violence. And once you think you're beating up on somebody who's not really somebody after all, it's not very far from there to get to killing them. And so you had in Rwanda 800,000 people, more or less, killed in 100, 120 days, most of them without the benefit of a gun. Can you imagine that? Most of them with machetes and sticks. And you had one million people driven from their homes in Kosovo because they were Muslims. And on and on and on.

And I'm honored that the United States is in a position to try to minimize those problems and heal those wounds. But make no mistake about it, we won't be able to do that over the long run, we won't be able to do good around the world, unless we are good here at home.

And a lot of this work is something that you have to do. You know, when Matthew Shepard's put out on a rack in Wyoming, or James Byrd's dragged to death in Texas, or those little kids at the school in Los Angeles were shot at because they were Jewish, or a Filipino worker was killed because he was Asian and he worked for the Federal Government, or that Korean Christian was shot coming out of his church in the Middle West, all those things—the former basketball coach at Northwestern murdered walking on the street because he was an African-American—when those things happen, there are things we can do. We ought to pass the hate crimes legislation. We ought to pass the employment nondiscrimination legislation. We ought to put more police on the street in the high-crime areas. There are things we can do.

But fundamentally, we have to get people to define their worth and their merit in ways that

are affirmative, not negative. We have to get people to understand that this brilliant new human genome project is uncovering the fact that we are genetically 99.9 percent the same. And I know that's tough for some people to deal with. When I said that in the State of the Union Address, in the House Chamber, the Republicans and the Democrats looked at each other in total disbelief. [*Laughter*] I mean, we've got to think all this stuff really matters. You know, we all get all puffed up.

I want to tell you, just in that vein, I keep on a little table—you've seen these pictures of these meetings I have in the Oval Office? You know, there's two chairs; the President sits in one, somebody else sits in the other, and then there's two little couches, and there's a table. Well, on that table, I now have a vacuum-packed Moon rock that Neil Armstrong gave me when he came in and we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Moon landing last year.

And the thing I want you to know about this Moon rock is, it is 3.6 billion years old. So I leave it right there on the table. And then people get so exercised and angry, and they're talking about this, you know. And I say, "Time out. See that rock there? It's 3.6 billion years old. We're just passing through. Chill out, here." [*Laughter*] We're just passing through.

I want you to laugh about it, but it does, it kind of puts it in perspective, doesn't it? You've got to see all these things in perspective.

I heard a cute story the other day. You know what a snail says when he's riding on a turtle's back? Whee! [*Laughter*] I mean, it all depends on your—you've got to—I'm telling you, I'm having a little fun, but this is a big deal. I mean, how you look at these things is everything.

It's funny, isn't it? After we live our lives and we turn gray—the mayor and I, anyway; Dennis wishes he could turn gray—[*laughter*]—and you think about all the things you learned and how hard you worked and all the stuff you think you did. And then you strip it all away, and what really matters is what you told your kids when they were little. You know, what's in your heart? And how do you view your neighbor? And can you love your neighbor as yourself? And who is your neighbor, anyway?

So I say to you, I'm happy about the way we're starting the new century. I believe we can reach all of our big goals. But I think that your leader here is right. We can reach all the rest of them if we do it together. And some of what we have to do we can legislate, and some of what we have to do is an affair of the heart. But the real trick in life is to take what is right in the heart and make it live in life. And that requires systematic, sustained, organized effort.

I watched them in Boston. They didn't have no racism in the police department overnight and by accident, and they still have challenges with it. But they train to do the right thing. They work to do the right thing. It is a disciplined effort. You have to care about these things.

So we will do our part. But I came here more than anything else to thank you for the last 7 years and to tell you that this mayor and this program is the most important thing you could be doing today. If on this Sunday the good Lord came to me and said, "Your time on Earth is over, and you've got to check out today, and you don't get to finish your term. And I'm not a genie; I'm not about to give you three wishes"—[*laughter*]—"but you can have one," I wouldn't wish for continued prosperity. I wouldn't wish for finding outer galaxies, to see if there's life there. I would wish for our country to be one America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Donald J. Borut, executive director, and Mayors Bob Knight of Wichita, KS, president, Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, first vice president, and Karen J. Anderson of Minnetonka, MN, second vice president, National League of Cities (NLC); C. Vernon Gray, president, National Association of Counties (NACo); civil rights activist Hosea Williams; Mayor Joe T. Smitherman of Selma, AL; Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA; and former astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon
in Cleveland, Ohio
March 13, 2000

Thank you so much. I want to say, first, how honored I am to be here with our leader, Dick Gephardt, and how much I look forward to his becoming the Speaker of the House. He is a truly remarkable human being and a really wonderful leader.

I want to thank Stephanie Tubbs Jones for welcoming me here and for doing such a good job for you. I'm delighted to be here with Marcy Kaptur and Dennis Kucinich. And I'm glad to see Sherrod Brown up and around. I told him he looked like a Roman soldier in one of those 1960's extravaganzas with that brace on.

I want to thank Congressman Jim Barcia for coming to Cleveland to be with us today, and Congressman Patrick Kennedy, who had to leave. And Mayor White, thank you for making us feel so welcome. Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, thank you for running for Congress. I certainly do hope you win, and I'm going to do what I can to help you. I'm glad to see you out here.

And I want to thank our Senate candidate, Ted Celeste, also for running in this race and for being here today, and my good friend Lou Stokes. I told some people a story when I was coming out—when I was here with Lou Stokes—I wanted to come to Cleveland with Lou before he left the Congress. I was here in his district many times when he was in Congress, but the last time we visited an elementary school in this district where there was an AmeriCorps project and the kids were tutoring these grade school kids—our young AmeriCorps people were.

And so we went to this assembly, and I gave a little talk. And then I was shaking hands with all these 6- and 7-year-old kids. And I got to the very end of the line, and this 6-year-old looked at me, and he said, "Are you really the President?" [Laughter] So help me, this happened. I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "But you're not dead yet." [Laughter] And it was clear to me that he had learned in school his Presidents were George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and a part of the job description was that you had to be deceased. [Laughter] There's been a day or two in Washington in the last 7 years

when I thought the kid might have been right. [Laughter] But I will always remember that.

I also am glad to be here today just to say a profound word of thanks to the people of Cleveland and the State of Ohio for being so good to me and to the Vice President, for giving us your electoral votes in 1992, and by a much wider margin in 1996. And I hope the trend continues in 2000.

I'm here primarily, as all of you know, to support these Members of the House and the candidates and the drive to restore a Democratic majority in the House. And I'm here for three reasons, basically.

One, they deserve it because they took the tough decisions that turned this country around and paid the price for it. We had no votes from the other side when we passed the economic plan in 1993, which drove interest rates down, investment up, and got this economy going again. And they deserve it. They also put their lives on the line to vote for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the efforts to put 100,000 police on the streets, which has given us a 25-year low in crime and a 30-year low in the gun death rate in America. Half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers were denied weapons because of the Brady bill. So they have earned it.

They provided large margins for the Balanced Budget Act in 1997 and for every other piece of progressive legislation that has passed, from the family and medical leave law to increasing the earned-income tax credit to tax relief for working families. And I could just go right on down the line: achieving 90 percent of our children with basic childhood immunizations for the first time, cleaner air, cleaner water, and a growing economy. So they've earned it.

Two, there are huge differences between the parties still on a lot of very fundamental issues. And Dick mentioned a few of them, but I just want to tick off three or four. Number one, if you want this economy to keep growing, we have to remember to dance with what brought us: We've got to keep paying down the debt; we've got to save Social Security and Medicare in a way that doesn't cause the baby boomers'

retirement to bankrupt our children; and we've got to save enough money to invest in education and health care.

We can still have a modest tax cut that will do an awful lot of good for a lot of people, to help people pay for health care costs, to help people pay for child care costs, to help defer the cost of tuition for sending your kid to college, for doing a lot of other things. But we have got to first keep the economy strong. We've got a chance to get this country out of debt over the next 12 or 13 years, for the first time since 1835. And if we do it, we'll have low interest rates for a generation and the highest economic growth we've ever had. We'll continue this expansion. The Democrats will support that. Our friends in the other party will support a tax cut so large that we'd either have to cut education, not save Social Security or Medicare, cut defense, or go back to running deficits. So it's a clear choice.

Second is education. Our agenda is clear. We want smaller classes, more teachers, better trained teachers. We want to modernize and repair schools, which is profoundly important. We want to hook every classroom up to the Internet. We want high standards which support the kids, more after-school and summer school programs. And we want more efforts to give people the excellence that they need. And every single year we have to wait until the very end of the legislative session and have a huge fight to get our education agenda through. And we normally get about 70 percent of it, but only because all of us stay together. This will become more and more important.

Third, it is important to continue to give more people the chance to be a part of this economic prosperity who haven't done it yet. That's what our new markets initiative is all about, to give you who can afford it the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in Cleveland, in Indian reservations, in the Mississippi Delta, in south Texas, and places like that that we now give you to invest in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. If we can't give the poor areas in America today the opportunity to have free enterprise, when will we ever get around to it? And I think that's very important.

The fourth thing I want to mention is health care. It's very important. We believe that people between the ages of 55 and 65 that lose their health insurance ought to be able to buy into Medicare and ought to be given a little help

to do it. We believe that people who are taking care of aged parents or disabled family members ought to get a \$3,000 tax credit to help them do it. We believe that the Children's Health Insurance Program, which we passed in 1997, should also include the parents of those children. And if we did those things, 25 percent of the uninsured population in America would have health insurance, and the health care providers in this country, many of whom have difficulties, would have a lot more cash flowing to them to keep a healthy health care system.

These are just some of the issues. There are big differences. And Dick mentioned the final one I want to mention. I have been involved for way over 20 years now in law enforcement. The first elected job I ever had was as attorney general of my State. I have always believed that we could drive crime down and diminish racial and other tensions between the police and the community. I have always believed that we had to have both smart punishment and smart prevention. I have always believed that. And for 7 years we have worked to put more police on the streets, to give our children something to say yes to as well as something to say no to, and to keep guns away from criminals and kids without undermining the legitimate interests of hunters and sports people.

Now, what I've tried to do, since the Columbine tragedy, in particular, and in the aftermath of the terrible deaths in the last couple of days, is to say, "Okay, let's do some more things that make sense. Let's require child trigger locks on all new handguns that are sold. Let's require background checks at these gun shows and urban flea markets, as well as at gun stores. Let's hold parents who are flagrantly irresponsible—or other adults, custodial adults—and let 6-year-olds get guns, let's hold them responsible for what they do. And let's ban the importation of these large ammunition clips." We banned assault weapons in America, and then people get around it by importing them.

This is all very sensible. It doesn't affect anybody's hunting, doesn't affect any sport shooting. It's no big problem. And all the practical problems can be worked out.

Well, we had a lot of energy after Columbine for doing that. The Senate passed a strong bill, because Al Gore broke a tie vote. The House passed a much weaker bill. But then they were supposed to get together, pass a compromise, agree on provisions, and send it to me. Eight

months later, they still haven't met. The committees haven't met. So I ask them to meet.

Now, in the aftermath of the terrible losses in Michigan and Tennessee—little Kayla Roland—I thought we could have some more energy for doing this. And what happened? The NRA started running all these ads attacking me personally—which I didn't take personally. I, frankly, was honored by it. But they were—and so I agreed to go on ABC, Sam Donaldson's program Sunday and answer questions about this. And all I did was to say why I was for closing the assault weapons; why I was for banning these large capacity ammunition clips, the import of them; why I was for closing the gun show loophole; why I was for child trigger locks; and why I thought adults who were knowing or reckless in letting little kids get ahold of guns ought to be held responsible.

And then the head of the NRA came on after me, and he said—I want to read you what he said, just so you'll know that there is a difference here between the two parties and America has to choose. He says that I am willing to accept a certain level of killings to further my political agenda and Vice President Gore's: "I believe—I have come to believe that Clinton needs a certain level of violence in this country. He's willing to accept a certain level of killings to further his political agenda and his Vice President's, too."

Now, it's quite one thing to say that when you're on national television. It's another thing to look into the eyes of a parent who's lost a 6-year-old and say that; to visit, as I did, the parents of the Columbine kids, or in Springfield, Oregon, or Jonesboro, Arkansas, and say that.

I want you to know this because I'm not trying to put you in a depressed mood, I'm trying to fire your energy for the coming combat. Maybe he really believes this. But if he does, we've got even more trouble than just a horrible political mistake. We've got to make up our mind as a country.

I'm glad the crime rate is at a 25-year low. I'm glad the gun death rate is at a 30-year low. I don't know a single living American who believes this country is safe enough. The NRA says we ought to prosecute gun crimes more. I agree with that, and we have. They're for holding adults accountable when they recklessly give kids access to guns; good for them. But they're not for anything that is a preventive

measure, that might require the slightest effort on the part of the people they propose to represent, even if making that effort lets everybody else live in a safer America. They were against banning cop-killer bullets—and there weren't any deer in the deer woods wearing Kevlar vests.

So I regret this. And I'm not going to get in a shouting match about it, but I want you to know that there are big stakes here. So I want to help these people because they've earned it, and they've given you a good country to live in and a stronger America because they're right on the issues.

And the third reason that I want to be for them is the point Dick made about wanting to run the House in a bipartisan manner and to set a good example. One of the reasons I ran for President is that I was completely turned off, as a Governor of what my predecessor called a small southern State, at the way that Washington was so much in the grip of name-calling and an attempt to systematically undermine other people personally. I thought it was wrong. And now that I've had some passing experience with it, I feel more strongly about it. I'm not running for anything, but I'm telling you, this is a great country, and you deserve a better climate than you have been getting in Washington, DC. And you've got to have people who will stand up and say that.

I've worked as hard as I could to build one America out here in the grassroots, to get people to come together across racial lines and religious lines and the other lines that divide us, and to be a force for that kind of harmony around the world. But it is difficult for America to do that if what they see in the national political leadership is this sort of slash-and-burn—well, the kind of stuff I just read you. And I think we can do better than that. And I know he'll be better than that, and these Members will be better than that.

Folks, we've got a lot of honest differences of opinion. And maybe they're right some times, and we're not always right. But I know one thing—we are right to believe that elections ought to be fought about what's good for you and what's good for your life and not whether we can decimate our adversaries. And that's the kind of Speaker Dick Gephardt will be.

So when people ask you why you came here today, say, "Well, they've done a good job, and they deserve our support. They've got better

ideas for the future, and that's what matters. And not only that, I like the way they will run our Nation's Government. I will feel better when they're having arguments up there over policy instead of personalities, and when they're trying to put people first and actually get something done."

Those are three good reasons for you to be here today, and I hope you will share those with all your friends and neighbors in this area. If you do, you'll dramatically increase the chances of their success in November.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. in the lobby at the Playhouse Square Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Mayor Michael R. White of Cleveland; Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, candidate for Ohio's 12th Congressional District; former Representative Louis Stokes; 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Sam Donaldson, cohost, ABC's "This Week"; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks to the Community in Cleveland March 13, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. First, I think Wanda did a pretty good job, don't you? Let's give her another hand. [Applause] I am delighted to be here in Cleveland. I want to thank all the people who are up here with me. Alice Katchianes, thank you for being here, and Mr. Venable, thank you for your welcome. If I could sing like that, I'd be in a different line of work. [Laughter] I thought that was great.

I want to thank Congressman Sherrod Brown and Congressman Dennis Kucinich, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, my great friend Lou Stokes, all the other officials who are here today. State Representative Jack Ford; County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora; State Senate candidate Donna McNamee, a woman I met at the dedication of the FDR Memorial with President Roosevelt's wheelchair, I'm glad to see her here.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to Congressman Dick Gephardt for his leadership and his passionate commitment to this and so many other good causes. Without him and these other members of our caucus, we wouldn't have a prayer of passing this proposal today. And I thank him.

And I want to say, obviously, how pleased I am to be here with Donna Shalala, who is, as Dick Gephardt suggested, not only the longest serving but by a good long stretch the ablest and best Secretary of Health and Human Services this country has ever, ever had. And I love to see her mother, and I'm glad she made room

for me at tax time. [Laughter] I told her, I said, "You know, when I get out of this job, I hope I need the services of a tax lawyer." [Laughter] Right now, it's all pretty straightforward. But that was, without a doubt, the shortest speech I ever heard a lawyer give, what she said to me. [Laughter] You probably doubled your business just by being here today.

I do love coming to Cleveland, and you heard Donna say that we have a lot of people in this administration from Cleveland, including my Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti, who is here today. But Clevelanders, they may go anywhere, but they never get it, Cleveland, out of their soul. If you go into Steve's office, there is a great photograph from the opening day of baseball at Jacobs Field in 1994. Now, I remember that because I threw out the first pitch. But Steve's got the picture on the wall because when I threw the pitch, everyone was absolutely stunned that it didn't hit the dirt—[laughter]—and Sandy Alomar caught it. So he really got—I'm incidental to the picture. He's got Sandy Alomar catching a ball which he was convinced would go into the dirt. I thought I did pretty well for a guy who played in the band, myself. [Laughter]

Let me say, this is a great time for this city and a great time for our Nation. As I said in the State of the Union Address, I hope this time will be used by our people to take on the big challenges facing America. One of those big challenges is what to do about the aging

of America, which is a high-class problem. That is, we're living longer; we're living better. And the older I get, the more I see that as an opportunity, not a problem. But it does impose certain challenges on us.

There is also a challenge to modernize our health care systems and to do other things to increase the health care of the American people. And that's what we're here to talk about today.

But because this is my only formal opportunity to be before—thanks to you—before the press and, therefore, the American people, I would like to just refer to another issue that relates to the health and safety of the American people, just briefly.

I have been fortunate enough to have the support of the Members of Congress on this stage in our efforts to drive the crime rate down, to make our streets safer. And Cleveland and every other major city in America is a safer place than it was 7 years ago. We have a 25-year low in crime, a 30-year low in the gun death rate. And I am grateful for the support I have received to put more police on the street, to have more summer school and after-school programs for young people, and to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, banning the cop-killer bullets, the assault weapons ban, the Brady bill, which has kept half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns.

Now, all of you know we had some tragic deaths last week. We had that 6-year-old girl killed in Michigan by a 6-year-old boy who was a schoolmate of hers. We had terrible shootings in Memphis. And just in the last year we had that horrible incident at Columbine High School, almost a year ago, and in the year before that, lots and lots of school shootings.

Now, after Columbine, I suggested that what we ought to do is to, number one, make sure there were child safety locks on these guns; number two—which would have made a big difference in the case of children getting the guns. Number two, make sure we ban the importation of large ammunition clips which make a mockery of the assault weapons ban, because they can't be made or sold here in America but they can be imported. Number three, close the loophole in the background check law, the Brady law, which says people can buy handguns at gun shows or urban flea markets and not have to do a background check. It's a serious problem. And fourth, I think when adults inten-

tionally or recklessly let little kids get ahold of guns, they should have some sort of responsibility for that. And so I asked the Congress to do that.

Eight months ago, Vice President Gore broke a tie in the Senate and passed a pretty strong bill, and then a bill passed in the House that was weaker. And I asked them to get together and pass a final bill. And they never even met until last week when we got them together after this last round of horrible shootings.

And I asked all Americans to join me, because I think these things are reasonable. This won't affect anybody's right to hunt or sport shoot or anything, but it will save kids' lives.

The response we got from the National Rifle Association was to run a bunch of television ads attacking me. And yesterday morning I went on television again to talk about these measures. I'm not trying to pick a fight with anybody. I'm trying to fight for the lives of our kids. But I want you to see what we're up against whenever we try to change here.

The head of the NRA said yesterday—I want to quote—he said that my support of these measures was all political, and he said this: "I have come to believe that Clinton needs a certain level of violence in this country. He's willing to accept a certain level of killing to further his political agenda and his Vice President, too."

Well, he could say that on television, I guess. I'd like to see him look into the eyes of little Kayla Rolland's mother and say that, or the parents at Columbine or Springfield, Oregon, or Jonesboro, Arkansas, or the families of those people who were shot in Memphis.

I say that, again, to emphasize change is hard, but sooner or later, if you know you've got a problem, you either deal with it or you live with the consequences. And the older you get, the more you understand that.

We do not have—I'm grateful that our country is a safer place than it was 7 years ago. I don't think it's safe enough. I don't think you think it's safe enough. I don't think you think it's safe enough for seniors. I don't think you think it's safe enough for little kids. And if we can do more things to keep guns away from criminals and children, that don't have anything to do with the legitimate right of people to go hunting or engage in sport shooting, we ought to do it. And we ought not to engage in this kind of political smear tactic.

Now, I feel the same way about this issue. And I want to try to explain to you what is going on now with this issue, because most people in America—you heard Dick Gephardt talk about it—most people in America think, well, why are we even arguing about this? Well, all health care issues are fraught with debate today. I know you're having a big debate here about hospital closures in Cleveland, and I don't know enough about the facts to get involved with it, but I'll tell you this. One of the problems we have is, there's too much uncompensated care in America.

And we're trying to—we're trying hard, the people you see on this stage, we're trying hard to make sure every child that's eligible is enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program that was created in 1997. We want Congress to let their parents be insured under the same program. We want people over 55 but under 65, who aren't old enough for Medicare but have lost their insurance on the job, to be able to buy into Medicare, and we want to give them a little tax credit to do it. If we do things like this, then whatever happens in Cleveland or anyplace else will have to be determined based on the merits of the case, but at least the people who need health care will be able to know that the people who give it to them, whether it's hospitals or doctors or nurses or whoever, will be able to get reimbursed for it. And that's a very important thing. I hope you'll support us in that.

And then we come to the issue at hand. Now, what's this about, this prescription—you all know what it's about. If we were starting—suppose I came here today as President and I were in my first year as President and I proposed Medicare, just like President Johnson did in 1965 in the first full year after he was elected, and I told you in 1965 what he said, it would be fine. But in 2000, if I said, "Okay, I'm going to set up this health care program for senior citizens. And you can see a doctor, and we'll pay for your hospital care. But even though we could save billions of dollars a year keeping people out of hospitals and out of emergency rooms by covering the medicine, we're not going to cover medicine." If we were starting today, given all the advances in prescription drugs in the last 35 years, you would think I was nuts, wouldn't you? The only reason that prescription drugs aren't covered by Medicare is that it was

started 35 years ago, when medicine was in a totally different place. That's the first thing.

The second thing I want to say is that it has really cost us a lot not to cover these seniors. And you see American seniors, for example, who live in New York or Vermont, going to take a bus trip to Canada because they can buy drugs made in America for 30 percent less—because very often the seniors, the people that are least able to pay for these drugs, are paying the highest prices for them.

Now, that's why our budget has this plan. And I want to tell you exactly what we propose and what we're all up here on this stage supporting today. We want to provide with Medicare a prescription drug benefit that is optional, that is voluntary, that is accessible for all—anybody who wants to buy into it can; a plan that is based on price competition, not price controls. That is, we don't want to control the price, but we want to use the fact that if we're buying a lot of medicine, seniors ought to be able to get it as cheap as anybody else. And we also want it to be part of an overall plan to continue to modernize Medicare and make it more competitive. Because I can tell you, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers, and people in my generation, we're plagued by the notion that our retirement could cause such a burden on our children, it would undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We don't want that.

Now, medically speaking, this is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. As I said, we already pay for doctor and hospital benefits. But an awful lot of seniors go without prescription drugs—and preventive screenings, I might add—that ought to be a part of their health care. We've worked hard to put preventive screenings back into Medicare, for breast cancer, for osteoporosis, for prostate cancer. These are very, very important. But not having any prescription drug coverage is like paying a mechanic \$4,000 to fix your engine because you wouldn't spend \$25 to change the oil and get the filter replaced.

In recent months, I have been really encouraged because a number of Republicans have expressed an interest in joining us to do this. And we can't pass it unless some of them join us, because we don't have enough votes on our own. But so far the proposals they're making, I think, are not adequate, and I'll explain why.

There are two different proposals basically coming out of the Republicans. Some of them

propose giving a block grant to the States to help only the poorest seniors, those below the poverty line. That would leave the middle income seniors, including those that are lower middle income, just above the poverty line, to fend for themselves. And here in Ohio, 53 percent of all the seniors are middle income seniors. None of them would be covered by this plan.

In 1965, when Medicare was created, some in Congress used these very same arguments. They said, "We should only pay for hospital and medical care for the poorest seniors." They were wrong then, and they're wrong now. More than half the seniors today without any prescription drugs at all are middle class seniors. I want to say that again. More than half the seniors without any prescription drugs at all are middle class seniors. On average, middle class seniors without coverage buy 20 percent less drugs than those who have coverage, not because they're healthier but because they can't afford it. And even though they buy 20 percent less medication—listen to this—because they have no insurance, their out-of-pocket burden is 75 percent higher—without insurance, 75 percent higher.

So I say, let's do this right. This is voluntary. We're not making anybody do it. But we ought to offer it to everybody who needs it. It doesn't take much, if you're a 75-year-old widow, to be above the so-called Federal poverty line. You can have a tiny little pension tacked on your Social Security, and you can be there. But if you've got, as you've just heard, \$2,300 worth of drug bills a year—and a lot of people have much higher—it's a terrible problem.

Now, some other Members of Congress are proposing a tax deduction to help subsidize the cost of private Medigap insurance. If any of you own Medigap, you know what's the matter with that proposal. This proposal would benefit the wealthiest seniors without providing any help to the low and middle income seniors. And the Medigap marketplace is already flawed. Today—listen to this—in Washington, the General Accounting Office is releasing a report that shows that Medigap drug coverage starts out expensive and then goes through the roof as seniors get older. On average, it costs about \$164 a month for a 65-year-old to buy a Medigap plan with drug coverage, and premiums rise sharply from there.

For example, in Ohio, an 80-year-old person would pay 50 percent more than a 65-year-old

person for the same coverage under Medigap. This is not a good deal, folks. We don't want to put more money into this program. It is not a good deal. Even those who offer Medigap plans say the approach wouldn't work, because it would force Medigap insurers to charge excessively high premiums for the drugs or to refuse to participate at all.

Now, there's another problem that we have in the Congress, which is that the congressional majority just last week voted on budget resolutions that together allocate nearly half a trillion dollars to tax cuts. And if we cut taxes that much, we won't be able to afford this, and we may not be able to save Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt and have money left over to invest in the education of our children.

I'm for a tax cut, but we've got to be able to afford it. And we, first of all, have got to keep this economy going. We need to pay down the debt. We can get out of debt for the first time since 1835, within a little more than 10 years, if we just keep on this road. A lot of you never thought you'd ever see that.

We can lengthen Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation. We can put 25 years on the Medicare program, which is longer than it's had in blows and blows, a long time. And we can add this prescription drug coverage. But we can't do it if the tax cut's too big, and we shouldn't do it in the wrong way and say you can only get it if you're really poor or you can only get it if you buy into Medigap.

Now, let me tell you why this is such a big deal. The average 65-year-old in America today has a life expectancy of 82 to 83 years. The average 65-year-old woman has a life expectancy higher than that. The fastest growing group of American seniors are those over 85. So to knowingly lock ourselves into a program that would get 50 percent more expensive as you got older and older and needed more and more medicine and had less and less money does not make much sense.

We have given them a good program. It is the right thing to do. And so I would like to ask all of you to help all of these Members of Congress on the stage and to tell the people in Washington, "Look, this is not a partisan issue." You know, a lot of people say, "We don't want to do this. This is an election year." Look, they can name this prescription drug program

after Herbert Hoover, Calvin Coolidge, and Warren Harding. It's fine with me. [*Laughter*] I don't—put some Republican's name on it. I don't care. Just do it, because it's the right thing to do for the seniors of this country.

So I would just implore you, help us pass this. Write to your United States Senators. Tell them it's not a partisan issue. Tell them what life is like. Tell them it's not right for seniors in Ohio to pay 30 to 50 percent more for medicine than seniors in Canada pay for the same medicine that's made in America in the first place. Tell them it's not right for you to need something you can't have, so you get sick, but then when you show up at the emergency room, it gets paid for.

We can afford this. Everybody in America has worked hard for it. We've got this budget in good shape. We can make a commitment to our future. If you think this is necessary now, imagine what it's going to be like when the number of seniors doubles in 30 years.

That's the last point I want to leave you with. Look how many seniors there are in Cleveland today. In 30 years, the number of people over 65 will double, and Donna Shalala and I hope to be among them. [*Laughter*] And you think about it. And then the average age in America will be well over 80.

Now, if we have to take care of all these people by waiting until they get sick and they go to the hospital, instead of worried about hospitals closing, 30 years from now you'll worry about the city going bankrupt because everybody will be in the hospital. We've got to be healthier.

We've got to keep people healthy. We need to keep them playing tennis, like Lawyer Shalala there, but we also need to be able to give people medication to keep them out of the hospital and to manage people in a way that will maximize their health. This will be a huge issue.

So I implore you, this country—this is the first time we've been in shape to do this in 35 years. We can do this now. And we can do it now and take care of the future. We can help the seniors of today and take a great burden off of tomorrow. But we need your help to do it.

Again, I implore you, talk to your Members of Congress. Talk to your Senators. Tell them it's not a partisan issue; it's an American issue. It's a human issue, and it's a smart thing to do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Louis Stokes Wing of the City Public Library. In his remarks, he referred to Wanda Golias, who introduced the President; Andrew A. Venable, Jr., director, City Public Library; former Representative Louis Stokes; Edna Shalala, mother of Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala; Sandy Alomar, Jr., catcher, Cleveland Indians; 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI, and her mother, Veronica McQueen; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Statement on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

March 13, 2000

On March 12, 1999, in Independence, Missouri, the Foreign Ministers of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. One year ago, America became safer, NATO became stronger, and Europe more stable and united.

Today we take the opportunity to reaffirm that the first new members of NATO shall not be the last. From the Baltic Sea to the Balkans, in the heart of Europe, and wherever NATO's partners are found, there are many countries

that share our democratic values and our determination to defend them. As they become able to meet the responsibilities of NATO membership and to contribute to the security of the transatlantic area, we will support their aspirations to become our Allies.

NATO is erasing arbitrary lines of division across Europe. That is essential if we are to meet our goal, shared by our administration and a broad bipartisan coalition, of a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first

time in history. We will also continue to deepen our partnership with Russia and Ukraine, who play essential roles in the new Europe.

At the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1999, the Allies laid out a roadmap to membership. We are helping aspiring allies intensify their participation in the Partnership for Peace, encouraging them to follow Membership Action Plans to achieve greater interoperability with NATO, and engaging with them in a full set of consultations and cooperative measures. In these ways, aspiring countries are demonstrating their commitment to closer ties with NATO and preparing for possible membership in the Alli-

ance. They are also embracing economic and political reforms as well as defense policies that strengthen their democracies and contribute to peace and security in Europe. We urge them to continue pursuing their Membership Action Plans, the surest path to joining NATO, with even greater dedication in the months ahead.

On this occasion, we thank our Allies, new and old, for working with us to make sure NATO does in the next half century what it has done in the last: unite our strength to deter war and defend our common interests. NATO's door is open to those who will help us do that in the future.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran March 13, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency declared with respect to Iran on March 15, 1995, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701-1706) is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2000, to the *Federal Register* for publication. This emergency is separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, in connection with the Iranian hostage crisis and therefore requires separate renewal of emergency authorities. The last notice of con-

tinuation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 12, 1999.

The factors that led me to declare a national emergency with respect to Iran on March 15, 1995, have not been resolved. The actions and policies of the Government of Iran, including support for international terrorism, its efforts to undermine the Middle East peace process, and its acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them, continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Chicago, Illinois March 13, 2000

Thank you very much. And thank you all for being here. I'm sure the fire marshal is nervous.

[*Laughter*] You're all packed in here, and I'm very glad to see you.

I want to thank—Jan, thank you for that wonderful, wonderful introduction and for your commitment to handgun safety and to keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Thank you, Senator Durbin. Thank you, Congressman Blagojevich. Thank you, Mayor Rendell and Janice Griffin and Joe Cari.

I want to thank—I asked Phil and Karen Stefani to come up here because we're in their wonderful place. This is the 20th anniversary of the opening of their restaurant. So let's give them a big hand, the Stefanis. Thank you very much. [Applause] They have been wonderful friends to me and to Hillary, and I'm very grateful to them, and I thank them again.

I will be brief, but I want to, first of all, thank you so much for being here and for your contributions. I want to thank the people of Illinois for being so wonderful to me and to Hillary and the Vice President and Tipper, for voting for me overwhelmingly in the '92 primary and giving us your electoral votes in '92 and '96. I thank you for that.

You know, I had a lot of advantages, running for President, in Illinois. I had Hillary. [Laughter] I had wonderful friends here in Chicago. I had David Wilhelm as my campaign chairman. I had served as the chairman of the Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, which included all the counties in southern Illinois, and I'd spent a lot of time there. I was from Arkansas, and there's an enormous number of African-Americans in Chicago from Arkansas, and that was a big help—something which stunned my opponents in '92 when they found out only too late. [Laughter] So I've had a lot of advantages here. And Illinois has been so good to me. Chicago has been so good to me. And I have now Bill Daley, who is making a wonderful Secretary of Commerce and doing you proud every day.

But I want to talk to you tonight about where we go from here and why you came here. I'm grateful that I've had the chance to serve as President, and I'm grateful for those of you who said tonight going through the line you wish I could serve a little more. This is the first election in decades I haven't been a candidate. Most days I'm okay with it. [Laughter]

So I come tonight to say to you, as your President, as a fellow citizen, as somebody who is profoundly grateful for how good you've been to me, we have worked a long time to turn this country around, to get the economy growing, to get the poverty rate down, to get the

welfare rolls down and the crime rate down, to get people coming together and moving forward, to make America a respected force for peace and freedom around the world—several of you talked about my upcoming trip to India and Pakistan tonight.

And this election gives us a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. It is very important. We have a chance, now, because the unemployment rate's at a 30-year low, because we've got back-to-back surpluses for the first time in 42 years, to give all our children the education they deserve; to provide health insurance for low income working children and their parents; to provide the kind of tax relief that would enable every family to be able to tell their children when they're young, "If you stay in school and do your lessons, no matter how poor we are, you can still go on to college"; to prove that we can grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time; to meet the big challenges out there.

We can get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We can save Social Security before the baby boomers retire. I'm the oldest of the baby boomers, and I can tell you that everybody in my generation, the people who I grew up with at home, most of whom have very modest incomes, they're very worried that when we all retire and there are only two people working for every one person on Social Security, that we'll impose a burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. We can get rid of that burden right now. We can take Social Security out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation.

We can lengthen Medicare. We can add a prescription drug benefit, which should have been there all along, so that our seniors who can't afford their medicine will be able to afford it. We can do these things.

And we can make America a safer place. You know, it's amazing to me that I get in these tussles with the NRA. They've been after me for a decade now. [Laughter] You know, I once got a lifetime membership to the NRA—I think it's been revoked now—[laughter]—because I worked with them when they were trying to educate children to go hunting without hurting themselves, when they were trying to help me solve a lot of other problems. But now their main mission in life seems to be to stop any kind of collective action that will help us to

keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

You know, we do this in all kinds of other ways. Most of us are safe drivers, but we still don't object to getting a driver's license or having to wear our seatbelts. Most of us are not terrorists, but we don't object to going through those metal detectors at airports. In fact, we kind of like them now because we think they keep us alive—but at some inconvenience, especially if you've got something that jangles in your pants and you keep—you know, your money clip keeps setting it off and you go through four or five—but we do it, right, because it makes us a safer country.

Now, their position is that guns are the only thing that we should impose no inconvenience on the law-abiding majority to protect us from the law-breaking minority or the dangerous people.

They said when we passed the Brady bill, we'd just interfere with hunters' rights and wouldn't get any criminals. There hasn't been a hunter missed a day in the deer woods, but we kept 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns, and a lot of people are alive in this country because of that. And the same with the assault weapons ban.

I really regret that the NRA leader—I guess he was frustrated, and sometimes when you don't have a defense for your position, the best thing to do is just attack your opponent, and that's what he did. But you know, it's pretty hard for me to take somebody saying I really want a certain level of killing in America so I can beat up on the NRA. You can say that on television, but I sat with the mother and the stepfather of that beautiful little 6-year-old girl that was killed in Michigan, and I didn't like that. I went and met with the families that lost their children at Columbine, out in Springfield, Oregon, and Jonesboro, Arkansas; I didn't like that. I've met with a lot of people who died from violence or whose loved ones died from violence. I'm just trying to keep more people alive. And I'm not interested in fighting with anybody, but I'm interested in fighting for this young man's future with his "No Guns" sign here.

And I was thinking today, coming into Chicago, one of the most meaningful days I ever had here was out in one of your neighborhoods, near a rehab unit where we had, I don't know, a half dozen, maybe a dozen people who were

wounded severely by gun violence. And that day there was a Chicago police officer who had done 2 tours in Vietnam and survived them without a scratch and had 11 bullets in his body because he'd been assaulted doing his job as a law enforcement officer.

And the police and the gun safety groups gave me a beautiful plaque, a very heavy plaque with a model of Abraham Lincoln that was the same used for the penny. And it's still in my office in the White House. If you came there, you could see it today. And I keep it to remember all those young people I saw in wheelchairs, paralyzed for life, who shouldn't have been there.

And I say that because there are big stakes here. And there are big differences between what the House and Senate Democrats would do and what their Republican counterparts would do. There are big differences between what Vice President Gore and Governor Bush would do. And I don't feel the need to attack them the way they attack us. I think they actually believe what they say. I just think they're wrong.

And I think that—you know, if we gave the kind of tax cut that the Republicans have embraced, starting with their nominee, we couldn't save Social Security; we couldn't save Medicare; we couldn't invest in education; and we'd start running deficits again. And I think you like it when we pay down the debt and these interest rates are low, and you can buy cars and homes and keep borrowing money and keep this economy going. And we still have the money to invest in schools and education and trying to help people work their way out of poverty.

There are real differences on these gun safety issues. I don't think that anybody ought to sell a handgun without a child safety lock on it. I don't think that we ought to import these big ammunition clips that allow you to convert weapons into assault weapons when we've banned them here at home. And I don't think that we ought to require background checks if you go buy a handgun in a gun store, and then if you show up at a gun show or an urban flea market, you can get out of the background checks. And I think Americans ought to be willing to undergo a certain amount of inconvenience, if they're law-abiding people buying a gun at a gun show or an urban flea market, to wait a day or so until this background check is done. And if it has to be 3 days because the records

aren't there, it's over the weekend, I think that's okay, too. And I don't think people ought to be bellyaching about that. If it saves the life of one child, it is worth it—it is worth it.

So what I want you to do is to tell people these things. If they ask you, why did you go last night, tell them that "I went because this country is in better shape than it was 7 years ago. They had good ideas, and they turned out to be right. I went because, more important, because they've got a better plan for the future."

And the last thing I want to say is this. A week ago yesterday I had one of the great days in my life. I got to go to Selma, Alabama, for the 35th anniversary of the voting rights march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. And I was thinking—I see all these young people here—I was thinking, when I was a young man in college, people were still being killed for the right to vote. Whites and blacks marching together in the South lost their lives so that everybody could vote—in my adult lifetime. And I thought about what a long way we have come since 1965.

In 1964, when I finished high school, we were sad because President Kennedy had been killed, but the country united behind Lyndon Johnson. We thought we would have an economy that would go on forever. We thought we would solve the civil rights problems through the Congress. We thought we would win the cold war without dividing the country. We thought things would be just hunky-dory.

Within a year, people were getting killed at Selma. Within 2 years, we had riots in the street. Within 4 years, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were dead, and Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection, and the country was split right down the middle over the war. And within a few months, we had elected a President on a campaign of "us" against "them" called the Silent Majority. Do you remember that? If you weren't in the Silent Majority you were, by definition, in the loud minority. That's what I was in. [Laughter] And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" ourselves to death for 30-something years now. [Laughter]

And by the way, that's when we had the longest economic expansion in history until this one. And soon after that election, expansion disappeared. And I say that because it is important that you not let the American people, the people of Illinois, the people of Chicago be casual

about this election. Because 35 years ago, when we had the same sort of economy by those terms in those years, we thought it would just go on forever, and we thought everything was going to be hunky-dory, and the wheels ran off.

And I have waited as an American citizen for 35 years to give our people the chance to build one America and to build the future of our dreams. That's what I've been working for these whole 7 years. I knew we could never get it all done in my term of service, but I knew if we could turn America around, if we could point America in the right direction, if we could keep going and unleash the energies of all of our people, we could actually build one country and deal with these big challenges.

Now, that's what this election is about. It is very important. You cannot assume any good thing that is happening today is on automatic. Martin Luther King said, "Progress does not roll along on the wheels of inevitability. It is brought by people who are willing to work hard, to be coworkers with God."

You have to work. You have to work. You've got a Presidential nominee you can be proud of. You've got a Senator, you've got Members of Congress you can be proud of. This is worth fighting for. When people ask you tomorrow why you were here—don't even wait for them to ask—tell them why you came. [Laughter] Tell them the country's better off than it was 7 years ago. Tell them we've got better ideas for the future. Tell them you have got the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children, and you are determined to do it, and you know that the best way to do it is to support the Democrats in November.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. at Stefani's Restaurant at a dinner for the Women's Leadership Forum and the Saxophone Club. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Janice D. Schakowsky; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, and Joseph A. Cari, Jr., finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; dinner hosts Phil and Karen Stefani; Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association, who appeared March 12 on ABC's "This Week"; Veronica and Michael McQueen, mother

and stepfather of 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Lincolnwood, Illinois

March 13, 2000

Thank you very much. Mike, I loved that introduction, but it sounds suspiciously like a eulogy, you know? [*Laughter*]

I was in Cleveland today, before I came here, and I reminded the crowd there that the last time I had come to Cleveland was to say goodbye to former Representative Lou Stokes, who was retiring from the Congress. And we went to an elementary school in his district where there were a lot of young AmeriCorps volunteers, like the ones who met me in Chicago tonight when I got off the plane. And they were serving in their communities, helping kids. They were teaching all these kids at this school to learn to read and kind of navigate their way in the world.

And I got down—I started with the oldest kids, and I got down to the 6-year-olds, and I'm shaking hands with all these 6-year-old kids. And this little kid looked way up at me, and he said, "Are you really the President?" [*Laughter*] And I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "But you're not dead yet." [*Laughter*] And I realized that for him, Presidents were George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and a part of the job description was you had to be deceased. And when people talk about me the way Mike did, I have to pinch myself and say, "I'm still here." [*Laughter*] But I loved it.

I want to thank Mike and Pat for having us in their beautiful home, and I want to thank them. And Jim, thank you for the work you did on this event tonight. And so many of you have been so good to me and to the Democratic Party. My friend Ed Rendell—I asked him to take this part-time job when he retired as mayor of Philadelphia, and he's wearing himself out at it. And thank you, Senator Durbin, for being here. Yes, he's doing a great job. Give him a hand. [*Applause*] I want to thank Lou Weisbach and Joe Cari for the work they're doing to help our party. And thank you all for coming.

I know we're going to have a little time for questions when I finish, so I'll try to be brief. But I want to say a few things. First of all, I am profoundly grateful to the people of Chicago and the people of Illinois for the support that they have given to me and Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore, starting in December of '91, when I began my campaign here in earnest, through the Democratic primary in '92, through two great elections and all of Illinois' electoral votes. And I am very grateful.

Secondly, I want to thank you, those of you, a large number of you in this room, who have already helped my wife in her quest to join Dick Durbin in the U.S. Senate. I thank you for that.

Thirdly, I want to thank Mike Cherry for all those ties. [*Laughter*] That would be—that's a good reason—if I could run for a third term, I would, just to get 4 more years of ties from Mike Cherry. I was—one wag that works in the White House asked me the other day, he said, "What are you going to do when you're not President anymore and you'll have to start buying your own ties? You'll be bankrupt in no time, you know." He's spoiled me.

The second thing I want to say to you is that what Mike said about the progress that our country has made over the last 7 years is very important to me. But it really only matters insofar as it's evidence of what we can and should do in the future. After all, that's what you hired me to do. And I ran for President because I thought Washington was off on the wrong track, and they were just up there fighting with each other and divided among themselves, and the way people even talked about issues and politics and real life in Washington bore no relationship to what I had tried to do for many years as Governor of my own State.

So I thank you for that. But the important thing is the future. Some of you heard me tell this story, but I used to go out to the State

Fair in Arkansas every year on a day I'd have Governor's Day, and I'd just sit there and meet with whoever showed up. In 1990—1989, late '89—I was trying to decide whether to run for a fifth term as Governor in 1990. And this old boy in overalls showed up, about 70 years old, and he said, "Well, Bill, are you going to run again?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. If I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "I guess so; I always have." And I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?" And he said, "No, I'm not, but everybody else I know is." [Laughter] I said, "But don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Well, sure you have, but that's what we pay you to do." He said, "You collect a paycheck every 2 weeks." It was a healthy little reminder that elections are always about tomorrow. That's why we're still around here after over 200 years.

And I have tried to give this country a relentless focus on the future and a way of getting there together. I believe everybody matters; everyone should have a chance. I believe everyone has a responsible role to play. I believe we all do better when we help each other. Simple ideas, and the country is better off than it was 7 years ago. And for that I'm grateful.

But we've got a lot of work to do this year. We've got a profoundly important vote on whether to approve China's entry to the World Trade Organization and acquire massive access to their markets, which we don't have now. We're trying to raise the minimum wage for workers that are still working 40 hours a week and living on the edge of poverty. We're trying to get tax deductibility to middle class parents for the cost of college tuition.

We're trying to get seniors on Medicare the option of buying prescription drug coverage, when we know three out of five seniors in this country, in spite of all our work, still can't afford the medicine they need. We're trying to get a tax break for people who take care of their elderly or disabled relatives at home, because it's such an expensive but lonely choice, and I think they need our help.

We're trying to modernize our schools by repairing and building thousands of them and making sure they're all hooked up to the Internet and giving all the troubled kids in this country access to after-school programs. We've got a big agenda. And it's very important that we continue to build on the work of the last 7

years in this year, to keep moving relentlessly forward.

And the last thing I'd like to say about all this is it's also very important that we make the right decisions in this election year. Several of you mentioned today the almost incredible attack that the leader of the NRA leveled on me, saying that I actually wanted a bunch of these kids to die so we'd have a reason to inconvenience gun owners. And you know, I don't want to get into a big personal shouting match about a comment that is clearly ridiculous. What I want you to understand is, there will be a lot of shouting and name-calling and elbowing in this election. There always is. But what I want you to understand is that underneath all that shouting and name-calling, notwithstanding what Mayor Rendell said, I don't think it's necessary to believe that Governor Bush is a bad human being to believe he shouldn't be President. I don't believe it's necessary to believe that the Republicans in the House and Senate are bad people to believe that they shouldn't be in the majority.

And I have to tell you, my experience in politics—I'm not running for anything. I'm just telling you, I've been in this business a long time. Most of the people that I have known in both parties worked harder than they got credit for and were more honest than people believed they were and did the best they could, day-in, day-out.

This election is about people who honestly have different views about the way to the future. And what I hope you'll tell people is, it's not like we don't have a test here. We tested their way, and we tested our way. And now you've got a choice, because in the election of 2000, the Vice President says we ought to keep paying down the debt; save enough money to save Social Security and Medicare, so when the baby boomers retire they don't bankrupt their kids and their ability to raise their grandkids; and give the rest of it, after we invest in education and health care, to the taxpayers in a tax cut we can afford.

And Governor Bush says we ought to have one even bigger than the one I vetoed last year, which means we can't guarantee the security of Social Security and Medicare or invest in education, or if we try to, we're going to go back to running big deficits.

Now, we tried it their way, and we tried it our way. And you have to decide whether you

think it was better in '91 and '92, or it was better in '99 and 2000. But you don't have to think they're bad people. This is an honest difference of opinion.

We believe that it is not unbearable to ask legitimate hunters and sports people in this country to agree that all handguns ought to have child trigger locks; that the Brady background checks we do at gun shows ought to be done—I mean, at gun stores ought to be done at gun shows and urban flea markets; that since we banned assault weapons, we shouldn't let people get around it by importing these big ammunition clips. And they disagree. It's an honest disagreement. I think we're right and they're wrong. We've got a 25-year low in crime rate, 30-year low in the gun death rate; half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers haven't gotten handguns because we started doing these background checks. And we have to choose.

You know, I believe we ought to provide more health insurance for lower income working people and their kids. I think it would be good for the hospitals, too, that are strapped for money. And we have a proposal on that. I believe we can grow the economy and improve the environment, and so does our Vice President.

I think experience matters, and there's no question, even the people that don't agree with anything I've done and don't agree with anything he's done will admit that Al Gore has been the most influential Vice President in the history, that's had the biggest impact over the largest number of issues, in the history of the Republic. Now, that's a fact. That's not something to debate. And I guess it's self-serving for me to say because the President has to okay that. But I never could figure out why Presidents would want Vice Presidents if they didn't want to put them to work; never made any sense to me. [Laughter] And I could never figure out why anybody would want to be Vice President if they didn't want to get up and go to work every day. And fortunately, I found a fellow workaholic who did a fabulous job.

You know, Dick Durbin—I believe he did the right thing to try to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. I think he did the right thing—and to protect them from guns. Now, I believe—and I could go on and on and on. So what I want to say to you is, I hope that even though—I think I've done a pretty good job of bringing this country together, not

such a good job of bringing Washington together. That may be something beyond human powers. [Laughter]

But I hope that we Democrats this year will go out there and run an aggressive campaign, not shy from debates, don't mind a fight, but make it about the American people. You know, voters are not stupid. They know, when politicians are throwing off on each other, they're trying to help themselves; they're not interested in them. But when they're fighting about issues, they can relate to that, because that has to do with how the rest of us live.

And when people ask you why you came tonight, say, "Look, I came because the country's better off than it was 7 years ago. They had some good ideas, and they turned out to be right. I came because I support what we're trying to do this year. And I came because this is a big, big election."

And let me just close with this thought. I have spent a lot of time trying to build what I call one America, to bring people together across racial and ethnic and religious lines, fight against hate crimes and fight for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and to be a force for reconciling conflicts around the world.

And if God came to me tonight and said, "Well, I'm sorry, you can't finish your term. You've got to finish tomorrow. You're history. And I'm no genie, I'm not going to give you three wishes, but I'll give you one," I would wish for America to be one nation, one united country, where people celebrated our differences but revered our common humanity even more, because I don't think we'll be able to do good around the world unless we are good at home.

And that goes to our political differences as well. I had more fun in the State of the Union watching the Republicans and the Democrats when I told them that according to all the research, we were all genetically 99.9 percent the same. [Laughter] And I could tell they both were grievously discomfited by that statistic. [Laughter] But it's true.

I've now got this—last year one of the great experiences I had was Neil Armstrong came to see me with two of his astronaut partners to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Moon landing. And he brought me this vacuum-packed Moon rock, which I now have on the table right in front of the chairs in the Oval Office. You know when you all see the pictures of the Oval

Office on television? There's two chairs and two couches, this big table. Well, you notice the next time you see it on television, there's this vacuum-packed Moon rock. And when people come in and they talk and they get real angry—like, we had this conference on gun safety the other day, and they got all agitated because I was pushing them to do this bill. And they get angry and mad; I stop everybody, and I say, "Chill out. Look at that rock. You see that rock? That rock is 3.6 billion years old. We are all just passing through, and we need to do the best we can right now." I want this campaign to be vigorous and hard-fought, but it ought to be a happy time. But you ought to be dead serious about it.

The only other point I want to make is one that's kind of heavy on me now because a week ago yesterday I got to go to Selma and march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when John Lewis and Hosea Williams and others were beaten badly trying to march to Montgomery to campaign for voting rights. As a southerner, it was one of the great moments of my life, with John Lewis, who's one of my true heroes. But here's what I want to say to you about it.

I've been thinking a lot about the sixties lately, because in February we had the longest economic expansion in history. Now, before we broke the record, the record was held by the decade of the sixties, 1961 through 1969. And I see a lot of young people here tonight. I was a high school senior in 1964, in the middle of this vast expansion, and we thought the economy would have high growth, low unemployment, low inflation forever. And when I graduated from high school, the country was getting over the grief of President Kennedy and honored that President Johnson was trying to pass all the civil rights legislation through Congress. And we thought all of our racial problems would be fixed by laws passed through Congress. And we thought we would win the cold war against communism without having the country divided. That's what we thought was going to happen. And we were all very—not just the kids, like me, the grownups—we just took it for granted, this is what was going to happen.

A year later, Selma occurred. And whites and blacks died in the sixties, just 35 years ago, for the right to vote. A year later, '66, we had riots in the streets. Then in 1968, when I was a senior in college, Robert Kennedy was killed

2 days before I graduated. Martin Luther King was killed 2 months before I graduated. Nine weeks before I graduated, Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President again. The country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

A few weeks later, Mr. Nixon was elected President on a divisive campaign, that he represented the Silent Majority, which meant the rest of us were in the loud minority. And it was a campaign of "us" against "them"—were you an "us" or "them"? And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" ever since. And then a few weeks after that, this vaunted economic expansion came to an end, and it was over.

And what I want all of you to say—a lot of you brought your children here tonight. Forget about me being President; as an American citizen, I have waited 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children together—35 years. And I thought about it walking over that bridge and having John Lewis tell me what it was like when he finally realized he was going to get his brains beat out. And I thought about how easily things can change and how easily we can be lulled into a sense of complacency.

I've worked as hard as I could for 7 years to turn this country around. I'm proud of what's happened. But believe me, nothing has happened that can hold a candle to what we could do together now that we have good basic conditions. What has happened is nothing compared to what we can do.

And that's what I want you to think about. America is always about tomorrow. And those of you who have been blessed enough in this life and this economy to be able to afford to come to this dinner tonight—I'm glad; I like that. But you wouldn't be here, you'd be at somebody else's dinner if you didn't also think that the people that served your food ought to make a decent living and ought to be able to have health care and their kids ought to be able to go to good schools and that we're all going to do better if we go forward together. If you didn't believe that, you'd be at somebody else's dinner tonight.

So I'm telling you, I'm glad you're here. I thank you for helping our party. I thank you, those of you who have helped Hillary, those of you who have helped the Vice President. I thank you for all that. But the fight is still ahead of us. And don't forget this. America is

always about tomorrow. And I watched it once before in my lifetime; it can get away from you before you know it. This is a solemn responsibility we have and an enormous chance. Let's make the most of it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Mike and Pat Cherry and cohost Jim

Levin, president, JHL Enterprises; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, and Joseph A. Cari, Jr., finance cochair, Democratic National Committee; Lou Weisbach, chief executive officer, HA-LO Industries, Inc.; Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, and Michael Collins; civil rights activist Hosea Williams; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medals of Science and Technology March 14, 2000

The President. Thank you, and welcome to the White House. Thank you, Secretary Daley, and thank you, Dr. Lane, for your leadership. Secretary Shalala; Dr. Colwell; Representative Nick Smith, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, thank you for your support of science and technology in the United States Congress, across party lines. We welcome Sir Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador to the United States, here to be with us today.

Every year I look forward to this day. I always learn something from the work of the honorees. Some of you I know personally; others, I've read your books. Some of you, I'm still trying to grasp the implications of what it is I'm supposed to understand and don't quite yet. [*Laughter*] But this has been—I must say, one of the great personal joys of being President for me has been the opportunity that I've had to be involved with people who are pushing the frontiers of science and technology and to study subjects that I haven't really thought seriously about since I was in my late teens. And I thank you for that.

When Congress minted America's first coin in 1792, one of the mottos was "Liberty, Parent of Science and Industry." Very few of those coins survived, but the Smithsonian has lent us one today. I actually have one. It's worth \$300,000. [*Laughter*] Not enough to turn the head of a 25-year-old dot-com executive—[*laughter*]—but to a President, it's real money. [*Laughter*] And I thought you might like to see it because it embodies a commitment that was deep in the consciousness of Thomas Jefferson

and many of our other Founders. And we could put the same inscription on your medals today.

You have used your freedom to ask and answer some of the greatest questions of our time. Each of you has been a brilliant innovator and more, breaking down barriers between disciplines, broadening the frontiers of knowledge, bringing the products of pure research into everyday lives of millions of people, helping to educate the next generation of inventors and innovators. For this, America and, indeed, the entire world is in your debt.

It is terribly important that we continue to open the world of science to every American. The entire store of human knowledge is now doubling every 5 years. In just the 8 years since I first presented these medals, think about what has occurred. In 1993, no one's computer had a Zip drive or a Pentium chip. There were only 50 sites on the World Wide Web—amazing—January of 1993; today, there are about 50 million. In 1993, cloning animals was still science fiction, but Dolly the sheep would be born just 4 years later. Since 1993, we've sent robots to rove on Mars, created prototype cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon, invented Palm Pilots that put the Internet on our belts and lead to the increasing nightmares of a busy life. [*Laughter*]

The work that you and your colleagues have done has changed everything about our lives. It has brought us to the threshold of a new scientific voyage that promises to change everything all over again.

Perhaps no science today is more compelling than the effort to decipher the human genome,

the string of 3 billion letters that make up our genes. In my lifetime, we'll go from knowing almost nothing about how our genes work to enlisting genes in the struggle to prevent and cure illness. This will be the scientific breakthrough of the century, perhaps of all time. We have a profound responsibility to ensure that the life-saving benefits of any cutting-edge research are available to all human beings.

Today, we take a major step in that direction by pledging to lead a global effort to make the raw data from DNA sequencing available to scientists everywhere to benefit people everywhere. To this end, I am pleased to announce a groundbreaking agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom, one which I reconfirmed just a few hours ago in a conversation with Prime Minister Blair and one which brings the distinguished British Ambassador here today.

This agreement says in the strongest possible terms our genome, the book in which all human life is written, belongs to every member of the human race. Already the human genome project, funded by the United States and the United Kingdom, requires its grant recipients to make the sequences they discover publicly available within 24 hours. I urge all other nations, scientists, and corporations to adopt this policy and honor its spirit. We must ensure that the profits of human genome research are measured not in dollars but in the betterment of human life. [Applause] Thank you.

Already, we can isolate genes that cause Parkinson's disease and some forms of cancer, as well as a genetic variation that seems to protect its carriers from AIDS. Next month the Department of Energy's joint genome project will complete DNA sequences for 3 more chromosomes whose genes play roles in more than 150 diseases, from leukemia to kidney disease to schizophrenia. And those are just the ones we know about.

What we don't know is how these genes affect the process of disease and how they might be used to prevent or to cure it. Right now, we are Benjamin Franklin with electricity and a kite, not Thomas Edison with a usable light bulb.

As we take the next step and use this information to develop therapies and medicines, private companies have a major role. By making the raw data publicly available, companies can promote competition and innovation and spur the

pace of scientific advance. They need incentives to throw their top minds into expensive research ahead. They need patent protection for their discoveries and the prospect of marketing them successfully, and it is in the Government's interest to see that they get it.

But as scientists race to decipher our genetic alphabet, we need to think now about the future and see clearly that in science and technology, the future lies in openness. We should recognize that access to the raw data and responsible use of patents and licensing is the most sensible way to build a sustainable market for genetic medicine. Above all, we should recognize that this is a fundamental challenge to our common humanity and that keeping our genetic code accessible is the right thing to do.

We should also remember that, like the Internet, supercomputers, and so many other scientific advances, our ability to read our genetic alphabet grew from decades of research that began with Government funding. Every American has an investment in unlocking the human genome, and all Americans should be proud of their investment in this and other frontiers of science.

I thank all of you for all you have done to build international and national support for American investment in science and technology. I am grateful that this administration has had the opportunity to increase our funding for civilian research every year and that we have requested an unprecedented increase this year, in areas from nanotechnology to clean energy to space exploration.

As the new century opens, we are setting out on a new voyage of discovery, not just into human cells but into the human heart. We cannot know what lies ahead. Each new discovery presents even more new questions. What is the purpose of the 97 percent of our genetic makeup whose function we don't know? What will we find in the genes left to identify? How will we make sure the benefits of genetic research are widely and fairly shared? How will we make sure that millions of Americans living longer lives also live better and more fulfilling ones?

Almost 200 years ago, Lewis and Clark set out on a voyage of discovery that was planned in this room, where Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis laid out maps on tables, right where you're sitting and, though it would be politically incorrect today, tromped around on

animal skins on the floor. [Laughter] That discovery would not only map the contours of our continent but expand forever the frontier of our national imagination.

Before setting out, when Meriwether Lewis was here in the East Room with Thomas Jefferson, poring over maps and sharing the lessons in natural science, he actually lived on the south side of this room, in two small rooms that Thomas Jefferson had constructed in this big room for him. I must say today, I wish I could ask all of you to do the same. [Laughter] I always feel that when I do this, the wrong person is talking. I wish we could hear from all of you today.

One of the things that I wish I could do a better job of as President is sparking the interest and understanding of every single citizen in the work you do—of everyone's ability to see how profoundly significant what goes on in your labs and in your minds is to their future. I do think the American people are coming a long way on that, and I tried to talk in the State of the Union in ways that would help. I also try to think of little ways to illustrate how you are changing our conception of the most basic things: what is big and what is small, what is long and what is short. Dr. Lane has actually given me a primer of what nanotechnology is, and I can carry on a fairly meaningful subject about something that is totally unfathomable to me. [Laughter]

And last year, Neil Armstrong and his colleagues came back to the White House to celebrate the 30th anniversary of his walk on the Moon. And while he did it, as a part of the ceremony, he gave me—just on loan—a vacuum-packed Moon rock which, if you see the photographs now of the Oval Office with the two chairs and the couches and the table in between, the Moon rock is now visible to the world that sees it. And when Members of Congress and others come in and get all heated up and angry over some issue, I often call a time out, and I say, "Wait a minute. See that rock? It came off the Moon. It's 3.6 billion years old. We're all just passing through. Chill out." [Laughter] It works every time. [Laughter] So there's a practical gain I got from scientific advance. [Laughter]

There are many other things that have happened that have enriched our lives. I have to

acknowledge the presence here of my good friend Stevie Wonder, who has had a lot to do with improving musical technology and is obviously interested in some of the scientific developments now going on which might restore sight to people and other movements to people who have suffered debilitating paralysis and other things. And we thank you, Stevie, for being here today. Thank you.

As our honorees receive their medals, we thank them; all of us thank them for the way they have changed the way we view our planet and broadened infinitely the ways we gather and store knowledge. You are part of an unbroken chain from Lewis and Jefferson to Edison and Einstein, from the cotton gin to the space shuttle, from a vaccine for polio to the mysteries of DNA. I thank each of you for what you have done to change our world and to enrich our minds, our imaginations, and our hearts.

And I think—I learned right before I came in here that it is infinitely appropriate that you are receiving these awards on Albert Einstein's birthday. So thank you very much. Congratulations.

Commander, please read the citations.

[At this point, Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I want to just say two things in closing. First of all, we saw again today another triumph of the scientific method. After two failures, all the other honorees took off their glasses on their own. [Laughter] It was truly amazing.

This has been a wonderful day. I'd like to invite all of you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception in honor of the award recipients.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:23 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, and Michael Collins; and musician Stevie Wonder.

Mar. 14 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Joint Statement by President Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom on Availability of Human Genome Data

March 14, 2000

In the last decade of the twentieth century, scientists from around the world initiated one of the most significant scientific projects of all time: to determine the DNA sequence of the entire human genome, the human genetic blueprint. Progressing ahead of schedule, human genome research is rapidly advancing our understanding of the causes of human disease and will serve as the foundation for development of a new generation of effective treatments, preventions, and cures.

To realize the full promise of this research, raw fundamental data on the human genome, including the human DNA sequence and its variations, should be made freely available to scientists everywhere. Unencumbered access to this information will promote discoveries that

will reduce the burden of disease, improve health around the world, and enhance the quality of life for all humankind. Intellectual property protection for gene-based inventions will also play an important role in stimulating the development of important new health care products.

We applaud the decision by scientists working on the Human Genome Project to release raw fundamental information about the human DNA sequence and its variants rapidly into the public domain, and we commend other scientists around the world to adopt this policy.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Signing the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000

March 14, 2000

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1883, the "Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000."

I fully share the Congress's objective of promoting nonproliferation and combating Iran's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile delivery systems. This issue remains at the top of the agenda with Russia as well as with other countries whose companies may be providing such assistance to Iran. In the case of Russian entities' cooperation with Iran, we have imposed penalties ten times in the past and stand ready to apply them again whenever necessary.

The expansive reporting requirements in this bill in many ways duplicate existing laws, and my Administration will work with the Congress to rationalize these overlapping reporting requirements. We will also seek to rationalize the reporting requirements relating to certain transfers in instances where those transfers are legal under the applicable foreign laws and consistent with the guidelines of the applicable multilateral export control regime.

This bill, as amended, is less problematic than the earlier version that passed the House and will not harm our efforts to halt international cooperation with Iran's WMD and missile programs. Therefore, I have signed H.R. 1883.

I want to make it clear that Russia continues to be a valued partner in the International Space Station (ISS). H.R. 1833 requires certain determinations for purchases from Russia related to the ISS, but does not affect Russia's important role as an ISS partner. My Administration will also continue to work closely with the General Director of the Russian Aviation and Space Agency in his role as Special Representative on nonproliferation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 14, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 1883, approved March 14, was assigned Public Law No. 106-178.

Remarks at a Rally for Gun Safety Legislation March 15, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated. Good morning, and welcome to the White House. I want to thank all the Members of the House who are here. We have a large contingent, as you can see, and a bipartisan one, for which I am very grateful. In a moment we will hear from Representatives McCarthy, Morella, and Lofgren, speaking on behalf of all the Democrats and Republicans who are here with me today.

I want to thank Attorney General Reno and Secretary Summers for being here and for their support of our endeavors. I thank Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder. The Chief of Police of the District of Columbia, Charles Ramsey, is here, and other representatives of law enforcement.

I want to thank Michael Barnes from Handgun Control, and former Member of the House, for his leadership. And I want to say a special word of welcome to my friend Suzann Wilson, who lost her daughter in the Jonesboro, Arkansas, school shooting, who has bravely carried on the struggle for a safer future for the children of this country ever since. And I want to welcome all the young people who are here today.

Six years ago, at the White House, I signed the Brady law. I was especially pleased that day to be standing beside two very brave fighters against gun violence, Attorney General Reno and Sarah Brady. Today, as I stand with Congresswomen McCarthy, Morella, and Lofgren, I am reminded again that women from both parties have been and remain at the forefront of this fight. And I know I speak for the other people who are here today to say I am glad they allowed some of their male counterparts in the House—[laughter]—to join them.

When I signed the Brady bill, I said that our efforts proved once again that democracy can work. The American people, in their grassroots demand for commonsense action against gun violence, prevailed over a very powerful Washington gun lobby. Today, America is a safer place thanks to the Brady bill and other measures that many here in this room championed, from banning assault weapons to cop-killer bullets, to putting 100,000 police on the street.

The overall crime rate has fallen 7 years in a row, homicide to the lowest rate in 30 years. But time and time again we see still, from Columbine to Buell Elementary School, it is still far too easy for guns to fall into the hands of criminals and children.

We have been trying for some time now, as all of you know, to further strengthen our gun laws, by passing a strong juvenile justice bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks with all new handguns, and bans the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which unbelievably is still legal and threatens to make a mockery of our assault weapons ban.

Once again, the gun lobby and their allies in the leadership of the Congress are standing in the way of real progress. And once again, we battle not just for the safety of our families but for the soundness of our democracy. For over 8 months, the majority leadership, under pressure from the gun lobby, has refused to allow the House and the Senate conferees to meet and have a substantive debate on the juvenile justice bill.

Representative Conyers has negotiated in good faith with Representative Hyde. I had the conference leaders here last week, and it was clear to me, from the discussion between them and with the rest of us, that they were much closer together, even though still considerably apart, than the position that the NRA has taken against our legislation. But we still haven't been able to get the committee to meet.

Now Representative Zoe Lofgren from California has offered a simple motion. It simply says, one version of this bill passed the Senate; one version of this bill passed the House 8 months ago; the conferees should meet. That's all it says. It says the Congress ought to do the job it was hired to do.

Again, I want to thank the Republican Members who have shown up here to stand here today. I don't even know, because we haven't talked about it, whether they would agree with me on every provision of this bill. But they want a bill, and they want the conferees to

meet. And I will say again, I know the conventional wisdom is in election years we're not supposed to do anything. I think that's wrong. We all still draw a check in election years, just like we do in nonelection years, and we're all here. And these kids, they keep dying every day. They don't know it's an election year. So I thank Zoe Lofgren and all these people who are here, for saying that we ought to get on with the business of the Nation.

Now unbelievably enough, the gun lobby—who would do well in this conference, I think; I don't like it very much, but I think they'd do pretty well—they don't want this conference to meet. And they're actually threatening retribution against lawmakers if they vote for Zoe Lofgren's resolution to meet. Why is that? Because they know the people aren't with them, that's why. Because they know that the people who have experience out there in the country, whether they're Republicans or Democrats or independents, once they understand what the issue is and that nobody's trying to take any hunter's gun away or burden anybody's legal rights, we're just trying to keep children alive—once they understand that, they know that they cannot win the public debate.

I got a little tickled over the weekend when they got a little rough with me. I mean—[laughter]—you know, I have so much scar tissue now, I can't even feel it. [Laughter] So it's totally immaterial to me what they say. And that should not be an issue for any of you.

You know, none of us—any of us get these elected jobs, we ask for them; nobody makes us take these jobs. So that's completely irrelevant. The only thing that should matter—the only thing that should matter—is what is the best course in our country to make America the safest big country in the world and to save the lives of these dozen kids that are getting killed every day from gun violence. That should be the only thing that matters.

And there are legitimate, practical issues that have to be worked through in these areas. But believe me, I've been there. I'm one of the few Presidents that's ever been to any of these gun shows. I've actually been to them. And I've been to them way out in the country, where all of the practical problems allegedly arise. And in all candor, I think that taking a little time and a little inconvenience to save a lot of lives is a good deal for America.

I also believe that we cannot make this the only area of our national life where our only response is punishment and no prevention. Suppose I gave a speech to you today. Suppose I called you here to say, "My fellow Americans, I am incredibly burdened by the fact that these airport metal detectors are a pain for a lot of people. And 99.9 percent of all the people who walk into airports are good, law-abiding citizens and would never do anything wrong, and a lot of them have money clips in their pockets and have to go through those metal detectors 2 or 3 times, and I just think it's terrible. And so we're going to take the metal detectors out of the airport, and the next time somebody blows up an airplane we're going to put 10 years on their sentence." [Laughter] Anybody want to support that policy? [Laughter]

Suppose I said to you, "My fellow Americans, I brought you here because I'm getting older and a little heavier and those seatbelts are really uncomfortable for me—[laughter]—and because the overwhelming majority of automobile drivers in America are good, law-abiding people and safe people, I want to abolish the speed limits and rip the seatbelts out of all our cars—[laughter]—and if somebody does something wrong, I want to add 5 years to their sentence." Now, that's the logic here.

Why should this be the only area of our national life where we say no prevention, only punishment? Attorney General Reno has increased gun crime prosecutions. Why do we fight for 100,000 police? Why are all these police groups here fighting for 100,000 police? Not primarily to catch criminals quicker but because they knew if they were on the street in the neighborhoods, they would prevent crime in the first place. That's what this is about.

So, again, there's an old proverb that says, he who throws the first blow admits he has run out of arguments. [Laughter] In 1993, they said the Brady bill would violate the second amendment. But the right to keep and bear arms in deer season is still alive and well in Arkansas, but 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers weren't able to get handguns. It was the right thing to do.

Gun crimes have fallen by 35 percent-plus since 1993. Today I'm honored to announce the results of the Justice Department's first annual review of the instant criminal background check system put in place in November of 1988 under the Brady law. In the first year, the insta-check

system, in one year, stopped 179,000 illegal gun sales, over two-thirds to people who were indicted or convicted of felony crimes. Most of the rest were fugitives or domestic or drug abusers. All told now, as I said, half a million guns have been stopped from falling into the wrong hands since 1993, proof positive that those who opposed the Brady bill in 1993 were wrong.

This is not an argument—we're having the same old argument. We have evidence now. And when it comes to the gun show, I would just remind you that back in 1993 the same crowd that's fighting closing the gun show loophole said, "You don't need the Brady bill because no bad actors ever buy guns at gun stores. They get them all at gun shows and urban flea markets and out of the backs of pickups and trunks of cars." So now we say, "Well, we did get a lot of them, but you're right, there still are a lot of those bad"—now they say, "Oh, well, we can't do that. It's too much of a burden."

Now, I don't believe that we can't reach agreement here. But the leadership of the Congress continues to resist and to cling to arguments that won't stand up in honest debate. And I'll bet, in their heart of hearts, they're pretty embarrassed by some of the things that their allies have said in the last few days.

They say gun shows would be put out of business if unlicensed dealers who sell guns have to comply with the background checks, which can take up to 3 business days to complete. But licensed gun dealers at gun shows already have to do background checks, if they're licensed, and they're still doing a very brisk business. Nearly three-quarters—now, listen to this—nearly three-quarters of all the Brady background checks are completed within a few seconds under the insta-check system; 95 percent now completed in 2 hours or less. Less than 5—here's the rub, and I want everybody to focus on this—this is the rub of this legislation. Less than 5 percent of the Brady checks take longer than 24 hours. So if we put this in, most of this will be over in 2 hours; 95 percent will be over in 24 hours. But of the 5 percent that take more than 24 hours, they are 20 times more likely to be rejected for a problem. So this whole big old fight here is, in large measure, about those 5 percent.

Now, why in the wide world any organized group would be in the business of worrying about the inconvenience of those 5 percent is beyond me. Ninety-five percent of the people

are going to be out of here; 75 percent of them are going to be out of here in an hour or less. Representative Conyers here has offered an agreement that would have the whole thing done in 24 hours, except for those that can't be done.

So again I say, I've heard all this—if you read the press on it, because so much of it is—and this is not a criticism of the press, it's the rhetoric of the fight—you would think this is about will there be background checks or not. Why in the world would we not want to have an adequate check of these 5 percent that are 20 times more likely to be problem people and hurt innocent children and other people? That is the issue here.

And I'm telling you, I don't care what anybody says about people traveling from one town to the next to another gun show and being out in the rural areas and how much trouble it is. It's not that much trouble. They deposit the guns at the local police department or the sheriff's office. There's 50 different ways to solve this problem.

This is all just a smokescreen. Every last issue is turned into some major battle over the Constitution, when all we're trying to do is save lives.

So again, I want to say again, I'm grateful to the people who are here. I'm grateful that we have bipartisan representation. I hope the Republicans who are here don't get too much grief when they go back to Congress.

But I would like it if this were not a political issue. I would like it if it were not a partisan issue. I would like it if not a single vote could be made on this in the November election. I would like it if no one ever had to vote for any candidate on this ever again. I would like it if we had a national consensus to protect our children.

And it would not in any way, shape, or form interfere with Americans to go about their business in the ways that Americans in my part of the country have from the beginning, in the hunting season, in the skeet shooting, in the sport shooting, and all that. It doesn't have anything to do with this.

But we're making a grave mistake when we continue to put up excuses for that for which there is no excuse and to pretend that this is the only area of our national life where only punishment and not prevention is the answer.

Mar. 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

So I thank the folks who are here. I wish Representative Lofgren well, and I particularly appreciate the leadership of the women Members of the Congress in this issue that affects all of us.

I would like to now call on someone who, of all the people on this stage, has paid the highest price for our failure to do the right thing by our country, Representative Carolyn McCarthy.

[At this point, Representatives Carolyn McCarthy, Constance A. Morella, and Zoe Lofgren made brief remarks.]

The President. I want to leave you with two thoughts. First of all, not many people who pay the price Carolyn McCarthy did wind up having the personal strength to run for Congress. One of the biggest problems here is most of the people out there whose kids get killed in crimes or by accident, it's all they can do to put their own lives back together, take care of the rest of their kids, and go on with their lives. I can't believe that Suzann Wilson is still doing this after all these years. There is only a—it was just kind of a God's grace that Jim and Sarah Brady happened to be nationally prominent people and in a situation where they could go on. Mike Barnes is trying to organize people that don't have anything like the natural inclination or ability to come up with the kind of money and power and then employ the kind of tactics that the typical lobby group does. But they're everywhere.

Yesterday I was contacted by a man that I've known for many years, to remind me of the incredible damage done to his family when his

son and his son's friend were playing with a gun that killed the friend. His son doesn't have a mark on him, but it took him years to get over it, watching his best friend die there. There are people like this everywhere. And they shouldn't be denied and disenfranchised just because they're not organized. You have to speak for them.

The second thing I want to say is Congressman John Lewis is here. The Sunday before last, I joined him in the 35th anniversary of marching over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, a march that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. People in our lifetime, those of us that are old enough, over 35, actually died so all Americans could vote. I don't think they marched and died so that their votes would vanish in a howl of special interest politics in Washington. That's not what the Constitution or the Bill of Rights or the civil rights revolution was all about.

This is about more than guns. This is about whether democracy works. So I ask you, don't just go out and talk about how well these women did today and how moved you are. Do something. Mobilize your friends to do something. We can win this battle with your help.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Michael D. Barnes, president, and Sarah Brady, chair, Handgun Control, Inc., and former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

Statement on the Congressional Budget Resolution

March 15, 2000

Today the Republican Congress took a first step on a risky budget that threatens to undermine the fiscal discipline that has led to our current economic prosperity. The budget blueprint they have endorsed fails to strengthen Social Security or Medicare, takes us off the path to paying down the debt by 2013, and threatens to slash key priorities like education, law enforcement, and the environment. It was the

wrong approach for America last year—it is the wrong approach for America this year.

Republican leaders should work with me on a responsible budget that strengthens Social Security and Medicare, adds a prescription drug benefit, pays down the debt by 2013, and invests in education and other key priorities. Let's work together to meet America's long-term challenges and keep our economy strong.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Federal Agency
Climate Change Programs and Activities
March 15, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 568(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000, as contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000 (Public Law 106-113), I transmit herewith an account of all Federal agency climate change programs and activities. This report includes both domestic and international programs and activities related to climate change, and contains data on both spending and performance goals.

As the comprehensive nature of this report indicates, my Administration believes that climate change presents one of the premier challenges that America—and the world—will face in this new century. Informed by sound science and based on prudent measures, I believe it is critical that the Federal Government provide leadership to address this serious challenge and to act on behalf of our citizens and future gen-

erations. Our action plan, as detailed in this report, features numerous investments in scientific research, in proven public-private partnerships, and in efforts to promote new and developing technologies and practices that will not only reduce greenhouse gases, but will provide significant new economic opportunities and savings for American businesses and consumers.

I appreciate the interest of the Congress in this important issue and in our efforts to address it. I urge the Congress to fully support these initiatives and to join my Administration in meeting the challenge of climate change.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Baltimore,
Maryland
March 15, 2000

Thank you very much. Peter, Mrs. Angelos, thank you for this incredible evening. Thank you all for coming and for your support. Thank you, Governor, for the kind words you said and for the great work you're doing in Maryland to try to protect people from gun violence. And I want to say, I agree with you; you do have the best Lieutenant Governor in the United States in Maryland. Thank you, Kathleen, thank you very much. And I'm something of an expert on that subject, having served as a Governor for a dozen years, served with 150 different Governors. And I think—it's amazing to me how many times the team of Glendening and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend have put Maryland first in all kinds of reforms, from education to what's good for children to community service, and now in your attempts to do everything you can to protect your children from violence. And you

should be very proud of this. This State is very, very well-governed, and I'm grateful to you.

I want to thank the other leaders who have come here: your State treasurer; your secretary of state; speaker of the house, who invited me to come back to address the delegates one last time before I leave. That's good. When people come up to me and start thanking me for what I've done, I feel like it's a eulogy, and I have to pinch myself to make sure I'm still alive. [Laughter] I'm always kind of surprised anybody wants me to show up anymore. [Laughter] So I thank you very much for that.

President Dixon, Commissioner Daniels, I thank all of you for being here. I want to say a special word of appreciation to the Congress Members who are here, Ben Cardin and Elijah Cummings, who have been great friends and allies of ours throughout these last 7 years. I thank you. And Peter Franchot, thank you for

your support. And Pete Rawlings, before he was the head of your fortunes with his legislative position, we used to work together on the education commission of the State. And whenever I needed somebody who'd stand up and say I was right when I was challenging people to change 15 years ago, he was there. And I thank you for that.

Mayor D'Alesandro came up to me tonight, and he said—you may know that his sister is Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, and one of the ablest people in the Congress—he came up to me tonight and said, “Well, I want you to know there's life after politics.” [Laughter] For which I thanked him. [Laughter] And I hope I'll be around to see the evidence. [Laughter]

And I want to thank Dr. Richardson, the president of Morgan State. I want to acknowledge him. Morgan State gave me an honorary degree a couple years ago, and I got to speak there. It's the only commencement I've ever attended where there were five different musical selections, and every one was better than the one before. You've got a lot to be proud of, having that fine institution here.

Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you and Katie for coming out to meet me at Fort McHenry and standing in the wind. And I'm glad the Irish saved Baltimore. [Laughter] I wish the same could be said of Washington—[laughter]—which the British did burn. And every night when I go home to the White House, there's a big block we've left unpainted that still has the burn marks from where the British assaulted it in 1814, and I always—periodically, at least, I remind the people who work with me just to be humble because you never can tell what's coming up the river there. [Laughter] And generally in life, that's a good lesson to remember. [Laughter]

I'm thrilled by your election. I enjoyed working with your predecessor, Kurt Schmoke. I was jealous when you got over 90 percent of the vote. I couldn't get over 90 percent of the vote if my name were the only one on the ballot. [Laughter]

And I am, particularly in this week, profoundly grateful for what you said about Ireland. My people are from Fermanagh, in County Armagh, which is right on the border of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. And I have a little watercolor in the Residence at the White House of the oldest known residence of my mother's people, the Cassidys. It's an early 18th

century farmhouse which still is in existence. I've never been able to trace my roots, beyond speculation, back before that. And it has been a great honor. And we're having a little trouble in Ireland now, but we're working through it, and I think it's going to be all right. And if it hadn't been for the Irish-American community, the United States never would have been able to do that. And so it means a lot to me that you said that tonight, and I thank you for that.

I want to finally, by way of introduction, beyond thanking Ed Rendell for agreeing when he left the mayoralty of Philadelphia, which has been fabulous to me and given me massive margins—I said, “I've got a little part-time job I'd like for you to do. Would you become chairman of the Democratic Party?” And he had earned a rest, and he didn't take it, because he knows how important these elections are to our future, for the same reason Peter Angelos said. So I want to thank him.

Now, I'd like to say some things tonight in a fairly straightforward way. You can do that when you're not running for anything. Most days I'm okay with that. [Laughter]

First of all, I feel profoundly indebted to Baltimore and to the State of Maryland for how good you've been to Hillary and me and Al and Tipper Gore. You've given us your electoral votes. You've always been there to support us. And through this administration of the Governor, you've been an ardent partner for us in so many of the things that I've tried to do for America. I don't know how many times in the last 7 years I've come to Maryland to give the country evidence that this or that or the other thing could be done, whether it was in law enforcement or education or the economy or the environment. And so I thank you for that. I am very, very grateful.

Tomorrow somebody might ask you why you came here tonight, and so I want to ask you to think about what answer you would give. I hope you will say, as has been said, “Well, you know, when President Clinton and Vice President Gore were elected in 1992, they said they wanted to change America for the better, to give the Government back to the American people, not just to restore the economy but to bring our society together, to build a more united community, and to enhance responsibility on the part of all citizens. And the economy is the best it's ever been. And the crime rate

is down. The welfare rolls are down. Adoptions are up. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized for the first time; 150,000 of our kids have served in AmeriCorps, serving their communities in Maryland and every other State and earning money for college. America has been a force for peace and prosperity around the world. We've got cleaner air, cleaner water. We've cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as the previous administrations did in 12 years. We've had the first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years."

So the first answer is, you know, "They did what they said they'd do. They did what they said they would do." And one of the most personally rewarding things that has happened to me since I've been President occurred actually fairly early in my first term, when a professor I had never met, who was a scholar of the Presidency, wrote me and said I had already kept a higher percentage of my promises to the American people than the previous five Presidents had. And that was in the first term.

I believe in laying out a program and sticking to it. I think it's a great mistake to ask for a job if you don't know why you want it. So that's the first thing I hope you'll say.

The second thing I hope you will say is, there's an answer to Governor Bush's question about what Al Gore has been doing in Washington for the last 7 years. And again, I can say this: I haven't been Vice President, but I have made quite an extensive study in my life, intensified in the last 7 years, of every one of my predecessors and the Office of Vice President.

Much as I love and revere Franklin Roosevelt, he did not pick Harry Truman expecting he would be President or with some great thought for why he would be. And when he tragically died, then-Vice President Truman did not know about the existence of the atomic bomb. He did not even know that. And thank the good Lord, we were lucky Harry Truman turned out to be a great man and a great President who made the tough decisions that were necessary to build the next 50 years.

President Eisenhower gave some more thought, and President Kennedy did, and Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon both had more influence as Vice President than anyone before them. Then President Carter inaugurated a whole different way of dealing with Vice Presidents with Walter Mondale, who met with him

every week, would come to every meeting. And to be fair—I don't want to be like our friends in the Republican Party—one of the things that Ronald Reagan did was to give then-Vice President Bush more responsibility, because the Carter-Mondale model had worked so well and because any President in his right mind knows that anything can happen in life and you might not be here tomorrow.

I had a different idea. I thought: Why would you want to be Vice President unless it was a real job, all day, every day? Who wants to hang around waiting for something bad to happen to the President? [Laughter] And I believed that the role that had been given to Vice President Mondale and then-Vice President Bush was a good thing but only the beginning.

So in 1992, when I asked Al Gore to run with me, I defied all political convention. Some people thought I was too young; I picked a guy who was a year younger than me. Some people thought I was too southern; I picked a guy from a border State. Some people thought I was too much of a New Democrat; I picked a guy who basically agreed with me on the issues. But I also picked someone who knew about things that I did not know about, who had experience in the Congress, who knew a lot about science and technology, who understood a lot about the environment, who knew an enormous amount about arms control and foreign policy. And I picked someone who I thought had strengths that I didn't have, because I thought we could work together in harmony.

And I can tell you that if you look at the whole history of the United States and you ask any objective historian who has really studied it, Vice President Gore has been, by far—not even close, by far—the most influential, productive Vice President in the history of our Republic, without regard to party. No one has ever been close.

He broke the tie that passed the economic plan in 1993, without which we wouldn't be here celebrating tonight, because it drove the interest rates down and got this economy going again. He recently, as you just heard, broke the tie on the gun safety legislation. In between, he headed our empowerment program designed to bring economic opportunity to designated poor cities and rural areas in this country. He headed our partnership with Detroit to develop new generation vehicles, some of which are now

at the Detroit auto show, that we developed over a 6-year period, working with the auto companies and the auto workers, getting 70, 80 miles a gallon. They'll be in the showroom in the next couple of years. He headed a special commission with Russia and helped to continue to reduce the number of nuclear weapons; had a special commission with South Africa to try to make sure that once they got real freedom and democracy after 300 years, it had a good chance to work.

And every tough decision I've had to take, whether it was a decision to try to restore democracy to Haiti or stop the slaughter in Bosnia or stop the slaughter in Kosovo or give financial aid to Mexico—on a day when a poll came out saying the people were 81–15 against it—every single tough decision, he backed it to the hilt. When we took on the tobacco interest and the NRA in a way that no previous administration of either party had ever done, he backed it to the hilt. So if somebody asked you the Governor Bush question, what's Al Gore been doing for the last 7 years, give them an earful, will you, because it's a good story. It's a good story.

The third thing I hope you will say is, you agree with the fights we're waging now. You can thank me later, when I'm a former President, if you're still so inclined, but I'm interested in what we're doing today. We're trying to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We're trying to pass a bill to build 6,000 schools and modernize 5,000 a year for the next 5 years—very important issue. We're trying to double the number of children in after-school and summer school programs and pass a budget in Congress which would give every child in every disadvantaged school in the entire United States the chance to be in an after-school mentoring program. We're trying—we have opened the doors of the first 2 years of college to all Americans through the HOPE scholarship. We've got 5 million people in college now getting the tax credits that were in the '97 Balanced Budget Act for college. I want to give people a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 for college tuition so we'll open the door for 4 years of college to all Americans. This is what we're trying to do now. These are important things.

We're working on the peace processes, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East, and I'm going to the Indian subcontinent at the end of the week. We're moving. The country is on

the move. We're fighting attempts by the other party to pass tax cuts so big that we wouldn't be able to save Social Security and Medicare and pay the debt down and do the things that need to be done for our country.

So you ought to say, "The last 7 years have been good. They did what they said they'd do. Governor Bush wants to know what Vice President Gore has been doing the last 7 years. I think he's been doing good, real good. And third, I agree with the fights that they're waging."

The most important thing that we're doing right now, of course, is we're embroiled in this fight over gun safety. And I always—I suppose I should be glad because they're kind of unmasked, but it's always kind of sad to me when one of these fights turns real mean and personal. I have a pretty thick hide after all these years, and it's not really very effective when they say things like they've been saying the last few days, the gun lobby. But it obscures the reality.

Sometimes people just don't like you, and you don't know why. Have you ever had that happen to you? One of my favorite stories is this story about this guy that's walking along the edge of the Grand Canyon, and he slips off, and he's careening to his certain demise. And all of a sudden he sees this little twig sticking out of the canyon, and he grabs onto it, and it breaks his fall. And then all of the sudden the roots start coming out of the twig. And he looks up in the sky and he says, "God, why me? I'm a good man. I've taken good care of my family. I've worked hard, and I've paid my taxes all my life. Why me?" And this thunderous voice comes out of the sky and says, "Son, there's just something about you I don't like." [Laughter]

Now, everybody has been in that situation. I know why the NRA, however, doesn't like me. They don't like me because I was shooting cans off a fencepost in the country with a .22 when I was 12 years old. They don't like me because I governed for 12 years in the State where half the people had a hunting license. And therefore, I know how to talk to people they try to scare up against us, those of us that want to have a safer world.

But the real issue is not the spokesman for the NRA saying that I want more deaths in America, or that somehow we're responsible for the death of that wonderful former basketball coach from Northwestern, and all these absurd

claims which they will doubtless use to raise money on. The real issue is, we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years and the lowest gun death rate in 30 years, but no one in their right mind believes America is as safe as it ought to be or could be. And no one believes we should stop until we make America the safest big country in the world. Now, that's what I believe.

You know, when people start batting around responsibility for people's lives—one of the jobs that I was not prepared for as President—I never dreamed about and I confess I never thought about it—was the responsibility to comfort the grieving when their loved ones had died. I never thought when I was running for President I'd be meeting a plane carrying the body of my friend and brother, Ron Brown, and all those people who died in Croatia, trying to give those people a better life. I never thought I'd have to go down to one room after another at a military base and greet 19 families of 19 airmen that were killed by terrorists because they were serving us in Saudi Arabia. I never thought I'd have to go to a place like Oklahoma City, where nearly 170 people were killed by a man consumed by his hatred for our Government.

I never thought I'd have to have parents like the grieving mother and stepfather of young Kayla Rolland sit in the Oval Office. And what can you tell them, if you've got a little girl and their little girl is gone? So I don't really think we should be talking about this debate in these terms.

When they fought me on the Brady bill, because they said it would be so burdensome to hunters and sports people, and I said it wouldn't, and we won. We had evidence now: 500,000 people have been kept from getting handguns because they were felons, fugitives, and stalkers. Unfortunately, the man who killed Ricky Byrdsong in Chicago and a young Korean Christian walking out of his church and several other people was able to get a gun illegally in another way.

Well, one of the ways people get guns, as the NRA said way back in '93, when they were against the Brady bill, they said, "Oh, well, people don't buy these guns at gun stores. They get them at these gun shows and these urban flea markets." So I said, "Well, let's just do a background check there." That's what this is about: child safety locks, money for smart gun technology, banning the importation of large

ammunition clips—assault weapons are illegal in this country; then we let people import the ammunition clips that can convert legal weapons into assault weapons—and closing the gun show loophole.

And oh, there's been the awfulest outcry about how terrible this is and how burdensome this will be. And one of the reasons they don't like me is I've actually been to these country gun shows. You're the Governor of Arkansas, you've got to get out there and hustle around and go where the people are. And I've got a lot of friends that have bought hunting rifles at these country gun shows. And it's true, if you're out in the country and somebody has to go someplace else, it's a little bit of an inconvenience if you have to wait a day to get your gun. But every one of these places has a nearby police office or a sheriff's office where those guns could be deposited while a background check is done.

Most people I know of good conscience, that love to go into the deer woods, would do anything to keep another child alive. This is not what this is about. And 95 percent of these people could be checked in a day, and the other 5 percent that I want to wait 3 days to make sure we can check—their denial rate, because of their background problems, is 20 times the denial rate for the 95 percent to clear in a day.

We're going to hold up the whole United States Congress, go 8 months after the Columbine slaughter? I didn't even talk about that, going to Columbine High School, going out to Springfield, Oregon, calling those people in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where I knew the people in the school. You know, I'm sorry, but I think it's worth a little inconvenience to save a lot of lives, and I think you do, too.

Ben Cardin was with me today when they won a great legislative victory over a tiny thing, because the NRA was trying to beat a resolution by Representative Zoe Lofgren from California, that simply said: Look, the Senate passed a good gun safety bill 8 months ago, and the House passed one that wasn't so good, but at least they passed a bill—and what Congress does when the Senate and House pass different bills, they get together, just like you do in Maryland, and you have a conference committee, and you work out a compromise, and you send it to the chief executive, and he signs or vetoes it.

They haven't met in 8 months. And the reason is, they know that our friends in the media back there cannot run a headline story every day for 8 months saying they haven't met; I mean, they can't. They've got a lot of work to do; tomorrow there will be something else on the news. So they thought, "This thing will just go away if we just don't meet. But if we meet and we have to say what our position is, we'll get hurt, or something might happen." So they just never met.

So Zoe Lofgren introduced a resolution in the House today that simply said one thing: Meet. [Laughter] You draw a paycheck every 2 weeks; earn it. Meet. Do something on this bill. Even if it's wrong, do something. That's all it said.

Well, the NRA acted like we were going to go confiscate guns. And they were up there pressuring people, handing out these awful pamphlets, running all these ads and everything.

So a bunch of them came down to the White House today, a bunch of the Members of the House, including about three Republicans, including Connie Morella from Maryland, who spoke. And Carolyn McCarthy spoke, whose husband was killed and whose son was nearly killed by the man who was using an automatic weapon on the Long Island subway 7 years ago. She was a lifelong Irish Catholic Republican. She switched parties, ran for Congress, became one of our Members. And I can tell you, we're really proud of her. She got up and talked about how callous it was for people who disagree with us on the issue to act like we don't care whether people die or not.

And the point I made was that—I was trying to get a little levity in the situation because it's so profoundly sad, but I also wanted people to think. I said—but these people at the NRA, what their position is is that guns are different from every other single safety threat. Every other threat, we do as much prevention as possible, and then if somebody does something wrong and we catch them, we punish them. But we try to prevent. I mean, every one of us was raised with that old "ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," right? But they say, "No, no, no, no prevention. Just throw the book at them if they do something wrong."

And I asked the crowd, and I'll ask you, how would you feel if I called a press conference tomorrow morning and I said the following: "My fellow Americans, I have been really concerned

about how difficult it is in crowded airports, with airplanes already delayed, for people to have to go through these metal detectors. And you've got a money clip in your pocket or a belt buckle that's too big, and you have to go through 2 or 3 times, and it's just a pain. Now, most people who fly on airplanes are completely honest. And 99.999 percent of them are being terribly burdened by these metal detectors. So I'm just going to take them out. And the next time somebody blows up a plane, if I catch them, I'm going to throw the book at them." [Laughter] You guys would think I had completely lost it, wouldn't you?

What if somebody said to you, "You know, most people who drive cars are really good people. They're responsible drivers. They're never drunk when they drive. They're just as good as they can be. And I'm just tired of them being burdened with having to get a license and having to observe the speed limit. And by the way, we're going to rip all the seatbelts out of all the cars, because most people do the right thing anyway." I mean, it's absurd, right? You know it's absurd. That is the argument: no prevention, only punishment.

So this is a huge deal, much bigger than just the issue at hand. Look, I know what the Constitution says. And quite apart from the Constitution, the American people believe they ought to have the right to hunt; they ought to have the right to sport shooting. But the death rate from accidental gun shootings is 15 times higher in this country than it is in the next 25 biggest countries combined, for kids.

I had a fellow call me yesterday when he saw all the press about this, an old friend of mine, just to remind me that once in his garage many years ago his little boy and his little boy's best friend were playing with a gun that they got somewhere else. The gun went off and killed his little boy's best friend. I've known this guy forever. He said, "I just want to remind you of that; don't forget that." He said, "It took my son years to get over that. He had no wounds, no burdens himself, but he had to live with seeing his friend die, and in front of him, as a kid, in a game they were playing together with something they had no business in their hands."

So I say to all of you, these are not issues to be taken lightly. And there are huge differences here between the parties and their

leadership and between our nominees for President. And that's going on this year.

Now, the last thing I would like to say to you is, we've got—what I hope this election will be—I hope and pray that there will be no votes on this gun issue in November. But the only way there can be no votes in it is if Congress does the right thing and starts saving kids' lives and putting the lives of our children first.

But I want you to think about this. I want you to think—I want you to lift your sights now. I want you to say, “So I came here because they did good. I came here because Al Gore was the best Vice President in history. I came here because I agree with them on the fights they're waging now.” The fourth thing I hope you'll say is, the big issue, “This is the best time this country has ever known in many ways, and we have to make the most of it.”

That's what I tried to say at the State of the Union Address. You know, when I became President, everybody was just worried about keeping the ship afloat and turning it around. Well, we've got it turned around now. What are we going to do with it?

How many times in your life have you made a mistake—if you're over 30, you have, whether you admit it or not—how many times in your life have you made a mistake not because times were bad but because times were good in your life, because you thought everything was—in a business or in a family situation or just in your personal situation, you thought things were rocking along so well there was absolutely no questions to be asked and no consequences to breaking your concentration or indulging yourself a little when you should have been thinking down the road?

That's what I want you to think about. We have a chance to save Social Security and Medicare for when the baby boomers retire, so we don't bankrupt our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. We've got a chance to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, so we keep interest rates low for a generation and the economy hot. We have a chance to give an excellent education to every child in this country by working with the schools and the States. We have a chance to meet the enormous environmental challenge of global warming and our local environmental challenges and to do it in a way that actually increases

the rate of growth of the economy, not undermine it.

We have a chance to help people balance work and family by doing more for child care, by broadening family leave, by raising the minimum wage, by providing more health insurance coverage to lower income working people who can't afford it. We have a chance to do these things.

We have a chance to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and justice, to help people solve their racial, their tribal, their religious conflicts. And we have a chance to truly build one America at home and to stop the prejudice against people just because of their race or their religion or just because they're gay or just because of their politics.

You know, the difference between us and our friends in the Republican Party is, I don't have any problem with people on the so-called religious right practicing their religion and taking their religion into politics. That's their business. I've never tried to demonize them. But if they were in power, they would demonize us, just like they did before. They don't think we should have the same rights that we're willing to give to them. They want us to live according to their rules. We're perfectly willing to let them live according to their rules. They want us to live according to theirs. And that's the difference.

And I just want you to think about that, because this is such a hopeful time for our country, but it will only work if we are very serious about this election. Now, you heard Peter talking about the money involved. The only reason the money is important is it costs money to communicate with people. The American people nearly always get it right if they have enough information and enough time. They've got a great internal compass, and they nearly always get it right. That's why we're still around here after over 200 years.

And it doesn't matter if they have more money than we do. They had \$100 million more than we did in 1998, and we still picked up seats in the House of Representatives, in the sixth outyear of a President's term, for the first time since 1822. But we have to have enough.

So I want you to think about—this is the most important thing you can say. When you talk to people when you go home, more important than “They kept their promises,” more important than “Al Gore was the greatest Vice President,” more important than “I agree with

them on the fights,” more important than the specific issues going toward the future, the most important thing is this: We have got to be one united country, committed to making the most of this moment.

Sunday, a week ago, I went to Selma, Alabama, for the 35th anniversary of the voting rights march on Bloody Sunday across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. And for me as a white southerner, it was a moment of a lifetime. Unless you were part of all that back then, you can't imagine what it meant to me, the honor I felt just to be there, to be with John Lewis, who I admire and love, and Coretta Scott King and Hosea Williams, getting up out of his wheelchair to walk across the bridge, and Dick Gregory and Reverend Jackson and all these other people. Kids find it hard to believe that 35 years ago you could get killed—white or black—you could get killed for fighting for the right to vote.

And what's that got to do with this? Here's what it's got to do with this. We're now in the longest economic expansion in American history—20-year low in poverty, record lows in African-American and Hispanic unemployment—the longest one we've ever had. Do you know when we broke the record? Do you know what record we broke? The economic expansion of 1961 through 1969.

I finished high school in 1964. President Kennedy had just been killed. President Johnson was in office. The country had rallied behind him. Unemployment was low. Growth was high. Inflation was low. And I'll tell you something, we thought it would go on forever—and not just the economy. We thought we'd win the cold war without incident, and we thought our President and our Congress would solve the civil rights problems of America through legislation in the Congress. And we thought we were going to rock on forever.

In 1965 we had Bloody Sunday. In 1966 we had riots in our streets. By 1968—I graduated from college on June 8. It was 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore. Our country was split right down the middle. Richard Nixon was elected President, saying he represented the Silent Majority, which meant those of us who weren't for him were in the loud minority. It was just a version of what you see today. It was, “This old country

is divided between 'us' and 'them.'” And we've had these “us” and “them” elections. I've done my best to end it, but that's what you see, “us” and “them,” “us” and “them.” And a few months after that, the longest economic expansion in American history was gone.

I've been waiting for 35 years—not as President, ever since I was a young man—I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. Now, that is fundamentally what this election is about. And when you hear the gun debate, the education debate, the tax versus pay-down-the-debt-and-save-Social-Security-and-Medicare debate, you need to be asking yourself every single time: Which decision is more likely to allow us to come together as one America and to build the future of our dreams for our children? Because when I was a kid, we thought all this was going on automatic. And then one day it came off, the wheels came off, and it was gone. And for 35 years I have waited.

I have worked as hard as I can for 7 years to give you this chance. And it is in your hands. Don't let anybody you know vote in this election without asking themselves that question: How do we build the future of our dreams for our children?

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the White Hall Ballroom at the Harbor Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Peter and Georgia Angelos; Gov. Parris N. Glendening and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Richard N. Dixon, State treasurer, and president, State board of education; John T. Willis, Maryland secretary of state, Casper R. Taylor, Jr., speaker, and Peter Franchot and Howard P. Rawlings, members, Maryland House of Delegates; Sheila Dixon, president, Baltimore City Council; Ronald L. Daniels, commissioner, Baltimore City Police Dept.; former Mayors Thomas D'Alesandro III and Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore; Mayor Martin O'Malley of Baltimore and his wife, Katie; Earl S. Richardson, president, Morgan State University; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; Veronica and Michael McQueen, mother and stepfather of 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died

after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil

rights activists Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory; and Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

Remarks on Departure for Capitol Hill and an Exchange With Reporters

March 16, 2000

Legislative Agenda/Oil Prices

The President. Good afternoon. I'd like to say just a few words, before I go up to the Speaker's annual Saint Patrick's Day luncheon, about three issues.

Yesterday the House took a small but significant step down the long road toward common-sense gun safety legislation. House Members from both parties have said it's time to get to work, after 8 months and other senseless shootings. It's time for the House and Senate conference to resolve the differences between the two bills and send one to me.

The American people have spoken clearly and consistently about the need to protect our children from gun violence. The House is listening. I hope the Republican leaders in the House and the Senate will listen and get this conference underway.

Of course, a meeting is just a beginning. Congress should keep working until it sends me a bill I can sign that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks with all new handguns, bans the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. Again, I hope they will reconsider and restore the provision that hold adults responsible if they knowingly or recklessly let little children have access to guns.

A courageous bipartisan majority in the House has now said no to the attack ads, no to the name-calling, and no to the threats. They have stood up for the American people, but there are further tests ahead. The clock is ticking, and America is waiting to see whether Congress can really produce a bill that responds to the interests of our children and not the intimidation of the NRA.

I'd also like to say a few words about the budget the House passed yesterday. It is more than a balance sheet; every budget is. It's a blueprint for our future. For 7 years, our administration has worked to build a future based on fiscal discipline. The budget proposed by the

Republican leadership would erode that discipline. It would weaken, not strengthen, the foundation Americans have worked so hard to build for the future.

Before devoting a single dollar to pay down the debt or extend the solvency of Social Security or Medicare or provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit or invest in our children's education, the majority's budget already spends almost half a trillion dollars in tax cuts—almost half a trillion, and as the Republican budget makes clear, they're just getting started.

This is unrealistic, unwise. The risks it poses are unconscionable. It is as risky and costly as the budget they proposed last year that I vetoed. It would undermine our ability to make America debt-free by 2013, to strengthen Social Security and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, to lengthen the life of Medicare and add a voluntary prescription drug benefit. It would slash our most pressing priorities across the board, from education and the environment, from law enforcement to public health, from scientific research to basic nutrition. It would be impossible for them to follow the path that we have all agreed on to modernize our defense forces and improve the quality of life of our men and women in uniform.

This is the wrong path for America. The only way they could meet their spending priorities with this tax cut is to go back to huge deficits. I asked the leadership to change course, to go back and write a budget that maintains our fiscal discipline and meets our most pressing priorities.

Now, the third issue I would like to mention very briefly is that I have just met with the Secretary of Energy and his team and my economic team, and we have talked about the present difficulties that Americans are facing because of the price of gasoline and the high price of oil, and what our short and longer term options are. And we've been working very hard

on this now for several weeks, and we hope to have some things to say about it over the next few days.

But this is—I'm encouraged by a lot of the developments that are going on. I hope there will be some relief soon when the OPEC meeting occurs. But I do believe we need to do more on our own here in America to deal with some of the things we've learned, some of the pressure points we've learned are on our people in these last few months.

So I just want to notify you that we are working on this, and we will have some more to say later, and I don't want to be late to the Speaker's Saint Patrick's Day lunch.

Q. Mr. President, on the question of gun control—

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken in person to any of the leaders of the OPEC nations to increase—

The President. Wait, wait. The answer is, we have made clear what my public position is. I've said no more to anybody privately than I've said in public. I think it is in the interest of the OPEC nations and in the interest of the consuming nations to have a stable price of oil that gives them a fair return on their oil, enables them to run their countries and finance their budgets, but is not so high that it runs the risk of promoting inflation or recession, which will reduce the demand for oil by cratering the economies of other countries and hurting ours and hurting a lot of innocent people in the process.

So the trick is to find the right balance. Oil was way too low last year because they increased production right as demand dropped after the Asian financial crisis. Now, the price is too high because they cut production right as demand increased, when Europe and Asia were growing more again.

So we've got to get this back into balance. That's what I want to do. I think it's very much in their interest, and I haven't said any more in private than I'm saying to you in public, but we are working that.

National Rifle Association

Q. Mr. President, Wayne LaPierre, last night on the news, said the blood of Ricky Byrdsong is on your hands. I was wondering if you would like to respond to that personally, sir, and also

go to the underlying issue of enforcement? The NRA contends the administration has been lax up until very recently on the enforcement issue.

The President. Well, first of all, most of those—I think the television news, some of the reports answered the Byrdsong case in great detail, and I don't have anything to add to that. And again, I will say, I don't think—getting into a personal spat with Mr. LaPierre about tactics that I don't think any American appreciates and that all Americans can see through is not worth doing.

I think on the enforcement issue, if you just go back and look at the facts that were reported on the news last night in this case, I think it makes the case. The question is: What should the States do? What should the Federal Government do? What is the appropriate thing to do in the Brady cases? And I believe what we've tried to do is the right course.

I think the Attorney General has tried to increase Federal gun prosecutions. We've asked for resources to do more. But we've also tried to do it in a sensible way that left a lot of the burden and the criminal law where it belongs, with the local prosecutors. And I think to try to take a case like that, where actually the Brady bill worked—and if we had more comprehensive checking so that no one could sell a gun without a Brady background check, we'd have an even safer society—is not a very good argument for the other side to make.

And I think it's truly ironic that the NRA is now criticizing us for not throwing everybody in jail that fails a Brady background check when they opposed the Brady bill. If it had been up to them, we wouldn't be doing these background checks, and 500,000 more felons, fugitives, and stalkers would have handguns, so—

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Is there a break in the Irish impasse?

The President. Thank you. We're working it.

National Rifle Association

Q. Can I follow up on that, sir? Mr. President, why do you think the NRA has chosen this particular moment, though, to attack you?

The President. I have no idea. I really don't know; must be a good fundraising tactic. I honestly don't know. I don't know.

Q. Because they've had their way mostly on Capitol Hill, it seems, up to this point.

The President. I don't know. I think they know that the majority of the American people support us on this bill, and if they get the bill before the Congress, it will pass. So maybe it's some strategy to try to keep it from ever being in an acceptable form to be voted on one way or the other. I don't know. You'll have to ask them. I can't figure it out.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks to the 1999 Stanley Cup Champion Dallas Stars March 16, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated. I want to welcome Thomas Hicks and his family, Gary Bettman and his daughter to the White House. Robert Gainey, the manager; and to all the Stars, including the captain, Derian Hatcher—I might say, the first American-born captain of a Stanley Cup team.

And I welcome Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson here, who is very proud of this team. We're glad to have you back in the White House. There are a lot of people from Texas here today, including many members of our administration and former members of our administration. I want to welcome you here. I often—I miss it when you don't come by. And now I know how to get you back. [Laughter] So thank you.

As all of you know, we're here to congratulate the 1999 Stanley Cup winner, the Dallas Stars. Ice hockey is a fascinating game, but for those of us who grew up in the South, we know it's normally dominated by people north of the Mason-Dixon line. There was not a skating rink in my hometown until I was over 40 years old.

But the Dallas Stars changed the perception of hockey. They were the first Sun Belt team to win hockey's Holy Grail in the 107-year history of the contest. So now Dallas will be known not just for the Cowboys and Super Bowls but for the Stars and the Stanley Cup.

It occurred to me when I was getting ready for this that hockey is a lot like Washington politics. It's a rough game—[laughter]—with a lot of lead changes. And usually you never know who's going to win until the final moment.

And that is, of course, literally what happened last June in game 6, when the Stars clinched their first Cup—3 overtimes, 111 minutes, all

of us, even people like me who don't skate very well, on the edge of our seats. We watched Ed Belfour block shot after shot, MVP Joe Nieuwendyk leading the charge on offense. And I still remember when Brett Hull shoveled the last puck past Dominik Hasek, a man I once met in Buffalo, to capture the win. I would be afraid to try to put anything past the guy. [Laughter] This was a very impressive game to those who are initiated and those who are becoming initiated into the thrills of professional hockey.

Opening and closing the year with a victory over the Sabres, that final game was a perfect ending to a nearly perfect season. The Dallas Stars not only took home the cup but also the president's award with the best record in the league for the second year in a row.

And I want to also acknowledge someone who is not here today, the coach. Every good coach I know, and I've been privileged to know quite a few great ones, always say that the players make great coaches. But great coaches also help the players bring out the best and play as a team.

The Stanley Cup is the oldest athletic trophy in North America. So it's about more than winning. It embodies our fascination with athletics, with determination, with teamwork. All the Dallas Stars earned this Cup. And after seeing Wednesday night's victory over the Devils, I see you're not going to give it up without a fight. I like people who don't give it up—[laughter]—without a fight.

Congratulations to all of you. And now I'd like to ask the commissioner of the National Hockey League, Gary Bettman, to say a few words.

Mar. 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

[At this point, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, team owner Thomas Hicks, and team captain Derian Hatcher made brief remarks. Mr. Hatcher presented a Stars jersey to the President.]

The President. You may have noticed today that I had this tie on. We had the annual Speaker's Saint Patrick's Day lunch today a day early up on Capitol Hill, so maybe I should just wear this tomorrow. [Laughter] This is great.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Bettman's daughter Brittany; Dallas Stars general manager Robert Gainey, players Ed Belfour, Joe Nieuwendyk, and Brett Hull, and head coach Ken Hitchcock; and Buffalo Sabres goalie Dominik Hasek.

Videotaped Remarks to the Carnegie Endowment's Annual Nonproliferation Conference March 16, 2000

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Carnegie Endowment's Annual Nonproliferation Conference. I thank you for coming together again to focus on the crucial task of curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. All of you know how serious this challenge is, from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, to ongoing risks that sensitive materials and technologies will spread from the former Soviet Union, including to Iran, to the imperative of bringing China into global nonproliferation regimes, to the continuing need for vigilance against Saddam Hussein.

Stemming this tide has been a critical priority for me for 7 years now, and it will be for this year, as well. In a few days, I'll travel to South Asia. There are those in the region who hope we will simply accept its nuclear status quo and move on. I will not do that. India and Pakistan have legitimate security concerns. But I will make clear our view that a nuclear future is a dangerous future for them and for the world. And I'll stress that narrowing our differences on nonproliferation is important to moving toward a broader relationship.

I know there are some who have never seen an arms control agreement they like, because rules can be violated, because perfect verification is impossible, because we can't always count on others to keep their word. Still, I believe we must work to broaden and strengthen verifiable arms agreements. The alternative is a world with no rules, no verification, and no trust at all.

It would be foolish to rely on treaties alone to protect our security. But it would also be foolish to throw away the tools that sound treaties do offer: a more predictable security environment, monitoring inspections, the ability to shine a light on threatening behavior and mobilize the entire world against it. So this year we will work to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. We'll increase momentum for universal adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And as to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, I am determined that last year's unfortunate Senate vote will not be America's last word.

With the leadership of General Shalikashvili, we will work hard this year to build bipartisan support for ratification. I will continue to call on other nations to forgo testing and join the treaty. We must not lose the chance to end nuclear testing forever. We must also take the next essential step, a treaty to cut off production of fissile material.

I know this conference will assess the potential impact of our program directed at emerging missile threats, such as from North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. I've stressed that a U.S. decision on a limited missile defense will take into account not only the threat, feasibility, and cost but also the overall impact on our security and arms control.

The ABM Treaty remains important to our security. Today, dealing with dangerous new missile threats is also vital to global security. So we will continue to work with Russia on

how to amend the treaty to permit limited defenses while keeping its central protections, and we'll continue to seek a START III treaty that will cut our strategic arsenals to 20 percent of their cold war levels.

Let me conclude by wishing you a productive meeting. I value your advice. I count on your dedication, and I thank you for all you're doing to build a safer world.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 11:50 a.m. on March 10 in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an American Ireland Fund Dinner

March 16, 2000

President Glucksman, Mr. Aikins, Senator Mitchell, members of the administration and Congress who are here, and our distinguished Ambassadors of the United States to Ireland and Ireland to the United States. To all the leaders of the parties from Northern Ireland who are here; Secretary Mandelson; and in his absence, from his video, I would also say I very much appreciate what Tony Blair said earlier. And most of all, to you, Taoiseach, I thank you. I thank you for the award, and I thank the American Ireland Fund for all it has done for peace and progress in Ireland.

And I want to say that this is about the most beautiful piece of Irish crystal I've ever seen. It also bears, as my wife said, a remarkable resemblance to a golf ball. *[Laughter]* And it is only for that reason, and because he does not play, that I do not feel constrained to let it reside for half a year with George Mitchell—*[laughter]*—to whom we are all profoundly indebted.

You know, basically, I don't believe that Presidents should get awards. The job itself is reward enough. But I'm honored and pleased to have this one, because, for me, the work for peace that I have done and our administration—Hillary, through the Vital Voices networks—it's been a labor of love at all hours of the day and night and through many months of frustration, through all of the efforts I've made just to understand, sometimes, the fights which seem to me to be inexplicable.

So much has been accomplished in the last 2 years especially, but really over the last almost 8 years. At the moment, we wish that the institutions were up, not down; we wish that every-

body was in agreement, not feeling frustrated; but we must never forget that the ceasefires now are measured in years, not weeks, that people now shop in their downtowns without fear of bombs going off, that the gradual return to normal life was again reflected today in the announcement of the British Government that further troops will be redeployed for duty outside Northern Ireland, leaving no army battalion resident in Belfast for the first time in 31 years.

More than 300 prisoners from both sides have been released. Human rights and equality commissions have been formed. Police reform is underway, and we are looking forward to the reform of the criminal justice system. A peace dividend has begun to take hold in Northern Ireland's economy: more people employed there than ever before, unemployment the lowest in 20 years. tourists up by 11 percent last year alone, American visitors doubling in the last decade, rising investment in trade, an economy becoming as modern as that of her Irish and British counterparts.

I am very proud of the role the United States has played in this economic rebirth as well. The International Fund for Ireland, to which we are the largest donor, has leveraged a billion and a half dollars of direct investment, helping to create over 30,000 jobs. The Walsh visa program will bring thousands of young Irish men and women to the United States for education and training, especially in high-tech areas. Our new microlending program, *Aspire*, is inspiring small business and entrepreneurs at a rapid rate.

And as the Taoiseach said, a year ago at this time, the people of Northern Ireland did not

enjoy self-rule. Last year, the assembly was established, the executives, the bodies were put to work, and lo and behold, the Irish were pretty good at self-government in the North as well. Ministers from both sides met together, worked together, took care of constituents together, made mistakes together and learned together, just the sort of thing democratic governments ought to do everywhere. They were successfully tackling some of their toughest shared problems and building structures for cross-border cooperation with the Irish Republic.

Now what? Well, we must begin by respecting the will of the people. After all, they voted in record numbers not for stalemate and delay but for progress and peace. The threat of violence from whatever source must be removed forever from Northern Ireland's politics, clearly and unequivocally.

At the same time, the people have the right to expect their leaders, with the support of the Irish and British Governments, to show vision and good will, to come together to establish a basis upon which the new institutions can be restored and the Good Friday accord can be implemented in full, just as the people voted.

The United States and all the friends of peace must do all we can to assist, to honor the heroic efforts of Senator Mitchell, to reaffirm our lasting pledge that so long as the people of Northern Ireland walk the road of peace, we will walk with you. Tomorrow at the White House I will be discussing this with the parties and listening and working for an answer.

The last century began with bloodshed across Ireland, and across the United States in our cities, signs that read, "No Irish need apply." This one begins with the best hope for Irish peace in our lifetimes and with Irish and Americans of every background gathered in Washington to rejoice in Ireland's rich contributions to America's national life.

I don't know that I've had so much to do with this, the progress that has been made. Tonight I am more burdened by the fact that I have not found an answer for the present stalemate. But I will say this: I have loved Ireland. My wife and my daughter have loved Ireland, North and South. We love the music, the dance, the language, the land.

If Mr. Yeats was right when he said, "Our glory begins and ends in our friends," I can say truly, I have simply tried to be a friend. But as a friend who, unlike Taoiseach here, has

a term limit and, therefore, who no longer has to stand for election, I must honestly say that I have spent an enormous amount of time as President comforting the victims of violence, mostly Americans, the people who died in Croatia trying to help overcome ethnic and religious hatred in the Balkans, the people who died in a terrorist bombing in the Middle East trying to help the people of that land and region find a different way, Irish victims of the Omagh bombing, the children's families who died in the school shootings in America, and on and on.

And I have spent a great deal of time trying to decide exactly what it is that makes people define the meaning of their lives in terms of their difference—their religion, their racial, their ethnic, their tribal differences—and how those differences come to be magnified in our minds along with the accumulated grievances of past wrongs, so that we are paralyzed to turn the clenched fist into the open hand, and how even when we start—and what a start we have made in Ireland—it is just hard to go on and easy to stop.

I must confess, as your friend, I still do not know the answer to these things. But I do know that life is fleeting, and opportunities come and also go. We have the chance of a lifetime here. You have done it—all of you, the Irish parties, have done this. The British have done it. We Americans, we've just been friends. But good friends tell each other the truth, the loving truth. Whatever the differences, it's not worth another life—not one. It's not worth another day's delay, much less a year. We're all just passing through this old world with an amount of time which we know not.

We're really happy and proud to be here tonight because we sense that good things have happened because people rose above their fears, their hatred, their honest wounds, their deep scars, to give a better future to their children. They're still out there, and they're still waiting. We have to find a way to put this back on track. And if we do, everyone will win. And that beautiful crystal piece there, it'll be a crystal ball, showing a way to our children's tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 p.m. in the Center Hall at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Loretta Brennan

Glucksman, president, and Kingsley Aikins, executive director, American Ireland Fund; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Michael J. Sullivan; Irish Ambassador Sean O'hUiginn; Secretary of State for

Northern Ireland Peter Mandelson and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland. Prior to his remarks the President received the American Ireland Fund's Millennium Peace Award.

Remarks on the Gun Safety Agreement With Smith & Wesson and an Exchange With Reporters

March 17, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. For 7 years, our administration has worked on every front to reduce violence and to keep our communities safer. That's why we've pushed for common-sense gun safety legislation, why I've taken executive action to crack down on bad gun dealers, and why in December I said we would engage gun manufacturers in ways to seek changes in how they do business.

Today I am pleased to report that a key member of the industry has decided to set a powerful example of responsibility. Earlier today Smith & Wesson signed a landmark agreement with the Federal Government and States and cities across our Nation.

For the very first time, a gun manufacturer has committed to fundamentally change the way guns are designed, distributed, and marketed. Under the agreement, Smith & Wesson will include locking devices and other safety features and will develop smart guns that can be fired only by the adults who own them. The company will cut off dealers who sell disproportionate numbers of guns that turn up in crimes and will require all its dealers not to sell at gun shows unless every seller at the shows conducts background checks. The company has also agreed to design new firearms that do not accept large capacity magazines and will work with ATF to provide ballistics fingerprints for all its firearms.

This agreement is a major victory for America's families. It says that gunmakers can and will share in the responsibility to keep their products out of the wrong hands. And it says that gunmakers can and will make their guns much safer without infringing on anyone's rights.

It has taken courage and vision for Smith & Wesson to be the first manufacturers to nego-

tiate. And I applaud their determination to do right by their company and their country. As I've said all along, there are responsible citizens in the gun industry who do want to make progress on this issue. I hope today's announcement will encourage others to respond in kind.

This agreement could not have come to pass without the leadership of many mayors, city attorneys, and State attorneys general. I'm glad to be joined today by Attorney General Eliot Spitzer of New York and Attorney General Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, as well as Mayors Alex Penelas of Miami, Bill Campbell of Atlanta.

In a moment, I'll be telephoning some other mayors, Joe Ganim of Bridgeport, Dennis Archer of Detroit, Roosevelt Dorn of Inglewood, California, Marc Morial of New Orleans, Jimmy Yee of Sacramento, as well as city attorneys Jim Hunt of Los Angeles and Louise Renne of San Francisco and the city attorneys of Berkeley, California, Camden, New Jersey, and St. Louis, to congratulate them as well on joining this agreement and to urge them to continue to work to keep our children safe.

I would also like to express my appreciation to former Congressman Mike Barnes, the new president of Handgun Control. I thank them all, as well as the members of our administration team who worked so hard on this: Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and Deputy Secretary Eizenstat, Attorney General Reno and Deputy Attorney General Holder, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, and my Domestic Policy Adviser, Bruce Reed. They have also worked very hard to bring us to this historic moment.

Let me say again today, the effort to reduce gun violence, to protect our children, to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children,

is not about politics. It is about saving lives. This agreement shows we can get so much done when we find the courage to find common ground.

Thank you very much.

Q. What's the chance of other companies falling in line?

The President. Well, I don't know. You know, Smith & Wesson is a real giant in this field. And as I said, it took a lot of courage for the company and its leader to do this. But I think the American people will have such an overwhelmingly positive response to what they have done, that I would hope the other manufacturers would follow suit.

We have had some success, you know. A number of other manufacturers are already embracing the idea that new handguns ought to have child trigger locks. So I hope that they will do these things, the—continuing to work on smart gun technology. And I think saying that they won't continue to allow their guns to be sold by dealers that don't clearly follow the law and that they won't participate in gun shows that don't do background checks, that's a big deal. That's a very important thing.

So I really—I'm very pleased by what they've done, and I think, as I said, I hope the American people will express their appreciation to Smith & Wesson, and I hope that others will follow suit.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, on the issue of oil, do you expect to announce any of the measures that you talked about yesterday that you hope to do in the next couple of days to reduce the effect of high oil, gas, and diesel prices before leaving for India? And the second question, if I may, on the same subject, did you discuss the oil market with Saudi King Fahd when you spoke to him yesterday or with any other Saudi officials, and did they give you any assurances regarding production increases in the March 25th OPEC meeting?

The President. Well, the answer is yes, I expect to have something to say before I leave for India, and yes, I talked about the markets with His Majesty King Fahd. And I think it's appropriate for me to let the OPEC members make their own decisions. But the Saudis have already expressed their support publicly for a production increase.

I think everybody's struggling now to find a consensus. The point I've been trying to make is that it is necessary, in order to get the oil prices down to an acceptable level but still have them at a high enough level to earn a fair return to the producing countries and to keep them from precipitously falling and destabilizing the world economy again as they did a couple of years ago—it's necessary to have a substantial production increase that will not only close the gap between production and consumption on a daily basis but also enable the stocks to be rebuilt, because a lot of the oil price stocks have been drawn down too low, and that's one of the things that spiked the market so significantly.

But I think that in terms of the decision they will make, that's for them to make, and they'll have to announce it. I think they're struggling to try to get a consensus. But they are, I think, concerned because the last time they increased production, there was this really big fall in the oil prices to a level that even those of us in the consuming countries thought was too low.

But the problem is, that time they increased production just as the global economy went down, the Asian financial crisis and other problems. This time, we had the reverse effect. Just as the global economy was coming up in Asia and the Europeans were growing, they cut production, which had exactly the reverse impact. So first, prices went too low. Now, they've gone way too high.

In our country, for example, lower income motorists, other motorists who live in rural areas and places where they have to drive a long way to work, and a lot of truckers, particularly independent truckers, have really, really been hurt by this situation.

So there is a stable, win-win situation here that—where the fuel prices will be affordable by the American people and others, and they will still be able to have a fair return on their production and not risk the precipitous fall that they endured over the last couple of years. So they've got to find the right balance. They can do that, but as I said, we need to have enough to meet daily consumption requirements and to rebuild the stocks.

China and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, any thoughts on China and the elections, on Taiwan?

The President. Well, we've already said publicly that we want to see a resumption of the cross-state dialog as soon as the election is over. But the election in Taiwan is for the Taiwanese people, and I don't think I should comment on it until they have all their votes in. And they'll elect a new President, and then we'll go from there.

Northern Ireland/South Asia

Q. Mr. President, from a foreign policy standpoint, what is your best hope for this series of meetings this afternoon with Irish leaders, and what is your best hope on your upcoming trip to India and Pakistan?

The President. First of all, the good news about Ireland is that even though the institutions have been taken down over the difference between the parties on decommissioning, no one wants to go back to the way it was or give up the peace process. The voters in Northern Ireland in both communities have overwhelmingly voted for it. And I think there's no sense that I got yesterday, in my first round of encounters with the leaders, that there's any desire to go back to the way it was.

I think what we've got to do is to find a formula by which the institutions can be restored, the people can get back to governing. They actually found out they were quite good at working together, and they were getting a lot done. And we need to restore that process, and we need to restore a process that will eventually lead to all the requirements of the Good Friday accord being observed. And we'll just keep working on it until we find that answer.

And on South Asia, obviously what I hope to do first is to rekindle the relationship between the United States and India. It's the world's largest democracy. No President has been there in 22 years. We have a lot of things

that we can do together, a lot of mutual interests. I want to do what I can to reduce tensions on the Indian subcontinent to reduce the likelihood of weapons proliferation and the likelihood of conflict. And I want to do what I can to support the restoration of democratic rule in Pakistan and to continue our cooperation with them against terrorism and in many other ways that we have both profited from over many decades. I also will be going to Bangladesh, and I'm looking forward to that. I have seen a lot of the initiatives taken in Bangladesh, particularly for the empowerment of poor people, that I think are important there and throughout the world.

And if you look at the size and the potential of the Indian subcontinent, if they could find a way to manage their difficulties, there's probably no other place in the world with the capacity for growth and modernization over the next two decades that you will find there. If you look at the success of Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis in the United States, that's clear evidence of that. So I'm going to do the best I can.

Syria

Q. Do you have a meeting coming up with the Syrian President?

The President. I don't have anything else to say about my foreign policy agenda today. But I will, in the next several days, continue to talk to you about all this stuff. And I thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to city attorneys John A. Misci, Jr., of Camden, NJ, Manuela Albuquerque of Berkeley, CA, and Dee Joyce-Hayes of St. Louis, MO; King Fahd of Saudi Arabia; and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

Teleconference Remarks With Mayors on the Gun Safety Agreement With Smith & Wesson

March 17, 2000

The President. Hello.

Participant. Hello, Mr. President.

Participant. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all for joining us. I'd like to start by asking everyone here on the phone to say their names and the city and the State they represent.

We have with us here, in the Oval Office, Attorney General Spitzer of New York, Attorney General Blumenthal of Connecticut, Mayor Penelas of Miami. And Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta was here; he just walked out. So we're all here. But why don't we—everybody else who is on the phone say something about it, who you are.

[At this point, the teleconference participants introduced themselves.]

The President. We're delighted to have you on the phone call. And I want to say on behalf of not only the White House but Attorney General Reno and Deputy Attorney General Holder, Secretary Summers and Deputy Secretary Eizenstat, and Secretary Cuomo, we very much appreciate what you've done, and we congratulate you. I think that this agreement will fundamentally change the way the gun industry does business, and all of you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your leadership and involvement have helped to make all American communities safer. We couldn't be here without you, and I thank you.

Now, we've got to build on what we've accomplished today and continue to reduce gun violence. The long roster of leaders with us here today is proof that the whole Nation supports what we're doing, and we just need you to go out there and keep working with responsible members of the gun industry to keep this momentum going. And I hope we can get some other manufacturers to join us.

I wonder if anybody who is here wants to say anything and anybody on the phone would like to say anything now.

[The participants made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. If I could just echo two of the points that were made. First of all, I agree with the last point Mayor Penelas made. This proves, this agreement, that nobody was in it for the money. Everybody said all along, the States, the municipalities, and the Federal Government, nobody wanted any money damages; we just wanted a change in the way America lives to make it a safer place.

The second thing I'd like to say—to echo what Mayor Archer and Attorney General Spitzer said—is Smith & Wesson stuck their neck out here, and I think that all of us, including the Federal Government, in our procurement policies, if we really are serious about making America safer, ought to send a clear signal that we appreciate what they did. I think that that will accelerate the day in which the other manufacturers will follow suit.

I thank you all very much. This is a happy day, and I'm glad to talk to you all. And thanks for joining the phone call, and thanks for agreeing with the settlement.

Thank you all. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade, FL; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; Eliot Spitzer, New York attorney general; and Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut attorney general. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participating city officials.

Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland

March 17, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, *Taoiseach*, for your words and your leadership, for the shamrocks and the beautiful Irish crystal. Upstairs in our Residence, there is so much Irish crystal now that sometimes I have guests from other countries that ask me if I've ever been anywhere but Ireland. [Laughter] But I will treasure this always.

I don't suppose the saints in Heaven spend time boasting about their earthly achievements, but if they do, I imagine the other saints can bear no more bragging from Saint Patrick, for no nation has ever lived up more fully to the virtues of its patron saint than has Ireland. Saint Patrick has been described as one of the great saints of the downtrodden and the excluded.

And the legendary, large-hearted Irish people are famous for reaching out to the world's less fortunate.

Whenever the troubled places of the Earth have called out for help, the Irish have answered the call, always among the first in economic assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping. Indeed, in the past four decades, there has never been a day, not a single day, that Irish troops have not stood watch for peace on some distant shore. All of you have paid a price for this. Like all of Ireland, I was saddened by the recent deaths of four young Irish soldiers serving with the United Nations in Lebanon.

As Ireland has committed itself to the cause of peace around the world, it is right that the world, and especially the United States, should commit ourselves to the cause of peace in Ireland.

I repeat today the promise I made in Dublin 4 years ago: America will be with you as you walk the road to peace. We are conscious that Ireland, along with the other parties to the Good Friday accord, made fundamental and principled compromises in the effort to secure a lasting peace. That agreement remains the very best hope we have ever had for achieving peace, and I still believe it will succeed.

And the model of the Good Friday accord represents not just hope for Northern Ireland but hope for so many stricken areas all across the Earth now suffering from sectarian violence. As extraordinary as Ireland's record is in exporting peace and peacekeepers to troubled areas

of the Earth, nothing will compare to the gift Ireland gives the world if you can make your own peace permanent and meet the urgent need of the world for proof that a path to peace can be found.

In the sixth year of Saint Patrick's enslavement, he was awakened by a mysterious voice that said: "Your hungers are rewarded. You are going home. Look, your ship is ready." His fateful response to depart immediately and seek his destiny set in motion his vocation to study, to learn, and then return to Ireland to bring faith and peace. By the persuasive force of the spirit, he began to change the warring traditions of the Irish tribes. But his accomplishments, great as they are, remain, after all these centuries, incomplete.

And so I say to you, *Taoiseach*, your ship is ready. In the smiling eyes of the Irish child, you have all the cause you will ever need to intensify the search for peace. I hope all the leaders and people of Ireland will follow your lead. I hope all those in Northern Ireland, especially, will heed this call. We must fulfill the pastoral mission of Saint Patrick. Nothing is more fitting on this Saint Patrick's Day.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:15 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Ahern.

Message on the Observance of Saint Patrick's Day, 2000 *March 17, 2000*

Warm greetings to everyone observing Saint Patrick's Day.

It is most fitting that the feast day of the Patron Saint of Ireland should be held on the threshold of spring, the season of promise, for the Irish have always been a people of promise. With warm hearts and a deep spirituality, they embraced the promise of salvation that Saint Patrick brought to their beautiful island 16 centuries ago and preserved their faith through the tumult and chaos of the Dark Ages.

In the 19th century, suffering from famine and oppression in their own land, millions of Irish men and women recognized the promise of freedom and opportunity in America. Often enduring great hardship, they journeyed west to begin a new life in a new land. With strength and humor, courage and determination, they made America's promise a reality for themselves and their children and enriched our history and heritage with their achievements. In business, labor, education, the arts, public life, and so

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much more, Irish Americans have made lasting contributions to the life of our nation.

Today Irish Americans and the people of their ancestral homeland share a strong commitment to the promise of peace. In the spring of 1998, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland sought to fulfill that promise when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Good Friday Accord. America remains committed to the Irish

people as they continue working to forge a brighter future, for, while the road ahead is long, the promise of peace is still within reach and its rewards are great.

As Irish Americans gather once again to honor Saint Patrick and to reaffirm their pride in their Irish heritage, Hillary and I extend warmest wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on Signing the Open-market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act

March 17, 2000

Today I have signed into law S. 376, the "Open-market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act." S. 376 amends the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to establish a statutory framework for the privatization of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat).

In partnership with the Congress, my Administration has worked aggressively over the last 6 years to promote the pro-competitive privatization of these intergovernmental satellite organizations. As a result of our efforts and changing commercial conditions, in 1995, Inmarsat spun off new business activities into a private United Kingdom (U.K.) corporation, ICO Global Communications Ltd., and, in 1999, Inmarsat privatized its remaining business activities as a U.K. corporation. In 1998, INTELSAT spun off five satellites into a private Netherlands corporation, New Skies Satellites, N.V. And last October, INTELSAT's 143 member governments agreed to fully privatize by early 2001.

My Administration's goal is to ensure that a privatized INTELSAT will compete fairly and fully with other international telecommunications companies, thus benefiting consumers through greater innovation, lower prices, and more service options. Fair competition requires a level playing field; INTELSAT must not retain advantages that result from its former intergovernmental status or that are unavailable to other satellite competitors, including any preferential access to orbital slots or foreign markets. But neither should INTELSAT (or the already

privatized Inmarsat and New Skies) have to face barriers to the U.S. market erected by competitors who want to limit competition here. Full competition means that INTELSAT should be privatized in a way that allows it to provide the full range of telecommunications services, including value-added services to end users, as well as wholesale satellite capacity to communications providers (its current role). That means allowing INTELSAT to compete robustly against all other service providers in this rapidly growing industry.

My Administration intends to pursue INTELSAT's privatization in a manner that is compatible with this Nation's international obligations and with our interests in a competitive global international telecommunications environment. Accordingly, the United States will continue to engage the other 142 member countries of INTELSAT in cooperative multilateral negotiations to achieve these goals.

Several provisions of S. 376 could interfere with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs by directing or burdening the President's negotiations with foreign governments and international organizations. Specifically, new sections 621 and 661 of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 purport to direct the executive branch on how to proceed in foreign negotiations, and new sections 625(c), 644(b), and 647 purport to require the executive branch to take particular positions in international organizations. The President's constitutional authority over foreign affairs necessarily entails discretion over these matters, and

I will therefore construe these provisions as advisory. To avoid similar constitutional difficulties, I will construe section 602(b) as not requiring the United States to take particular positions in international organizations.

The President has the authority to conduct U.S. international trade policy and to interpret international treaty obligations, such as those arising under the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this regard and in furtherance of new section 601(c) of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962, the appropriate Federal agencies will advise the Federal Communications Commission on all matters raised by S. 376 concerning interpretation of and compliance with WTO commitments of the United States.

I appreciate the changes that the Congress made to section 3 of this bill, with respect to new section 601(b)(1)(C) of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962. These changes ensure, among other things, continued access by the Department of Defense, other national security agencies, and law enforcement and public health and safety agencies to existing and future Inmarsat and INTELSAT services. To effectively implement that section, the appropriate Federal agency or agencies will provide the Federal Communications Commission with comments on the application of S. 376 to matters related to national security, law enforcement, and protection of public health and safety.

New section 601(a) of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 deals with the Federal Communications Commission's licensing of "separated entities," i.e., privatized entities to which a portion of INTELSAT's or Inmarsat's assets are transferred before full privatization. In approving S. 376, I state my understanding that section 601(a) will be applied as setting forth only one determination that the Commission must make in issuing a license or other

authority to a separated entity. The Commission will continue to be required to make the other findings required by the Communications Act of 1934, including that the Commission apply its public interest review to all those who operate, or wish to operate, as telecommunications carriers. By interpreting section 601(a) in this way, we ensure that this provision is harmonized with the Communications Act. We further ensure that in deciding to issue a license or other authority to a separated entity, the Commission will take into account factors in addition to the impact on competition of the issuance of a license or other authority, such as considerations relating to national security, law enforcement, foreign policy, trade, and public safety.

In addition, in approving S. 376, I state my understanding that section 647 does not limit the Federal Communications Commission from assigning, via competitive bidding, domestic satellite service licenses intended to cover only the United States.

As it has done for the last 6 years, my Administration will consult closely with the Congress as we negotiate with other countries on how INTELSAT should be privatized. My Administration has a clear vision for INTELSAT privatization, one shaped by our overriding concern with benefiting U.S. consumers through increased competition. We will participate aggressively in negotiations to ensure that decisions on privatization promote robust competition and comply with the United States' international treaty obligations.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 17, 2000.

NOTE: S. 376, approved March 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-180.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

March 17, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with section 629 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations

Act, 2000, as contained in the Omnibus Appropriations Act for 2000 (Public Law 106-113), I hereby certify that the United States Government is not implementing the Memorandum of

Mar. 17 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Understanding Relating to the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems of May 26, 1972, entered into in New York on September 26, 1997, by the United States, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine.

Attached is a report to the Congress relating to this certification.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations, and Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Reception March 17, 2000

The President. Thank you. Welcome to the White House. I want to join Hillary in thanking our entertainers. I welcome you, *Taoiseach*, and all the members of your government and your entourage, and all of our guests from Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Members of Congress who are here. I want to thank the members of the British Government who are here, Peter Mandelson and British Ambassador Christopher Meyer; Sean O'hUiginn, your Ambassador here, and Brian Cowen, the Irish Foreign Minister; and all the Government.

And I want to thank our Ambassadors to Ireland, Governor Mike Sullivan, and to Great Britain, Phil Lader. And our former Irish Ambassador, Jean Kennedy Smith, is here, with a fair measure of her family we welcome here.

I want to say that I do love Seamus Heaney's poetry, and I love what he quoted, that I quoted. I actually wrote a book in 1996 and cribbed his words, "of hope and history." But you know, he's done better than having me quote his lines. He's done better than winning the Nobel Prize. He's actually managed to make "Beowulf" interesting. [*Laughter*] And in honor of that, if we don't get this mess straightened out pretty soon, I may appoint you to succeed George Mitchell. [*Laughter*] Anybody that can make "Beowulf" interesting is my guy. [*Laughter*]

I also want to join others in thanking my great friend Senator George Mitchell for the magnificent work he has done. I want to thank all those who met with me today from the various parties in Northern Ireland for saying that you would continue the search for peace.

I was thinking, when Hillary said that I was singing "Danny Boy"—which was rude, I realize, but I couldn't control myself. [*Laughter*] I'm one of the few Americans that knows all the words to the second verse. [*Laughter*]

First Lady Hillary Clinton. Shall we sing it?

The President. And I believe the second verse is more beautiful than the first and really the mark of a life well lived, if someone you really loved would kneel at your grave and tell you that they loved you. And so I thank you, sir, for that gift tonight.

And I was thinking—just one other thing. I have nothing to add to what I said last night, and most of you were at the American Ireland Fund dinner. But the lines from "The Cure at Troy" which Seamus read are far more remarkable when you fully understand their context. The man who is saying that—the chorus is singing this chant:

Hope for a great sea change on the far side
of revenge,
Believe in cures and miracles and healing
wells.

They're saying that about Philoctetes, who was a Greek in the Trojan Wars, who was very important to the military efforts of Ulysses because he had a magic bow. And legend had it that the gods always blessed Philoctetes, and whenever he brought his magic bow into play, the Greeks always won. But after a battle in which he was badly wounded in the leg, he was dumped unceremoniously on a god-forsaken piece of rock in the Aegean and abandoned for a decade, where his foot rotted into a stump. He never saw another living human being. He turned into a virtual feral beast.

And then, Ulysses came up with this great idea that they could finally win the Trojan War if they made this big horse and filled it full of soldiers and made it look like an act of friendship, and then they would trick the Trojans and win the war. But he was sent the message that he couldn't win without Philoctetes. So he said, "After I stuffed this guy on this island and left him to die, and I thought he was dead, and now I know he's living, how in the wide world will I ever get him to come and do anything for me again?"

So he takes a young guy and he goes to the island, and the young guy goes up and starts talking to Philoctetes. That's what this whole play is about. And he basically pretends to be someone else. And finally, Ulysses realizes he's never going to get the guy off until he goes out and fesses up. So he goes up and tells him who he is, what he did, and he just says, "I have to ask you to come with me. I cannot do this without you."

And against all the odds, Philoctetes forgives him, limps down to the boat with his bow, sails off into the Aegean, and the rest is history. But the important thing you need to know is, after this beautiful chorus which Seamus read, as he is sailing away from this island where he spent 10 years all alone, finding within himself not hatred but the strength to love a man who had abandoned him, he looks back at the island and says, "It was a fortunate wind that blew me here."

When Nelson Mandela—we have the Ambassador from South Africa here—when he took me to Robben Island, that's all I could think of. After 27 God-forsaken years, it was a fortunate wind that blew him there. And to all of you on this, my last Saint Patrick's Day, it was a fortunate wind that blew me into your presence.

But for all of that, I kept thinking to myself, as the children were up here playing their bells

so beautifully, that this whole thing really has to be about them. And we can compliment each other from now until the end of our lives, with all of our beautiful words and all of our warm memories. But unless the wind blows all of us toward final peace, we will have let them down, and all of our poetry will have fallen on deaf ears.

So on this Saint Patrick's Day, let us remember, if we have the eloquence of Seamus and the heart of Philoctetes and the goodness of Saint Patrick, we can do what we were meant to do in this fleeting life.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Now, I want to ask our most distinguished guest to say a few words, but before I bring the *Taoiseach* up, let me tell you this: I have worked with two of his predecessors. I liked them both very much. They wanted very much to make peace. They did everything that could reasonably have been expected of them. But this man is very special, and everybody involved in this process knows it. And if we make it, it will be in no small measure due to the heroic and wise efforts of Bertie Ahern.

Taoiseach.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Ministers Albert Reynolds and John Bruton of Ireland; Peter Mandelson, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; former Senator George Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; and former President Nelson Mandela and Ambassador Sheila Sisulu of South Africa. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Ahern. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address

March 18, 2000

Good morning. In recent months, we've seen a rapid increase in the price of oil, and many are concerned about the effect on our economy.

It's important to remember that while prices are higher now than they have been for some time, our overall economy is still the strongest

it's ever been. Inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels. But high oil prices are causing hardship for many Americans: Americans on modest incomes that have to drive a long way to work, independent truckers that have big fuel costs.

We need to take action now for both the short and the long term, to protect consumers and strengthen America's energy security. In the short term, I'll continue to work with foreign countries to help close the gap between production and consumption. Several important oil-producing countries already have expressed their support for a production increase. But we also need to take a longer view, one that rejects environmentally damaging alternatives like drilling in the protected and treasured natural habitats of Alaska.

Today I am announcing important new steps to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and fossil fuels, to protect our environment, and to keep our economy strong. First, to reduce the likelihood that future heating oil shortages will harm consumers as they did this winter, I am proposing the creation of an environmentally sound home heating oil reserve in the Northeast that could supply additional heating oil to the market in the event of a future shortage.

Second, to ensure that we have all available tools in the event of a crisis, I'm calling on Congress to immediately reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a critical part of our Nation's insurance against national emergencies caused by interruptions in the supply of oil.

Third, for over 2 years, Congress has refused to pass commonsense tax credits I've proposed

to promote fuel-saving cars of the future and energy-efficient homes, buildings, and equipment. I'm proposing a comprehensive package of tax incentives to improve the energy efficiency of our society, to promote the use of alternative fuels, and to support increased domestic oil production. I call on Congress to act now and pass these critical measures without further delay.

Finally, it's long past time for Congress to fully fund the more than \$1 billion I've requested to accelerate the research and development of more efficient energy technologies, including the use of alternative and more efficient fuels. We have to be clear: There's no overnight solution to this problem. Instead of taking short-sighted and risky steps now we might regret later, we should use this opportunity to start down the right path toward real, long-term energy security.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Theodore Roosevelt defined America's central task as leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us. If we take responsible action on energy security now, we can meet Roosevelt's challenge. We can also protect our environment and grow our economy well into the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on March 17 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 17 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Election of Chen Shui-bian as President of Taiwan

March 18, 2000

I congratulate Mr. Chen Shui-bian on his victory in today's elections in Taiwan. This election clearly demonstrates the strength and vitality of Taiwan's democracy.

During the election, all the candidates made clear their hope for restoration of constructive dialog with the People's Republic of China. I believe the election provides a fresh opportunity for both sides to reach out and resolve their differences peacefully through dialog. The

United States strongly supports such dialog and is committed to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

We will continue to conduct close unofficial ties with the people on Taiwan through the American Institute in Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act and our "one China" policy as embodied in our three communiques with the People's Republic of China.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh in Dhaka March 20, 2000

Prime Minister Hasina. Distinguished members of the press, on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh, I would like to extend a very warm and special welcome to the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Bill Clinton, and distinguished members of his delegation. This is the first-ever visit of a U.S. President to Bangladesh, and it reflects the warm and friendly ties between our two countries, as well as the qualitative formation that has been taking place in our relationship.

Let me also thank President Clinton for his decision to begin his tour of South Asia from the soil of Bangladesh. We are truly honored, Mr. President.

At this moment, I recall with gratitude the warm hospitality that was extended to me by the President and the First Lady during my brief visit to the White House in 1997. I'm proud to say that the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, imbued by deep and abiding values of freedom, democracy, and equality, achieved for us this nation. He laid the foundation of Bangladesh-U.S. relationship.

We value the relationship. It is a matter of satisfaction that these ties have grown substantially. It was, therefore, a singular honor for me today to meet President Clinton. He's an outstanding leader and statesman of our times. We discussed our bilateral relations and issues of common concern, and I am happy to say that our meeting was fruitful and productive.

We reiterated to the President that the Government of Bangladesh shares the U.S. commitment to democracy, rule of law, human rights, and free-market policy. Like the U.S., Bangladesh also believes in peace, security, and in proactive efforts to defuse tension everywhere.

We appreciate the President's efforts and initiative to bring the Middle East closer to a lasting peace and realize the important role played by the U.S. in achieving peace in Bosnia, Kosovo, and other regions.

We also discussed our bilateral trade with the U.S., which is our number one export market. Nearly \$2 billion worth of goods were exported

to the U.S. in 1998 and '99. In this context, we explained to President Clinton the liberal economic policies and programs of the Government, and also discussed our proposal for increase of Bangladesh's quota of Government exports, as well as duty-free and quota-free access of Bangladeshi products to U.S.

Regarding cooperation in energy, both our countries acknowledge the immense potential in this sector and have decided to intensify our cooperation. We have initialed two production-sharing agreements with Unocal and Pangea. Bangladesh and the U.S. also signed a strategic objective agreement, under which the U.S. would provide an amount of U.S. dollar, \$30 million grant to achieve increased institutional capacity to make decisions in clean energy development, improve environment, and increase public support for energy sector reform.

In addition, we thank the President for the agreement signed between our two countries for reduction of debt and use of interest for local development activities under the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998. This is a good beginning, and we requested the President for further action for cancellation of our debt under P.L. 480. A number of other agreements have also been finalized where U.S. aid would be funding for this in Bangladesh.

On the question of export of gas, our position remains that after fully meeting our domestic requirements and ensuring gas for 50 years for use of future generations, the remaining surplus gas will be available for export. Similarly, on the question of export of power, we maintain that with new gas fields being discovered and developed, we must find good use for the gas. We will, therefore, welcome proposals that are commercially viable for the export of power, based on our natural gas.

We also apprised President Clinton that Bangladesh could emerge as an important center of IT industry in South Asia. Bangladeshi programmers, computer engineers, and IT professionals could provide IT product services, taking

advantages of the time difference between Bangladesh and the U.S. The U.S. could also provide necessary technical assistance and institutional support to Bangladesh for development of IT industry. This could help create employment opportunities for the educated youth of the country.

We requested the President to expedite the deportation of the killers of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We stressed that the killers have terrorist links and that they should not be given refuge in the greatest democracy of the world, a country that upholds the rule of law. I am touched by President Clinton's sympathetic response.

We requested President Clinton to take steps to regulate the status of Bangladeshi nationals living in the U.S. without proper documents. I'd like to thank President Clinton for the deep personal interest he has taken in the welfare and well-being of the people of Bangladesh. I am sure that the President's visit will be a milestone in our relationship and serve to highlight the many achievements of Bangladesh and enhance its stature and standing in the world community.

President Clinton extended an invitation to me to visit his great country, which I gladly accepted. A date in October this year will be worked out for this visit.

May I now request His Excellency William Jefferson, President of the U.S.A., to say a few words now.

Thank you, and the floor is yours.

President Clinton. Thank you very much. Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen, I am proud today to be the first American President to visit Bangladesh. But I am quite sure I will not be the last. Though far apart geographically, our nations grow closer every day, through expanding trade, through the Internet revolution, and through our shared interest in building a world more peaceful, more tolerant, more prosperous, and more free.

Twenty-nine years ago this month, against extraordinary obstacles, Bangladesh began a lonely fight for existence that did not receive the support it deserved from many countries around the world. That struggle was led by the Prime Minister's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose passion and commitment united a people.

Despite many challenges since then, you have come together to build a nation that has won the respect of the world. The United States

admires Bangladesh as a nation proud of its Islamic heritage, proud of its unique culture, proud of its commitment to tolerance and democracy, and proud of its participation in the world community. We are grateful for your leadership in the United States and your courageous example in sending peacekeepers to end the conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo. We particularly honor Bangladesh as the first nation in South Asia to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Finally, we are grateful for the Bangladeshi-Americans who are doing so much to enrich and to enliven both our nations.

Today is only the beginning of a stronger partnership. The Prime Minister and I discussed ways to strengthen our economic ties, while ensuring that future prosperity is built upon respect for decent labor practices, the magnificent natural environment of Bangladesh, and a sense of responsibility toward the children who will inherit the future.

Today I am pleased to announce that our Agency for International Development will provide \$50 million to Bangladesh and other nations in South Asia to harness clean energy resources, reduce air pollution, and fight climate change. Bangladesh also will be the very first nation to receive funding under a United States program that converts old debt to new funding to protect tropical forests.

I'm also happy to announce that our Agency for International Development and Department of Agriculture will provide \$97 million in food assistance here. And today I'm sending to our Congress the renewal of our agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation with Bangladesh.

Anyone who looks at the map can see that this is a nation of great rivers from many sources merging together as they approach the Bay of Bengal. Today, from many sources of our different national traditions, we meet in Dhaka to build our common future.

Thank you very much, Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Hasina. Thank you.

President Clinton. Would you like to call on a journalist, and then I will? Should we go to the Americans first or the Bangladeshis first? It's your call.

Visit to Bangladesh

Q. Mr. President, what political and economic factors have convinced you to undertake your first visit to Bangladesh? And would the United States consider favored nation to Bangladesh as

a favored nation, when India, Pakistan, and South Asia are engaged in nuclear arms threats?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, you ask what political and economic factors encouraged me to come here. I think this is a nation with a very big future. This is a nation that chose to sign and to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; a nation that has used its soldiers to go around the world to help others make peace; a nation that, I believe, is committed to democracy, with a vigorous level of political debate inside this country, as nearly as I can see, and a real commitment to the long-term welfare of its children, and one in which we feel a great deal of common interest. So to me, this was an easy decision to come here. I wanted to come here. And I look forward to a longer and richer future between the United States and Bangladesh.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad

Q. Mr. President, there has been a lot of speculation that you'll conclude this trip by going to Geneva to meet with President Asad of Syria. What is the likelihood of that? And would it be your expectation, if that happens, that your meeting would lead to a resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks that were suspended in January?

President Clinton. Well, I do intend to do that. When I leave, when I conclude my visits in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, I do intend to go to Switzerland to meet with President Asad. And we'll just have to see what comes out of the talks.

But we have, now, we've worked very hard with the parties to get the Palestinian and Israeli track back going, and they're doing very, very well indeed. And I think they have a lot of energy and a real plan for the future. And I think this is the next logical step. I don't want to unduly raise expectations, but I think that this is an appropriate thing for me to do, to try to get this back on track, so that our objectives of having a comprehensive peace can go forward.

Politics in Bangladesh/Bangladeshis in America

Q. My question is, how do you look at the Bangladesh politics? Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that—this is your first visit to Bangladesh, where people are hard-working and sincere. Do you want to make

your visit memorable by declaring a general amnesty for undocumented citizens of Bangladesh who are living in your country?

President Clinton. I think you asked about the Bangladeshis living in the United States. And I think one of you asked about what I thought about your local politics. I think that the less I say about it, the better, except it certainly seems to be vigorous. And I hope it will be peaceful, because—you may know that I have a few opponents back in the United States. We have vigorous political systems; that's what democracies are about. But in the end you have to find constructive ways to resolve your differences and go on.

Now, on the Bangladeshis in America, I have done what I could to make sure that none were unfairly treated. We have laws that govern this. And it is true that we have allowed significant populations from places where there were virulent civil wars and they were driven into our country because they could not safely remain at home, and then they stayed in our country and began to establish families and earn a living, and there were—the Congress passed blanket provisions to allow them to stay. Other people who come to our country in large numbers are basically governed by our more general immigration laws. And there's a limit to what I can do. I have already taken some steps there.

But I said in my opening statement, and I will say again, I think our country has been greatly enriched by the presence of Bangladeshis, and we have many Bangladeshi-American citizens. One of them is here with me today, Osman Siddique, who's our Ambassador to Fiji. And so I feel very good about the presence of Bangladeshis within the United States. But I have to observe the laws that we have.

Lori [Lori Santos, United Press International].

Cancellation of Visit to Joypura

Q. Sir, can you tell us what security concerns prompted you to cancel your trip to the village today? And are you confident it will not happen again on this trip, particularly in Pakistan?

President Clinton. The answer to the first part of your question is, no, I won't, because I don't think I can, I should. But let me—that I thought it was very, very important for me to come here. And I think it's important for the United States to see its friends and to work for a future.

I regret that I could not go to the village. And I'm delighted that the villagers are coming to see me because it will give me a chance to highlight something the American press has heard me talk about many times, which is that the whole microcredit movement in the world basically began here in Bangladesh with the Grameen Bank nearly 20 years ago—maybe more than that now. And the Prime Minister and I talked about this.

I am honored that I will have a chance to see Muhammad Yunus again, to see some of the villagers, and to try to highlight the important role that, I believe, microcredit should have not only here in Bangladesh but throughout all developing countries in the world. The United States, through AID, supports about 2 million microcredit loans a year in other places. So I'm delighted I'm going to be able to see the people

from the village and to support this very, very important initiative in which Bangladesh is truly the world's leader.

Q. Sir, and about the security on the rest of the trip?

Prime Minister Hasina. I think we can—we can stop here. Four questions already have been asked. And thank you very much. Thank you very much. And President, thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 187th news conference began at 1:40 p.m. on the front steps outside the Prime Minister's Office. In his remarks, the President referred to Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director, Grameen Bank. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed Extension of the Bangladesh-United States Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreement March 20, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153 (b), (d)) (the Act), the text of a proposed Agreement Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh to extend the Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy signed at Dhaka, September 17, 1981 (the Agreement for Cooperation).

The proposed Agreement to extend the Agreement for Cooperation (the "Extension Agreement") was originally approved and its execution authorized by President Bush based on his written determination that the performance of the Agreement for Cooperation for an additional period of 20 years would promote, and would not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. A copy of President Bush's written approval, authorization, and determination is enclosed. Also enclosed is a copy of the unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) pre-

pared at that time by the Director, United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

The proposed Extension Agreement was effected by an exchange of diplomatic notes at Dhaka on January 5, 1993, and February 6, 1993. The terms of the Extension Agreement condition its entry into force on each State notifying the other of the completion of its respective legal requirements for entry into force. However, before the proposed Extension Agreement could be submitted to the Congress in 1993 for review pursuant to section 123 of the Act, the Government of Bangladesh asked to consult with the United States regarding a possible modification of the term of extension. These discussions proved to be very protracted, but both Governments have now agreed that their original intention to extend the Agreement for Cooperation for an additional period of 20 years from the date of the original Agreement's expiration (i.e., to extend it until June 24, 2012) should stand, and that the Extension Agreement should be brought into force as soon as each Party has notified the other in writing that it has completed its legal requirements for doing so.

Section 123 of the Act, as amended by Title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-277) now also provides that each Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement prepared pursuant to the Act shall be accompanied by a classified annex prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of Central Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information. The Secretary of State is submitting to the Congress under separate cover such a classified annex. It contains, *inter alia*, the Secretary of State's reaffirmation of the conclusions reached in the original unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (a) that continued implementation of the Agreement for Cooperation is consistent with all requirements of the Act, and (b) that the safeguards and other control mechanisms and the peaceful-use assurances contained in the Agreement for Cooperation are adequate to ensure that any assistance furnished under it will not be used to further any military or nuclear explosive purpose.

I am pleased to reconfirm President Bush's approval of the Extension Agreement and authorization of its execution and implementation. Bangladesh is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and is fully in compliance with its nuclear nonproliferation commitments under that Treaty. In my

judgment, continued performance of the Agreement for Cooperation between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy will promote, and not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Apart from the proposed extension, the Agreement for Cooperation will remain in all other respects the same as that which was favorably reviewed by the Congress in 1982. The Department of State, the Department of Energy, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have reconfirmed their favorable views regarding the original NPAS as well as the conclusions contained herein.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the period of 30 days of continuous session provided for in section 123 b., the period of 60 days of continuous session provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 20, 2000.

Remarks in Dhaka to Visitors From Joypura

March 20, 2000

Thank you very much. First let me say to the Prime Minister how delighted I am to be here in Bangladesh, and how much I have enjoyed meeting today with all the people from Joypura. I thank you, Asia, for your teaching. I thank Hasan Abed and the other people who are involved in the BRAC movement. I thank my longtime friend Muhammad Yunus for bringing his people here today who are associated with the Grameen Bank. And I'd also like to thank the people who came with the Asrayon project that the Prime Minister has founded. Thank you all for making me feel welcome today.

Bangladesh is a country that, by traditional economic measurement, is still poor. But as I

saw today, in terms of the spirit and the ability of the people, it is full of riches. And the challenge we all face is how to unlock the ability, the brains, the heart, the spirit of the people of Bangladesh, beginning with the wonderful children that I have seen, but also including the people that I met with the Asrayon project and the people who have participated in the Grameen Bank.

I want my fellow Americans and people throughout the world to know that the people of Bangladesh are a good investment in the future. If you look only at the Grameen Bank, it has 2.4 million borrowers in 39,000 villages. Ninety-four percent of the borrowers are women; 98 percent of the loans are repaid. And

now, with loans for people to buy cell phones, entire villages are being brought into the information age. I want people throughout the world to know this story.

I want to thank the Prime Minister and the people involved in the Asrayon movement for setting a goal that no person in this country should be homeless. That should be every nation's goal. And I want to thank the teachers and the supporters of the BRAC School for showing us that all our children can learn and they all deserve the chance to learn.

I also want to thank your Government and industry for working with the International Labor Organization and the United States to take some 9,000 children out of garment factories and put them in classrooms. There are children here today, including a group from a special ILO-supported school that our United States Senator Tom Harkin told me about, that he visited 2 years ago. I thank you for doing that, as well.

I want to continue to support all these projects. I am pleased to announce today that the United States will commit several million dollars to help another 30,000 Bangladeshi children move from work in hazardous industries into schools that will give them safer, better futures.

We will work with the ILO and Grameen to help 3 million women in rural areas gain access to micro-health insurance. And we will commit several million dollars to help women get new skills, improve working conditions, and secure fair representation in trade organizations.

We will also provide several million dollars to support another Grameen program, a solar cell program to use the clean energy of the Sun to generate power in villages throughout Bangladesh, cheap power, clean power, power that will empower all kinds of people to raise their incomes in different ways in the next few years.

I would like to make just two points in closing. First of all, I want to bring greetings from my wife, who preceded me to Bangladesh. She and our daughter came here a few years ago.

And she told me of all the good things that were going on here, and she urged me to have the United States do more to support the Grameen Bank, to support your Government, to support efforts to unleash the ability of your children and your families to build a better future.

And finally, I would like to thank all of you who shared your stories with me today. Many of you have overcome great obstacles in your lives. Many of you still face great challenges. But you convinced me again that no one—no one—should believe that poverty is destiny, that people have to remain poor, that their children cannot learn and do better. You have made me believe more strongly than ever that every child in this world should be given the chance to dream and to live those dreams.

Because I have been privileged to be President of the United States, I have traveled all over the world. I have met with the wealthiest and most powerful people in the world. I have been in the most successful communities in the world. I have also been in the poorest villages of Africa, of Asia, of Latin America. And I believe, more strongly today than ever, that intelligence and ability and a human spirit are evenly distributed across the rich and the poor, in every continent on Earth, and everyone must have a chance. Every little boy and every little girl must have a chance. I will do what I can to be a good partner and a good friend in that endeavor in Bangladesh.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh; Asia Begum, a teacher from Joypura, who introduced the President; Fazle Hasan Abed, executive director, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC); and Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director, Grameen Bank. The President met with the people of Joypura at the Embassy after his planned visit to the village was canceled because of concerns raised by the Secret Service.

Statement on the Observance of Nowruz

March 20, 2000

This week people of Iranian heritage around the world will celebrate Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Nowruz is a tradition as old as the land of Persia, but at the same time it celebrates change and renewal: the changing season from winter to spring, a new year and a new beginning. It is a time to gather with family and

friends and to look toward the future. I extend my best wishes for the new year to Americans of Iranian origin and to the people of Iran. I hope this season will bring the start of a new era of better relations between our two countries.

Nowruz Mubarak.

Letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on Gun Safety Legislation

March 20, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Since last summer, I have repeatedly urged the Congress to finish its work on juvenile crime legislation and pass a balanced, bipartisan bill with strong gun measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. However, I am troubled by your recent comments that you are considering stripping the Senate-passed commonsense gun provisions out of the final conference report. Legislation intended to address the problem of youth violence simply cannot ignore the most devastating problem facing our youth—gun violence.

Let me be clear: I will not sign juvenile crime legislation that fails to move forward in our efforts to make guns safer, and to keep them out of the hands of children and criminals.

Last summer, the Senate passed reasonable gun provisions that would help do just this, by closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, barring violent juveniles from owning guns as adults, and banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. These measures can help save lives and should be enacted without further delay.

Last week, my Administration, joined by many cities and states, reached a landmark agreement

with Smith and Wesson under which the company will change the way it designs, distributes, and markets its products. That pact—which includes important provisions on gun shows, child safety locks, and large ammunition clips—is proof that when reasonable people choose to sit down and negotiate, they can find common ground and protect the public interest. I hope Congress can now build on that example.

Nearly a year has passed since the tragedy at Columbine High School, and gunfire continues to take the lives of nearly a dozen young people a day. That is why I urge you once again to finish the job you started last year and send me a comprehensive juvenile crime bill that contains the Senate-passed gun safety measures. No task could be more urgent.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was sent to Orrin G. Hatch, chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed of Bangladesh in Dhaka
March 20, 2000

Mr. President, Prime Minister, distinguished guests, this has been a day of extraordinary hospitality, insight, and discovery for us. On behalf of the American delegation, I thank you for all you have done to make us feel at home.

For 5 years now, my wife and daughter have been singing the glories of Bangladesh. Finally, I am glad to see for myself. This day has been a watershed for both our nations. Americans admire Bangladesh as a proud Muslim nation, devoted to peace with its neighbors, to peace-keeping around the world, to tolerance and diversity within its borders.

When the great Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, he said this: "I am glad I have done some work to give expression to this great age when the East and the West are coming together." Although he did not live to see the creation of Bangladesh, Tagore would doubtless be proud of all you have done to lead your people into a new century. I believe he would also approve of what we did today to bring the East and the West closer together.

I was deeply gratified this morning to be the first American President to arrive in Bangladesh, and I am proud of the kind of partnership we are forging. It is about more than the ceremony of a state visit. It is about promoting democracy and the values that give meaning to our lives. It is about helping children stay in school and

have a better future, about investing in people who have never been given a chance to succeed before, and investing in a nation that now has a chance to succeed as never before.

Tomorrow the Sun will rise on a deeper friendship between America and Bangladesh. Through our ceremonies and our conversations, we have hastened the arrival of a more peaceful new day, the kind of day that Tagore spent his life imagining, a new day comprehending not only the absence of war and suffering but the presence of mutual understanding and common endeavors.

On behalf of all Americans, I pledge that we will work with you to build on this good day, to soften the hard facts of daily hardship, to make real the poetry of our finest aspirations.

I ask you now to join me in a toast to the President, the Prime Minister, the people of Bangladesh, and the friendship between our two nations. May it grow. May it deepen. May it affect the lives of our people in ways that are truly good.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:30 p.m. in the Banquet Hall of the Bangabhawan. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Ahmed.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India in New Delhi
March 21, 2000

Prime Minister Vajpayee. I am delighted to welcome President Clinton to India. His visit provides us a unique opportunity for historic confirmation in our relations. We have just concluded a very productive meeting. President Clinton and I have had an indepth exchange of views on many subjects. Our two delegations have also held extensive discussions. Our discus-

sions have been warm, friendly, and candid, reflecting our common desire to build a new relationship of mutual trust and respect.

Our objective is to forge a durable, politically constructive and economically productive partnership between the world's two largest democracies. I think with President Clinton's visit and

our meeting today, we have laid a firm foundation for the future.

President Clinton and I have just signed a vision statement. The statement outlines the contours of and defines the agenda of our partnership in the 21st century. We both agreed that our commitment to the principles and practice of democracy constitutes the bedrock of our relations and for our cooperative efforts internationally for peace, prosperity, and democratic freedom.

We have also concluded agreements and understandings on the establishment of very wide-ranging dialog architecture. Closer contacts between our business and scientific communities will be encouraged. Both countries will endeavor to enhance trade and investment, cooperate in energy and environment, and to draw upon the vast array of talent, especially in the area of information technology and frontier sciences, for the betterment of the lives of their peoples.

We share a common concern at the growing threat of terrorist violence and its links with religious extremism and illegal trade in narcotics. Both of us expressed our firm opposition to the use of any form of violence, whether as an instrument of terror against democratic society or as a means of realizing territorial ambition. Nothing justifies the use of such matters against innocent people. We expressed our determination to intensify our cooperation in this area.

President Clinton and I had a frank discussion on the issues of disarmament and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The dialog which is in progress between our two countries on these issues has enhanced the mutual understanding of our respective concerns. I've explained to President Clinton the reasons that compel us to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent. I have reiterated our firm commitment not to conduct further nuclear explosive tests, not to engage in a nuclear arms race, and not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against any country.

We have resolved to continue a dialog and to work together in cooperation with other countries to help bring about a peaceful and secure world completely free of the threat of all weapons of mass destruction.

In our discussion of regional issues, I reiterated our policy of developing friendly and cooperative relations with all our neighbors in accordance with established principles of good

neighborly relations, respect for each of their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and on the basis of agreements solemnly entered into. India remains committed to resolving its difference with its neighbors through peaceful bilateral dialog and in an atmosphere free from the thought of force and violence.

We agreed that problems between countries of the region should be resolved peacefully by the concerned countries themselves. As a means of implementing our agenda, a partnership in the 21st century, we have agreed to regular summit meetings. President Clinton has invited me to Washington; I am delighted to accept.

The President will have the opportunity over the next few days to see the rich cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of our country, to experience the warmth and friendship of our people, to witness the delicate blend of tradition and modernity in our society, and to feel the democratic pulse of our large nation. I wish the President and the members of his delegation a very pleasant stay in India.

In that end, I would like to make some remarks on the tragic events in Jammu and Kashmir yesterday. The brutal massacre of 36 Sikhs in Jammu and Kashmir last night is further evidence of the ethnic cleansing that has been underway for a decade and is part of a pattern that we have experienced earlier, including during my visit to Lahore last year. The nation and the entire civilized community is outraged at this premeditated act of barbarism and joins us in condemning this act.

The attempt at cloaking ethnic terrorism in the guise of *jihad* carries no conviction. We and the international community reject the notion that *jihad* can be a part of any civilized country's foreign policy. None should doubt the determination of the people of India to safeguard the secular unity of our society.

Together we have defeated all of the challenges in the past, and we shall do so again. We have the means and the will to eliminate this menace.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you, Prime Minister, for your remarks and for the warm welcome that you, your delegation, and the people of India have given to me and my family and the Americans who have come with me.

It has been 22 years since a United States President has visited this country. Of course, that is not much time in the grand sweep of

India's civilization, but it is close to half your history since becoming independent. That is far too long, and this day is therefore long overdue. I am glad to be here.

As the world's two largest democracies, we are united in believing that every person's dignity should be respected and every person's potential fulfilled. There is no better example of the power of freedom and opportunity to liberate human potential than the success that Americans of Indian heritage have enjoyed in our Nation.

I have come to India because I want us to build a dynamic and lasting partnership, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. India and America should be better friends and stronger partners. In a world of increasing globalization, our futures plainly are intertwined. Today we have agreed to hold regular meetings between our heads of government and top officials. I thank the Prime Minister for accepting my invitation to visit the United States later this year. We have just signed, as you know, a joint vision statement that outlines the goals we share and the challenges we face.

The world has become a better place as more nations have joined us on the unfolding path of democracy. We want democracy to spread and deepen, to protect human rights, including the rights of women and minorities.

This June our two countries will convene the Community of Democracies meeting in Warsaw. I thank the Prime Minister for the leadership of India in this important endeavor. And I'm pleased that our National Endowment for Democracy, the Confederation of Indian Industry, and the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies here will organize the Asian Center for Democratic Governance, based here in New Delhi, to share our common experience with the hope of advancing freedom across Asia.

Both our nations now enjoy strong economic growth. Both are pioneering the information revolution. Today we've reached agreement to bring more jobs and opportunities to our people, to accelerate trade between us, to help India's financial markets and assist its small businesses, to institute a regular economic dialog between our Governments.

We both face, still, the challenges of better educating our children, lifting them from poverty, protecting them from disease and environmental peril. Today, these are global challenges; what happens in one nation affects others across

their borders. We have agreed to face these challenges together. And together we can succeed.

Finally, both our nations want a peaceful future. I recognize that India has real security concerns. We certainly share your outrage and heartbreak over last night's brutal attack in Kashmir. We offer our profoundest sympathies to the people, especially to the families of the victims. It reminds us of what tremendous suffering this conflict has caused India. The violence must end. This should be a time for restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, for renewed lines of communication.

I also stressed that at a time when most nations, including the United States and Russia, are making real progress in moving away from nuclear weapons, the world needs India to lead in the same direction.

While I am here, I will have the opportunity to speak with Indians about these issues and listen, as I have today, to the concerns of India's leaders and its people. Then our discussions will continue after I leave. I say again, we have neglected this relationship for more than two decades. It is too important to ever fall into disrepair again. I am committed to building a stronger partnership. And we are committed to building a better world.

I look forward to spending the next 4 days here, meeting with your people, learning more about a rich history and culture I have long admired, and strengthening a friendship that, indeed, is critical to the future of the entire planet.

Thank you very much.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Clinton. Thank you. I'll come get it when we finish the questions, how's that?

India-U.S. Relations

Q. This question is addressed to the Prime Minister. How did your one-to-one talks go, and what are your expectations of the future of India-U.S. relations?

Prime Minister Vajpayee. I'm glad you asked that question. As you can see, our talks have gone very well. We discussed substantive issues relating to bilateral relations. We discussed the situation in South Asia in a very frank and candid manner. I'm sure, as a result of this visit and as a result of the discussion, a new chapter is being added into our bilateral relations.

Nuclear Nonproliferation

Q. Mr. President, did you make any progress, did you achieve any progress today in persuading Prime Minister Vajpayee to take any of the specific steps that you have urged to restrain India's nuclear program, specifically, signing the CTBT, banning the production of fissile materials, and tightening export controls? If you didn't make any progress today and if you don't in the future, how close can this new relationship that you both have spoken of become?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, on this whole nonproliferation issue, we have had a dialog that has gone on for some time now under the leadership of Mr. Singh and Mr. Talbott. And I would like to thank the Indian Government for that work.

Secondly, I felt today that there was a possibility that we could reach more common ground on the issues of testing, on the production of fissile material, on export controls, and on restraint, generally.

With regard to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, you heard the Prime Minister's statement about his position on testing. I would hope that the democratic process will produce a signing and, ultimately, a ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban in India, just like I hope the democratic process will ultimately produce a ratification of the Test Ban Treaty in America that I signed. These are contentious issues. But I'm actually quite optimistic about our ability to make progress on them.

And again, I thank the Prime Minister for sanctioning what I think has been a very honest and thoroughgoing dialog. We've been working on this for some time, and we will continue to do it. And I believe we will wind up in a common position.

Situation in Kashmir

Q. This question is addressed to both President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee. Thirty-five people were massacred in the valley yesterday, and both of you have expressed outrage at the incident. In the context of ongoing India-U.S. cooperation on counterterrorism, what are your reactions to this, and did this come up during your discussions on terrorism?

President Clinton. Would you like to go first, Prime Minister?

Let me ask you this, could you just repeat just the question you asked? Did this come up in our discussions—yes, it did. Ask me the previous question you asked. I want to make sure I understood it.

Q. In the context of ongoing India-U.S. cooperation on counterterrorism, did you discuss this issue in terms of—did you discuss this in the context of international terrorism? And did this question come up just in terms of the violence?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, we discussed it at some length, and I expressed privately to the Prime Minister my outrage about it—apparently the first targeting of the Sikhs in Kashmir. I don't think—the answer to your question is, I don't suppose it came up in the context of overall terrorism in the sense that it just happened last night. We have to know who did it before there could be a conclusion about that.

But I think that the targeting of innocent civilians is the worst thing about modern conflicts today. And the extent to which more and more people seem to believe it is legitimate to target innocent civilians to reach their larger political goals, I think that's something that has to be resisted at every turn. There should be less violence in Kashmir, not more. And when people take on others, they ought to be those that have the responsibility for defending—if somebody wants to fight, at least they ought to leave the civilians alone.

I think this is a horrible development in Kashmir, but unfortunately it's becoming all too common around the world. And one of the things that I hope we'll be able to do together is to reduce the incidence of violence against innocent civilians, not only here but in other parts of the world as well.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, if you'd like?

Prime Minister Vajpayee. I have nothing more to add.

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, you said in February that South Asia was perhaps the most dangerous place in the world today. Given the massacre yesterday and the increasing nuclear tensions, do you think that the risk of another war is increasing?

And to the Prime Minister, sir, who do you hold responsible for the massacre yesterday, and what do you mean when you say, "We have the will and the means to eliminate this menace"?

President Clinton. Your turn. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Vajpayee. I'll take my turn. [Laughter] I'm sure after visiting this part of the world, the President will come to the conclusion that the situation is not so bad as it is made out to be. There are differences; there have been clashes; there is the problem of cross-country terrorism; innocent people are being killed. But there is no threat of any war. India is committed to peaceful means. We are prepared to solve all problems, discuss all problems on the table. We do not think in terms of war, and nobody should think in those terms in this subcontinent.

So far as the massacre is concerned, it's a brutal act, an outrage. This is not for the first time; it has been going on. And whenever there are chances of both countries coming together—and at the people-to-people level our relations are very good, as I realized when I visited Lahore—but there is a deliberate design to foment trouble, to encourage killing, mass murders, to sabotage any attempt to bring about normalcy in this part of the world. This policy is not going to pay. And I hope this question will be discussed by the President in Islamabad.

Q. Mr. President.

President Clinton. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], to go back to the questions you asked me. First of all, I was encouraged by what the Prime Minister said to me in private, which was just what he said to you in public, that he did not want any of the difficulties that we have been discussing today to become the occasion for war.

I have basically four beliefs about this whole thing, and I can state them very concisely. First, I think that that sort of restraint is something

that everyone on the subcontinent should practice. Second, I think there must be a respect for the Line of Control. Third, I think some way must be found to renew the dialog.

The Prime Minister did, I thought, a brave thing in participating in the Lahore process. He took some risks to do it. He'd always said that just the facts of geography and shared history called upon him to do that. But you cannot expect a dialog to go forward unless there is an absence of violence and a respect for the Line of Control.

And the last thing that I would say is, I doubt very seriously that there is a military solution to the difficulties that the Kashmiris face. And that makes the death of these Sikhs all the more tragic and the importance of trying to restart the dialog all the more important, not just over this but other issues as well.

And the Prime Minister said he hoped I would say that in Islamabad, and I will. I don't believe—one of the nice things about having you folks with us all the time is that we can't get away with saying one thing in one place and a different thing in another. We almost have to say the same thing everywhere, or you'll find us out. So I can tell you that this is my same message: Respect the Line of Control; show restraint; stand against violence; restore the dialog.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 188th news conference began at 1:03 p.m. in the garden at the Hyderabad House. In his remarks, the President referred to Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh of India and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

Joint Statement on United States-India Relations: A Vision for the 21st Century *March 21, 2000*

At the dawn of a new century, President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee resolve to create a closer and qualitatively new relationship between the United States and India.

We are two of the world's largest democracies. We are nations forged from many traditions and faiths, proving year after year that

diversity is our strength. From vastly different origins and experiences, we have come to the same conclusions: that freedom and democracy are the strongest bases for both peace and prosperity, and that they are universal aspirations, constrained neither by culture nor levels of economic development.

There have been times in the past when our relationship drifted without a steady course. As we now look towards the future, we are convinced that it is time to chart a new and purposeful direction in our relationship.

Globalization is erasing boundaries and building networks between nations and peoples, economies and cultures. The world is increasingly coming together around the democratic ideals India and the United States have long championed and lived by.

Together, we represent a fifth of the world's people, more than a quarter of the world's economy. We have built creative, entrepreneurial societies. We are leaders in the information age. The currents of commerce and culture that link our societies run strong and deep. In many ways, the character of the 21st century world will depend on the success of our cooperation for peace, prosperity, democracy and freedom.

That presents us with an opportunity, but also a profound responsibility to work together. Our partnership of shared ideals leads us to seek a natural partnership of shared endeavors.

In the new century, India and the United States will be partners in peace, with a common interest in and complementary responsibility for ensuring regional and international security. We will engage in regular consultations on, and work together for, strategic stability in Asia and beyond. We will bolster joint efforts to counter terrorism and meet other challenges to regional peace. We will strengthen the international security system, including in the United Nations, and support the United Nations in its peace-keeping efforts. We acknowledge that tensions in South Asia can only be resolved by the nations of South Asia. India is committed to enhancing cooperation, peace and stability in the region.

India and the United States share a commitment to reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons, but we have not always agreed on how to reach this common goal. The United States believes India should forgo nuclear weapons. India believes that it needs to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent in keeping with its own assessment of its security needs. Nonetheless, India and the U.S. are prepared to work together to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. To this end, we will persist with and build upon the productive bilateral dialogue already underway.

We reaffirm our respective voluntary commitments to forgo further nuclear explosive tests. We will work together and with others for an early commencement of negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. We have both shown strong commitments to export controls, and will continue to strengthen them. We will work together to prevent the spread of dangerous technologies. We are committed to build confidence and reduce the chances of miscalculation. We will pursue our security needs in a restrained and responsible manner, and will not engage in nuclear and missile arms races. We will seek to narrow our differences and increase mutual understanding on non-proliferation and security issues. This will help us to realize the full potential of Indo-U.S. relations and contribute significantly to regional and global security.

The true measure of our strength lies in the ability of our people to shape their destiny and to realize their aspirations for a better life. That is why the United States and India are and will be allies in the cause of democracy. We will share our experience in nurturing and strengthening democratic institutions the world over and fighting the challenge to democratic order from forces such as terrorism. We will cooperate with others to launch an international Community of Democracies this year.

The United States applauds India's success in opening its economy, its achievements in science and technology, its commitment to a new wave of economic expansion and reform, and its determination to bring the benefits of economic growth to all its people. Our nations pledge to reduce impediments to bilateral trade and investment and to expand commerce between us, especially in the emerging knowledge-based industries and high-technology areas.

We will work together to preserve stability and growth in the global economy as well. And we will join in an unrelenting battle against poverty in the world, so that the promise of a new economy is felt everywhere and no nation is left behind. That is among the fundamental challenges of our time. Opening trade and resisting protectionism are the best means for meeting it. We support an open, equitable and transparent rule-based multilateral trading system, and we will work together to strengthen it. We agree that developed countries should embrace policies that offer developing countries the opportunity to grow, because growth is the

key to rising incomes and rising standards. At the same time, we share the conviction that human development also requires empowerment of people and availability of basic freedoms.

As leaders in the forefront of the new high-technology economy, we recognize that countries can achieve robust economic growth while protecting the environment and taking action to combat climate change. We will do our part to meet the global environmental challenges, including climate change and the impacts of air and water pollution on human health.

We also pledge a common effort to battle the infectious diseases that kill people and retard progress in so many countries. India is at the forefront of the global effort that has brought us to the threshold of the eradication of polio. With leadership, joint research, and application of modern science, we can and will do the same for the leading killers of our time, including AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

We are proud of the cooperation between Indians and Americans in advancing frontiers of knowledge. But even as we unravel the mysteries of time and space, we must continue to apply our knowledge to older challenges: eradicating human suffering, disease and poverty. In the past, our cooperation helped ease mass hunger in the world. In the future, it will focus as well on the development of clean energy, health, and education.

Our partnership is not an end in itself, but a means to all these ends. And it is reinforced by the ties of scholarship, commerce, and increasingly of kinship among our people. The industry, enterprise and cultural contributions of

Americans of Indian heritage have enriched and enlivened both our societies.

Today, we pledge to deepen the Indian-American partnership in tangible ways, always seeking to reconcile our differences through dialogue and engagement, always seizing opportunities to advance the countless interests we have in common. As a first step, President Clinton has invited Prime Minister Vajpayee to visit Washington at a mutually convenient opportunity, and the Prime Minister has accepted that invitation. Henceforth, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of India should meet regularly to institutionalize our dialogue. We have also agreed on and separately outlined an architecture of additional high-level consultations, and of joint working groups, across the broad spectrum of areas in which we are determined to institutionalize our enhanced cooperation. And we will encourage even stronger people-to-people ties.

For India and the United States, this is a day of new beginnings. We have before us for the first time in 50 years the possibility to realize the full potential of our relationship. We will work to seize that chance, for our benefit and all those with whom we share this increasingly interdependent world.

William Jefferson Clinton
President
United States of America

Atal Behari Vajpayee
Prime Minister
India

Done on March 21, 2000 at New Delhi

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Agreed Principles: Institutional Dialogue Between the United States and India

March 21, 2000

1. During the visit of President Clinton to Delhi in March 2000, President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed as part of their vision for the future relationship that a regular, wide-ranging dialogue is important for achieving the goal of establishing closer and multifaceted relations between India and the United States and for the two countries to work jointly for promotion of peace and prosperity in the 21st

century. The two leaders agreed on a number of steps to intensify and institutionalize the dialogue between India and the United States.

2. The President of the United States and Prime Minister of India will hold regular bilateral 'Summits' in alternating capitals or elsewhere, including on the occasions of multilateral meetings, to review bilateral relations and consult on international developments and issues.

They will remain in frequent contact by telephone and through letters.

3. The two countries will also hold an Annual Foreign Policy Dialogue at the level of the Secretary of State of the United States and External Affairs Minister of India. This dialogue will be broad-based and touch upon all aspects of US-India relations, including considering the work of other groups as appropriate.

4. The two countries also consider the ongoing Dialogue on Security and Non-proliferation between the Deputy Secretary of State of the United States and External Affairs Minister of India important for improving mutual understanding on bilateral, regional and international security matters. They agreed that this dialogue should continue and take place semi-annually or as often as considered desirable by both sides. The Principals of this dialogue will establish Expert Groups on specific issues as considered desirable and appropriate.

5. Foreign Office Consultations between the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States and Foreign Secretary of India will continue. The two leaders believe that close cooperation between the two countries is a factor of stability in the politically and culturally diverse and rapidly transforming Asia. A Dialogue on Asian Security will also be conducted as part of the Foreign Office Consultations. The two sides will also stay in close touch and consult on international democracy initiatives.

6. The two leaders consider combating international terrorism as one of the most important global challenges. They expressed satisfaction at the establishment of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism and its productive first meeting in February 2000. They agree that the Joint Working Group should continue to meet regularly and become an effective mechanism for the two countries to share information and intensify their cooperation in combating terrorism.

7. The two leaders see an enormous potential for enhancement of economic and business relations between the two countries in the Knowledge Age. They decided to institutionalize bilateral economic dialogue. They will keep themselves informed and follow developments in the bilateral economic dialogue closely through a high-level coordinating group. The coordinating group will be led on the US side by the White House with the support of the State Depart-

ment, and on the Indian side by the Prime Minister's Office with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Coordinating Group will develop a common economic agenda for and undertake preparations for the Heads of Government meetings. With broad inter-agency and inter-ministerial representations at senior official levels, it would convene regularly to facilitate close coordination on the various issues raised in the ministerial dialogues and ensure that discussions therein complement and reinforce broad economic and foreign policy objectives, including the deepening of bilateral cooperation on high technology and information technology issues.

US-India Financial and Economic Forum: The US Secretary of the Treasury and the Indian Minister of Finance will host a forum on finance and investment issues, macroeconomic policy and international economic developments at regular intervals. Their meetings at the ministerial level would be supplemented by sub-Cabinet meetings and involve, as appropriate, the participation of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Reserve, Council of Economic Advisors, and other officials of the US Government and the Securities and Exchange Board of India, Reserve Bank of India, and other officials of the Government of India.

US-India Commercial Dialogue: The US Secretary of Commerce and Minister of Commerce and Industry of India will lead a dialogue to deepen ties between the Indian and American Business communities. The dialogue will encompass regular government-to-government meetings to be held in conjunction with private sector meetings. Its aim will be to (a) facilitate trade, and (b) maximize investment opportunities across a broad range of economic sectors, including information technology, infrastructure, biotechnology, and services. Participation will include, as appropriate, representatives of other Cabinet agencies and ministries on both sides. Close contact will be maintained with business associations, and activities will be planned with the benefit of such private sector input, including

the establishment of subcommittees to pursue specific projects or sectoral issues of mutual interest.

US-India Working Group on Trade: The United States Trade Representative and the Ministry of Commerce and other concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India will engage in regular discussion to enhance cooperation on trade policy. As appropriate, individual trade issues could be examined in greater depth with the participation of other agencies with corresponding responsibilities and through creation of sub-groups. The Group will serve as a locus of consultation on a broad range of trade-related issues, including those pertaining to the World Trade Organization. The Group will receive inputs from the private sector (including trade policy issues identified in the US-India Commercial Dialogue) as appropriate.

8. The two leaders consider cooperation between the two countries in energy and environment an important part of their vision for the future. They have agreed to set up a Joint Consultative Group on Clean Energy and Environment. The Group will hold periodic ministerial/high level meetings as desirable and appropriate

and will lay emphasis on collaborative projects, developing and deploying clean energy technologies, public and private sector investment and cooperation, and climate change and other environmental issues. The Co-conveners of the Group will be the Department of State of the United States and the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

9. The two leaders believe that the strong scientific resources of the two countries provide excellent opportunities for scientific collaboration between them. They agree to set up a US-India Science and Technology Forum. The Forum shall promote research and development, the transfer of technology, the creation of a comprehensive electronic reference source for US-India science and technology cooperation, and the electronic exchange and dissemination of information on US-India science and technology cooperation, and other programs consistent with the previous practice of the US-India Foundation.

10. Institutional dialogue in other areas will be considered as mutually agreed.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the Supreme Court's Decision on Tobacco Regulation

March 21, 2000

Since we took office, Vice President Gore and I have worked hard to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. Five years ago, the FDA put forward an important proposal to protect children from tobacco by eliminating advertising aimed at children and curbing minors' access to tobacco products. Today's Supreme Court opinion, while holding that Congress has not given FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products, does affirm our view that tobacco use by young people "poses perhaps the single most significant threat to public health in the United States."

If we are to protect our children from the harms of tobacco, Congress must now enact the provisions of the FDA rule. Fortunately, those protections have strong bipartisan support: in 1998, 57 Senators supported a bill negotiated

by Senators Bill Frist and John McCain containing provisions comparable to those included in the FDA regulation.

So today I call upon the leadership of Congress to take up the bipartisan Frist-McCain legislation. Nearly 4 million children under the age of 18 smoke cigarettes, 3,000 more start each day, and 1,000 will have their lives cut short as a result. Every year, more than 400,000 Americans die of tobacco-related diseases; nearly 80 percent of them started smoking as children. Even some in the tobacco industry—after fighting the FDA rule in court—now say they support regulation of tobacco. I believe that by working together across party lines, we can protect our children and save lives.

Letter to Senate Leaders on Social Security Reform Legislation March 21, 2000

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am pleased that the Senate is moving forward with consideration of H.R. 5, a bill that would eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age. On March 1, 2000, with strong Administration support, the House passed H.R. 5 by a vote of 422-0. I now urge the Senate to follow suit and quickly pass H.R. 5. This will ensure enactment of a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age, which I will promptly sign into law.

I called for the elimination of the earnings test for seniors in my State of the Union address in 1999. I believe that the test is confusing and outdated. As the baby boomers begin to retire, it is more important than ever that older Americans who are willing and able to work should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

Our work together on eliminating the retirement earnings test can help establish bipartisan momentum toward Social Security reform. We

should build on this foundation to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year, I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

These simple measures would be a substantial down payment on meeting the long-term Social Security challenge. I hope we can continue to work together on this issue.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to Trent Lott, Senate majority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Kircheril Narayanan of India in New Delhi March 21, 2000

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, distinguished guests. First, on behalf of the American delegation, let me thank you for your warm hospitality, and indeed, I thank all of you for making us feel so welcome.

As you pointed out, Mr. President, it was 5 years ago next week when my wife and daughter first came to New Delhi. I confess I was a little jealous of them then because I wanted to come. And I am delighted finally to be here today.

One of my country's most beloved writers, Mark Twain, once wrote that India, and I quote, "is the sole country under the Sun that all desire to see, and having seen once, would not trade that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined."

India has given profound gifts to the world for thousands of years now. Nearly half of humanity practices the four great religions that were born here, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism. The whole world has been influenced by Indian culture.

Indian thinkers have enriched every science known to humanity. And I welcome the presence of so many of your scientists here tonight. However, I must confess there are many American high school students who wish that "Aryabhatiya" had kept his work on trigonometry to himself. [Laughter] The computer age would hardly be possible at all without the decimal system invented in India. And appropriately enough, 30 percent of the world's software engineers today are Indian.

Every American who has been moved by the universal philosophy of nonviolence, every American whose life was transformed by the civil rights movement, owes a debt to India. Today I had the great honor of visiting the Gandhi Memorial. Two weeks ago, in my own country, I visited Selma, Alabama, which is one of the sacred sites of our civil rights movement, where the words of Martin Luther King and the marches of ordinary citizens both echoed the ideas of Gandhi.

My country has been enriched by the contributions of more than a million Indian-Americans, from Vinod Dahm, the father of the Pentium chip, to Deepak Chopra, pioneer of alternative medicine, to Sabeer Bhatia, creator of the free-mail system Hotmail, the free E-mail system.

Now, next Sunday when the Academy Awards are given out in Los Angeles, more than a few people, not only in India but in America, will be rooting for director M. Night Shyamalan and his remarkable movie "The Sixth Sense," nominated for best picture.

So we have gotten a lot from India, and we have neglected our friendship for too long. Today we are proud to be your partners, your allies, your friends in freedom.

As a President who has the good fortune to have been selected by an electorate that casts about 100 million votes, I can hardly imagine a nation with over 600 million eligible voters. I don't know how you please them all. Or should I say, 60 *crore*.

I didn't know what a *crore* was until I got here this time. Now I can go home and suggest to my Vice President that he have a new slogan: Four *crore* for Al Gore! [*Laughter*]

We have a lot to give the world in the richness of democracy. One of the great things about a democracy is, it is a system which allows us to resolve our differences through conversation, not confrontation. I've enjoyed the conversation that we began here today. I am grateful that we found common ground. I am convinced we have laid the foundation for a new respectful partnership based on our oldest and most enduring values.

In the days to come, may our two nations always remain examples of tolerance and the power of diversity. May we build societies that draw upon the talents and energies of all our people. May we preserve the beauty and natural richness of this small planet that we share. May we work together to make the difficult choices and the necessary investments, as Nehru once instructed, "to advance the larger cause of humanity." In the spirit of that partnership and that vision, I ask you all to join me in raising a glass to the President, the Prime Minister, and the people of this wonderful nation which has welcomed us.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. in the Banquet Hall at Rashtrapati Bhavan. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Narayanan.

Interview With Peter Jennings of ABC's "World News Tonight" in New Delhi

March 21, 2000

India-Pakistan Dispute Over Kashmir

Mr. Jennings. Prime Minister Vajpayee said that you will conclude, now that you're here, that the situation—Kashmir, between India and Pakistan—is not as bad as they say it is. Is that what you conclude?

The President. Well, I think that I've concluded that he is going to do everything he can to avoid having it escalate into a war with Pakistan. And that is encouraging. But I still

think it's a difficult situation, to say the least. I think it's important that they both show restraint. I think it's important that they respect the Line of Control, both sides do. And then, over the long run, I think what really matters, in terms of an ultimate resolution, is that the people of Kashmir feel that their legitimate interests are being addressed in some formal fashion.

But I do feel better about his determination to avoid a war, at least what you might call a full-scale war. But I don't—I'm still very troubled by the fact there's so much violence there. A lot of it obviously is propagated beyond the borders of Kashmir, and I don't think the Line of Control is adequately respected.

And I think—you know, what happened at Kargil was very troubling to me, because I supported strongly the dialog between India and Pakistan in the Lahore process. I still think it's a difficult situation, and I don't think they should take it lightly, either side.

Mr. Jennings. Moreover, Prime Minister Vajpayee is much more militant with the Indian press than he was with you today.

The President. That's good, though. That means that—maybe that means my trip here has a beneficial impact. And I hope I can have some impact on the Pakistanis when I go there.

Mr. Jennings. What do you mean by "impact," Mr. President?

The President. You know, I spent last July 4th trying to persuade former Prime Minister Sharif to withdraw back behind the Line of Control. He did. I think it weakened him when he did, frankly, but it was the right thing to do.

I think that they—these countries need to be thinking about reducing violence and increasing cooperation and dialog and freeing up their immensely talented people for different pursuits. If you look at how well the Indians and the Pakistani-Americans have done, how well they're doing in the information economy in the United States, how well they're beginning to do here, it's truly a tragedy that they're basically trapped in this position which, even if it doesn't lead to war, leads to big expenses on defense, which could be spent on education and health care or the development of a modern economy.

So I hope that my trip here and the long-term rekindling of the relationship with India that I'm committed to for our country can basically, slowly, over time, take this in a different direction.

Mr. Jennings. Forgive me for being more pointed. You know as well as I do that you're talking, to a very large extent, in generalities. What do you think the United States can really do here, especially given the fact that the Indians say the United States has no role?

The President. Well, I think that what they say is that we have no role in Kashmir. And

they have every right to say that. Every place in the world I've been involved in the peace process—you know, it's because we have been able to inspire the confidence and have a relationship with both parties.

But I think the United States does have an interest in trying to avert a larger conflict and trying to reduce the tensions between the two countries. I think we do have a clear interest there.

Mr. Jennings. So?

The President. We've worked with the Pakistanis for years. We want it—and obviously we've got a big interest in India's future. So therefore, I think anything I can do to get them to focus on what it would take to reduce the tensions is important. And I think right now the important thing is respecting the Line of Control, reducing violence, and find a way to resume the dialog. Now, beyond that, it's up to them.

Mr. Jennings. You'll tell the Pakistanis they should respect the Line of Control, the de facto cease-fire line?

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. Jennings. And what will you tell those Kashmiris, or Pakistanis, who believe they're fighting to free the Muslim Kashmiris from Indian control?

The President. First of all, I think that—the same thing I said to the Indians. I don't think there can be a military solution to Kashmir. And the tangled history of it does not admit of a simple solution. I think that the best chance that the Pakistanis have, if they want to have a positive impact on what they believe the legitimate concerns of people who live in that part of Kashmir that's in India, is through a dialog, not through acts of violence and supporting acts of violence.

And I think for many years they thought that might get us involved, and it won't. I'm not going to be dragged into something that—first of all, that India doesn't want us to be part of and, secondly, that I got dragged into from deliberate acts of violence. I just don't think that's right.

Mr. Jennings. So what is America's Kashmir policy?

The President. Our policy is: First, respect the Line of Control; second, do not promote violence by third parties in Kashmir; third, negotiate; and fourth, with respect to India, that

there's not a military solution to Kashmir's problems by India, either, that the Kashmiris deserve to have their own concerns addressed on the merits. But I don't think we ought to get in the position of saying that we think that an ethnically diverse country like India can't exist anymore. I don't agree with that.

Mr. Jennings. Do you support the Kashmiris' right to a referendum on their own independence? Do you support the right as it was laid out by the United Nations in 1948, for them to have a plebiscite on their future?

The President. Well, there's been a lot of changes since 1948, including what happened in 1971 and a number of things since. What I support is—I support some process by which the Kashmiris' legitimate grievances are addressed, and I support respecting the Line of Control. And I think the Pakistanis and the Indians have to have some way of talking about it. And the Indians have to have some way of talking to their own Kashmiris about it that recognizes there's not a military solution.

But the most I can do right now is to oppose violence, particularly oppose violence propagated by third parties within Kashmir, and to support reaffirming the Line of Control. And Prime Minister Vajpayee just said today that if the Pakistanis would reaffirm the principles of the Lahore Declaration and not promote or support violence on the other side of the Line of Control and respect the Line of Control, that he thought a dialog could be resumed. I think that is the best hope, ultimately, for resolving this.

Mr. Jennings. Who are these third parties you're referring to, involved in Kashmir?

The President. Well, we know that there have been instances of violence within Kashmir that were propagated by people who were not from there, but they weren't necessarily elements of the Pakistani Government. I don't want to accuse Pakistan of something it didn't do.

Mr. Jennings. Do you believe the Pakistan Intelligence Service facilitates the infiltration of fighters to Kashmir?

The President. I believe that there are elements within the Pakistani Government that have supported those who engaged in violence in Kashmir.

Mr. Jennings. And what will you tell General Musharraf about that?

The President. Just exactly what I said to you. And I want to talk with him, as I did with Prime Minister Vajpayee, about the future. I

think that in order to get out of a fix—when you get into a fix like this and you feel paralyzed by your past practices, the only way to change it is to have a vision of the future which convinces you that if you want to achieve a certain goal, you've got to do it in a different way. And I'll do my best to persuade him of that.

I just don't think that this is the way to deal with Kashmir, and I don't think it's a good enough reason to drive, in effect, the whole existence, the whole policy of the Pakistani Government. The Pakistanis are great people, too. They've been good allies of ours. They've helped us even in my time, since the end of the cold war, to get terrorists, the terrorists involved—one involved in the World Trade Center, one involved in the CIA killing. They've helped us in other contexts. I want to continue to be a good ally for them. But I think they have to have a plan for restoring democracy, and they have to have a nonviolent plan for resolving their differences with India.

Mr. Jennings. Just so I understand, then, Mr. President, you want the United States on the sidelines in this, giving advice but not involved in any three-way attempt to settle the Kashmir issue?

The President. I don't think the United States can be involved in a three-way attempt to settle the Kashmir issue, unless and until they both want us. I think that that is the evidence—you know, if you look at, we're in the Middle East because they both want us, not to say that either side agrees with everything I say and do, but we have a certain credibility there born of years and years and years of labor and a welcoming into the process. The same thing is true in the Irish peace process.

So I think that right now what I need to do is to try to convince both sides to avoid the worst—and there's something to be said for avoiding the worst here—and then to adopt some common principles which will allow the resumption of the dialog. If we can get them to renounce violence as a way of resolving this and to restore their dialog, respect the Line of Control so the dialog can be restored, then who knows what will happen and what they decide to do and how they decide to do it. But if they stay sort of hunkered down in unapproachable positions, then I think we'll have to work very hard to avoid a more difficult situation.

Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia

Mr. Jennings. I have a nuclear question. The United States tells people in the rest of the world to be like us. And the Indians say, "Right. We're just like you. We're a democracy. We're a free-market economy, and we have nuclear weapons in order to protect our national security." What's wrong with that?

The President. Well, what's wrong with it is that we're trying to lead the world away from nuclear power and away from the threat of nuclear war. And when the Indians took this position, they basically said, "We don't think we can be secure without nuclear weapons, and it's our right as a great nation to have them."

And we, first of all, don't believe it does; we don't believe it enhances their security. We think countries like Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, South Korea, that walked away from the prospect of nuclear programs, are more secure and have more funds to support their own national security and the development of their people and their economy. And we believe that it sends a bad signal when a great democracy like India, in effect, is telling the world that we ought to get into another arms race.

I've tried to reduce the arms of the United States. I hope this year we'll make another effort to reduce the arms of the United States and the arms of Russia. I've tried to support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the restriction of the distribution of fissile material.

So I think India—it sounds great to say, "Well, the United States has nuclear weapons, and they're a democracy. We ought to." But if you look at the whole history of this thing, what they're saying is, "We want to reverse the move toward reducing the nuclear threat because we say we ought to have nuclear weapons."

Mr. Jennings. Well, they also say, sir, that these are weapons of self-esteem and this is a U.S.—

The President. Self-esteem, that's right. If they're weapons of self-esteem for India, then every nation in the entire world has the same right to self-esteem. So therefore, however many countries there are in the world, everyone that can afford one ought to have a nuclear weapon. I do not believe that that would make the world safer. I believe that that would make the world more dangerous.

So I respect what the Indians say. They say, "Look, it's not just Pakistan. China has nuclear weapons. You know, it wasn't so many decades ago we had a border war with China. We have our problems there." But I think that most people believe—and have studied this believe that all nations would be more secure if we reduce the overall nuclear threat and reduce the number of people that had access to nuclear weapons.

And also keep in mind, the more nuclear weapons you have, the more nuclear material you have, the more risk you have that that nuclear material will be subject to pilfering. So you have to worry about—not only about other states becoming nuclear states but even terrorists getting ahold of small-scale nuclear weapons. I just think that it takes the world in the wrong direction. It's an honest disagreement we have with the Indians.

Mr. Jennings. Yes, because the Indians say to you, "You Americans say well, you just don't trust us"—

The President. That's not true.

Mr. Jennings. —"It's okay for you, but you don't trust us."

The President. No, that's not true. Actually, I do trust them. I believe Prime Minister Vajpayee when he says, "I will never be the first to use nuclear weapons." So it's not a question of trust.

What I don't agree with is that a country needs nuclear weapons to manifest its esteem or its national greatness. Nor do I agree that India is actually more secure with these nuclear weapons. I think that in some ways it reduces one's security.

Mr. Jennings. Trust the Pakistanis with control of nuclear weapons, too?

The President. I feel the same way about them. I think—they probably think they have a better argument since they know they couldn't win a conventional war with India, because India is so much bigger and because Lahore, for example, one of the most important places, is so close to the Indian border.

But it just seems to me—again, if you look at—if you ask yourself, where is there greater security? In Brazil, in Argentina, or even in South Africa, or even in South Korea, where they renounced nuclear weapons? Are those people less secure than the people of Pakistan and India? I think you would have to say they are not less secure.

So my argument is, any country can say to us, any country, particularly another democracy, "Oh, you're a hypocrite. You've got nuclear weapons. You don't want us to have any." Well, I'm trying to reduce the store of nuclear weapons the United States has, the store Russia has. The Russians have supported this. And we're trying to make the world more stable.

I just think—I don't think they're more secure by having nuclear weapons.

Cancellation of Visit to Joyapura, Bangladesh

Mr. Jennings. On the subject of security, I'm really curious. You travel all the time in this extraordinarily tight security envelope. And yet, it wasn't secure enough yesterday to go to a small village in Bangladesh. Did you really feel a personal risk in Bangladesh? Did you end up telling Chelsea, or, if you talked to her, Mrs. Clinton, "I'm going off on a trip in which I am at personal risk"?

The President. Well, I think it's better for me not to discuss it, except to say this. Insofar as there was a risk, it had nothing to do with the Bangladeshis, nothing to do with the Government or the people of Bangladesh, and they were not in any way at fault. I did my best to take account of the analysis of our security people and to act accordingly, and it worked out just fine. We had a wonderful trip.

President's Security

Mr. Jennings. Do you ever have your way with the security people?

The President. Do you mean, do I ever disagree with them?

Mr. Jennings. No. Do you ever have your way?

The President. What do you mean?

Mr. Jennings. In other ways, do you ever have your—you can disagree with them; do you ever prevail?

The President. Sometimes I do. I have from time to time disagreed with them and actually done what I wanted to do. But when that happens, I try to do it the way they want to do it, because if I disagree with them, I realize I've assumed a greater risk, and I should do it in the way they want to do it.

Middle East Peace Process

Mr. Jennings. Last question, sir. You're going to see President Asad in Geneva on Sunday.

That's a pretty big meeting. Does this mean a deal is close?

The President. I wouldn't say that. But I will say this. Ever since they met in Shepherdstown the first of the year, and then the talks sort of were stalled, I've been working very hard with both sides. I now think I'm in a position to have a sense of what it will take for both sides to get an agreement. So it's an appropriate time for me to discuss this with President Asad, in the hope that we can start the talks again.

I'm encouraged by the decisions that have been made by the Israelis and the Palestinians. I think they are committed to going forward, and they have a pretty good timetable. They're going to have to work hard to make it. And I think that the only way we'll ever have this thing the way it ought to be in the Middle East is to finish with the Syrians and then with the Lebanese, as well.

So I think this is time. Whether it will lead to a breakthrough, I don't know. I hope it will lead to a resumption of talks.

Mr. Jennings. Is it safe to assume that President Asad doesn't leave the country easily and would not agree to go to Geneva to see you were you not to have something pretty good to offer?

The President. I think it's safe to assume that I wouldn't waste his time, either. I think that we have—it's time for us to talk about what we think it would take to resume these talks and move to a resolution. And I'm going to give him my honest opinion about where we are and where I think we can go. And then we just need to make a decision, all of us, about whether to go forward. But principally, it's a decision for the Israelis and the Syrians.

Mr. Jennings. Does this involve a comprehensive settlement, one that involves the Syrian Golan Heights, the Israelis, and the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon?

The President. Well, I want to talk to President Asad. There isn't an agreement, yet. But if there is an agreement, I would hope it would lead to a resolution of both the Syrian issues and the Lebanese issues, which is very important in Israel. The Israelis care a lot about that, and well they should. And of course, the Lebanese do. We'll see. Keep your fingers crossed.

Mr. Jennings. You're enthusiastic.

The President. I'm hopeful.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:20 p.m. at the Maurya Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan

on October 12, 1999; and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. The transcript of this interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 22. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks to a Joint Session of Parliament in New Delhi *March 22, 2000*

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, I am privileged to speak to you and, through you, to the people of India. I am honored to be joined today by members of my Cabinet and staff at the White House, and a very large representation of Members of our United States Congress from both political parties. We're all honored to be here, and we thank you for your warm welcome.

I would also like to thank the people of India for their kindness to my daughter and my mother-in-law and, on their previous trip, to my wife and my daughter.

I have looked forward to this day with great anticipation. This whole trip has meant a great deal to me, especially to this point, the opportunity I had to visit the Gandhi Memorial, to express on behalf of all the people of the United States our gratitude for the life, the work, the thought of Gandhi, without which the great civil rights revolution in the United States would never have succeeded on a peaceful plane.

As Prime Minister Vajpayee has said, India and America are natural allies, two nations conceived in liberty, each finding strength in its diversity, each seeing in the other a reflection of its own aspiration for a more humane and just world.

A poet once said the world's inhabitants can be divided into, and I quote, "those that have seen the Taj Mahal and those that have not." [Laughter] Well, in a few hours I will have a chance to cross over to the happier side of that divide. But I hope, in a larger sense, that my visit will help the American people to see the new India and to understand you better. And I hope that the visit will help India to understand America better and that by listening

to each other we can build a true partnership of mutual respect and common endeavor.

From a distance, India often appears as a kaleidoscope of competing, perhaps superficial images. Is it atomic weapons or ahimsa; a land struggling against poverty and inequality or the world's largest middle-class society? Is it still simmering with communal tensions or history's most successful melting pot? Is it Bollywood or Satyajit Ray; Shweta Shetty or Alla Rakha? Is it the handloom or the hyperlink? The truth is, no single image can possibly do justice to your great nation. But beyond the complexities and the apparent contradictions, I believe India teaches us some very basic lessons.

The first is about democracy. There are still those who deny that democracy is a universal aspiration, who say it works only for people of a certain culture or a certain degree of economic development. India has been proving them wrong for 52 years now. Here is a country where more than 2 million people hold elected office in local government, a country that shows at every election that those who possess the least cherish their vote the most. Far from washing away the uniqueness of your culture, your democracy has brought out the richness of its tapestry and given you the knot that holds it together.

A second lesson India teaches is about diversity. You have already heard remarks about that this morning. But around the world there is a chorus of voices who say ethnic and religious diversity is a threat, who argue that the only way to keep different people from killing one another is to keep them as far apart as possible. But India has shown us a better way. For all the troubles you have seen, surely this subcontinent has seen more innocents hurt in the efforts to divide people by ethnicity and faith than by

the efforts to bring them together in peace and harmony. Under trying circumstances, you have shown the world how to live with difference. You have shown that tolerance and mutual respect are in many ways the keys to our common survival. That is something the whole world needs to learn.

A third lesson India teaches is about globalization and what may be the central debate of our time. Many people believe the forces of globalization are inherently divisive, that they can only widen the gap between rich and poor. That is a valid fear, but, I believe, wrong.

As the distance between producers large and small and customers near and far becomes less relevant, developing countries will have opportunities not only to succeed but to lead in lifting more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in human history. In the old economy, location was everything. In the new economy, information, education, and motivation are everything, and India is proving it.

You liberated your markets, and now you have one of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world. At the rate of growth within your grasp, India's standard of living could rise by 500 percent in just 20 years. You embraced information technology, and now, when Americans and other big software companies call for consumer and customer support, they're just as likely to find themselves talking to an expert in Bangalore as one in Seattle.

You decentralized authority, giving more individuals and communities the freedom to succeed. In that way, you affirmed what every successful country is finding in its own way: Globalization does not favor nations with a licensing *raj*; it does favor nations with a *panchayat raj*. And the world has been beating a path to your door.

In the new millennium, every great country must answer one overarching question: How shall we define our greatness? Every country, America included, is tempted to cling to yesterday's definition of economic and military might. But true leadership for the United States and India derives more from the power of our example and the potential of our people.

I believe that the greatest of India's many gifts to the world is the example its people have set, "From Midnight to Millennium." Think of it: Virtually every challenge humanity knows can be found here in India. And every solution to every challenge can be found here as well: con-

fidence in democracy, tolerance for diversity, a willingness to embrace social change. That is why Americans admire India, why we welcome India's leadership in the region and the world, and why we want to take our partnership to a new level, to advance our common values and interests, and to resolve the differences that still remain.

There were long periods when that would not have been possible. Though our democratic ideals gave us a starting point in common and our dreams of peace and prosperity gave us a common destination, there was for too long too little common ground between East and West, North and South. Now, thankfully, the old barriers between nations and people, economies and cultures, are being replaced by vast networks of cooperation and commerce. With our open, entrepreneurial societies, India and America are at the center of those networks. We must expand them and defeat the forces that threaten them.

To succeed, I believe there are four large challenges India and the United States must meet together, challenges that should define our partnership in the years ahead.

The first of these challenges is to get our own economic relationship right. Americans have applauded your efforts to open your economy, your commitment to a new wave of economic reform, your determination to bring the fruits of growth to all your people. We are proud to support India's growth as your largest partner in trade and investment. And we want to see more Indians and more Americans benefit from our economic ties, especially in the cutting-edge fields of information technology, biotechnology, and clean energy. The private sector will drive this progress, but our job as governments is to create the conditions that will allow them to succeed in doing so and to reduce the remaining impediments to trade and investment between us.

Our second challenge is to sustain global economic growth in a way that lifts the lives of rich and poor alike, both across and within national borders. Part of the world today lives at the cutting edge of change, while a big part still exists at the bare edge of survival. Part of the world lives in the information age. Part of the world does not even reach the clean water age. And often the two live side by side. It is unacceptable. It is intolerable. Thankfully, it is unnecessary. And it is far more than a

regional crisis. Whether around the corner or around the world, abject poverty in this new economy is an affront to our common humanity and a threat to our common prosperity.

The problem is truly immense, as you know far better than I. But perhaps for the first time in all history, few would dispute that we know the solutions. We know we need to invest in education and literacy, so that children can have soaring dreams and the tools to realize them. We know we need to make a special commitment in developing nations to the education of young girls, as well as young boys. Everything we have learned about development tells us that when women have access to knowledge, to health, to economic opportunity, and to civil rights, children thrive, families succeed, and countries prosper.

Here again, we see how a problem and its answers can be found side by side in India, for every economist who preaches the virtues of women's empowerment points at first to the achievements of India's State of Kerala—I knew there would be somebody here from Kerala. [*Laughter and applause*] Thank you.

To promote development, we know we must conquer the diseases that kill people and progress. Last December India immunized 140 million children against polio, the biggest public health effort in human history. I congratulate you on that.

I have launched an initiative in the United States to speed the development of vaccines for malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS, the biggest infectious killers of our time. This July, when our partners in the G-8 meet in Japan, I will urge them to join us.

But that is not enough, for at best, effective vaccines are years away. Especially for AIDS, we need a commitment today to prevention, and that means straight talk and an end to stigmatizing. As Prime Minister Vajpayee said, no one should ever speak of AIDS as someone else's problem. This has long been a big problem for the United States. It is now a big problem for you. I promise you America's partnership in the continued struggle.

To promote development, we know we must also stand with those struggling for human rights and freedom around the world and in the region. For as the economist Amartya Sen has said, no system of government has done a better job in easing human want, in averting human catastrophes, than democracy. I am proud

America and India will stand together on the right side of history when we launch the Community of Democracies in Warsaw this summer.

All of these steps are essential to lifting people's lives. But there is yet another. With greater trade and the growth it brings, we can multiply the gains of education, better health, and democratic empowerment. That is why I hope we will work together to launch a new global trade round that will promote economic development for all.

One of the benefits of the World Trade Organization is that it has given developing countries a bigger voice in global trade policy. Developing countries have used that voice to urge richer nations to open their markets further so that all can have a chance to grow. That is something the opponents of the WTO don't fully appreciate yet.

We need to remind them that when Indians and Brazilians and Indonesians speak up for open trade, they were not speaking for some narrow corporate interest but for a huge part of humanity that has no interest in being saved from development. Of course, trade should not be a race to the bottom in environmental and labor standards, but neither should fears about trade keep part of our global community forever at the bottom.

Yet we must also remember that those who are concerned about the impact of globalization in terms of inequality and environmental degradation do speak for a large part of humanity, those who believe that trade should contribute not just to the wealth but also to the fairness of societies, those who share Nehru's dream of a structure for living that fulfills our material needs and at the same time sustains our mind and spirit.

We can advance these values without engaging in rich-country protectionism. Indeed, to sustain a consensus for open trade, we must find a way to advance these values as well. That is my motivation and my only motivation in seeking a dialog about the connections between labor, the environment, and trade and development.

I would remind you—and I want to emphasize this—the United States has the most open markets of any wealthy country in the world. We have the largest trade deficit. We also have had a strong economy, because we have welcomed the products and the services from the labor of people throughout the world. I am for

an open global trading system. But we must do it in a way that advances the cause of social justice around the world.

The third challenge we face is to see that the prosperity and growth of the information age require us to abandon some of the outdated truths of the industrial age—as the economy grows faster today, for example, when children are kept in school, not put to work. Think about the industries that are driving our growth today in India and in America. Just as oil enriched the nations who had it in the 20th century, clearly knowledge is doing the same for the nations who have it in the 21st century. The difference is, knowledge can be tapped by all people everywhere, and it will never run out.

We must also find ways to achieve robust growth while protecting the environment and reversing climate change. I'm convinced we can do that as well. We will see in the next few years, for example, automobiles that are 3, 4, perhaps 5 times as efficient as those being driven today. Soon, scientists will make alternative sources of energy more widely available and more affordable. Just for example, before long, chemists almost certainly will unlock the block that will allow us to produce 8 or 9 gallons of fuel from biofuels, farm fuels, using only one gallon of gasoline.

Indian scientists are at the forefront of this kind of research, pioneering the use of solar energy to power rural communities, developing electric cars for use in crowded cities, converting agricultural waste into electricity. If we can deepen our cooperation for clean energy, we will strengthen our economies, improve our people's health, and fight global warming. This should be a vital element of our new partnership.

A fourth challenge we face is to protect the gains of democracy and development from the forces which threaten to undermine them. There is the danger of organized crime and drugs. There is the evil of trafficking in human beings, a modern form of slavery. And of course, there is the threat of terrorism. Both our nations know it all too well.

Americans understood the pain and agony you went through during the Indian Airlines hijacking. And I saw that pain firsthand when I met with the parents and the widow of the young man who was killed on that airplane. We grieve with you for the Sikhs who were killed in Kashmir, and our heart goes out to their families.

We will work with you to build a system of justice, to strengthen our cooperation against terror. We must never relax our vigilance or allow the perpetrators to intimidate us into retreating from our democratic ideals.

Another danger we face is the spread of weapons of mass destruction to those who might have no reservations about using them. I still believe this is the greatest potential threat to the security we all face in the 21st century. It is why we must be vigilant in fighting the spread of chemical and biological weapons. And it is why we must both keep working closely to resolve our remaining differences on nuclear proliferation.

I am aware that I speak to you on behalf of a nation that has possessed nuclear weapons for 55 years and more. But since 1988, the United States has dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons. We have helped Russia to dismantle their nuclear weapons and to safeguard the material that remains. We have agreed to an outline of a treaty with Russia that will reduce our remaining nuclear arsenal by more than half. We are producing no more fissile material, developing no new land- or submarine-based missiles, engaging in no new nuclear testing.

From South America to South Africa, nations are forswearing these weapons, realizing that a nuclear future is not a more secure future. Most of the world is moving toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. That goal is not advanced if any country, in any region, it moves in the other direction.

I say this with great respect. Only India can determine its own interests. Only India can know if it truly is safer today than before the tests. Only India can determine if it will benefit from expanding its nuclear and missile capabilities, if its neighbors respond by doing the same thing. Only India knows if it can afford a sustained investment in both conventional and nuclear forces while meeting its goals for human development. These are questions others may ask, but only you can answer.

I can only speak to you as a friend about America's own experience during the cold war. We were geographically distant from the Soviet Union. We were not engaged in direct armed combat. Through the years of direct dialog with our adversary, we each had a very good idea

of the other's capabilities, doctrines, and intentions. We each spent billions of dollars on elaborate command and control systems, for nuclear weapons are not cheap.

And yet, in spite of all of this—and as I sometimes say jokingly, in spite of the fact that both sides had very good spies, and that was a good thing—[laughter]—in spite of all of this, we came far too close to nuclear war. We learned that deterrence alone cannot be relied on to prevent accident or miscalculation. And in a nuclear standoff, there is nothing more dangerous than believing there is no danger.

I can also repeat what I said at the outset: India is a leader, a great nation, which by virtue of its size, its achievements, and its example has the ability to shape the character of our time. For any of us, to claim that mantle and assert that status is to accept first and foremost that our actions have consequences for others beyond our borders. Great nations with broad horizons must consider whether actions advance or hinder what Nehru called the larger cause of humanity.

So India's nuclear policies, inevitably, have consequences beyond your borders, eroding the barriers against the spread of nuclear weapons, discouraging nations that have chosen to forswear these weapons, encouraging others to keep their options open. But if India's nuclear test shook the world, India's leadership for non-proliferation can certainly move the world.

India and the United States have reaffirmed our commitment to forgo nuclear testing. And for that I thank the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of India. But in our own self-interest—and I say this again—in our own self-interest, we can do more. I believe both nations should join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, work to launch negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, strengthen export controls. And India can pursue defense policies in keeping with its commitment not to seek a nuclear or missile arms race, which the Prime Minister has forcefully reaffirmed just in these last couple of days.

Again, I do not presume to speak for you or to tell you what to decide. It is not my place. You are a great nation, and you must decide. But I ask you to continue our dialog on these issues, and let us turn our dialog into a genuine partnership against proliferation. If we make progress in narrowing our differences,

we will be both more secure, and our relationship can reach its full potential.

I hope progress can also be made in overcoming the source of tension in this region, including the tensions between India and Pakistan. I share many of your Government's concerns about the course Pakistan is taking, your disappointment that past overtures have not always met with success, your outrage over recent violence. I know it is difficult to be a democracy bordered by nations whose governments reject democracy.

But I also believe—I also believe India has a special opportunity, as a democracy, to show its neighbors that democracy is about dialog. It does not have to be about friendship, but is it about building working relationships among people who differ.

One of the wisest things anyone ever said to me is that you don't make peace with your friends. That is what the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told me before he signed the Oslo accords with the Palestinians, with whom he had been fighting for decades. It is well to remember—I remind myself of it all the time, even when I have arguments with members of the other party in my Congress—[laughter]—you don't make peace with your friends.

Engagement with adversaries is not the same thing as endorsement. It does not require setting aside legitimate grievances. Indeed, I strongly believe that what has happened since your Prime Minister made his courageous journey to Lahore only reinforces the need for dialog.

I can think of no enduring solution to this problem that can be achieved in any other way. In the end, for the sake of the innocents who always suffer the most, someone must end the contest of inflicting and absorbing pain.

Let me also make clear, as I have repeatedly: I have certainly not come to South Asia to mediate the dispute over Kashmir. Only India and Pakistan can work out the problems between them. And I will say the same thing to General Musharraf in Islamabad. But if outsiders cannot resolve this problem, I hope you will create the opportunity to do it yourselves, calling on the support of others who can help where possible, as American diplomacy did in urging the Pakistanis to go back behind the Line of Control in the Kargil crisis.

In the meantime, I will continue to stress that this should be a time for restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, for renewed lines of communication.

Addressing this challenge and all the others I mentioned will require us to be closer partners and better friends and to remember that good friends, out of respect, are honest with one another. And even when they do not agree, they always try to find common ground.

I have read that one of the unique qualities of Indian classical music is its elasticity. The composer lays down a foundation, a structure of melodic and rhythmic arrangements, but the player has to improvise within that structure to bring the *raga* to life.

Our relationship is like that. The composers of our past have given us a foundation of shared democratic ideals. It is up to us to give life to those ideals in this time. The melodies do not have to be the same to be beautiful to both of us. But if we listen to each other and we strive to realize our vision together, we will write a symphony far greater than the sum of our individual notes.

The key is to genuinely and respectfully listen to each other. If we do, Americans will better understand the scope of India's achievements and the dangers India still faces in this troubled part of the world. We will understand that India will not choose a particular course simply because others wish it to do so. It will choose only what it believes its interests clearly demand and what its people democratically embrace.

If we listen to each other, I also believe Indians will understand better that America very much wants you to succeed. Time and again in my time as President, America has found that it is the weakness of great nations, not their strength, that threatens our vision for tomorrow. So we want India to be strong, to be secure, to be united, to be a force for a safer, more prosperous, more democratic world. Whatever we ask of you, we ask in that spirit alone.

After too long a period of estrangement, India and the United States have learned that being natural allies is a wonderful thing, but it is not enough. Our task is to turn a common vision into common achievements, so that partners in spirit can be partners in fact. We have already come a long way to this day of new beginnings, but we still have promises to keep, challenges to meet, and hopes to redeem.

So let us seize this moment with humility in the fragile and fleeting nature of this life, but absolute confidence in the power of the human spirit. Let us seize it for India, for America, for all those with whom we share this small planet, and for all the children that together we can give such bright tomorrows.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Parliament Building. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Krishnan Kant, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Speaker of the Lok Sabha G.M.C. Balayogi of India; and Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12, 1999.

Exchange With Reporters at the Taj Mahal in Agra, India

March 22, 2000

Visit to the Gandhi Memorial

Q. Mr. President, what were your thoughts when you were at the Gandhi Memorial?

The President. I was thinking about Gandhi's life. I was thinking about his going to South Africa, how he decided to come back here, how he completely gave his life over to what he believed, and how if all of us just had one fraction of that commitment, we could make peace in the world. That's what I was thinking.

Visit to Agra

Q. Mr. President, are you sort of sad that Agra is sort of a ghost town? Would you have liked to pump hands?

The President. Absolutely. I did see some people—

Q. Yes, but back there. They were peering—

The President. I know. I would have liked it if they were up front. I'd like that. I wanted to see them.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 5 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in Agra at the Signing Ceremony for the Indo-United States Joint Statement on Energy and the Environment *March 22, 2000*

Thank you very much, Foreign Minister Singh, Chief Minister Gupta, Mayor Maurya, District Commissioner Chowdhury, and, especially, Professor Mishra. We admire you so much for your efforts to save the Ganges. We admire you because for you it is a matter of science and faith.

I want to thank all of you for welcoming me and my daughter and my wife's mother, many Members of the United States Congress, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce, distinguished members of our administration, and our Ambassador here today. I want to thank all the environmental leaders from India who have come here today.

One month from this day, we will celebrate across the world the 30th anniversary of Earth Day, a day set aside each year to honor our natural environment and to reaffirm our responsibility to protect it. In a unique way, in India the Earth has been celebrated for more than 30 centuries. This, after all, is a nation named for a river, a place where the Earth and its waters are worshipped as divine.

With good reason, the people of India have spent centuries worrying far less about what we might do to nature and far more about what nature can do to us through floods, hurricanes, droughts, and other calamities. But as the experience of the beautiful Taj Mahal proves and as the struggle to save the Ganges proves, we can no longer ignore man's impact on the environment.

Pollution has managed to do what 350 years of wars, invasions, and natural disasters have failed to do. It has begun to mar the magnificent walls of the Taj Mahal. Since 1982, protection of the monument has been a major priority, and the fight has yielded significant advances. But still, a constant effort is required to save the Taj Mahal from human environmental degradation, what some scientists call marble can-

cer. I can't help wondering that if a stone can get cancer, what kind of damage can this pollution do to children?

It took the United States a long time to face up to these serious environmental questions. Not so many years ago, one of our rivers was so polluted, it actually caught on fire. Bad air has made breathing very difficult in many of our cities. Acid rain from our cars and our factories made it unhealthy to eat the fish from many of our lakes and rivers. Over the last generation we have worked very hard to restore our natural treasures and to find a way to grow our economy in a way that is in harmony with the environment.

We know that India's remarkable growth has put that same kind of pressure on your environment. And the costs of growth are rising every year, even along with your prosperity.

We also know that more and more, the environmental problems of the United States or India or any other nation are not just national problems. They are global ones. More than any time in history, the environmental challenges we face go beyond national borders, and so must our solutions. We must work together to protect the environment. That is the importance of the agreement Mr. Singh and Secretary Albright have signed today.

There are few areas where that cooperation is needed more than on the issues of climate change and clean energy. Here in Agra, you have taken important strides since the early 1980's to protect the Taj Mahal by using cleaner energy and improving the quality of the air. In particular, I commend the work of M.C. Mehta for working to establish a pollution-free zone around your national treasure. This is local action with global consequences.

The overwhelming consensus of the world's scientific community is that greenhouse gases

from human activity are raising the Earth's temperatures in a rapid and unsustainable way. The 6 warmest years since the 15th century—200 years before the Taj Mahal was built—the 6 warmest years in all that time were all recorded in the 1990's.

Unless we change course, most scientists believe that the warming of the climate will bring us more storms and more droughts; that diseases like malaria will be borne by mosquitoes across more borders and at higher and higher altitudes, threatening more and more lives; that crop patterns will be severely disrupted, affecting food supplies; and the sea level will rise so high that entire island nations will be threatened and coastal areas around the world will be flooded.

Now, of course if that hit, it is the developing nations that will be hurt the most. And India, because of its geography, is one of the most vulnerable.

Today your Government is taking an historic step to move us further in the right direction toward both clean energy and reducing climate change. I applaud the leadership of Prime Minister Vajpayee for affirming today that India will embrace specific national goals for energy efficiency and renewable energy. In so doing, India is exercising leadership for the entire world. It will clean the air; it will reduce greenhouse gas pollution and global warming; and it will be good for your economy.

As the world's leading producer of greenhouse gases today, the United States and the rest of the developed world have a special responsibility. With this historic agreement, our two nations will work hand-in-hand to help turn India's environmental goals into a reality that also supports your economic growth. There are a number of ways in which the U.S. will support these efforts.

First, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, whose administrator is here today, we are committing \$45 million to promote more efficient energy production and use in India and \$50 million to promote clean energy throughout South Asia. Our Departments of Energy and Environmental Protection will resume their programs of technical assistance to India to develop cleaner air and cleaner water. We will make available \$200 million for clean energy projects through the Import-Export Bank. And we will take special steps to work with private enterprise to address these challenges. I thank the United States Energy Asso-

ciation and the Confederation of Indian Industry for agreeing to work as partners to meet these goals.

All told, we believe this historic agreement will help to reduce air pollution, to diminish health risks, to fight global warming, to protect and preserve the natural beauty of India.

And while we work to cooperate between our nations, we must also remember our obligation to realize the promise of the landmark Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. For if we act wisely, this agreement can help both the developed and the developing nations to harness the power of the market to build a clean energy future. We must complete the work begun in Kyoto so that the United States and other nations can ratify the protocol and it can enter into force.

Now, let me say that there are some people who don't believe anything can be done about global warming because they don't believe the economy can grow unless energy is used in the same way it has been used for 100 years in the industrialized countries. They do not believe that India can grow wealthy unless you put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by burning more oil and coal, in the same way the United States and Europe and Japan did. And in the industrial age that might have been true, but that is no longer true.

Many members of our delegation today rode over here in electric buses that you use here to keep from promoting air pollution. In no time at all we will have electric vehicles or vehicles that use fuel from farm products or from simple grasses that will not pollute the atmosphere. In no time at all we will be using solar power wherever it is feasible. We will be building buildings with materials that keep heat and cold out and are far more efficient.

We can, in short, do something today that could not be done 50 years ago. We can promote more economic growth in India by using less energy and keeping the environment cleaner. In other words, the economic conditions today are precisely the reverse of what they were 50 years ago.

The United States will never ask India or any other developing nation to give up its economic growth in order to reduce pollution. But we do ask you to give us a chance to work with your scientists to prove that you can achieve even greater economic growth and make the environment even cleaner.

I must say that we even have some people in the United States who believe the Kyoto Protocol is some sort of plot to wreck our economy and who unfortunately, some of them, have a good deal of influence. They continue to deny that global warming is real.

All I know is, the overwhelming consensus of scientists and the evident lessons of the weather patterns of the last few years all say the climate is warming at an unsustainable rate. We know it takes at least 50 years to turn it around. Why would we take a risk in not doing it when we know we have the technology today, with alternative energy sources and conservation, to chart a different future? I hope that in my country and yours and throughout the world, we will have the sort of partnership to which we have committed ourselves on this day.

Finally, let me just say that we don't have to choose—we don't have to choose—between economic opportunity and environmental protection. But we do have to choose between a future of sustainable development for all of our children, with clean water and sanitary conditions and energy efficiency and clean air, and a future in which we give it up simply because we refuse to take the necessary decisions to preserve them.

On this Earth Day this year and on this historic day today of partnership between our two nations, when we stand in the shadow of the Taj Mahal, we remember that it is a monument built in love. All the most important monuments are built for love. The most important monument today we can give our children and our children's children is the preservation of the Earth that was given to us. We should give that monument in the spirit of love.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Taj Khema overlooking the Taj Mahal. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; Chief Minister Ram Prakash Gupta of Uttar Pradesh; Mayor Baby Rani Maurya and Commissioner Nita Chowdhury of Agra; Hindu priest Veer Bhadra Mishra, civil engineering department head, Banaras Hindu University, and founder, Sankat Mochan Foundation; the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham; and M.C. Mehta, co-founder, Indian Council for Environmental Legal Action. Prior to the President's remarks, Foreign Minister Singh and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright signed the joint statement.

Statement on Senate Action on Social Security Reform Legislation *March 22, 2000*

I am pleased that the Senate has followed the House in passing a measure to eliminate the retirement earnings test for seniors. In my 1999 State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to work with me to end this confusing and outdated policy that discourages healthy senior citizens from continuing to work past 65 if they choose to do so. I look forward to opening a new era of opportunity for older Americans by signing this measure into law.

Eliminating the earnings limit is an important first step in undertaking comprehensive Social Security reform this year. The work on the re-

tirement earnings test shows that Congress can work together to further the people's business. We should build on this bipartisan spirit to make further progress on Social Security. Last fall I sent Congress legislation that would use the benefits of debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century. Today I call on Congress to work with me on this simple plan to extend the solvency of Social Security while strengthening benefits to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National
Endowment for the Humanities
March 22, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit the 1998 annual report of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Federal agency charged with advancing knowledge and public education in the humanities. Throughout 1998, the agency provided crucial support to hundreds of research and educational projects throughout the United States and its territories. The Endowment also provided grants to innovative educational projects employing the latest computer technologies, as well as to efforts to preserve library and archival resources and make such resources available to schools, scholars, and citizens.

In 1998, the NEH continued to exercise leadership in applying technology to the humanities. The Endowment launched Schools for a New Millennium, a program that provides funding to schools to further humanities education through the creative use of new technologies. In Lawrence, Kansas, one Schools for a New Millennium project is digitizing photographs and historical documents for use in junior high classrooms. The Endowment also extended its Internet strategy by expanding its EDSITEment project in partnership with the Council of Great City Schools and MCI WorldCom, more than doubling the number of high quality humanities sites available to students and teachers.

I am especially pleased by another of the agency's partnerships employing both the Internet and traditional broadcasting. The Endowment is partnering with the White House Millennium Council on the presentation of "Millennium Evenings at the White House," a series of showcase events that explore the ideas and creativity of the American people on the eve of a new millennium. These programs feature prominent scholars and creative thinkers and are accessible to the public by satellite and cable broadcasts, and many State humanities councils are coordinating local downlink sites. With support from SUN Microsystems, these lectures and discussions are cybercast live from the East Room in the White House. Viewers can submit questions via the Internet to the guest speaker or to the First Lady and me.

The NEH is well-known for its support of documentary films based on a collaboration between filmmakers and humanities scholars. In 1998, the Endowment maintained this tradition of excellence with its support of *Eleanor Roosevelt*, which drew upon outstanding new historical scholarship, archival films, photographs, and first-hand testimonies to paint a vivid portrait of one of America's most outstanding women.

The Endowment's grants also addressed the long-term needs of the Nation's cultural and academic institutions. In 1998, the NEH created a special program designed to aid the Nation's public libraries in serving the public with humanities programming. Among the institutions aided in 1998 by Challenge Grants was the African American Research Library and Cultural Center, a new facility created by the Broward County Public Library to serve Broward County's growing and diverse population.

Through its Preservation Programs, the NEH is preserving the content of hundreds of thousands of brittle books, periodicals, and American newspapers—priceless sources for present and future historians and scholars. The Endowment's initiative to save much materials is now entering its 10th year, and will preserve nearly a million books and periodicals by the time it is completed. The U.S. Newspaper Project, an equally important effort to microfilm historic newspapers, is creating a comprehensive national database for scholars, students, and citizens who wish to research their community's history.

In November 1998, the First lady and I joined the Endowment in honoring at the White House nine distinguished Americans with the National Medal of the Humanities. Through these awards and its grants programs, the National Endowment for the Humanities recognizes and promotes outstanding efforts to deepen public awareness and understanding of the humanities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 22, 2000.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Reports of the National Science Foundation

March 22, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 3(f) of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1862(f)), I transmit herewith the combined annual reports of the Na-

tional Science Foundation for fiscal years 1996–1997, and the annual report for fiscal year 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 22, 2000.

Remarks in a Discussion With Members of a Dairy Cooperative in Naila Village, India

March 23, 2000

The President. But one thing I think is important to mention, though. You talked about with the dairy cooperatives, how you've now computerized all your transactions. Well, the computer can be anywhere. And that means that all kinds of jobs can now be in small rural villages everywhere in the world which before could only be in cities. But in order to have them, people have to have a certain level of education and a certain level of credit.

And I think that people should think more about what other kinds of jobs computers make possible, as well as the successful dairy cooperative.

[*At this point, a young woman participant commented through an interpreter that learning computer skills could help village children get better jobs, but that greater opportunities would have to be provided there for them.*]

The President. Since I have been the President of the United States, I have traveled around the world and met in villages like this in Africa and Latin America, China, and now here in India. And my wife has done even more than I have. And we try to invest money in the education of girls to make sure that girls and boys both have the same chance to get an education. And this year we will finance around the world about 2 million of the kind of small loans you have been talking about.

But we are looking more and more at trying to make sure that every village has at least one computer hookup like this, and you have given

me a lot of ideas. And I just want to congratulate you for your courage and your persistence. And I hope my coming here will cause everyone in India to know about what you are doing, and maybe more women will follow your lead.

Q. My name is Chitra, and I wanted to convey to you that, through the Women's Development Project, we are trying to create awareness among young girls so that when they grow older and they become women, they do not have to face many of the problems that we, as children, had to face, especially related to our bodies, our sexuality, and our non-economic empowerment.

I think it is time to wind up. I will now request Kanta Guswami to give you a smart card, so that you can become a member of the dairy cooperative here. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Kanta Guswami presented the smart card to the President.*]

The President. I grew up in a place with many dairy cows. And I know what hard work it is. And I will always treasure this. And I will put this up in the White House so that people from all over the world will know I have come here, and I can tell them the story of what you are doing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in a meeting room in Naila Village, near Jaipur. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion With Members of the Governing Council in
Naila Village
March 23, 2000

Q. I have a question to ask. There is a stereotypical image of Indians all over the world as backward people. You have been in India for a few days. How would you respond to this? Do you think we are backward? [*Laughter*]

The President. No. But what I hope my trip will do is to help people all over the world see India in a more complete way. There are many people here who are poor, but you are proving that democracy can be used to lift the poor, can be used to end discrimination against women and keep children, girls and boys, in school, and can be used to bring people of different tribes and castes together. That is very important to me and to my family, my wife, who has been in Indian villages, and to our whole administration.

What I think you should know is that the problems you have here are problems that people have faced all over the world. My own country became independent from the British Empire in the 1780's, and it was almost 150 years before women could even vote. It was almost 100 years before the slaves were freed, and more than another 100 years before they acquired equal rights, African-Americans, under our laws.

And today, all over the world, there are wars where people are being killed—in Africa because they're of different tribes, in Bosnia and Kosovo because they were of different tribes and religions. So if in India you can prove that people can lift themselves from poverty and, at the same time, end discrimination against women and their girl children and learn to work

together across tribal and caste lines because of democracy, you will give the world the greatest gift it could have now.

The only other thing I would like to say is, I believe that the computer will make it happen more quickly if it is used wisely and put in every village in this country. And I think that those of us who would like to be good partners and to help you must also listen to what you have said today.

The biggest public health problems, I think, in India and many other countries throughout the world are based on the fact that there's not enough clean water and too much of the soil is washing away or blowing away in the wind.

And the last thing I would like to say is, I hope you will not lose your enthusiasm and your spirit when things don't change as fast as you would like. I know it is easy to get discouraged. I know there is still injustice and unfairness. But what you are doing is astonishing. And you have a chance to overcome problems that are still crippling other places in the world more quickly because you have these institutions of democracy. You must believe in them and use them and not give up when you're frustrated and cannot succeed in a short time.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in a meeting room in Naila Village, near Jaipur. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Revised International Plant
Protection Convention With Documentation
March 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to acceptance, I transmit herewith the revised International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), adopted at the Con-

ference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations at Rome on November 17, 1997. In accordance with Article XIII of the existing IPPC, the revised text will enter into force for all contracting parties 30

days after acceptance by two-thirds of the contracting parties.

The revisions are designed to bring the IPPC into line with modern practices and concepts, and to establish new mechanisms to promote the development and adoption of international phytosanitary standards.

It is my hope that the Senate will give prompt and favorable consideration to this Convention,

and give its advice and consent to acceptance by the United States, subject to the two proposed understandings set forth in the accompanying report, at the earliest possible date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 23, 2000.

Remarks at the Mahavir Trust Hospital in Hyderabad, India *March 24, 2000*

Thank you very much. Good morning, Chief Minister Naidu. Thank you for welcoming me today to your State and to this magnificent city. Dr. Aruna, thank you for your remarks and for your work. Dr. Kolluri, to Ms. Rachel Chatterjee, the Minister of Health and the other ministers of the Government that are here; to the staff of the Mahavir Trust Hospital, I thank you all for your dedication and for making me and our American delegation so welcome.

I am honored to be joined today by my daughter, by the American Ambassador to India, Mr. Celeste, and his wife, Jacqueline Lundquist; by the Secretary of Commerce, Bill Daley, and the Administrator of our Agency for International Development, Brady Anderson; and by six distinguished Members of our Congress: Congressman Gary Ackerman and Representative Nita Lowey from New York; Congressman Jim McDermott from Washington; Congressman Ed Royce from California; Congressman Sheila Jackson Lee from Texas; and Representative Jan Schakowsky from Illinois. We are delighted to be here, and we are very interested in what you are doing, and impressed. And we thank you.

We come today to celebrate a success story and to join with you in meeting a new challenge. As Dr. Aruna said, the success story is the virtual complete eradication of polio from the face of the Earth. In 1987, India reported 27,000 cases of this crippling disease. Today, only 1,000 Indians are afflicted, and as you have just heard, there are no reported new cases this year.

India has collaborated in this effort with Rotary International, with the Gates Foundation, with UNICEF, the World Health Organization,

and with the U.S. Agency for International Development, or AID.

I would like to say just a special word of appreciation to our Agency for International Development. It has meant a great deal to America's partnership on a very human level with people all across the world and especially here in India. It has guided our efforts to fight diseases that threaten children, to launch the Green Revolution that helped India achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture, and even more, to provide education, so that parents in India and throughout the world can determine the size of their families and keep their children in school, and to support great Indian universities like IIT.

Now, we believe that USAID will be just as critical and just as active as India and the United States embark on a dynamic new partnership, as we face new challenges like developing the sources of clean energy, bringing the Internet to rural India so all its children can reach out to the world.

So I'd like to say a special word of thanks today to our AID Administrator, Brady Anderson, and B.A. Rudolph and the other members of the AID team who are here. They are devoted to the cause of India, and I thank them for their work.

I would also like to acknowledge, though, that on this polio eradication effort, the vast majority of the funding division and the work has come from India. And the whole world admires greatly what you have achieved.

Now, for the challenge. Today is World Tuberculosis Day. It marks the day the bacteria which causes TB was discovered 118 years ago.

And yet, even though this is 118-year-old knowledge, in the year 2000, TB kills more people around the world than ever before, including one almost every minute here in India.

Malaria is also on the rise here and in Southeast Asia and in Africa. And while the AIDS infection rate here is still relatively low, India already has more people infected than any other nation in the world. These are human tragedies, economic calamities, and far more than crises for you, they are crises for the world.

The spread of disease is the one global problem for which, by definition, no nation is immune. So we must do for AIDS, for malaria, for TB what you have done for polio. We must strengthen prevention, speed research, develop vaccines, and ultimately eliminate these modern plagues from the face of the Earth. It can be done—you have proved it with polio—if governments, foundations, and the private sector work together.

With AIDS in particular, it also takes leadership. I want to commend Prime Minister Vajpayee for his efforts to focus India's attention on the urgency of this challenge. In every country and in any culture, it is difficult to talk about the issues involved with AIDS. I know a lot about this because it's been a problem for a long time in America, and now it's a big problem for you. But I would submit to you it is much easier to talk about AIDS than to watch another child die. And we have to face up to our responsibilities for preventing this disease, especially because there is not yet a cure.

I am gratified that India is not waiting to act, and I am proud that the United States is supporting your efforts here. I am happy to announce that we will contribute another \$4 million this year to programs to prevent AIDS and care for victims here in India, and another \$1 million for TB research.

I also want to thank—I want to thank the Gates Foundation and, in particular, Patty Stonesifer, because they are also announcing a number of new contributions today. No private foundation in America and, as far as I know, anywhere in the world has made remotely the

commitment that the Gates Foundation has in the world struggle against infectious disease, and I thank them for that.

Earlier this year, I asked Congress to support a \$1 billion initiative to encourage the private sector to speed the development of vaccines for diseases that particularly affect the developing world—malaria, TB, and AIDS—and then to take steps to make those vaccines affordable to the poorest people in the world who need them. I am going to work hard to obtain support for that initiative in Congress. And again, I thank the Members of our Congress who are here from both parties for their interest and commitment to India and to the public health.

The fight against infectious disease should be a growing part of our partnership with you. Indians already are trailblazers in vaccine research. India pioneered treatments for TB being used today in America. Many of the problems we have talked about are present here in India, but the solutions can be found here as well, in the dedication of men and women like those who work in this clinic and in the genius of your scientists and in the elected officials and their commitment, from Delhi to Hyderabad to countless towns and villages across this country.

Many years ago, India and the United States helped to launch the Green Revolution, which freed millions of people from the misery of hunger. If we can join forces on health, determined again to place science in the service of humanity, we can defeat these diseases; we can give our children the healthy and hopeful lives they deserve in this new century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, and Dr. S. Aruna, Minister of Health, Andhra Pradesh; Dr. Murthy Kolluri, who made a presentation on tuberculosis and polio treatment; Rachel Chatterjee, Commissioner of Hyderabad; U.S. Ambassador to India Richard F. Celeste; Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; and Patty Stonesifer, cochair and president, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

United States-India Joint Leadership Statement on HIV/AIDS March 24, 2000

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not only an Indian problem, it is not only an American problem, it is a global crisis, threatening every country. It burdens our health systems, our economies and, most importantly, the lives of too many of our citizens. But the AIDS epidemic can be slowed, and ultimately reversed by raising awareness, changing behavior and developing new technologies including—eventually—a vaccine.

To that end, India and the United States are working closely together, involving our public, academic, business and non-governmental sectors for the benefit of our nations, and the world. India and the United States are home to some of the world's finest scientists and facilities. We intend to expand collaborative research efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention. Together we are applying our nations' substantial public health expertise and scientific capacities to fight the global pandemic.

India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, through the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), which coordinates HIV/AIDS policy formulation and implements prevention and control programs, has recently launched a new phase of its National AIDS Control Program. With a substantial commitment from the Indian Government, bolstered by additional re-

sources from the World Bank, USAID and other donors, NACO is now working with State health authorities and non-governmental organizations to reduce high-risk behaviors and increase awareness in the general population.

USAID is the major supporter of HIV/AIDS prevention programs in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu States. Additionally, the United States (under its "LIFE" initiative) will support Indian efforts to prevent infection, care for the affected, and build capacity. Planning for these efforts include: establishing an HIV/AIDS resource center; establishing a business coalition for employer-based HIV prevention activities with private and public sector employers; supporting NGO activities for children affected by AIDS; and sensitizing journalists to HIV/AIDS issues.

Science alone will not win the world's struggle against HIV/AIDS. This will require leadership, which India and the United States are determined to provide. We hereby commit our continued, personal involvement to stopping AIDS in India, the United States, and around the world.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks to the Business Community in Hyderabad March 24, 2000

Thank you. Thank you very much. First of all, thank you all for coming out in such large numbers on this warm day to this wonderful facility. It may be that every day is a warm day, but for us, it's a new experience. [Laughter] And I rather like it.

Mr. Raju, thank you very much. President Bajaj, President Batnagar, Mr. Hariharan, and Chief Minister Naidu, thank you all for welcoming us here. And I must say, when I was watching the Chief Minister give his speech, I wish I had brought some slides—[laughter]—because it was so very impressive. And you

should know that he is becoming—[applause]—yes, he did a good job. If a picture is worth a thousand words, you will remember much more of what he said than what I am about to say. [Laughter] And he is becoming very well-known in the United States and very much admired for all of these remarkable achievements, and I thank him.

I would like to thank your Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Chandra, for coming back home to India and making this trip with me. And thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador, for what you do.

I would like to thank the large number of Americans who are here with me, including six Members of our Congress. And I would like to ask them to stand, because they come on these trips with me, I get to give the speeches, they have to sit and listen, and then when we go home, they have all the power over the money. [Laughter] So I would like to introduce Representative Gary Ackerman from New York, Representative Nita Lowey from New York, Representative Jim McDermott from Washington, Representative Ed Royce from California, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee from Texas, and Representative Jan Schakowsky from Chicago, Illinois. [Applause]

Thank you very much. If that doesn't improve the aid program for India, I don't know what will—[laughter]—and make sure we have no burdens on E-commerce between ourselves.

I want to thank Secretary Daley, the Secretary of Commerce, for being here; and Brady Anderson, the Administrator of our USAID program; and Dr. Neal Lane, my Science Adviser; and Dr. Ramamurthi; and of course, Ambassador Dick Celeste and Jacqueline, his wife.

I'd also like to point out I have—I don't know how many, but I have at least four Indian-Americans with me working on this trip who are actually in the audience today, and two of them are from here in Hyderabad. So I'd like to acknowledge Rekha Chalasani from AID and Mona Mohib, who works with us in the White House. I thank them for being here.

You should also know this was a very coveted trip, from Washington to India. My Chief of Staff is on this trip, my National Security Adviser. Everyone wanted to come. Those who did are happy; those who are still at home working are angry. [Laughter] But we know—we know a lot of our future depends upon whether we have the right kind of partnership with India.

Once historians said of your nation, India is the world's most ancient civilization, yet one of its youngest nations. Today, in this ancient city, we see leadership to drive the world's newest economy.

One of the greatest joys of being President of the United States, for me, has been to be involved with the people at home who are pushing the frontiers of science and technology. Many people believe that I asked Al Gore to be my Vice President because he knew roughly 5,000 times more about computer technology

than I did. [Laughter] But I have learned every day now, for over 7 years.

And I think it's very interesting for a man my age—I'm 53, which is way too old to make any money in information technology. [Laughter] But it's very interesting—the terms that are used today by young people and not-so-young people anymore had such different meanings for me when I was in my twenties. When I was a young man, chips were something you ate, windows were something you washed, disks were part of your spinal column, that when you got older often slipped out of place, and semi-conductors were frustrated musicians who wished they were leading orchestras. [Laughter] The world is a very different place today.

I want to speak briefly about how our nations already are working together to seize the possibilities of the information age and about what we can do to make sure no one is left behind. I particularly appreciated the Chief Minister's emphasis on this in his remarks, because, for me, the true test of the information revolution is not just the size of the feast it creates but the number of people who can sit at the table to enjoy it.

It is incredible to think about how far science has come in just the 7 years and a few months since I first became President. In that time we have explored a galaxy 12 billion light years away. We have seen the cloning of animals. We are just a few months away from completing the sequencing of the human genome, with all that promises for improving the life and the quality of life of people all around the world.

When I was elected President, there were—listen to this—there were only 50 sites on the World Wide Web in January of 1993. Today, there are more than 50 million, and it is the fastest growing communications medium in history.

Here in India, the number of Internet users is expected to grow more than 10 times in just 4 years. Ten years ago, India's high-tech industries generated software and computer-related services worth \$150 million. Last year, that number was \$4 billion. Today, this industry employs more than 280,000 Indians in jobs that pay almost double the national average. Little wonder, as the Minister said, Hyderabad is being known now as "Cyberabad."

Now, I realize to many of you this comes as no surprise, since the decimal system was discovered—invented in India. If it weren't for

India's contributions in math and science, you could argue that computers, satellites, and silicon chips would never have been possible in the first place, so you ought to have a leading role in the 21st century economy—companies with names like Infosys, Wipro, and of course, Satyam.

Again, I want to say that I think Chief Minister Naidu deserves a lot of credit for giving you the right kind of governance. There are some people who believe—we were talking about this before we came out here—there are some people who believe that the 21st century world, because the Internet will make the globe more interconnected, and we will have all kinds of connections with people beyond our borders that we never had before, and therefore, Government will become completely irrelevant to most people's lives. If you look at the example of this State and this city, you see we need a different kind of government. It can be smaller. It can be far less bureaucratic. It should be far more market-oriented. It should be smart, as I learned from the Minister's chart. But it is a grave mistake to think that we can really go forward together without that kind of smart governance. And the Chief Minister's role in your success, I think, is evident to all of you by your response.

I'm personally intrigued by the fact that you can get a driver's license on the Internet, and you don't have to go wait in line, as you do in America. I have my driver's license here—[laughter]—and in a few months I may come back, because it may be the only place I will have a license to drive. [Laughter] You may see me just tooling around on the streets here, causing traffic jams. [Laughter]

I want to also acknowledge, if I might, just very briefly, something which has already been mentioned by previous speakers, and that is the remarkable success of Indian-Americans in this new economy, from Suhas Patil, the chairman emeritus of Cyrus Logic, to Vinod Khosla, who helped to build Sun Microsystems, to Vinod Dahm, who created the Pentium chip. The remarkable fact is—listen to this—Indian-Americans now run more than 750 companies in Silicon Valley alone, in one place in America. Now, as again I learned on the screen, we're moving from brain drain to brain gain in India, because many are coming home.

The partnership of Americans and Indians proposes to raise a billion dollars for a global

institute of science and technology here. I have no doubt they will succeed. After welcoming your engineers to our shores, today many of our leading companies, from Apple to Texas Instruments to Oracle, are coming in waves to your shores. I'm told that if a person calls Microsoft for help with software, there's a pretty good chance they'll find themselves talking to an expert in India rather than Seattle. India is fast becoming one of the world's software superpowers, proving that in a globalized world, developing nations not only can succeed, developing nations can lead.

One of the reasons India is finding so much success, I believe, is because of your enduring values of nationhood. Fifty years ago, Prime Minister Nehru had the vision to invest in the Indian Institutes of Technology. I am very proud that the United States helped in its early development. Today, not only are ITT graduates leading the information revolution, India has the second largest pool of trained scientists in the entire world.

As I said, we have to do more together. Two of our leading associations, the U.S.-India Business Council and your Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will launch a dialog to take our infotech trade to new heights, to create more jobs and more opportunities in both our nations.

But as I said at the beginning, in the midst of all this celebration of tomorrow and in the midst of all of our satisfaction at our own good fortune, there is something we cannot forget. It's a good thing that we're creating a lot of 25-year-old multimillionaires; it's a good thing that we're seeing the latest Indian startups shoot up the NASDAQ; but this whole enterprise cannot just be about higher profits. There must also be a higher purpose.

In India today, as in America, there is much to do. Millions of Indians are connected to the Internet, but millions more aren't yet connected to fresh water. India accounts for 30 percent of the world's software engineers but 25 percent of the world's malnourished. And there are other statistics, which, given the wealth of the United States, I could cite you about our country which are just as troubling and challenging.

So our challenge is to turn the newest discoveries into the best weapons humanity has ever had to fight poverty. In all the years of recorded human history, we have never had this many

opportunities to fight poverty. And it is good economics to do so.

There is so much we can do, for example, to help the poor have better health care. This morning I was at a clinic in Mahavir, and I helped to immunize a child against polio. Together we have nearly eradicated this disease, but tuberculosis is still a major problem. Malaria is on the rise. HIV and AIDS are big problems for you, as they have been for years for the United States. These are global problems. We must find a science to solve them and the technology to disseminate those solutions to all people, without regard to their income.

There is much to do to protect our planet and those who share it with us. In Agra, I saw some efforts that local citizens are making to clean the air and preserve the Taj Mahal. I talked to an engineer who is doing his best to clean up the Ganges River that he worships as an important part of his faith and his country's history.

Yesterday I was in the national park in Rajasthan to see the magnificent tigers. And I learned, much to my dismay, that—from a man who has spent a great deal of his life and risked a lot of his life to save those tigers—that last year still 20 of them were poached, and you are still in danger of losing them. They, too, are an important part of your heritage and your future.

We must find a way to help people make enough money and have a decent enough income that they wish to preserve the environment and the biological species with which we share this planet. This is very, very important, and technology has a big role to play in all of this.

This week, you are establishing a green business center here in Hyderabad, with some assistance from USAID, to bring the private sector and local government together to promote clean energy development and environmental technology. This is a profoundly important issue, and I hope that this city will lead your nation and help to lead the world toward a serious reassessment of our common obligation to reverse the tide of global warming and climate change, because in the new economy you do not have to pollute the atmosphere and warm the planet to grow the economy. In the new economy, you can create more jobs by promoting energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy than by polluting the environment.

The economic wave of the future is in environmental preservation, not in environmental destruction. That is a lesson this city can teach the rest of your nation, people in my nation, and people throughout the world, and I hope you will do it.

There is still much we can do in science and technology to feed the world's people. American and Indian scientists are working in the biotechnology industry to pioneer new crops more resistant to pests, diseases, more nutritious, with higher yields per acre.

There is much we can do to protect the rich cultural diversity of our planet. I know that some worry that globalization will produce a world where the unique gifts nations and peoples bring to the world are washed away. I do not believe that. If we do the right things, the Internet can have precisely the opposite effect. Look at India, with 17 officially recognized languages and some 22,000 dialects. You can get on the Internet today and find dozens of sites that bring together people who speak Telugu from every part of the world. You can download fonts in Gujarati, Marathi, Assamese, and Bengali. You can order handicrafts made by people from every part of India—I saw one of the sites just before coming in here. And you know the proceeds are going to the people in need.

The new technology can reinforce our cultural distinctions while reaffirming the even more important fact of our common humanity. And India can also help us lead the way in doing that.

Now, finally let me say, we cannot work to lift what has been called the "Silk Curtain," which has divided the United States and India for too long now, only to have a digital divide arise in both our countries between the haves and have-nots. In America, we have worked very hard to wire all our schools to the Internet, and we've made great progress. We are now going to provide some \$5 million through AID to help bring the Internet to schools and businesses in underserved areas in rural India. This State is doing a remarkable job in providing the Internet to people all over the State, in the smallest, poorest villages.

We have to bring government services with printers to every village, so people can see in basic ways what it is they need to do to improve the health care of their children. We need printers with computers on the Internet with all the educational software available. If we could do

that for every village in South Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, then overnight the poorest places in the world could have access to the same learning materials that only the richest schools offer their students today. We can do that if we do it together.

And it isn't just good public values; it would be good economics. It would mean, among other things, that the world's most populous nation would have the world's largest number of educated people and, therefore, in no time would have the world's largest economy. Doing the right thing is good economics in the Information Age, and we have to do this together.

Finally, let me say that we just want to be a good partner with you in all these endeavors. Two days ago in Delhi I signed an agreement to create a U.S.-Indo Science and Technology Forum to bring scientists from our nations together to discuss future cooperation. Today the top science minds in our two Governments are sitting down together to begin a dialog on how we can conduct new research across a whole range of scientific frontiers. There is a lot we can do.

But, you know, as I said before I came out here, I visited a lot of the booths; I met a lot of the businesspeople; and I also was treated by the Chief Minister to a video conference with people in all 23 districts of this State who are working on empowerment projects, who had access to microcredit. I learned something I didn't know before I got here, which is that 20 percent of the people in the world in poor villages who have access to microcredit are in this State in India. And that's something my wife and I and our administration have worked very hard on. We financed through AID about 2 million microcredit loans all across the world every year.

So I saw all this. And I would say there's one thing that I hope my country will learn from the values expressed in the Chief Minister's speech, in the local government councils I have visited here, in the local women's communes I have visited here, working on all kinds of economic and educational issues, and that is that the two most important things that

we can promote in the new world are empowerment of individuals and a sense of community. And if you do one without the other, you will not succeed.

Very often, people who are very interested in empowerment don't have much interest in community. When they're talking about empowerment, they mean their own empowerment. [Laughter] And very often, a lot of people who have always cared deeply about community are almost a little suspicious of empowerment. But the lesson that you are teaching us is that we must do both together.

We are here to talk about the future of cyberspace. "Cyber" comes from the Greek word "kybernautis". It means helmsman, one who steers the ship. So I am here to say I admire what you are doing to steer the ship of this State into the future. I want to steer with you. But we cannot forget the simple message that, no matter how much new technology there is, the two things we must remain committed to are empowerment and community. Everyone counts. Everyone should have a chance. Everyone has a role to play. And we all do better when we help each other.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the atrium at the Hi-Tech Center. In his remarks, he referred to B. Ramalinga Raju, chair, Satyam Computer Services, Ltd.; Rahul Bajaj, president, Confederation of Indian Industry; Sanjay Batnagar, president, American Chamber of Commerce in India; E.S. Hariharan, deputy general manager, Hi-Tech Center; N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh; Secretary of Science and Technology Valangiman Ramamurthi of India; Naresh Chandra, Indian Ambassador to the United States; Richard F. Celeste, U.S. Ambassador to India; Rekha Chalasani, press officer, Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development; Mona Mohib, Associate Director for Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the First Lady; and Hindu priest Veer Bhadra Mishra, civil engineering department head, Banaras Hindu University, and founder, Sankat Mochan Foundation.

Statement on North Atlantic Treaty Organization Operations in Southeast Europe

March 24, 2000

One year ago today, the 19 democratic members of NATO, supported by our regional partners, launched Operation Allied Force to put an end to Slobodan Milosevic's brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Milosevic's actions not only caused the worst human disaster in Europe since World War II but also threatened NATO's core interest in the stability of southeast Europe. As result of NATO's resolute and concerted stand over 78 days, we reversed the ethnic cleansing, compelled Serb forces to withdraw, allowed a NATO-led force and a United Nations mission to secure the peace, and paved the way for nearly a million refugees to return to their homes in safety. Imagine the consequences if NATO had not acted one year ago. Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing would have proceeded unchecked, exterminating or expelling hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians, a final grim epitaph of the twentieth century. Those who survived would have become permanent refugees, causing a humanitarian crisis and threatening the stability of the region. The historic progress we have made toward building a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in history would have been reversed, and NATO's role to help consolidate stability in Europe would have been undermined.

We should be proud that we met our responsibilities in Kosovo, and we have accomplished much in the past year. With the support of the international community, NATO and the United Nations Interim Administrative Mission have created the foundation that can lead to a peaceful and stable Kosovo. The U.N. mission helped return over 90 percent of the refugees to their homes in time to assist their preparations for winter. Some 300,000 Kosovar children are back in school today. Electric power has been restored to most areas. Over 200 kilometers of railway are back in service, and nearly

2,000 kilometers of roadways have been cleared of unexploded ordnance and mines. Although violence still remains too frequent in Kosovo, the weekly murder rate has been reduced by 90 percent since last June, thousands of weapons have been confiscated and destroyed, and the Kosovo Liberation Army was successfully disbanded.

There is much more to be done. The NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), with approximately 85 percent of the troops contributed by our Allies, has helped create conditions of basic security that will permit civil implementation to move forward quickly. The international community has pledged over \$1 billion for the stabilization and economic revitalization of Kosovo—with our partners providing more than 6 times our contribution to this effort. U.N. member states have sent over 2,500 policemen to patrol the streets of Kosovo, but the U.N. has asked for an additional 2,000 officers, and we will do our share. Building on the foundation of the 300 local judges and prosecutors that have been appointed by UNMIK, the international community is working with Kosovars to help rebuild Kosovo's legal and judicial systems. With the support of international soldiers and police, we are working to protect the individual human rights and cultural heritage of all Kosovars, Serb, Roma, Albanian and others. We remain committed to seeking the release of those Kosovars jailed in Serbia without the benefit of due legal process.

During Allied Force, we persisted until we prevailed. Today, we are carrying that same spirit forward into the challenges of building peace, democracy, and opportunity—in Kosovo and across the Balkans. And with the leadership of our European allies and the support of our Congress, we will continue to work with the people of southeast Europe toward our shared vision of a democratic and peaceful future.

Memorandum on the Effect of Imports of Crude Oil on National Security March 24, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: The Effect of Imports of Crude Oil on National Security

I have reviewed and approved the findings of your investigative report titled “The Effect on the National Security of Imports of Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum Products” under section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862), that imports of crude oil threaten to impair the national security. Further,

I accept your recommendation that trade remedies not be imposed, but that existing policies to enhance conservation and limit the dependence on foreign oil be continued. Indeed, we have already proposed additional tax credits to promote renewable and efficient sources of energy, new tax incentives to support the domestic petroleum industry, and further investments in energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, as this report suggested.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Business Reception in Mumbai, India March 24, 2000

Thank you. Thank you, President Goenka. Chief Minister Deshmukh; my good friend Ambassador Wisner; my colleague and longtime friend Ambassador Celeste; Secretary Daley; our distinguished crowd here. We thank you for welcoming us.

I have brought quite a group from the United States, including six Members of our Congress. And we were just down in Hyderabad, and I asked the crowd to acknowledge them, because I always got to give the speech, they always have to listen, but when we go home, they control all the money. [*Laughter*] So I would like to acknowledge the presence here of Congressman Jim McDermott, Congressman Gary Ackerman, Congressman Ed Royce, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Representative Nita Lowey, and Representative Jan Schakowsky, all Members of the United States House of Representatives. We thank them for coming.

This has been a remarkable week and, I think, a wonderful week for me and my daughter, Chelsea, who is here, and for our entire American delegation. We came as friends to a changing India, to gain a better understanding of your country, your views, in order to build a new partnership on a higher level than that which we have experienced over the last 22 years.

If you imagine the world you would like to see 10 years from now or 20 years from now, if you imagine how you would like India to

be 10 or 20 years from now, it is difficult to believe that the world you would like and the India you would like can be achieved without a deeper and better partnership of mutual respect and common endeavor with the United States.

I can also say—grateful for the presence of the American Ambassador, one former American Ambassador to India, and the Indian Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Chandra—that I cannot imagine the world that I want for my children’s generation in America that does not include a deeper and better partnership with India.

And so I came here to try to build it, or at least to have the foundations there before my time as President is done. Already, as all of you well know, America is the largest trading partner and investor for India. This week American companies signed about two dozen agreements to create or advance projects worth another \$4 billion. And I’m very pleased that our Export-Import Bank will make available a billion dollars in new financing for small and medium-sized businesses in India to export to the United States.

This week we have strengthened our commitment to work together to protect the environment, to promote clean energy, to fight against deadly diseases, to use science and technology to help people rise from poverty.

I visited a small village in Rajasthan yesterday; you probably saw the pictures in the paper where I was dancing with the village ladies. [Laughter] It was pretty good odds; there were about 30 of them and one of me. [Laughter] And they were throwing—the children were throwing flowers, petals of flowers on us. But the reason we were dancing was because of the time we had shared before. And I saw the work that was being done in the poor village to lift the lives of women, to give them access to credit, to give them support in the workplace, to keep their children, including their girl children, in school. I saw the role of men and women and people of different tribes and castes working together in the local government units. And so there was cause for celebration.

Today in Hyderabad, when I was there, I talked to representatives of all 23 districts of the State in a teleconference about the same sorts of activities that are occurring. I say that because I believe that while there is plainly a digital divide in India and a digital divide in the United States, not just from place to place but within every city where there is a strong business group well-connected to the new economy, the truth is that the information age gives us the chance to eliminate poverty more quickly for more people than ever before in all of human history.

I saw that yesterday when I was in this little village of Naila. And there was a computer hookup to the State and Federal Government so that all the people could come in and find out what all the services were that were available to them. And there were printouts so that the women could get actual prints that they could take home that would tell them how to take better care of their children.

And someday every village will have all the educational software available anywhere in the world on it, so that in the poorest villages of India or Africa or China or Latin America, people will be able to print out for their school-children the most modern educational materials available anywhere, so that people in the poorest villages of the world will have access to the same learning materials that the people in the richest schools in the United States or any other country have today.

If we do this right, we will find that doing what is morally right, consistent with the values of India that's a sense of community and mutual responsibility, also turns out to be very good

economics in the information age because you need more education, you need more people with the capacity to make the most of this new economy.

The same thing is true with the environment. All over the world today there's a general consensus that the climate is warming too quickly and that the consequences are likely to be disastrous.

I met with a man doing malaria research shortly before I came here tonight. And we talked about how troubling it was that malaria is now being found at higher and higher altitudes in countries all across the globe where it manifests, so that it's attacking people in villages that have never seen it before. And they're much more vulnerable and likely to have many more problems, all the consequences of changing environment.

But in the information age, no nation has to grow rich by putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. And in fact, there will be enormous opportunities for India—millions and millions of jobs, a trillion-dollar global market—in developing alternative energy sources, maximizing the use of new energy technologies, the development of fuel for automobiles from farm sources all over the world.

It will change the world in the next 5 years about as much as the Internet has changed it in the last 5, and it will do nothing but help India. It would reduce the pressures on your people to continue practices that lead to soil erosion or the loss of precious species.

Yesterday I went to the Ranthambhore National Park and I saw two magnificent Bengal tigers, one, a vast male tiger named Boomerang—interesting name for a tiger—[laughter]—and the other a female tiger. Rather like often happens, the female was doing all the work in this setting. [Laughter] She was stalking a herd of deer. And it was an amazing sight to behold.

Already this year, 20 tigers have been killed in India, even though it is not legal to do so. All of these competing economic pressures. I hope all of you will help to preserve your tiger population. It's an important part of India's heritage. But I think we all understand that the stronger and more diversified the economy gets, the easier it will be to preserve the species, to preserve the environment, to restore the magnificent historical and cultural artifacts that dot

the countryside in every part of this magnificent country.

So we have a lot at stake in this. So does the United States. We have in Silicon Valley alone 750 companies started by Indian-Americans—750 in Silicon Valley alone. We have seen the country literally transformed because of the infusion of new talent from people from all over the world. But we have been especially blessed by people from India and, indeed, from throughout South Asia.

And as I look at the world of tomorrow, a world that I hope will be characterized by peace and prosperity, by a genuine commitment to the dignity of all people, by societies which celebrate their ethnic, their racial, their tribal, their religious diversity, but are bound together by a common acceptance that the humanity we all share is even more important than the differences among us—I know the world will never be that way unless South Asia is that way.

And I have seen in these local experiments in India something I wish for all the world. Yesterday, in that little village where I am known now only for dancing not very well with the village women, I talked to people on the local government council who told me that they now had 10 of their tribes and castes represented in their local government, that for the first time in the history of the village, people from different groups were regularly dining together.

Now, it seems like a little thing, but if you consider the fact that 800,000 people, more or less, were killed in the Rwandan tribal wars in the space of 100 days, that a million people were driven from their homes in Kosovo simply because they were Muslim in a country that was mostly Serbian and Orthodox Christian, that the Irish Troubles have been going on for 30 years, and in the Middle East people still die because of their faith and ethnic background, and I could go on and on and on—it was a truly remarkable thing to see that in a local community in India, people were worried about how they could get clean water, and it didn't matter much what your caste or tribe was. And they were rather proud of the fact that women as well as men were in the government and that their positions were, to some extent, guaranteed. And they couldn't even remember why they didn't want to have dinner together anymore.

This may seem small to you, but if you have seen people like I have seen them—a widow in Rwanda who woke up to see her husband and six children cut to death all around her, just because of the tribe they were in; if you had been in the refugee camps that I've been in, in the Balkans, in Bosnia and Kosovo, to see people run out just because of their religious faith—it is not something to be lightly discarded. If you can figure out how to take what I saw yesterday at the village level and keep working until you reach some sort of acceptable accommodation on the other larger problems on this subcontinent, there's no stopping you.

I really do believe that if India—and of course, as I said in my speech to the Parliament, you'll have to make all these decisions yourself. And we don't agree on every issue, and we shouldn't. And friends don't have to agree on every issue. They just have to have an honest relationship about it, and then whoever is supposed to make the decision has to make the decision. But I do believe if we can lead the region—or you can—away from the proliferation of dangerous weapons, toward the proliferation of new ideas, new companies, and new technologies; away from the kind of racial and ethnic tensions that we see now in the trouble spots in South Asia, toward the sort of harmony I saw in that little village yesterday, then the dreams that your Chief Minister spoke of are well within your grasp.

I believe that if we work together to turn our common vision into common progress, to educate our children as partners, to fight disease as partners, to protect our environment as partners, to expand commerce as partners, to lift the lives of the poorest among us as partners, to fight terrorism and work for tolerance as partners, I believe if we do that, then what Gandhi said of India so long ago will certainly be true. He once said, "It is my conviction that India, numbering one-fifth of the human race, can be a great force of service to the whole of mankind."

If we have the right kind of partnership and the best of India that I have seen in these last few days becomes the guiding force for all of India, then Gandhi's cherished hope will become the accepted reality for your children and America's children in this new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at the Stock Exchange. In his remarks, he referred to G.P. Goenka, president, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister of Maharashtra; Frank

G. Wisner, director and vice chairman, external affairs, American International Group, Inc.; Richard F. Celeste, U.S. Ambassador to India; and Naresh Chandra, Indian Ambassador to the United States.

The President's Radio Address

March 25, 2000

Good morning. As I reach the end of my terrific week in South Asia and prepare to return home, I want to talk to you this morning about the greater challenge we now face to keep our children safe from the dangers of tobacco. Every single day another 3,000 American children smoke their first cigarette. Most of them will be hooked for life, and a third of them will die earlier as a result.

That's why our administration has worked so hard to highlight the health threat teen smoking poses and to keep tobacco products out of the hands of our children. We supported State and local efforts to stop underage smoking before it starts. And we know these efforts work. Massachusetts has used education programs to reduce high school student smoking by 15 percent. Oregon cut eighth-grader smoking rates by almost a third in just one year.

Five years ago we asked the Food and Drug Administration to start a campaign to slash teen smoking in every State and to treat nicotine like the dangerous drug it is. The FDA wrote strong, effective rules to prevent any child under 18 from buying any tobacco product anywhere in the United States. The FDA was also prepared to end tobacco advertising that is shamelessly aimed at addicting another generation of our young people.

This effort had strong support from public health leaders in both parties in Congress, but it collapsed under the pressure of tobacco companies and the Republican leadership in Congress while the tobacco industry challenged the rules in court.

This week, in a setback for the health of our children, the Supreme Court ruled that the FDA must have explicit authorization from Congress before it can regulate tobacco. However, all nine Justices made it perfectly clear that they

believe tobacco is dangerous, especially to young people. The majority opinion called it, quote, "perhaps the most significant threat to health in the United States."

Now, the American people know this. They've known it for a long time. Now the ball is in Congress' court. They should show they also understand the danger to our young people and give the FDA's tobacco regulations the force of law.

This is not a partisan issue. It's a health issue for our Nation and a life-or-death issue for children. In 1998 a bipartisan group of Senators offered legislation that would have let the FDA's campaign move forward. It had the support of 57 Senators from both sides of the aisle, but the leadership blocked it. And this week similar bipartisan legislation was introduced in the House. I urge both Houses of Congress to pass it promptly.

The Justice Department also has sued the tobacco manufacturers to recover the cost of tobacco-related illnesses and to make sure they're held accountable for actions that they take. I ask Congress to support these efforts, as well, not undermine them, as some have threatened to do. I also ask Congress to work with me to take action to protect the financial security of tobacco farmers and their communities.

And finally, I challenge the States to do their part, as well, by dedicating the money they've collected from tobacco settlements to fund antismoking programs for children and young people.

Preventing our children from smoking is our common responsibility. It's a fight we can win and one we must win, starting now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:05 p.m. on March 24 at the Stock Exchange in Mumbai, India, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. e.s.t. on March

25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Television Address to the People of Pakistan From Islamabad, Pakistan

March 25, 2000

As-salaam aleikum. It is an honor to be the first President of the United States to address all the people of Pakistan, and the first to visit your country in more than 30 years. I'm here as a great admirer of your land's rich history, of its centuries of civilization that stretch as long as the Indus River. I'm here as one whose own Nation has been greatly enriched by the talents of Americans of Pakistani descent. But most of all, I am here as a friend, a grateful friend who values our long partnership, a concerned friend who cares deeply about the future course of your country, a committed friend who will stand with the people of Pakistan as long as you seek the stable, prosperous, democratic nation of your founders' dreams.

More than half a century ago, Mohammed Ali Jinnah shared that vision as he addressed Pakistan's Constituent Assembly. "If you work together," he said, "in a spirit that every one of you is first, second, and last a citizen, with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make." The *Quaid-e Azam* ended that speech by reading a telegram he had just received. The message expressed hope for success in the great work you were about to undertake. That message was from the people of the United States.

Despite setbacks and suffering, the people of Pakistan have built this nation from the ground up, on a foundation of democracy and law. And for more than 50 years now, we have been partners with you. Pakistan helped the United States open a dialog with China. We stood together when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Our partnership helped to end the cold war. And in the years since, we have cooperated in the fight against terrorism. Our soldiers have stood together in missions of peace in every part of the world. This is your proud legacy, our proud legacy.

Now we are in the dawn of a new century, and a new and changing world has come into

view. All around the globe a revolution is taking hold, a revolution that is tearing down barriers and building up networks among nations and individuals. For millions it has made real the dream of a better life with good schools, good jobs, a good future for their children.

Like all key moments in human history, this one poses some hard choices, for this era does not reward people who struggle in vain to redraw borders with blood. It belongs to those with the vision to look beyond borders for partners in commerce and trade. It does not favor nations where governments claim all the power to solve every problem. Instead, it favors nations where the people have the freedom and responsibility to shape their own destinies.

Pakistan can achieve great things in this new world, but real obstacles stand in the way. The political situation, the economic situation, the tensions in this region, they are holding Pakistan back from achieving its full potential in the global economy.

I know I don't have to tell you all this. This is something you know, something you have seen. But I do have hope. I believe Pakistan can make its way through the troubles and build a future worthy of the visions of its founders: a stable, prosperous, democratic Pakistan, secure in its borders, friendly with its neighbors, confident in its future; a Pakistan, as Jinnah said, "at peace within and at peace without."

What is in the way of that vision? Well, clearly, the absence of democracy makes it harder, not easier, for people to move ahead. I know democracy isn't easy; it's certainly not perfect. The authors of my own country's Constitution knew that as well. They said that the mission of the United States would always be, and I quote, "to form a more perfect Union." In other words, they knew we would never fully realize our ideals, but that we could keep moving closer to them. That means the question for free people is always how to keep moving forward.

We share your disappointment that previous democratic governments in Pakistan did not do better for their citizens. But one thing is certain: Democracy cannot develop if it is constantly uprooted before it has a chance to firmly take hold. Successful democratic government takes time and patience and hard work. The answer to flawed democracy is not to end democracy but to improve it.

I know General Musharraf has just announced a date for local elections. That is a good step. But the return of civilian democratic rule requires a complete plan, a real roadmap.

Of course, no one from the outside can tell Pakistan how it should be governed. That is for you, the people of Pakistan, to decide, and you should be given the opportunity to do so. I hope and believe you want Pakistan to be a country where the rule of law prevails; a country where officials are accountable; a country where people can express their points of view without fear; a country that wisely forsakes revenge for the wounds of the past, and instead pursues reconciliation for the sake of the future. If you choose this path, your friends in the United States will stand with you.

There are obstacles to your progress, including violence and extremism. We Americans also have felt these evils. Surely we have both suffered enough to know that no grievance, no cause, no system of beliefs can ever justify the deliberate killing of innocents. Those who bomb bus stations, target Embassies, or kill those who uphold the law are not heroes. They are our common enemies, for their aim is to exploit painful problems, not to resolve them.

Just as we have fought together to defeat those who traffic in narcotics, today I ask Pakistan to intensify its efforts to defeat those who inflict terror.

Another obstacle to Pakistan's progress is the tragic squandering of effort, energy, and wealth on policies that make your nation poorer, but not safer. That is one reason we must try to resolve the differences between our two nations on nuclear weapons.

Again, you must make the decision. But my questions to you are no different from those I posed in India. Are you really more secure today than you were before you tested nuclear weapons? Will these weapons make war with India less likely or simply more deadly? Will a costly arms race help you to achieve any economic development? Will it bring you closer

to your friends around the world, closer to the partnerships you need to build your dreams?

Today, the United States is dramatically cutting its nuclear arsenal. Around the world nations are renouncing these weapons. I ask Pakistan also to be a leader for nonproliferation. In your own self-interest, to help us to prevent dangerous technologies from spreading to those who might have no reservations at all about using them, take the right steps now to prevent escalation, to avoid miscalculation, to reduce the risk of war.

As leaders in your own country have suggested, one way to strengthen your security would be to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The whole world will rally around you if you do.

I believe it is also in Pakistan's interest to reduce tensions with India. When I was in New Delhi, I urged India to seize the opportunity for dialog. Pakistan also must help create conditions that will allow dialog to succeed. For India and Pakistan this must be a time of restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, and renewed lines of communication.

I have listened carefully to General Musharraf and others. I understand your concerns about Kashmir. I share your convictions that human rights of all its people must be respected. But a stark truth must also be faced. There is no military solution to Kashmir. International sympathy, support, and intervention cannot be won by provoking a bigger, bloodier conflict. On the contrary, sympathy and support will be lost. And no matter how great the grievance, it is wrong to support attacks against civilians across the Line of Control.

In the meantime, I ask again: Will endless, costly struggle build good schools for your children? Will it make your cities safer? Will it bring clean water and better health care? Will it narrow the gaps between those who have and those who have nothing? Will it hasten the day when Pakistan's energy and wealth are invested in building its future? The answer to all these questions is plainly no.

The American people don't want to see tensions rise and suffering increase. We want to be a force for peace. But we cannot force peace. We can't impose it. We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the dispute in Kashmir. Only you and India can do that, through dialog.

Last year the world watched with hope as the leaders of India and Pakistan met in Lahore

on the road to better relations. This is the right road to peace for Pakistan and India, and for the resolution of the problems in Kashmir. Therefore, I will do all I can to help both sides restore the promise and the process of Lahore.

A few months ago we had a ceremony at the White House to mark the end of Ramadan. An imam shared a message from the Koran which tells us that God created nations and tribes that we might know one another, not that we may despise one another. During the years of my Presidency, I have tried to know the Muslim world as part of our common humanity. I have stood with the people of Bosnia and Kosovo, who were brutalized because of their Muslim faith. I have mourned with Jordanians and Moroccans at the loss of their brave leaders. I have been privileged to speak with Palestinians at their National Council in Gaza. Today I am proud to speak with you because I value our long friendship, and because I believe our friendship can still be a force for tolerance and understanding throughout the world. I hope you will be able to meet the difficult challenges we have discussed today.

If you do not, there is a danger that Pakistan may grow even more isolated, draining even more resources away from the needs of the people, moving even closer to a conflict no one can win. But if you do meet these challenges,

our full economic and political partnership can be restored for the benefit of the people of Pakistan.

So let us draw strength from the words of the great Pakistani poet Muhammad Iqbal, who said, "In the midst of today's upheaval, give us a vision of tomorrow." If the people of Pakistan and South Asia are driven by a tolerant, generous vision of tomorrow, your nation and this entire region can be the great success story of the world's next 50 years.

It is all in your hands. I know enough about the ingenuity and enterprise and heart of Pakistani people to know that this is possible. With the right vision, rooted in tomorrow's promise, not yesterday's pain, rooted in dialog, not destruction, Pakistan can fulfill its destiny as a beacon of democracy in the Moslem world, an engine of growth, a model of tolerance, an anchor of stability. Pakistan can have a future worthy of the dreams of the *Quaid-e Azam*.

If you choose that future, the United States will walk with you. I hope you will make that choice. And I pray for our continued friendship, for peace, for Pakistan. *Zindabad*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. from the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12, 1999.

Statement on the Election of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia March 27, 2000

In a telephone conversation earlier today, I congratulated President-elect Vladimir Putin on his victory in the Russian Presidential elections.

Sunday's vote was an important milestone in the development of a democratic Russia. The people of Russia demonstrated again their intense commitment to democracy. Roughly 70 percent of eligible Russians voted.

In my conversation with President-elect Putin, I emphasized the importance to Russia and the world of strengthening the foundations of Russia's democracy and deepening its international integration. President-elect Putin has an opportunity to translate his electoral mandate into concrete steps to advance economic reform, to

strengthen the rule of law, to intensify the fight against crime and corruption, and to join with us on a broad common agenda of international security, including arms control, nonproliferation, and regional peace and stability.

Finally, I emphasized my concerns about the war in Chechnya. I stressed to President-elect Putin the importance of launching impartial and transparent investigations of reported human rights violations and providing prompt and full access for international organizations and the press.

Joint Statement by the Depositary States on the 25th Anniversary of Entry Into Force of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

March 27, 2000

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Convention, the three Depositary States, the Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, reaffirm their belief in the continuing relevance and importance of the Convention. As we start a new century the principles and objectives of the Convention are an important international norm serving to prevent any country from developing, producing, stockpiling or obtaining the means to employ bacteriological, biological or toxin weapons as a means of warfare. As such the Convention remains one of the key elements of international security and stability.

At its inception the Convention was a watershed international document, the first formal multilateral agreement to forswear an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Twenty five years later 143 States have acceded to it, a remarkable endorsement of the principles which it encompasses, and of the very important role it plays in the web of non-proliferation and arms control treaties. We, as the Depositaries, take this opportunity to call on those states

which have not yet ratified or acceded to the BWC to do so without delay, so that the prohibitions on possession and development of biological weapons become even more universal.

The representatives of many States Parties are now engaged in work to strengthen the Convention. The aim is a Protocol that will create a regime to enhance confidence in compliance with the fundamental objectives of the Convention. This effort will bring the Convention into better alignment with the principles of other arms control agreements. As the terms of the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Group make clear the objective is "to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures . . . to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument." Successful achievement of an effective Protocol within the agreed timeframe must be the target of all States Parties. We pledge our own efforts to achieving this goal, and call upon all other States Parties to do likewise, and to accede to the Protocol once it is agreed.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

March 27, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a semiannual report "detailing payments made to Cuba . . . as a result of the provision of telecommuni-

cations services" pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 27, 2000.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National
Emergency With Respect to Angola (UNITA)
March 27, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

(UNITA) that was declared in Executive Order 12865 of September 26, 1993.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 27, 2000.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt
and an Exchange With Reporters
March 28, 2000

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have President Mubarak back here. We have a lot to discuss today. I want to talk with him about the peace process in the Middle East, about the movement on the Palestinian track, about my meeting with President Asad, and what further steps he thinks we could take on the Israel-Syria track. And we have a lot of other things to discuss as well.

So I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to welcome you here, Mr. President.

President Mubarak. Thank you, sir.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Mubarak, the peace process seems to be faltering again, especially after the failure of the Geneva talks. What is your vision, Mr. President? What can Egypt do in order to break this deadlock?

President Mubarak. First of all, I thank President Clinton just for meeting me today. And we used to exchange views every now and then. We have very good relations with the President since he took office 8 years ago.

Today we are going to discuss so many issues about the Middle East, about even bilateral relations. And concerning the Geneva meeting, I cannot say that's a failure. It's a step forward, although no progress between the Israelis and the Syrians, that doesn't make us pessimistic. We have to make much more effort so as to

reach peace and an agreement could be signed, for the welfare of the whole area.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, there's word out of Vienna that OPEC has reached a deal now. Are you now looking forward to a decline in oil?

President Clinton. Have they, in fact, announced that?

Q. The Venezuelan representative has.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think I ought to wait to issue a definitive comment until they actually vote and reach an agreement. But my concern has always been that the oil price production be increased to a level sufficient to ensure continued growth in the global economy and continued growth here at home and that, therefore, by definition, to alleviate some of the serious burdens that some of our people have felt, particularly the truckers and the people who commute long distances.

But I want to wait and see. I've heard some encouraging things about what OPEC will do in combination with what some of the non-OPEC members will do. And in the aggregate, it could be sufficient to get production and consumption back into alignment and to rebuild some of these stocks, which are at their lowest point in a decade. And if that happens, then I'll be encouraged, but I want to wait and see.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, how much faith do you have in peace being concluded before you leave your tenure here?

President Clinton. Well, I think we are making and will continue to see good progress between the Israelis and Palestinians. I went to Switzerland to meet President Asad, to clarify to him what I thought the options were and to hear from him what his needs are. I asked him to come back to me with what he thought ought to be done. So the ball is in his court now, and I'm going to look forward to hearing from him. And we're going to talk about what else I can do, what else we can do together. President Mubarak has been at this longer than I have, and we're going to keep working.

Q. President Clinton, your term ends in a few months now. Do you think the Israelis are ready to go along and finalize the peace process during that period? And what do you think the steps that they are going to take? For President Mubarak, do you foresee a solution in the near future?

President Clinton. Well, I think they are making very serious efforts. And I think Prime Min-

ister Barak would like to do this as quickly as he can. And I can tell you they have made very, very serious efforts on all tracks, and I think you will continue to see progress at least on the Palestinian track. And of course, I hope we'll have some progress on the Syrian one, as well—as well as in Lebanon.

President Mubarak. This information concerning the Middle East problem cannot stay as it is now. Tremendous efforts are being done by the United States with the cooperation with us. And I hope that we could reach a solution between the two sides, and especially I may meet with Mr. Barak soon after I return back to Cairo, to see what could be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A reporter referred to Minister of Energy and Mines Ali Rodriguez-Araque of Venezuela, head of the Venezuelan delegation to OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Production Decision and the Legislative Agenda for Energy Security
March 28, 2000

Today's announcement that OPEC members will increase production is a positive development. These increases will help sustain worldwide economic growth and provide greater balance between oil supply and demand. While oil prices are projected to fall this year, we will continue to closely monitor developments in world oil markets in the coming months.

Congress should waste no more time in getting to work on the critical measures to improve

America's energy security that I have proposed. Congress has failed to act on energy security measures, including new tax incentives to support domestic oil producers, tax incentives and investments to promote the use of alternative and more efficient energy technologies, the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve, and reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. These measures should be passed into law without delay.

Radio Remarks on Sightseeing Flights Over the Grand Canyon
March 28, 2000

There may be no place on Earth more stunning than the Grand Canyon. It's important to

preserve and protect it, so that the millions who visit each year can enjoy the Canyon in all its

splendor. Today I am announcing an important new measure to carefully manage sightseeing flights over the Grand Canyon. With this action, we can allow continued access to all, while also helping to restore the natural quiet of this timeless treasure.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 8 p.m. on March 17 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 28. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Debbie Stabenow March 28, 2000

Thank you. Now, only a politician who is not running for office would take a stand on the Final Four before the results are in. [Laughter]

Thank you very much. Debbie, I am a huge basketball fan. And I already lost my State school and my daughter's alma mater in the NCAA, so I'm just watching it with great fascination. It's been a good tournament.

I want to thank Senator Torricelli for all that he has done for the Democrats, and the Senate candidates in particular. And I thank Carl Levin for more than I can say. You have no idea all the good things that he does in the Senate, many of which are not vote-getting issues; they'll never make the headlines. But someone needs to be going to work every day who cares about public policy and good Government and the way this country works. And Carl Levin does. You should be really proud of him. He's a really good man.

I want to thank Gary and Bill and Michelle for helping Debbie to raise the money necessary to wage a campaign against an incumbent Senator of the other party. It's a difficult thing to do. And she is in good shape, but she needs your support to do it. And I want to thank John Conyers and Sandy Levin for being here, and so many other of my friends from Michigan who helped me these last 7 years and a couple of months. I thank you very much.

I was thinking to myself, "What am I doing here? I'm not running for anything." [Laughter] I'm trying to get this fine Member of Congress a 6-year term, and I'll never even have the privilege of working with her. Well, one reason is, on principle this year, I'm very big on women going to the U.S. Senate. I have a passing interest in a lot of these elections. [Laughter] But

I would like to—I'll be very brief, because she's already told you why she's running.

I think it's important that we remember that things were different in 1992 when I ran for President. We had economic distress. We had social decline. We had political division. And we basically had drift and gridlock in Washington.

And I believed that this country could build a bridge to the new century with an America that offered opportunity for everyone who is responsible enough to work for it, with an increasingly diverse America that cherished that diversity but thought our common humanity was more important, with an America that continued to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And we're in better shape than we were in 1992, and for that I am very grateful. And for the opportunity I've had to serve, I am profoundly grateful.

But the real thing I would like you to think about is: What is it that we propose to do with this prosperity? You know, I've reached an age now when my memory stretches back long enough that I know that nothing lasts forever. And in tough times, that's reassuring. In good times, it should be sobering.

This is a moment of phenomenal opportunity for our country. And a lot of the—I'm glad to see so many young people here, because you've got most of your lives in front of you. And it's very important that we take this moment to deal with the big challenges, the big problems, the big opportunities in the new century, in a world that is coming closer and closer together, in a world where increasingly what matters is whether you believe every person counts and every person is given the ability to develop his or her God-given potential.

You know, I just got back from India and Bangladesh and Pakistan, and I made a stop over in Switzerland to keep working on the Middle East peace process. But I'll tell you an interesting story. I was in this little village in India, one of the hundreds of thousands of little villages in a country with over 900 million people, with a per capita income of \$450 a year, one of the poorest places on Earth.

So I go to this little village, and I meet the local government. And it's required now that all the different tribes and castes have an opportunity to be represented, and 30 percent of all the local governments are women—elected officials.

And I meet the women's dairy cooperative. And these women took over the milk business because they got a little machine that tested the fat content of milk, so they weren't cheating anybody out of their money anymore. And—now keep in mind, I'm in one of hundreds of thousands of villages, right, in a country with a rich and diverse texture but a low per capita income. Every single transaction that the dairy cooperative made was recorded on a computer. Every woman that brought milk in there got a computer printout of what the fat content was, what the price was that day, then got an accounting out of the same computer on who bought the milk and when she got her money.

Then I go into the local government in this tiny village, and I see there the computer in the community center. And every person can come in and get on that computer in English or Hindi. And many of the things you can find, you can get even if you can't read, because of the software, the sophistication of the software. So poor village women can come in and see how they're supposed to care for their newborn babies in their first year of life. They pull it up on the screen, and then they had a printer, and they got it out. And it's just as good information as you can get here or in any other place in America, in the finest doctor's office in the land. This is going to be a very different world in the next 5 or 10 years.

I went to Hyderabad in India, which is sort of their high-tech capital, and the head of the State Government there now offers 18 different government services on the Internet, including getting your driver's license. Nobody ever has to wait in a line in the revenue office. [*Laughter*] Do not move to India just yet. [*Laughter*]

We will get that done, but you get the picture, right?

Today I met—when President Mubarak from Egypt was here today and we met with a bunch of Egyptian-Americans, one of them was a Nobel Prize-winner from Caltech. Another was a high official at the World Bank. Another was a big high-tech company executive. Another one ran a big biotech company. We talked a lot about the human genome and the sequencing of it, and how we were going to allow people to patent legitimate discoveries, but how we had to keep the basic information affordable so that the developing countries and poor people around the world and in this country could also benefit from the discoveries. I mean, we're talking about no more Alzheimer's and cures for Parkinson's and detecting cancers when they're just a few cells. These are amazing things.

And the reason that I'm here tonight, even though I'm not running, is that I don't want our country to blow this opportunity. What's the big problem in all these peace negotiations around the world? People want peace. Young people like you, they're thinking about their future; they want a whole different world. They're not all caught up—it's a question of people's impulses, the basic good human impulses at war with old ideas cherished by people who can't let go.

We have an American version of that, I think, in this contest here. One of the reasons that I want Al Gore to be elected President is that I know from personal experience he understands the future, and he knows how to take us there.

And you can't—most of what is written is written about politics and politicians acts as if policies are inconsequential and acts as if things that really affect the lives of millions of people don't matter. But I would argue to you that the details of our welfare program mattered. The details of our education program mattered. The details of our environmental program mattered. The details of our anticrime program mattered. It matters what you do. The details of our approach to science and technology mattered. These things matter.

This is not about a bunch of hot air and slogans and positioning. This is about whether this country, at its moment of maximum prosperity and opportunity and minimum threats from abroad and from within, will take the chance that we have had never before in my lifetime, except maybe in the 1960's, before all

the wheels ran off, to write the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this whole thing is about. Don't make any mistake about it. That's what the whole thing's about.

I worked hard to try to help turn this country around and get us moving in the right direction. But the big benefits are still out there to be reaped. Wouldn't you like your country to be the safest big country in the world? Wouldn't you like your country to be a place where every working parent could also succeed at rearing their children because there was adequate child care? Wouldn't you like your country to be a place where every child, no matter how poor, was held to high standards but had high opportunities in education; where there was no digital divide; where there were economic opportunities in the poorest urban and rural neighborhoods and on every Indian reservation in the country? And I could go on and on and on. That's what this whole deal is about.

And I'm telling you, if I can do anything this year, I am going to try to convince the American people only to vote for those people

that understand the future and are prepared to do what it takes to get us there—and all of us, together. That's why I'm here.

And I hope tomorrow, if people ask you why you were here, you will tell them that—because Debbie Stabenow is a great human being, a great public servant, and she will take us there.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. in the Columbia B Room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts William and Michelle O'Reilly; Gary Torgow, finance chair, Stabenow for Senate; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. Representative Stabenow was a candidate for U.S. Senate in Michigan. Prior to the President's remarks, Representative Stabenow presented him with a Michigan State University T-shirt in recognition of the men's basketball team's Final Four standing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

Remarks at a Reception for Governor Frank O'Bannon of Indiana March 28, 2000

You know, when Evan was talking about how he's trying to recover from having given a keynote speech—[laughter]—I bombed; he didn't. [Laughter] He was actually very good.

But I am delighted to be here for Frank O'Bannon, and with Judy and Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Kernan. I want to thank Evan Bayh and Susan for being wonderful friends to Hillary and me for many years now. And I want to thank Senator Birch Bayh for his service to America and for also being my friend for 20 years now.

Every now and then, I remind Birch that in 1980 he came to Arkansas; we dedicated an ethanol plant. And you may or may not know that the Agriculture Department is funding research into how to more efficiently convert gasoline to ethanol or, you know, how to do it with less fuel. Now the ratio's about 7 gallons to 8. They tell me within a year or two, we'll be down to 1 gallon to 8. And Birch and I were just 20 years ahead of our time. [Laughter]

But I'll always be grateful to him for many things in his service, and I'm delighted to be here.

Thank you, Mike Sullivan. Thank you, Mark Weiner. Thank you, Robin Winston. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Joe Andrew for working so hard for the national Democratic Party. And I saw three of your House Members here earlier: Pete Visclosky I know is still there, and Baron Hill and Tim Roemer may or may not still be here, but they were here earlier.

I am delighted to be here. You may wonder what I'm doing here; I'm not running for anything this year. [Laughter] Take a good look at me; I'm the only politician you'll see this year you don't have to give a contribution to. [Laughter]

I was a Governor for 12 years, and they were some of the happiest years of my life. I would have never tired of doing the job. The voters would have gotten tired of me long before I got tired of the job. [Laughter]

And you know, I have worked very hard for the last 7-plus years to try to turn our country around and to try to get governing right. Now, there are not many votes in governing, really, when you talk about it. But if you've got a job and you do it well, there are votes in it. That's why Evan Bayh was elected and overwhelmingly reelected and then sent to the Senate; that's why Frank O'Bannon was elected and why I think he'll be reelected: because they believe in governing.

After all this time I've been President, I can say there are a lot of things about this job that are much more than just policy, times when a President has to speak to the Nation about a crisis or in the midst of a collective grieving or just speak for the Nation when you have to take a stand. But a lot of what determines the success of our enterprise is whether we show up for work every day and treat our work like your work, like a job.

And the difference in political work and other work is that you have more leeway to define the job. In other words, you have to decide what it is you're going to do if you're Governor or President, except you've got to sign the bills or veto them, as the case may be, and make the appointments. But otherwise, you have to decide.

And I think I know a little bit about that. I served with over 150 Governors. And Frank O'Bannon is a very good Governor. I know.

I would also tell you that the tradition that he and Evan established in Indiana of fiscal responsibility and focusing very sharply on the most important things the government should do, and not defending everything that government ever did in the past, is one I tried to carry on. You know, we now have the smallest Federal Government since 1960, when Dwight Eisenhower was President and John Kennedy was running for the White House. We've gotten rid of hundreds of programs, and I'll give \$5 to anybody here who can name three of them. [Laughter] See? [Laughter]

I say that because when I became President, we had to do two things at once. We had to get this deficit under control and balance the budget. But we had to keep investing in education. We had to keep investing in health care for children. We had to keep investing in the environment. We had to keep investing in science and technology. We had to keep, in

short, preparing for the future. And that's what Governors have to do.

Now, one of the ways that we did that was, for example, in the area of education, we gave the States more funds and set higher goals, but we got rid of about two-thirds of the Federal regulations. And I could give you lots of other examples where, in effect, we did the right thing, but only if the Governor does the right thing.

When we passed the welfare reform bill, we said, "Okay, here's the deal: If you're able bodied, you've got to get some training, and then if you get a job, you've got to take it. But we won't ask you to hurt your children. We'll leave your children with their guaranteed nutrition and health care, and we'll spend more on child care and transportation. We'll invest more in you. But if you can go to work, you've got to do it." Well, all that had to be designed and implemented by the Governors.

When we passed the Balanced Budget Act in 1997, we had the biggest expansion in federally supported health care since Medicaid in 1965, when we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program to allow the children of families that were working families—so their incomes were too high to get Medicaid coverage, but their incomes were too low to afford health insurance, and their employers weren't providing it. So we had the money to provide them health insurance. But the program was to be designed by the Governors.

In other words, a lot of what we have tried to do to have a more vigorous but a more disciplined Government has required us, here in Washington, to make his job even more important. And it's very important that everybody understands that. It really matters who sits in these Governors' chairs today. It matters what their values are. It matters what their vision is. And it also matters a lot whether they show up every day.

This is not a job for someone who is faint-hearted or disinterested. It's a job—particularly if you live in a State like Indiana or Arkansas, where people actually hold you accountable, and you can't get elected on television. [Laughter] You know? It really makes a difference.

I remember when I ran for President in '92, Governor Bush used to—I mean, President Bush used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State, in sort of drippingly negative overtones, you know? [Laughter] And you

know, I was so dumb, I thought that was a good thing. [Laughter] You know, I was proud of it. I thought—and I think it's very important. If you care about the education of our children and if you care about whether the poorest of our children have access to health care, if you care about whether we can preserve a clean environment and grow the economy, you have to care about who the Governor is.

And I think most Americans may not fully appreciate the extent to which, over the last 7½ years, the reason this whole deal has worked as well as it has is that we've had good Federal policies, but we have done more and more of it in partnership with the private sector and with State and local government.

And so I wanted to come here because I genuinely like and admire Governor and Mrs. O'Bannon. And I genuinely believe that they should break that record that goes back to the 1830's. And that's the last thing I want to say about all these races in 2000.

I worked as hard as I can to turn this country around and to get us moving in the right direction. But all the really big benefits are still out there. We've got the longest economic expansion in history. What are we going to do with it? We're going to give all of our kids a world-class education. Are we going to make America the safest big country in the world? We're going to get the country out of debt for the first time since 1835. Are we going to bring economic opportunity to poor areas that haven't felt it yet? I can just go on and on and on.

That's what will be decided in the year 2000. And I hope that the electorate will want to vote for people from top to bottom like these two men here, who are serious about the work they do and for whom winning an election is just a prelude to the most important thing,

which is the job. Because you know, this is a chance in a lifetime we have. And I've lived long enough now to know that these things come, and they go. The good news is bad times don't last forever. But good times don't either. And so when they come along, you have to focus and move, act.

So this is a big deal, this election. One of the reasons, apart from all my personal feelings about him, that I want Al Gore to be elected President so bad is he understands the future, and he knows how to get us there. And that's what we ought to be thinking about. Who understands the future? Who can get us there?

And your presence here says you know that about your Governor. But when you go back to Indiana, I hope you'll give that as a reason for the rest of the folks sticking with him, without regard to party. If you're producing, if you're serious, if you care about the future, stick with him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:52 p.m. in the Columbia A Room at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill. In his remarks, he referred to Judy O'Bannon, wife of Governor O'Bannon; Lt. Gov. Joseph E. Kernan and his wife, Maggie; Senator Evan Bayh, his wife, Susan, and his father, former Senator Birch Bayh; Michael J. Sullivan, general president, Sheet Metal Workers International Association; Mark Weiner, treasurer, Democratic Governors' Association; Robin Winston, chairman, Indiana State Democratic Party; and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee. Incumbent Governor O'Bannon was a candidate for reelection. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

The President's News Conference

March 29, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I would like to begin by saying that yesterday's announcement that OPEC members will increase oil production is good news for our economy and for the American consumer. These increases should bring lower prices, which

will help to sustain economic growth here in America and also, and very importantly, throughout the world.

It will also, I hope, bring relief to hard-pressed truckers in this country, who have been especially hard-hit, and others who have high

fuel costs, by providing a greater balance between oil production and consumption.

While home heating costs and the price at the pump are both expected to fall in the next few weeks, I urge the oil companies to do everything they can to bring the savings to consumers as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, we will continue to monitor developments in world markets closely.

Since January, our administration has taken significant action to address high oil prices, from helping more low income and elderly citizens to pay their heating bills, to calling for the creation of a regional market reserve in the Northeast, to asking Congress to immediately reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

It is also very, very important for Congress now to act on my proposal to strengthen our long-term energy security, including new tax incentives and investments to support domestic oil producers and to promote the development and use of alternative fuels and more efficient energy technologies. We can become much more energy efficient and support economic development if we do.

Congress also has an opportunity and a responsibility to make progress on a number of other important issues for the American people this year. First, we must work together to reduce the staggering toll of gun violence in America by passing my proposal for more prosecutors and stronger gun enforcement and by finally passing a strong juvenile justice bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for all handguns, and bans the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

For 9 months now, key congressional Republicans, egged on by the NRA, have stood on a bill and stopped it from being considered by keeping it from coming out of conference onto the floor of both Houses for a vote. Fourteen days ago, a House resolution passed with bipartisan support, sponsored by Representative Zoe Lofgren of California. It simply said that House and Senate conferees should meet to settle their differences on the bill that has been languishing in Congress for too long. But after 14 days, the response to Representative Lofgren's resolution has been deafening silence and still no action. It appears the opponents of reform have run out of arguments, so now they're just trying to run out the clock.

This makes no sense. With crime at a 25-year low and the Brady law keeping guns out

of the hands of a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers, the argument is over. Gun safety measures do work and do not interfere with the interests of ordinary hunters and sports people. So it's time to build on our proven success and pass this commonsense legislation.

Three weeks ago, I asked Congress to finish the gun bill and send it to me by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, April 20th. That deadline can still be met. So again, for the sake of our children, I ask Congress to stop the delay. This should not be a partisan issue, and it should lead to action, not argument.

There are some other issues I'd like to mention briefly. First, to make sure the benefits of Medicare keep pace with the benefits of modern medicine, we must reform Medicare and add a voluntary prescription drug benefit. Three out of five older Americans lack dependable, affordable drug coverage. Since I first raised the issue last year, virtually every Member of Congress has voiced support for some kind of new prescription drug benefit. I call on Congress to pass a bill that ensures all Medicare beneficiaries the option to choose an affordable, accessible drug benefit. If they do, of course, I will sign it.

Second, to protect the interests of 190 million Americans in health plans, we should pass a strong, enforceable, bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights. This isn't a partisan issue in America. The House has already passed a strong bill, but the insurance lobby continues to oppose it. All we need is for the conference of Senators and Representatives to let every Member in both Houses vote his or her conscience on a real Patients' Bill of Rights. If it passes—and it will—I will certainly sign it.

Third, we should raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years. A bipartisan majority in the House voted to do so earlier this month, but Republican leaders held the pay raise hostage for tax increases for the wealthiest Americans—tax decreases, excuse me—tax breaks that could make it impossible to pay down the debt or strengthen Social Security and Medicare. I ask again to the Congress: Do the right thing. Everyone knows we need to raise the minimum wage. Send me a clean bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years, and I will sign it.

Fourth, we must keep the economy growing, first by opening new markets here at home in our hardest pressed communities, rural and

urban, and second, by opening new markets for American products and services around the world. Especially, we need to give our businesses, farmers, and workers access to the world's largest consumer market in China. There is no more important long-term international economic or national security issue facing us today. Congress should pass permanent normal trade relations with China this spring.

I will say again, this requires us to take no further action on our part to lower tariffs or open markets. All the concessions are being made by China in return for entering an open trading system. If we do not do this, then the full benefits of all we negotiated will flow to all the other countries in the WTO but not to the United States. The economic consequences will be bad. The national security consequences will be worse.

Fifth, we must invest more in our public schools and demand more from them. I ask again Congress to endorse the principles in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which call for ending social promotion and funding only those things which work to raise student achievement.

And we know that our students can't learn in schools that are falling apart. Yesterday a bipartisan school construction bill was introduced in the House that would provide \$24.8 billion in tax credit bonds to modernize up to 6,000 of our schools. If the Republican leadership doesn't prevent it, Congress could vote on this proposal tomorrow. I ask the Congress to pass this bipartisan legislation, and I will sign it.

Sixth, to save the lives of thousands of young people who every year get hooked on cigarettes, we must now pass legislation allowing the Food and Drug Administration to require tobacco, like the dangerous substance it is, to be regulated by the FDA. There is strong bipartisan support for this idea, and I hope the Congress will pass it. If they do, I will certainly sign it.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the importance of passing the supplemental budget requests without delay. This is urgent funding for pressing needs at home and abroad: to help the families that were victims of Hurricane Floyd; to provide needed energy assistance for families struggling to cope with rising oil prices; to help keep illegal drugs out of our Nation by supporting the Colombian Government's courageous fight against drug traffickers;

to keep the peace, provide for our troops, and build stability in Kosovo; and to provide needed debt relief to the world's poorest nations.

When Congress adjourns this summer, we ought to be able to look back and say we took real steps to make America better. The issues have been decided; they are clearly there. They have also been debated. The American people want action, and they deserve it. The only thing left is for the congressional leadership to reach across party lines and to work with us to break the grip of special interests and do the people's business.

Thank you very much.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, you said that the ball is in Asad's court. Is that because you think that his insistence on the return of all Syrian land under occupation in exchange for peace lacks logic or possibility?

The President. It's because he now knows in great detail what the Israeli proposals were. And I believe, since they have made an effort to be specific and comprehensive, if we're going to make progress, they should now be able to know what his specific and comprehensive response is on all the issues.

There is more than one issue here. And if we're going to have a negotiation, I don't think it's enough to say, "I don't like your position. Come back and see me when I like your position." And I understand how strongly he feels about it, but if he disagrees with their territorial proposal, which is quite significant, then there should be some other proposal, I think, coming from the Syrians about how their concerns could be handled. And that's what I meant by that. I did my best to try to just present what I thought the options were. And if we're going to have a negotiation, it takes two people coming up with ideas—or three sides, in this case, if we are being asked to mediate it.

He, obviously, has the perfect right to take whatever position he believes is in Syria's interests and whatever he thinks is right. But if there is a genuine desire for peace here on both sides, and I believe there is, and if both sides face certain significant political constraints within their countries, and I believe they do, then they both need to come up with some ideas and start talking.

I mean, the one thing there should be no doubt about is that there is a real effort being made here to resolve this. And I think it is clear that Prime Minister Barak would like to resolve it, and I think President Asad would like to resolve it. So once you know what the other side wants and you don't think you can do it, then you ought to come up with some alternative way of trying to respond to the underlying concerns that are behind the position. That's what I've suggested, and I hope that will happen. And meanwhile, the rest of us will keep working. I had a good talk with President Mubarak yesterday about that, and I hope we can continue to move forward.

Yes.

New York City Police

Q. Mr. President, three unarmed black men have been shot and killed by police in New York City in the past 13 months. Do you believe that the New York Police Department has a racial problem, and does that department require Justice Department oversight?

The President. Well, I believe there is a Justice Department review of the practices in the department, which I think has been a matter of public record for some time. And in the Diallo case, there was a specific reference to a review of the action there for possible civil rights violations. I think the important thing I'd like to say is, first of all, there's a lot of evidence that in city after city where the crime rate has dropped—and the crime rate's gone down a lot in New York; it's gone down a lot in every major city in America—there is now ample evidence that the crime rate can go down, and the tenor of community police relations can go up. And it's largely a matter of the right sort of training, the right sort of policies, and consistent effort there.

On the specific cases, I think I should say no more, particularly in view of the latest incident, which was tragic. There is a good U.S. Attorney in New York, and I have confidence that whatever decision is appropriate will be made as all the facts come out, and that's what's being done here.

But I think that the focus ought to be everywhere on having the right kind of training and the right kind of policy direction to say that we're going to bring the crime rate down, and we're going to bring the quality of police community relations up. The two things are not

inconsistent. In fact, I think, generally they reinforce one another, and I think that that's what we all ought to be working for in New York and everywhere else in the country.

Randy [Randy Mikkelsen, Reuters].

President-Elect Vladimir Putin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, when you spoke with Russia's President-elect Putin the other day, what did he tell you to indicate how he might run the country, particularly in the areas of the economy and foreign policy? And do you think it would be a good idea for you or your successor to try to build the same sort of personal relationship with Putin that you had with Boris Yeltsin, in view of criticisms that U.S. policy was too focused on one individual?

The President. Well, first, he has expressed a genuine commitment to economic reform—and the Russian economy is growing again—and a desire to put together a first-rate team. And that was encouraging.

In foreign policy, he expressed an interest in working with us to pursue matters of mutual concern, particularly in the area of arms control and in some other areas. And I'm looking forward to working with him on that.

With regard to the personal relations, I think that—President Yeltsin, keep in mind, was the first democratically elected President of Russia. And he had the sort of personality that was difficult not to—it was difficult to remain neutral in dealing with him. And I did like him very much, but I also thought he was committed to democracy. And I think the fact that he stepped down and that we had a genuine democratic transition in Russia is some evidence of that.

So I think that regardless of personal chemistry—and I hope that mine with President Putin will be good, and I hope that my successor's will be good with him—the United States and Russia have vast national interests that require them to work together on the things with which we agree and to manage the difficulties between us where we have honest disagreements. So it is the relationship that is important. And the personal chemistry will come and go, depending on the personalities. But the point is, the fact that I liked Boris Yeltsin didn't stop me from differing with him when we were differing, and it certainly never stopped him from differing with me in his classic style. And I don't expect that to change with President Putin.

But I think the relationship is very important to the United States and to Russia, and it must be worked on constantly. We just have too much in common, and we have to work on it.

Yes, Ellen [Ellen Ratner, Talk Radio News Service].

Electronic Commerce

Q. The Internet commission is meeting on electronic commerce, and they are giving some proposals. What are your thoughts about what proposals you think they should come out with? And also what about the States, as electronic commerce becomes more and more available on the net and may take revenue from the States?

The President. Well, I think— first of all, I supported the moratorium on taxes, and I saw where Mr. Gephardt did as well a couple of days ago, and I think that's good. I think that we should.

I think that the process that has been set up is the right one. I don't know what the solution is, but I think the States are going to have to get together with these companies and figure out—first of all, I don't think there should be any access taxes or new transactional taxes or anything that will overly burden Internet commerce, because it is making a real contribution to our economy.

The real issue is, as a higher and higher percentage of sales are conducted over the Internet, what happens to the sales tax base of the States? Are they going to have to go to a different kind of taxation? Because they don't want to prejudice ordinary retailers. On the other hand, some of the people in the Internet business think that any sales tax will put them at a disadvantage because they have to charge shipping charges.

So I think that is a matter that the States will have to work out. Since they are basically State taxes, I think we ought to leave it to them. But the Governors are highly attuned to economic development. They will not lightly hurt their economies. But they also have responsibilities to fund their schools and other public services. And I just think they are going to have to work through it.

I think over the next year or so, you will begin to see some kind of consensus emerge.

Yes, go ahead.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared to deploy American advisers, monitors, or troops on the Golan Heights to secure an Israeli-Syrian peace accord? Did you discuss that at all with President Asad and, if so, what was his response?

The President. We did not discuss it. So far, all the options being discussed by Syria and Israel do not entail that. The only time I ever even discussed it as a theoretical possibility was many years ago with the late Prime Minister Rabin. And it was clear to me, even then, that both sides were looking for a way to resolve this that would not require an international force including American troops there, and I think they are still trying to get that done.

Yes, John [John Cochran, ABC News].

Eliau Gonzalez

Q. A possible confrontation is looming between the relatives of Elian Gonzalez and Federal authorities. As a last resort, would you permit Federal authorities or some kind of Federal agents to go in there to forcibly take the boy so that he could be sent back to Cuba?

The President. Well, I think, surely, we are some distance from that because they have to—they will, doubtless—if they do not prevail in court, they will clearly appeal. And I would just hope that the law would be followed by everyone, including them. I think that there is a legal process here. I have done my best to avoid politicizing it. And I think that the appropriate authorities, in this case the judges, will make a decision. And when that is done, I think that the people on all sides should accept the rule of the court. And I—

Q. So the relatives realize that is an option?

The President. What do you mean?

Q. That marshals might have to come in there and say, "Release the boy."

The President. Well, that's—it's no more an option there than it is for anyone else who doesn't—who says, "I don't like the way the courts decide." I don't think they should be singled out. I don't think there should be any extra pressure put on them. But on the other hand, I think that they should observe the rule of law; just like if they prevail in court, the others should accept it. I have done my best not to overly politicize this, and I don't think we should. There is a legal process here. We ought to let it play out.

Yes, go ahead, Jim [Jim Angle, Fox News]. I'll take you both. Go ahead.

Senate Inaction on Nominations

Q. The Senate so far has not acted on two of your nominees to the Federal Reserve Board and shows no inclination to do so. A third slot is open as well. Do you have any realistic expectation of seeing action on that front this year, or will those slots be filled by your successor, whomever he may be?

The President. Well, I don't know. I hope that the Senate will continue to move forward on appointments. We had some success with judicial appointments recently. They are approving a smaller percentage of nominees than is customary when the President is of one party and the Senate majority is of another, and I think that is regrettable. But I have worked with the Senate, and I have consistently sent the appointments up there, for example, recommended by Republicans for Republican slots on various boards and commissions. And I hope we will have some progress there.

They are also holding up a couple of Ambassadors for reasons that are totally unrelated to the nominees or any objection that they have to their qualifications, and that's not good for America's foreign policy interests. So I hope we will continue to see—we will have some breaking of logjams the way we did on the judges just a few weeks ago.

Go ahead, Jim.

Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade County, Florida

Q. Mr. President, the mayor of Miami—back on the Elian Gonzalez case—the mayor of Miami said today that he would withhold any assistance from the city, including police, if Federal authorities decide to return Elian Gonzalez to Cuba. And if there were any violence in the streets, he would hold you and Attorney General Reno personally responsible for that.

That seems to sound like an invitation for the community to block Federal authorities and an assurance to them that the Miami police will stand aside.

The President. Well, I like the mayor very much, but I still believe in the rule of law here. We all have to—whatever the law is, whatever the decision is ultimately made, the rest of us ought to obey it.

National Rifle Association

Q. Mr. President, Charlton Heston is on the college speaking circuit. And he said last night, "It amazes me that the President is so stubborn when it comes to guns." And he notes that there are already 22,000 gun laws on the books by his count, which he says that the administration does not enforce.

Could you do more to enforce existing gun laws, and how do you feel about the attack that the NRA has mounted on you and your administration?

The President. Well, let me answer the question on the merits. Gun prosecutions are up under our administration. And I have asked in this budget for a significant increase to enforce the laws, including more prosecutors, more ATF agents.

But again, I would make the main point: The NRA's position is that if somebody does something wrong, throw the book at them, but do not have any preventive measures when it comes to guns. They believe that unlike every other area of our life, there should be no prevention. So they say—they didn't want us to have the Brady bill. They said it was too burdensome on people. But it hasn't been burdensome. They don't want us to close the gun show loophole. They say it's too burdensome.

They're not even for the research into smart gun technology or for banning large ammunition clips. There's a case where we have a law on the books that can't be effectively enforced. These assault weapons are illegal, but the ammunition clips, the big ammunition clips, can be imported because of a loophole in the law, so the law we have can't be effectively enforced.

And I think that it's just wrong to say that because of the second amendment or because there are a lot of people who like to hunt and sport shoot, that prevention plays no role in this.

How would you feel if I said, for example, the following: "You know, all these people that go through airport metal detectors, 99.999 percent of them are law-abiding, good people. And it is really a pain to go through those metal detectors if you've got a money clip in your pocket or a rodeo belt buckle on or something else, and you have to go through two or three times or take your belt off or whatever. It's just too burdensome, and I'm just sick and tired of it, and I'm going to take these metal detectors

down in the airports. And the next time a plane blows up, we're going to throw the book at them."

Now, you're laughing. But what if I said, "You know, most people who drive are good, honest, responsible people, and we should just—we ought to repeal the laws, the driver's license laws, and repeal the speed limits. And the next time somebody does something wrong and has a 25-car pileup, we'll just throw the book at them."

I mean, a sensible society has a balance between prevention and punishment. And when we put these 100,000 police out, a lot of people said that wouldn't work. But the truth is, the community policing program, I believe, has contributed more to lowering the crime rate by preventing people from committing crimes in the first place than even by catching them more quickly.

So all I can tell you is, I just disagree with that. And in terms of their attacks on me, you know, that's what I get hired to do. That's part of the President's job description, being attacked by people who disagree with him. That doesn't matter. I still think Charlton Heston's a great actor, and I love his movies—[laughter]—and I still watch him every time I get a chance. And I loved having him here at the White House not very long ago, when he got one of the Kennedy Center awards.

But that's irrelevant to me. The only question is, what is best for the safety of the American people? And guns are no different than any other area of our life. We need a balance between prevention and punishment.

Go ahead. Did you have a question? Go ahead, John [John King, Cable News Network] and then Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Privacy Act and the White House

Q. Mr. President, a Federal judge, with whom you have disagreed in the past, today said it was his opinion that you had committed a criminal violation of the Privacy Act by releasing those Kathleen Willey letters during the Independent Counsel investigation. What do you think of that ruling? And do you agree with the take of one of your legal advisors earlier today, who called this judge "a loose cannon"?

The President. Did one of my legal advisors do that? [Laughter] Well, he does seem to have somehow acquired a significant percentage of

the cases involving the White House. That's an interesting story.

But anyway, you know, obviously, we don't agree with the ruling. And I can say that when the decision was made to release those letters, I didn't even have any conversation with anybody about the Privacy Act. I never thought about it, never thought about whether it applied or not, and decided to do it reluctantly only because it was the only way I knew to refute allegations that were made against me that were untrue. And I think they plainly did that, and I would not have done it otherwise.

But I think in terms of the law, there are other reasons that I disagree with the law, with the idea that the Privacy Act, which was generally designed to protect people who had business with the Federal Government or were complaining about something that the Government was doing or had reasons for confidentiality in having to give the Government records—there were all kinds of reasons for the Privacy Act. And so I just don't believe that it—I think that the opinion of our counsel's office and many other judges who ruled on this is that that act does not apply to this kind of correspondence in the White House. And so we disagree, and we will proceed accordingly.

Yes, go ahead, and then Mark. Go ahead, Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters].

Gasoline Tax and Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, in light of the fact that OPEC has decided to increase production, do you see it as a mistake for the Senate to proceed with a bill that would suspend the gas tax? And if it reached your desk, would you veto it?

The President. I don't expect it to reach my desk because there seems to be bipartisan opposition to it in the House, including among the leadership. But the problem I have with it, apart from what it might do to the Highway Trust Fund and the spending obligations that have already been incurred by the acts of Congress—the budgets—is that I'm not sure that the savings would be passed along to the consumers, in addition to that.

So I think there are a lot of questions about it, but I don't expect it to pass. I do think, however, we shouldn't minimize the real bind that some Americans have already faced by these high fuel costs. For most of us who—of course, I don't drive myself anymore—but for most people who don't have to drive a long

way to work, it may seem an irritant but not a burden. But there are a lot of Americans who do have to drive a long way to work, who work for not very much money. And there are a lot of Americans who are in the trucking business who have been really, really hurt by this.

So I think we have to just keep our powder dry, keep our options open. But right now I think the prudent thing is to see how quickly these prices can come down with the increase in production, and for the House to reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We've got to have that reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. My authority even to use that, even as a possible option, expires on Friday. And it's very, very important for that to pass.

Go ahead, Mark.

United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair

Q. Mr. President, I wonder if you've got any thoughts or advice for your friend British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the dilemma that he faces—[laughter]—on whether he should take parental leave, as his wife has suggested, when their next child is born? And if you don't want to share your advice with us, what would you do in that situation? [Laughter]

The President. I would like to have been a fly on the wall when they first talked about that after it appeared in public. But you know, I feel very close to both Tony and Cherie. I don't want to get in the middle of that. [Laughter] But I think Mrs. Blair said that there must be a "third way" to handle this challenge. [Laughter] That's what she said, although I thought it was a good line.

First of all, I envy him very much. I think it's a great thing for them, and it'll keep them young. And it's a wonderful thing. You know, for me, even though Presidents have a very hard schedule—you know, we keep very long hours—you have some more flexibility with your time because we live above the store, so to speak. So I wouldn't have the same burdens, if we were having a baby. I could spend a lot of time with the baby and still work and work it out.

But I think that that's something they ought to work with. I do think that the Prime Minister's government did a good thing to try to provide fathers as well as mothers family leave, though. [Laughter] I think it's a good policy.

Yes, go ahead. Go ahead, Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, you are lobbying Congress to pass permanent trade relations for China. You're having a difficult time getting your own Democrats to vote for it. Vice President Gore has said even though he is for this agreement, if he was President he wouldn't negotiate trade deals like this; he would only negotiate trade deals that included labor and environmental standards. How is that stand of his complicating your efforts to convince Democrats to vote for this?

The President. It isn't, because if we were having a trade agreement with China, instead of an agreement on their accession to the WTO, we could do that. But keep in mind, I favor—I believe I was the first person in a national campaign ever to advocate the inclusion of labor and environmental provisions in trade agreements. And we put some in NAFTA. And we've gotten some good environmental improvements as a result of it. Even though there are still environmental problems along the Rio Grande River, a lot has been done. And there have been some labor standards improvements as a result of it in some places. So I know a lot of the people who wanted it aren't satisfied that we've done as much. But it was a really groundbreaking effort.

I went to the International Labor Organization in Switzerland and to the WTO and to Davos, Switzerland, to argue for a different approach to trade. I don't think you can take economics, in a global economy that is becoming increasingly globalized, and act as if it's totally separate from child labor or other abusive labor practices or what the impact of economic activity on the environment is.

That is not what this agreement is. I still believe if we can just get everybody to read what this agreement does, it will pass handily, because this agreement will create jobs for America. It will create jobs for labor union members. It will grow the economy. I will say again, in this—I mean, this is an agreement about the conditions under which China enters the WTO. The United States doesn't lower any tariffs. We don't change any trade laws. We do nothing. They have to lower tariffs. They open up telecommunications for investment. They allow us to sell cars made in America in China at much lower tariffs. They allow us to put our own distributorships over there. They

allow us to put our own parts over there. We don't have to transfer technology or do joint manufacturing in China anymore. This is a hundred-to-nothing deal for America when it comes to the economic consequences.

And most of what we have negotiated, we will absolutely lose the benefit of, if they go into the WTO and we don't approve normal permanent trade relations with them, what will happen is, all the work that Charlene Barshefsky and Gene Sperling did to get those concessions will go to Europe and Japan and all the people who didn't negotiate it. They'll get all the benefits, and we won't.

So the consequences, the economic consequences are quite clear and unambiguous for the United States. And so, I think to—and under the rules of the WTO, we couldn't impose different standards on their membership than were imposed on us or anyone else. See, that's the difference in this.

I agree with the Vice President. When he gets to be President—I believe he will be—he should continue to work harder on integrating a whole vision of the global economy that includes labor and environmental standards and the whole idea of what it will mean to be part of a global society in the 21st century. I think that's important.

But if people understand what this is, this is a vote on whether we will support their membership. And the only way we can do it—and that we will benefit from their membership. And the only way we can do it is if they get permanent normal trade relations. It is not like we had a bilateral trade agreement with China; that is not what this is about.

So if we were in bilateral negotiations, we could argue more strongly for certain agreements on, for example, climate change, because we'd be giving them something while they were giving us something. We're not giving up anything here. These are the terms of their membership, and it's a hundred-to-nothing deal for us. All we lose here is, if we reject it, we will lose economic opportunities we will regret for 20 years, and we'll hurt our national security interest.

Yes, go ahead, Susan [Susan Feeney, Dallas Morning News].

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Sir, could you comment on the Vice President's plan for a \$7 billion democracy endow-

ment to pay for congressional and perhaps Presidential campaigns?

The President. Yes, I thought it was a good idea. I kind of wish I thought of it myself. And I think—I'll tell you why I think it's a good idea, very briefly. I think you can't ever really solve the problem in campaign finance reform unless you have—because what is the problem? The problem is that it costs so much money to communicate with people over the mass media. So if you want to solve the problem, you either have to have a different source of funding, or there have to be requirements for free or drastically reduced media time. That's the problem. Otherwise, you're just sort of rearranging where the money comes from or how you do it.

I don't mean—I think McCain-Feingold is important, and let me reiterate what the Vice President said. His proposal should not be interpreted in any way as a reduction of the administration's support for McCain-Feingold. The Shays-Meehan bill, which is the partner bill, has already passed the House. Again, if we could bring it up to a vote in the Senate, it would pass the Senate. A minority is blocking it in the Senate. We can pass it in the Senate. And we ought to pass it, because it will do some real good.

But the thing I like about it is, the American people have reservations about public financing of campaigns. We even have some trouble with the dollar check-off for the Presidential campaigns. This proposes to give incentives to people to try to raise the money in a more voluntary fashion from non-tax sources. So if it could be done and if the trust fund could be filled up, I think it is actually quite a good idea.

Go ahead, John [John Harris, Washington Post].

Leadership in China

Q. Mr. President, when you finished your trip to China 2 years ago, you gave a news conference in Hong Kong in which you praised Chinese President Jiang Zemin as a visionary, a man of good will, and someone who was the right leadership at the right time for China. Since then, China's record on abusing human rights and threatening Taiwan has, of course, continued to be quite checkered. I wonder if today you still think Jiang's leadership still deserves that praise you gave it, or if your judgment today would have to be more severe?

The President. Well, I still think, given the alternatives of who could have been the President of China, that I'm aware of, and who could have been the Premier, I think that President Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji are the best team that could have been in their positions at that time.

As you know, I generally strongly disagree with the Chinese view that to preserve stability in their society, they have to repress political and sometimes religious activists to the extent that they do. I think that's wrong. And there have been several cases in the last couple of years that have deeply disappointed me.

I know that China has a historic—almost a phobia of internal disintegration because of the problems that they faced in the last—if you just take the last 100 years, problems that our society has never faced. I know that they say that to some extent their cultural views are not as oriented toward individual rights and liberties as ours are. But I believe that the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is a universal document, and I believe it should be observed, and that's why we voice our disagreements with China every year. And so I don't like that.

And I hope that—I will say again, I hope that we will see a lessening of tensions across the Taiwan Straits. I support the "one China" policy. But part of our "one China" policy is that the differences between China and Taiwan must be resolved by dialog, and I feel very strongly about it.

But having said all that, I still believe that, given the available alternatives of which I am aware, these two men have been the best team that was available for China. And I think this decision they've made to join the WTO is a decision basically to modernize China in ways that will go far beyond the economy. I think it will lead—when you get all this telecommunications revolution permanently manifest in China, they will not be able to control the Internet; they will not be able to control access to information; they will not be able to control freedom of expression. It will become a more free country and a more open country. And that is a very, very good thing. That's another big reason we ought to sign onto this, because we ought to be a part of their opening. There will be more openness in the next 5 years, if China enters the WTO and all the telecommunications revolution hits at full force, than there

has been in the last 20 years, since Deng Xiaoping started this.

Yes, go ahead.

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to return to campaign finance reform, if I could. Vice President Gore, in announcing his proposal, called himself an imperfect messenger on that subject. Isn't that an acknowledgement, sir, of something you and he have long denied, that there was an attempt to bend, if not break, the spirit, if not the letter, of campaign finance laws during your reelection campaign?

The President. No, I disagree with that. He said—he has never said that he knew that any of the money that he raised was not lawfully raised. And I don't believe he did. And I can certainly tell—you look at the difference in the way we reacted in 1996 and the way the other party reacted to allegations of illegal foreign money, for example.

What did we do? We spent \$4 million, that we had to go out and raise, to put all these records on computer disks, to give it all to the Justice Department, to make sure that everything was there. There was no slow-walking, no stonewalling, no nothing. I was outraged when I found out that the system for checking the backgrounds of contributors and things like that had been dismantled without my knowledge or approval.

And I did not do all that work. And keep in mind, you mentioned '96—we didn't have—we raised the funds we needed for my Presidential reelection in 7 months. And I believe—you can go check this—but I have been told that ever since the campaign finance laws came in, in the seventies, that we had the smallest number of violations and fines of any Presidential campaign, the Clinton/Gore '96 campaign did.

So—I know those funds were raised through the party, but I was as appalled as the next person when I found out that we had taken funds, that people had given us money that wasn't legal. We didn't need it to win. It was wrong, and we did everything we could to try to correct it and set it right. And we spent a lot of money doing it.

And so I think what he meant is that he had been involved in one incident which he felt was unfortunate, and we raised soft money.

And we've done it aggressively because we don't believe in unilateral disarmament.

But I would just point out that 100 percent of our caucus, the Democratic caucus in the Senate and the House—100 percent of us—and the White House, the whole Democratic Party in Washington, DC, support the McCain-Feingold bill. So if it had been up to us, it would have been law years ago. And I think that's worth something.

So I think he's a good messenger. You know, I think he was showing a little humility, and I think that's always a good thing. We're all flawed in some way or another. But I think that, you know, he passionately believes this. And he worked very hard to come up with not only our support for McCain-Feingold, and his, but some way to build on it to solve the real problem.

The thing that I worry about, for example, in addition to—you know, most of you are concerned about the large contributions and the soft money. But something else, I think, that should concern you—not so much for me, because I have—it's easy for me to get around, and I have great living conditions here, and the Vice President does. But it bothers me that Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate have to spend the time they have to spend raising the funds for their campaign. And the wear and tear on them, getting on those airplanes, you know, once or twice a week, all the time, when frankly, I think, if they were home resting, you know, reading good books, spending time with their families—you're laughing. This is a serious deal.

You think about it. This is a significant cost to our political system, that these people have to spend the time they have to spend to raise the funds required to wage their campaigns. It wears them out, and I worry about them. You know, this is a hard enough job. And I really believe that Congress would function better if they didn't have to spend this much time. So that's another reason that I support not only McCain-Feingold, but I think that this idea of the Vice President's, or something like this that would alleviate the burden of spending so much time, I think the American people would get a lot better Government, and the Members of Congress would get a lot more sleep.

George [George Condon, Copley News Service].

China-U.S. Relations/Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, back on China for a second. This morning the Chinese told Sandy Berger that U.S.-Chinese relations were at a critical juncture. Do you agree that things are critical right now? And also, you mentioned your continued support for a "one China" policy. Do you envision any circumstances in which you could support Taiwanese independence?

The President. Well, first, I think they're at a critical stage primarily because of this—of the China-WTO decision before the Congress. And secondly, I think that they would be at a critical stage if we were to abandon our "one China" policy.

But you know, we made an agreement with the Chinese a long time ago. When we normalized relations under President Carter, after a period of years of developing them, starting with President Nixon's historic trip there, it has been the unanimous bipartisan position of every President and every administration that that was the right decision. It has also been, to this point, the position of all elected leaders in Taiwan.

I remember, I was there as a Governor in 1986 at their Tientien Day celebration, and they had a map of China which showed Taiwan being a part of China, too, even though they had the political tilt the other way.

And I think that they have so much to gain from each other. I mean, the investment of Taiwanese in China, for example, as you know, is enormous. And if they just keep talking, they'll work this out. They'll find a way to work this out. The Chinese have been quite clear that they were willing to be patient and to negotiate an arrangement which might even be different from that in Hong Kong. And I think that Taiwan's got a lot going for it. And I don't think either one of them needs this crisis right now.

So I just think they need to—and I've been very impressed by the President-elect in Taiwan and the way he's handled this since his election, what he's had to say. And he seems to be quite well aware of the weighty responsibility he now has and the great opportunity he has. And so I just think they need—this is a big issue. They need to get together, start the dialog again, and figure out where to go from here.

But if you look at the future that awaits the Chinese and that is already embracing the Taiwanese, you know, they have huge market percentage globally in a lot of the various components of the computer industry, for example—huge. And I just don't think they want a political problem to take all that away from their people. And they'll find a way to do it. They need to stick with this framework and find a way to get their dialog going again.

Yes, go ahead.

Chelsea Clinton

Q. Although not unprecedented in history, it's unusual for a President's child to have such an important limelight as Chelsea had during your state visit to the Asian subcontinent. With the First Lady fully engaged in New York, will we be seeing more of Chelsea? Did she express an interest to make more state visits with you, sir? How do you think she did?

The President. Well, I think—she's like Hillary and me. All three of us, I think, we want to savor the weeks and months we have ahead in this, our last year. And I told her that if she could take time off from school, I'd like for her to go with me on some of these trips.

I was—I think she was kind of taken aback by the attention she got in India, in particular. And I think it was because she had been there with her mother before, and they had both made a very favorable impression in Bangladesh and India and Pakistan. So—but I think she was quite surprised by it, and I don't think she sought it out in any way.

But you know, when your child grows up—I think any parent with a grown child can identify with this—you're always sort of pleasantly surprised when they still want to hang around with you a little. And it's a wonderful thing. So for me, it is just a personal thing. And any time I can be with her, I want to be with her.

Yes, go ahead.

White House E-Mail

Q. Mr. President, it was reported today that the White House had a computer disk with Monica Lewinsky's E-mails. Sir, what do you think about the notion that it wasn't turned over sooner, and how would you assess your administration's overall handling of E-mail problems at the White House?

The President. I don't know it, but I believe that was known years ago. I believe that. I don't—I don't—I don't handle the E-mail things. I can tell you this: my Counsel, Beth Nolan, is going up to the Hill, I think tomorrow, to talk about this. I believe that it is accurate to say that we had turned over everything that had been found, and from what I understand, some things were not found because they were in a different system. So now we're working out how to cooperate with the Congress.

But my Counsel will talk about it tomorrow, and I'm confident that whatever is the right thing to do, we will do.

Yes, go ahead.

"American Beauty"/Youth Violence

Q. It's coming up on the year anniversary of Columbine, and around this time last year, you had a summit at the White House where you talked not only about the gun aspect of violence but also the cultural aspect in our society of it. And considering that we just had a movie sweep the Academy Awards that had a pretty violent ending, I wondered whether you felt the entertainment industry has made much progress in this area?

The President. Well, first of all, I certainly don't believe that movie glorified violence. I have never suggested that we should have movies that—as long as there is a good ratings system—movies that didn't have violence, which is part of a normal theme.

I thought it was an astonishing movie, actually. And I certainly don't think anyone who watched it and understood it would think of it as glorifying violence. I think it would be—I think a lot of the tragedy and fear that is behind people who misuse guns would be apparent there. And so I think, if anything, it was an antiviolenence movie.

I think that some progress is being made. I think that there are still problems with whether the ratings systems make sense and make sense in relations to one another, between the movies, the TV programs, and the ones that are being developed for the Internet—I mean, the video games. And I just—I think there are still some improvements that need to be made.

I know that Hillary said that she thought there ought to be a uniform system, and I think that that would—if it could be made more uniform, more simple, more understandable, I think that would make a difference. And I still

think there is too much gratuitous violence produced in entertainment. But I don't think that applies, that's a fair criticism of "American Beauty."

Let me say this. Since the year, though, since you mention that, the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, with our Executive Director, Jeff Bleich, has done a lot of work, and they're doing a lot of work on city-by-city efforts and efforts by specific sectors of the community and dealing with all these aspects. So there's quite a lot of vigorous involvement. We've even got a Youth Advisory Council now, and they're working.

So I've been pleased by what they're doing, and I hope we can get a lot more people involved in it in my last year here. And then when I leave, I hope that the new administration will take this up and keep it going, obviously with whatever personnel they choose. But I hope this will become a permanent fixture of the National Government's efforts as well as the council we have within the Federal Government to work on this until the youth violence rate goes way down. There's just tons of work to do.

Yes, go ahead.

Situation in Kosovo

Q. A question, please, about Kosovo. A short while ago, a senior Pentagon official was quoted as saying we're at ground zero in terms of building a better and more secure society over there. And there have been some instances that suggest U.S. troops are coming into more danger. How does it appear that this situation will be in the future, more dangerous, less dangerous? What are the stakes for us now?

The President. Well, first, I think that there clearly are still deep-seated aversions in the Serbian and Kosovar-Albanian communities for each other. There is a lot of fear, a lot of mistrust, a lot of hatred. There is continuing activity of which we do not approve by some radical elements in the Kosovar-Albanian community. There is some evidence that the Serbs may be trying to work a little mischief in the northern part of Kosovo.

But the main problem is, those people were oppressed for a decade, and then they were all run out of their country. And there is still a lot of bad blood, and it's not going to go away in a year or two. But I think that the international community did a very good job

of sending the soldiers in. But we have to do more.

And I've been on the phone quite a lot about this, by the way, in the last, oh, month or so, trying to make sure that all of us get our money there on time and that we get more police there. We've offered more police, and many of the European countries have, as well. We need more civilian police there, and then we need to make sure that the money flowing to Mr. Kouchner at the U.N. Mission flows in a timely fashion so that people can be paid and that the civil institutions can get up and going.

But you know, this takes time. I remember, when we started in Bosnia, people thought it would never get any better, and it's better. And there's still problems, but it's better. This is not going to be done shortly.

But I would say this: I would urge the Congress to pass both the military and the non-military components of the Kosovo supplemental request, because if we want the Europeans to do their part—and they are; I must say, in the last month or so they have really geared up the speed with which they are moving their investments into Kosovo—then we're going to have to do our part.

But you know, we have to find ways to get people, first of all, to accept living normal lives, to provide basic protections, and then to get used to, in halting steps, living and working together. And this is not easy, but it can be done.

And when I think of the other peace processes in which I have been involved, most of them really take hold after people have lived with the insanity of their previous position so long that they are tired of it, they are bored with it, and they are willing to lay down their hatred and hurt. And we're still at a point where, in Kosovo, a lot of people are carrying their hatred and hurt around, and a lot of others seek political advantage over it.

All I can tell you is I think we did the right thing to go in there and let those people go back home. I think it's better than it would have been if we hadn't gone in there. And I think we are just going to have to work like crazy to try to make it work. I never thought it would be easy, but I do think it's possible.

Yes. Go ahead.

Energy Policy

Q. Mr. President, tomorrow on the Hill, Republicans will accuse you of a failed energy policy when we look at America's continued dependence on foreign oil. Even a Member of the Democratic Senate says that not enough has been done, that we have grown complacent.

And when you look at the popularity of sport utility vehicles in this country, sir, have you done enough, both practically and psychologically, to promote the idea of weaning this country off of fossil fuels?

The President. Well, maybe not. But I've done a lot more than the Congress has. And I think it is ironic that they would say that, since for years now I have been pleading with them to give us some more tools to promote the development of alternative fuels and to promote both the manufacture and the purchase of energy-saving technologies.

You know, I have talked until I was blue in the face about this for years, and a lot of times it's like you're alone in the forest and no one hears you. I felt like the tree falling in the forest. If no one hears it, did it fall and make a sound? You know, I—maybe we should do more, but maybe now people will be listening more.

Of course, different Members have different takes on it. Some Members think we ought to have more oil production at home, and for some Members, that means we ought to have oil production offshore in places we don't have it now. But if you look at all of our proven reserves, I don't think anyone really believes that we can become more energy independent unless we become more energy efficient and develop more alternative fuels. That is the long-term answer here. And believe me, if the Congress—if any Member of Congress of either party wants to do more on that and is ready to do more than I have done in the past and ready to advocate something beyond what I've advocated in the past, I will be the first person to applaud that person. And I will work with them in any way, shape, or form I can.

I hope very much that this is a little bit of a wakeup call for all of us and that we can put this on the front burner and get some action. And I think—I am like everyone else—after you say something several times and you look like you're not going to make any progress on it, you tend to go on to something where

you can make progress. And it was hard to get people interested in it, especially when oil prices dropped to \$12 a barrel. And I think—I hope this has been a sobering experience for the American people and for all of us and that we can now do more. And I'm certainly prepared to do more and prepared to give others the credit for taking the lead. I don't care about that. And what we should—we can do a lot, a lot.

Again, let me just review one or two of the things that I said in the State of the Union, just very briefly. We are reasonably close, I believe—most of the scientists I've talked to think that we're reasonably close to cracking what I would call the fuel-to-biofuel conversion problem. If you, for example, if you want to produce ethanol today, it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make about 8 gallons of ethanol. You wind up a little ahead, but not much. Scientists believe that if we can unlock the chemical problem that is analogous to cracking the crude oil molecule that made gasoline possible, we can get down to a conversion ratio of 1 gallon of gasoline for 8 gallons of ethanol. If you do that and then we get 80-mile-a-gallon cars, you're looking at 500 miles to the gallon, in effect. So that's important.

I have done everything I can, and the Vice President has taken the lead on this partnership for new-generation vehicles, where we've worked quietly now for over 7 years to work with the auto companies to develop high-mileage vehicles, vehicles that run on electricity that have self-regenerating batteries, so you don't have to pull in every 80 or 90 or 100 miles to recharge them, or dual-fuel-use vehicles that are beginning to come on the market.

Now, on the sports utility vehicles, I think, you know, the American people, they want to drive those vehicles. They like those big vehicles. But if they're going to drive them, we're either going to have to find a way for them to get better mileage or run on alternative fuels over the long run. And I think we will be able to do that.

In the—and let me just give you one other example. I don't want to beat a dead horse, but one of my proposals was to give tax incentives for the manufacturers and to purchasers—for consumers—to buy certain energy-efficient materials. The National Home Builders has worked with HUD and the Energy Department to build lower cost housing for working people

on modest incomes in various places that cut the fuel bills by 40 to 60 percent, just by using better insulation, new solar panels that look just like ordinary shingles on roofs, and glass that lets in more light and keeps out more heat and cold.

These things are out there now, and we just need to increase the percentage of people that are using them. If you can afford the right kind of light bulb, which may cost you 2½ times as much, it'll burn 4 or 5 times longer and can save a ton of greenhouse gas emissions just over the life of a big light bulb.

So there are lots of things we can do, but we need to create some markets for doing this. And there hasn't been a lot of interest in it, I think, probably since the high prices of the seventies. But even at modest oil prices, the profits are there if we can just highlight this. So I hope—I will say this: I think I should do more. I hope I can do more. But I'd like their help to do more, as well.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 189th news conference began at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; former President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; Representative Richard Gephardt; Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and Bernard Kouchner, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Memorandum on Continued Commitment to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program

March 29, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Continued Commitment to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program, named for its legislative sponsors, is a Federal initiative that generates employment and training for more than 34,000 people who are blind or who have other significant disabilities. These individuals, working in more than 600 nonprofit agencies associated with the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) or with NISH (a national nonprofit agency that serves persons with a wide range of disabilities), furnish supplies and services to the Federal Government under the JWOD Program.

In recent years, the JWOD Program has faced numerous challenges as the Federal acquisition system has evolved in ways not envisioned even a decade ago. Today, for example, hundreds of thousands of Federal employees buy goods with purchase cards. Electronic commerce is expand-

ing rapidly and commercial firms deliver goods previously stocked and distributed by Federal agencies. These and other procurement reforms have created a more direct relationship between commercial vendors and their Federal customers. Participants in the JWOD Program are taking steps to adjust to these and other changes in the Federal procurement environment, but the transition is a dynamic and far-reaching process that requires strong support from Government customers.

As I have stated on numerous occasions, the unemployment rate for adults with disabilities is unacceptably high. We cannot afford to lose any opportunities for this segment of our population. I call upon you to recognize the contributions made to the Federal Government by individuals with disabilities under the JWOD Program and to take steps to ensure that your agencies' procurement executives, and other employees who acquire supplies for your agency, purchase JWOD products and services, consistent with existing law. Their support for the JWOD

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Program will help people with significant disabilities become and remain more independent and productive members of society. It is particularly important to encourage those entrusted with Federal purchase cards to be vigilant in continuing to purchase the reasonably priced products and services (including SKILCRAFT items) supplied through the JWOD Program.

The JWOD Program also provides many recycled content, environmentally preferable, and energy efficient products. The purchase of these items would enable the Federal Government to continue its leadership of the “greening of the

government” initiative while invigorating the JWOD Program.

Representatives of the Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled (the Federal entity responsible for the JWOD Program), NIB, or NISH will contact your procurement staff in the near future to explore steps that your agency can take to increase support for the JWOD Program at this critical juncture.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative James E. Clyburn in Columbia, South Carolina

March 29, 2000

Well, it’s certainly a relief, after this long trip I just took from Washington to India and Bangladesh and Pakistan and Switzerland, to be with such a laid-back crowd tonight. [Laughter] I’ll tell you, I don’t know how many people said to me tonight, “You must be so tired.” If I had been tired, I’d be so pumped after this, I may not sleep for 3 more days. [Laughter] I want to thank you all for the wonderful welcome. I want to thank the young people who performed for us tonight, and I want to thank all of you who brought your children tonight, to remind us of why we’re really all here.

I want to say to you, Bishop, Mrs. Adams, I am honored to be here with you. We’ve been friends a long time, since before I was President, and I’ve heard you give a lot of talks, and you get better every time you do it. [Laughter] I want to thank the first AME bishop I ever knew, Bishop Fred James, who is out here, my longtime friend. Thank you very much, my good friend.

Dr. Waddell, thank you for having us here at Allen University. I want to say a special word of appreciation to Dick Harpootlian, who—he and Pam, they did have me down here 8 years ago, and I had a wonderful time, and he’s been a great chairman of this party. I want to thank Don Fowler for his leadership of the Democratic National Committee, for being here with me tonight.

I thank Bob and Beth Coble. And I’m glad to see that Mayor Riley made it upstate a little tonight. We’re glad to see you, too; thank you. And thank you, Bob, for coming out to the airport to meet me and always making me feel so welcome in Columbia.

I want to thank some of my old friends who are here: Dwight Drake, whom I’ve known now more than 20 years; and thank you, McKinley Washington, for being one of my cochairs in 1992 when even my mother wasn’t sure I could be elected President. I want to thank Inez Tenenbaum and Jim Lander for being here. And I want to thank Governor Bob McNair; thank you for being here. And Governor John West, also my friend of more than 20 years, thank you for being here.

I want to say, I might have been the happiest non-South Carolinian in the entire United States of America when Jim Hodges was elected Governor in 1998. When he filed, Erskine Bowles and his wife, Crandal, told me that he would be elected. And I got so used to Republicans winning down here, I have to admit I was a Doubting Thomas. But they turned out to be right, and it’s been good for South Carolina. And he and Rachel have really brought dignity and direction to the Governor’s office.

And let me say that I am so delighted to be here for Jim Clyburn. You know, when the Governor was building Jim up, I was sitting

there talking to Emily, and she said, "You know, I'm going to have to talk to Jim after this introduction. He might get to believing all that stuff." [Laughter]

I have to tell you that even though he told that golf joke, I still like Jim Clyburn. [Laughter] And I respect him. And I wish all of you could see him operate in Washington, and I say that in a complimentary way. But he has such a good, reassuring way of doing his business.

When the freshman class in 1992—you know, he was elected when I was, so we went there together, but unlike me, he's not term-limited, so he can stay—he goes in 1992, and the freshman class of that year elected him the class president. First thing he did was to propose sharing his term with Representative Eva Clayton from North Carolina, to pay homage to the fact that it was the year of the woman. That's the kind of thing that he does that is genuine and generous and also smart. [Laughter] This guy didn't fall off the truck yesterday. [Laughter].

He's got a way of standing up for what he believes in and still working to build consensus. That's how he became the unanimous choice to head the Congressional Black Caucus. And he's even trying to use his ability to build consensus to resolve this bitter debate over the Confederate flag.

You know, I know everybody expects me to say something about that. I just want to say this: I was, a couple of Sundays ago, I went to Selma, Alabama, for the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. And my mother-in-law said it was the best talk I ever gave. And I told her, it's because I'd been waiting all my life to give it. I was there with John Lewis and Hosea Williams and Mrs. King and Reverend Jackson, and Dick Gregory came back. Hosea Williams got up out of his wheelchair; we walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge together. And I said then all I have to say about this, that as long as the waving symbol of one American's pride is the shameful symbol of another American's pain, we still have bridges to cross in our country, and we'd better go on and get across them.

I very much agree with what Governor Hodges said when he said there is a new South Carolina. And I began to see it when I came here in 1991 and 1992 and in all the times since. I saw it when Jim Clyburn was elected. I saw it when Jim Hodges was elected. I saw it in the dialog you've had on issues of racial

and religious tolerance. I see it in the commitment you're made to education. I see it in the ratification of the leadership Jim has given on everything from supporting the vital mission of historically black colleges and universities to maintaining affirmative action to promoting economic development for all his constituents.

He is one of the sponsors, as he said, of my new markets initiative. It's a simple little idea, really. We've been sitting around thinking about, for months, how can we keep this economic growth going without inflation, number one; and number two, how can we do something to get the benefits of this economic recovery to the people and places that have been left behind?

We may have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, but there's still some people left behind. In my State, and I'll bet you in this State, there are still some counties with unemployment rates that are twice the national average. In the Mississippi Delta, where I come from, or in the Rio Grande Valley or in some of the inner-city neighborhoods from New York to Los Angeles, there are still people and places that have been left behind.

Jim and I were talking tonight coming in here about the trip we took and how he went with me and we both saw Mount Rushmore for the first time at night when they turn the lights on. It was one of the most breathtaking experiences I think either one of us have ever had. And almost in the shadow of Mount Rushmore, there is the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the home of the Lakota Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent.

So we were thinking, well, guess what? It would be not only good to give people who are dying to work and aren't part of this deal yet a chance to do it, it would not only be the morally right thing to do, it would be good economics, because if you make new businesses and new employees and new taxpayers at the same time you're making new consumers, it's by definition noninflationary growth.

So our idea with this new markets initiative is pretty simple. It is that we ought to give American investors with money the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia or any other place around the world. So I thank Jim for his leadership there, for the work he's done for the South

Carolina Heritage Corridor or the—something that he really believes in that I thought was great.

I signed the bill that he sponsored to protect the airline whistle-blowers. If you ride the airplanes a lot, you'll appreciate that. [Laughter] And he said that Vice President Gore signed the bill—I mean, voted for the bill, cast the tie-breaking vote that passed the '93 Budget Act, which began all this marvelous expansion. That's true. But so did he, because we didn't have a vote to spare in either place, because we couldn't get any Republicans to help us. So thank you, Jim Clyburn, for bringing the America economy back and for sticking with us.

I would like to say a word of greeting to you from three people who aren't here. The first is the best Secretary of Education this country ever had, Dick Riley, who is in China tonight.

The second is Vice President Gore. We were together yesterday when we hosted the President of Egypt. And I used to complain, because he'd get to do things like this. When I was—before, whenever I was running or being President, they've never let me come to State party events. They'd always say, "Well, you know, Al gets to do that." And it really used to steam me. [Laughter] So I told him yesterday, I said, "You know where I'm going tomorrow night? I'm going to South Carolina. Eat your heart out." [Laughter] And he said, "Well, tell them not to forget me." So I did. And you shouldn't. You shouldn't.

And I thank you for the wonderful round of applause you gave to Hillary when the bishop mentioned that I'm trying to get into the Senate spouses club. [Laughter] She's in California tonight, and I'm flying back, and we're going to spend tomorrow in New York together. But I'm very proud of her for what she's done as First Lady and for doing what she's doing now, and I thank you for that.

I want to say just a couple of words seriously, and then I'll let you go. You've been patient, and I know you're probably tired. But I don't get to come here very much, and Jim said, "Just give them a whole dose tonight, will you?"

I got tickled, you know, when the bishop said—he talked about how mad the Republicans got at me all the time. I was glad he told me why. [Laughter] You know, I always thought I was a pretty nice fellow. I've been sitting around here for 7½ years trying to figure out—

he reminded me of the story—you know about the story about this guy's walking along the edge of the Grand Canyon, just an ordinary guy, a good guy, and he—looking over the side, and he slips off. And he's hurtling down to his certain demise. And he looks out on the edge of the Canyon, and he sees this little plant, and he grabs onto it, and it breaks his fall. And he just sighs relief. Then, all of a sudden, the roots of the plant start slowly coming out of the side of the cavern. He looks up in the sky, and he says, "God, why me? I am a good man. I work hard. I pay my taxes. I take care of my kids. I contribute to my community. I have done everything in the world I'm supposed to do. Why me?" And this thunderous voice comes out of the sky and says, "Son, just something about you I don't like." [Laughter] Well, I've had a few days like that in Washington. [Laughter] But now that the bishop explained it to me, you know, I feel better about it.

And I thank you for what you said about my knowing the lyrics to "Lift Every Voice and Sing." A couple years ago when I was in a—Toni Morrison, the Nobel Prize-winning author, said that I had become America's first black President. [Laughter] And you know, Chris Tucker is making a movie in which he plays the first black President. So he came to the White House, and I sat him down at my desk, and he was feeling pretty good. And I said, "Eat your heart out. You're second." [Laughter] "Toni Morrison told me so."

Then the next week, a man named Miguel Loisel, who is a great friend of mine from Puerto Rico, introduced me, and he said I had a Latino soul. And then I went to Turkey, and I went to see all these earthquake victims, and I picked up this little baby. And the baby squeezed me on my nose real hard, and it was in every newspaper in Turkey—this kid squeezing my nose. And so the headline said that "He's a Turk." [Laughter] And I thought to myself, I'll never be able to go home to Ireland if this keeps up. What am I going to do? [Laughter]

But I want to say a couple of things seriously about that. I think it is so interesting that at this time of unparalleled prosperity and at a time when, because of the nature of the economy we're living in, we can, if we're smart, bring technology and science and wealth to people and places that have never had it before. I was in a little village in India a week ago, a little village in a country where the per capita

income is \$450 a year. And in this little village, I met with the city government, representing all the different tribes and castes, women as well as men, in a society that never had such a thing before, people elected, governing together.

And then I met with this women's dairy cooperative, and I watched these women, poor village women in India, every transaction they have now recorded in a computer that they get a receipt from and they can operate. And then I went into the little municipal building in this remote village in India, and I saw they had a computer there with a screen that you could work if you could speak English or Hindi or if you were virtually illiterate, because of the way the software was constructed. And I saw a woman come in there who just had a baby. And on this computer, she was able to get all of the kinds of instructions of what she should do with her child the first few months of life, and then she printed it out and took it home with her, stuff that would be unheard of in a society like that just a few years ago.

And all these things that are out there. In the next few years, you'll be able to drive a car that gets 80 miles a gallon. And if we can crack the chemical barrier to converting agricultural products, not just corn, maybe rice hulls, other kinds of waste products, into fuel, you may be able to get the equivalent of 500 miles per gallon of gasoline in no time at all.

We're going to release in the next several weeks the whole sequencing of the human genome, 3 billion elements, 80,000 segments. And within a few years, they will figure out how to prevent older people from getting Alzheimer's, how to cure cancer, how to find it when it's just a few cells, no metastasis. They'll be able to give young mothers sort of a roadmap of their baby's lives when they leave from the hospital. So if the little baby girl has one of the genes that's a high predictor of breast cancer, they'll be able to say, "Well, if you do these 10 things, you can reduce the risk by two-thirds or more." All these things are going to happen in this very modern world.

When I became President, there were 50 sites—50—on the World Wide Web. Today, there are 50 million—7 years. I've got a cousin in Arkansas that plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia—amazing. And don't you think it's interesting that all over the world, in the face of all this opportunity and all these

modern things, that the biggest problems of the world are the oldest problems of human nature? Man, this flag controversy here, you shouldn't be surprised by how tough this has been. Why are the Catholics and Protestants still fussing in Northern Ireland? Why did the Orthodox Christians run the Albanian Muslims out of Kosovo, a million of them? Why did 800,000 people in Rwanda get killed in a tribal war in 100 days with no guns, practically? They were almost all hacked to death. And I could go on and on and on. Why can't we make peace in the Middle East? Obviously, if they would all quit fighting and figure out how to divide up the land and go to work on economics and education—both the Jews and the Arabs of the Middle East have a history of success in areas that are most rewarded in this economy.

I just came from the Indian subcontinent where India and Pakistan are two of the poorest countries in the world, but they've got to have nuclear weapons and increase their defense budgets by 20 percent so they can argue about Kashmir. And you come to America, we've got 200 ethnic groups in this country, and the Indians and the Pakistanis in this country—of the 200 ethnic groups in this country—rank in the top 5 in education and per capita income. If they could just let it go, there's nothing they couldn't do.

Now, I think the South has got something to teach the rest of the country and to help our country teach the rest of the world. We've got to let this go. And if we can—and I know, you know, you say, "Well, it's easy for you to say, but look, everybody's got a beef in life."

I'll tell you, one of the most meaningful conversations I ever had in my life was with Nelson Mandela, who has been a wonderful friend to me and to Hillary and especially to our daughter. And I remember one time, you know, after I got to know him, I said, "You know, Mr. President, you're a very great man with a great spirit and all that, but you're also a shrewd politician," kind of like what I was saying about Jim. You know, he is a good guy, but the stuff he does makes sense, too. And I said, "That was pretty smart of you to have your jailers come to the Inauguration and all of that, but let me ask you something." I said, "Didn't you really hate them for what they did?" He said, "Oh, yeah, I hated them for a long time." He said, "I stayed alive on hate for 12 years. I broke rocks every day, and I stayed alive on

hate.” And he said, “They took a lot away from me. They took me away from my wife, and it subsequently destroyed my marriage. They took me away from seeing my children grow up. They abused me mentally and physically. And one day,” he said, “I realized they could take it all except my mind and my heart.” He said, “Those things I would have to give to them, and I simply decided not to give them away.”

And so—so I said to him, I said, “Well, what about when you were getting out of prison?” I said, “The day you got out of prison in 1990, it was Sunday morning, and I got my daughter up early in the morning, and I took her down to the kitchen, and I turned on the television, and she was just a little girl then, and I sat her up on the kitchen counter. And I said, ‘Chelsea, I want you to watch this. This is one of the most important things you’ll ever see in your life.’”

And I said, “I watched you walk down that dirt road to freedom.” I said, “Now, when you were walking down there, and you realized how long you had been in their prison, didn’t you hate them then? Didn’t you feel some hatred?” He said, “Yes, I did a little bit.” He said, “I felt that.” And he said, “Frankly, I was kind of afraid, too, because I hadn’t been free in so long.” But he said, “As I felt the anger rising up, I thought to myself, ‘They have already had you for 27 years. And if you keep hating them, they’ll have you again.’ And I said, ‘I want to be free.’ And so I let it go. I let it go.”

And you know, that’s what I tried to tell the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs and the other minorities that I met with in Kosovo recently. I said, “Look, you know, I brought you guys home, but I can’t make you behave now that you’re here. And you do have a gripe. You’ve seen murder and slaughter, and you were all uprooted. And then the others, they have their gripes because, in retaliation, things have been done to them.” I said, “What you’ve got to understand is that everybody in life has got a beef, a real one. Some of them are truly horrible, but you’ve just got to let it go.”

Now, what’s the point of all this? If God came to me tonight and he said, “I’m not going to give you 8 years. You’ve just got one more day, and then you’ve got to check out. And I’m no genie. I’m not giving you three wishes. I’ll just give you one.” I would not wish for all these programs that I talked about in the

State of the Union. I would just wish simply for us to be one America, because if we could work together, the rest of it would take care of itself. It would take care of itself.

And I’ll leave you with this thought. When we celebrated, last month, America being in the longest economic expansion in history, I felt very humble. I felt so grateful that what we had done had made a contribution, and it had worked, and that it had been my great good fortune to be President at this time, see 21 million people get jobs and all of that.

And so I got interested in when the last longest expansion in American history was. Do you know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, here’s the point I want to make. All the southerners of a certain age can identify with this. Every veteran from the Vietnam war can identify with this. Everybody who opposed the Vietnam war can identify with this.

Nineteen sixty-four, up until that time the most prosperous year in American history, I graduated from high school. My President was Lyndon Johnson. I was heartbroken when President Kennedy was killed, like most Americans were. But Johnson had taken over this country and pulled us together. He was a southerner with a passionate commitment to civil rights. And in 1964, this country had low inflation, high growth, low unemployment. And everybody thought it was going to go on forever, I’m telling you. We thought, moreover, that the civil rights problems would be solved in the Congress and in the courts, not in the streets. We thought we would win the cold war as a matter of course. And if anybody told you that we would become mired in Vietnam and divided, no one would have believed it—1964—and we were just all kind of relaxed about it.

Two years later, we had riots in the streets. Two years later, I was graduating from college. The day I graduated from college was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, and 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn’t run for President anymore because this country was split right down the middle over the war in Vietnam. And then our cities started burning after Dr. King was killed. And we had a Presidential election based on what the winner, Mr. Nixon, called the Silent Majority.

Now, that was one of those “us” versus “them” elections, the kind of stuff I saw in the Republican primary down here. You know

what the—the Silent Majority means if you're not with them, you're in the loud minority. That's what I was; I was in the loud minority. But it was "us" versus "them."

Now, we southerners are well-schooled in this sort of politics, aren't we? We were raised with it. But the point I want to make to you is, people thought they could just indulge themselves in those few good years in the 1960's. It was going to go on forever. And within 2, 3, 4 years, it was gone. Poof.

So we had our "us" versus "them" election in 1968. Within a few months, the economic recovery was over. And the country went through all those divisive elections, all of that economic turmoil, all that social division.

And look, I want you to listen to this. I'm not going to be President anymore, after this election. I'm telling you this as an American citizen and as a southerner. I have waited 35 years for my country to again be in the position to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we dare not blow this opportunity. We will never have it again.

So I tell you, yes, I want Vice President Gore to be elected, not just for personal reasons but because I know that he backed me on every tough, controversial, momentarily unpopular decision I had to make, because he understands the future and he can lead us there. And we need somebody who understands the future and can lead us there.

This is not a sloganeering election. We can't let people be casual with their votes. We need people who care, who work, who have the kind of intensity about what they do that Jim Clyburn does. I'm telling you, we cannot afford to be relaxed just because times are good. I came of age when times were good, and I saw it go away in the flash of an eye.

I want you all to think about that. I don't want you to be down. I want you to be up. I don't want you to be sober about it. But every grownup in this audience has lived long enough to be able to remember some time in your life when you got in trouble not because times were tough but because they were going along

so well you thought you didn't really have to concentrate or be responsible.

And this country has got the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for the kids in this audience. We need to support people like the people that are bringing the Democratic Party back in South Carolina. And we need, most important of all, to keep centered and keep in our heart a burning sense of humility and gratitude that America is so blessed at this moment in history that we can rear back and do what we always wanted to do.

This is a moment for making tomorrows, not for just thinking about today. You go out, stick with these folks, and help them make tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. in the John Hurst Gymnasium at the Allen University. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop John Hurst Adams, Seventh Episcopal District, and his wife, Dolly Dresselle Adams, and Bishop Frederick Calhoun James, member, Council of Bishops, African Methodist Episcopal Church; James K. Waddell, president, Allen University; Dick Harpootlian, chair, South Carolina State Democratic Party, and his wife, Pamela; Donald L. Fowler, former national chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Robert D. Coble of Columbia, SC, and his wife, Beth; Mayor Joseph P. Riley of Charleston, SC; Dwight Drake, partner, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, L.L.P. law firm; State Senator McKinley Washington, Jr.; State Superintendent of Education Inez Moore Tenenbaum; State Comptroller General James A. Lander; former South Carolina Governors Robert E. McNair and John West; Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina and his wife, Rachel; former Chief of Staff to the President Erskine B. Bowles and his wife, Crandal; Emily Clyburn, Representative Clyburn's wife; the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Representative John Lewis; civil rights activists Hosea Williams, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and Dick Gregory; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; actor Chris Tucker; and former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in New York City March 30, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, thank you, Denise. If I come here one more time—[*laughter*—we should allocate part of the property tax assessment to me. I love coming here to this beautiful, beautiful place. I want to thank you, and I want to thank all the people who served us today and provided this wonderful meal. I want to thank the WLF, Laura, Betsy, Sharon, Susan, and Agnes, particularly. I want to thank Judith Hope, who has proved that someone from Arkansas can make it in New York—[*laughter*—which is becoming an increasingly important precedent in my mind. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Mayor Rendell, and thank you Carol Pensky. I was trying to think of what I could possibly say, since most of you have heard me give this speech 100 times. And I was remembering, oh, 12, 13 years ago, maybe a little longer, Tina Turner came to Little Rock when she—you know, she went away for a long time, and she was abused in her marriage, and she had a lot of really tough times. And then she made an album after many years of being silent, called “Private Dancer,” which made her a big international star again. So she was taking and making her tours around, and so she came to Arkansas, to this place where we always had concerts. And the guy who ran the place knew that I just loved her. So Hillary was out of town, I remember, and he gave me like eight tickets on the front row, and I took all my pals and sat on the front row.

So she sings all her new songs; everybody goes nuts. At the end, she starts to—the band starts to play “Proud Mary,” which was her first hit. So she comes up to the microphone, and everybody cheers; she backs away. And she comes up again; everybody cheers again, and she said, “You know, I’ve been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it.” [*Laughter*] Anyway—I’ve got to do it. Very instructive, I’ll never forget it.

I want to tell you, we’re in this beautiful surrounding—I want you to know where I was last night. Last night, I was in the Bishop John Adams Hall of Allen University, an African Methodist Episcopal college, an AME college in Columbia, South Carolina. That’s where I

was last night, at a dinner sponsored by the State Democratic Party, with the new Democratic Governor there; Inez Tenenbaum—some of you may know her—she’s the Commissioner of Education now for South Carolina, longtime active in American Jewish colleges, a friend of mine for many, many years; and many others, in honor of the African-American Congressman Jim Clyburn from that district. It was a real picture of a new South, a different place than we have been treated to for the last several years in national politics. It was fascinating.

And I was talking to them about going to Selma a few weeks ago for the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and walking over the Edmund Pettus Bridge with John Lewis and Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory and Coretta Scott King and Jesse Jackson, all the people that were in Selma 35 years ago. And this whole issue of the Confederate flag being on a flagpole in South Carolina was there. And I said, “I can’t say anything better to you than when the waving symbol of one American’s pride is the shameful symbol of another American’s pain, we still have another bridge to cross.” And the crowd exploded, and said, “We’re going to take that flag off the flagpole.” And it really made me feel proud to be an American, proud to be a Democrat, and proud to be a southerner.

And to see that the old—what we know now about South Carolina, most Americans who aren’t from there, is that President Bush went to Bob Jones—I mean, Governor Bush went to Bob Jones University. President Bush went there, too. And President Reagan went there, too. Bob Dole went there, too—and I let him get away with it because I didn’t know it. [*Laughter*] If I had known it, I wouldn’t have.

You can’t imagine what a big deal this was to a southerner. Anybody that went through the civil rights revolution was more offended by that, I think, than anything else—because—it’s okay. I’m sure there are a lot of—you know, there are good people everywhere. But if you’re going to go there, you should say, “I don’t agree with your racial and religious policies.”

But what I want you to know is, there’s a whole other group of people down there. And they’re involved in a struggle, *mano a mano*,

with the Republicans for defining the future of that State, and how they define it might have a lot to do with what America looks like in the future. And this is the struggle that's going on throughout the country.

I would also tell you that the second-biggest hand that anything got in the evening was when the Congressman said that he certainly hoped Hillary would be elected to the Senate from New York. And that South Carolina crowd erupted.

I say that to tell you that the reason I love being a member of this party and the reason that I am so grateful that I have had this chance to serve our country is that we really are now the only available national vehicle for the common aspirations of all Americans, people who can come to a wonderful lunch like this, people who serve the lunch that could never afford to come to one, all kinds of people in between.

And I just want to say, tell you very briefly—because I'm not on the ballot. I'm not running for anything. Most days I'm okay with it. [Laughter] Some days I'm not so sure. [Laughter] But what I thought I would do today is to try to just give you a little ammunition in an organized fashion, based on what's now going on in Washington right now and what certainly will be at issue in this election, about what the differences are, the practical differences and what the evidence is in terms of what works. And I'll start with an interesting thing, particularly—it always amazes me at these events. You could all be at one of their events and get a bigger tax cut. So let's start with their tax policy.

What's our tax policy? Our tax policy is: We've got a surplus; we can afford a modest tax cut as long as it doesn't interfere with our ability to balance the budget, keep paying down the debt, and save Social Security and Medicare, and have enough money to invest in education, health care, and the environment, science and technology, and medical research. And if we've got any—but we can have one. But we think it ought to be concentrated on increasing the earned-income tax credit, which is what low income working families get so they can support their kids.

We think we need a much bigger child care tax credit, and it ought to be refundable, because paying child care costs is still one of the biggest challenges that working families face.

With more and more people living longer, the number of people over 65 slated to double

in the next 30 years, and I hope to be one of them—[laughter]—more and more families making the loving but expensive choice to care for their relatives, we want a \$3,000-a-year tax credit for long-term care.

We want a tax deduction that will extend all the way to upper middle class people for up to \$10,000 for the costs of college tuition. We have made with our tax credits, effectively, we've made 2 years of college, at least at the community college level, universal in America, one of the major achievements of the Clinton-Gore administration. If this passes, we'll make 4 years of college access universal. It's very important.

So those are the kinds of tax cuts we want. We want to give people who have money big tax breaks if they will invest in the poor areas in America that are not part of our prosperity yet. I believe that you ought to have the same tax incentive to invest in inner-city neighborhoods in New York or Chicago or the Mississippi Delta or Appalachia or the Rio Grande Valley or the Native American reservations where unemployment rates still run as high as 70 percent on some of them—you ought to have the same tax incentives to invest in those areas that we will give you today to invest in Latin America or Africa or Asia. Not that I want to take the others away; I just want the same incentives here in our country.

Their tax program, under the guise of marriage penalty relief, is to get rid of the estate tax entirely and have other things that are concentrated overwhelmingly toward upper income people. There's a difference, a real difference. And it says a lot about most of you that you're here, because most of you would benefit more in the short run if you were there with them.

So what does that tell you about the Democrats? When I ran in '92, I said that I had a vision of 21st century America in which every responsible citizen had an opportunity, in which we would be a community of all people, and in which we would continue to lead the world for peace and freedom. And I think that we think that way because, basically, we believe everybody counts, that everybody should have a chance, that everybody should have a role to play, and we all do better when we work together. That's what we really believe.

And it matters. You should know, there's a huge, gaping difference on tax policy. Now, am I right, or are they right? We've had a lot of

tax cuts since I've been President: HOPE scholarship tax credit; we've doubled the earned-income tax credit; we gave a \$500-per-child tax credit; and there was a survey that came out the last day of my trip when I was gone that said that on ordinary Americans, the income tax burden in America, the percentage of income going to income tax—now, that's not Social Security or Medicare but just income tax—is the lowest it's been in 40 years. So I think we're right. And I'm not running—I can't make that case. But you can, and you must.

What about the budget? What's our budget policy? I want us to pay down the debt for the first time since 1835. And I think it's a liberal thing to do, not a conservative thing to do. Why? Because if we do that in a global economy, interest rates will stay down and ordinary people will be able to make their money go further. They'll be able to buy cars. They'll be able to take college loans. They'll be able to buy homes. And we'll have more money available for businesses to borrow at lower interest rates, because the Government won't be doing it, which means more jobs will be created. I think it's the right thing to do.

And I want to also save enough money so that when the baby boomers all retire, we'll be able to preserve Social Security and Medicare, and we'll have enough money to invest in education. We've got—this administration has done more work in more areas in education, I think, than anyone in history. And I've got a big program up there now, designed to help school districts turn around failing schools or shut them down, to provide after-school programs and other remediation programs to every kid in every troubled school in America, to finish our work of hooking all the schools up to the Internet, to repair 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years, and to build 6,000 new ones. And this is important.

Now, what's their program? Their program is—their nominee, just as recently as last week, has reaffirmed that he supports a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed last year. And I can tell you what will happen if it passed. Here's what will happen. If it passes, we will go back to either running Government deficits, or there will be vast cuts in education, where Governor Bush says a lot of things—virtually endorsed our program in education to only give out Federal money to the schools if they support what works. The problem is, he can't keep his

commitments, because he's for a tax cut that will mean they'll have to cut education. And not just a little bit; I'm talking a lot.

They won't have any money to help Social Security and Medicare when the baby boomers retire, but that's okay with them, because they want to privatize both of them. And I think it's a mistake.

They can't support our plan to provide a prescription drug benefit with Medicare, which 60 percent of the people on Medicare need, by the way, not just poor people on Medicare. There are a lot of people who have middle class incomes who have huge medical bills, that are severely distressed by them, and they cannot get affordable coverage for medicine when they get older.

They can't support our program to let the parents of poor children that are in our children's health program buy into health insurance because they don't have the money, because they're going to give it all away in a tax cut. And we'll still have a deficit. Now, there's a big difference there.

And it's not like we don't have any evidence here. Our economic policies—we have doubled our investment in education; we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And I think the economic performance speaks for itself, the longest expansion in history and 21 million new jobs. So why are we even having this argument? Because we really have honest differences here.

If you look at other issues—I could just mention two or three more. Our view of the world—I got tickled the other day. I just got back from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh, and I stopped in Switzerland to try to make another effort on the Middle East peace. And I noticed a member of the other party in the Senate was criticizing me for going to India and Pakistan, because I didn't, quote, "get anything for it." That is, they didn't agree to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or to the other efforts that I'm making to try to stop them from building up nuclear weapons.

Well, they didn't. What he didn't point out is that I lost all the leverage I had when the Republican Senate defeated the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I thought, that is real gall. Man, for a guy to stand up and say that, that requires a lot of moxie, you know. [Laughter] One of their great strengths is, by the way, they have no guilt and no shame.

I mean, they'll say anything. [Laughter] You know, you'll never see them blink about it.

But I want to say, there are differences in that. And we do have some things in common. I compliment the Republicans that are trying to help me help Colombia to reduce the drug flow into America and to shore up a brave democratic government's fight there. And the people who are criticizing this, saying it's another Vietnam, are just wrong. We're not sending soldiers there. All we're doing is supporting the police and other efforts to build a civil society and give those farmers some reason to stop growing coca and grow something else. I support—I thank the Republicans who have helped me with the China agreement, because I think it's very important to bring China into the World Trade Organization.

But we have big differences. You know, I want to support the U.N. more; most of them want to support it less. I think we were right to go into Kosovo and save the lives and the livelihoods of a million Muslims. Most of them thought it wasn't worth the trouble, not all of them but most of them.

And so there are real differences here. And the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is the most stunning one. I mean, I cannot imagine a reason for the United States not to sign on to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty unless you believe that we will be more secure because you think we can always win any arms race, so it's okay if everybody else starts to get in the nuclear business as well. These are differences.

I'll just give you two or three others of these things we're fighting: The Patients' Bill of Rights, about 190 million Americans in these managed care plans, I believe they ought to have access to a Patients' Bill of Rights that's really strong and enforceable. And we're still fighting that. We may get it, but we're not there yet.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage a buck over 2 years. You know, the last time I did it, they said it would wreck the economy. Since then, the economy's grown even faster than it did before we raised the minimum wage. [Laughter] It's not like there's an argument here that has any evidence behind it.

The gun safety legislation, you all know about that. I mean, they asked me in my press conference yesterday what I thought about all these terrible things Charlton Heston is saying about

me, and I said, "I still like his movies, and I watch them every chance I get." [Laughter]

But if you look at it—forget about the NRA, here. If you look at this view—should we close the gun show loophole and doing background checks. Well, when I signed the Brady bill, they all said, "Oh, it was the end of the world as we knew it. The hunters would be bereft, because they would be—their lives would be messed up." Nobody's missed an hour in the deer woods yet, and a half a million people who were felons, fugitives, or stalkers haven't gotten handguns. And gun crime is at a 30-year low in America because of that. But a lot of them still pick up these guns at urban flea markets and at these gun shows. And the technology is there to do the background check.

You know, people thought the assault weapons ban was terrible. But frankly, it's not as effective as it ought to be, because you can still import large capacity ammunition clips and then adapt the guns. And we ought to ban them.

We ought to have child trigger locks. We ought to be investing in safe gun technology so if somebody buys a handgun, you can equip it in a way that you have to show your fingerprints on the gun before it will fire. These things are worth doing.

And the difference I have—and the Republicans say, "Well, but you just ought to enforce the existing laws more." And a lot of you have heard me say this, but I want to hammer this home. It's a big issue. We have enforced the gun laws more than they were before. Prosecutions are up. I've asked for another 1,000 prosecutors and more investigators to enforce the existing gun laws, to get—the surprising number of guns used in crimes come out of just a few dealers. There's something to that. But their position is that guns are the only area of our national life where there should be no prevention.

I said this in the press conference the other day, but I want to say it again: If I gave you the following speech, you would think I was crazy. If I said, "You know, I've been flying on airplanes all my life, and most people who fly on airplanes are really good people. And it's a real pain, especially when you're late and airports are crowded, to have to go through these airport metal detectors. And if you've got a big old buckle or a highly metallic money clip, you may have to go through two or three times. You empty your pockets and everything.

And 99.99 percent of the people in those airports are good, honest people. Let's just rip those metal detectors out there, and the next time somebody blows up an airplane, we'll throw the book at them." Now, you think about that. That's the argument, right? But most people believe that you should prevent as many bad things from happening as possible in life. And it's far better to prevent bad things from happening, and then if something does happen bad, then you do what's appropriate. But these are huge differences.

The choice issue is going to be huge. The next President will appoint somewhere between two and four Justices in the Supreme Court. And their nominee's said repeatedly that *Roe v. Wade* was a bad decision; he'd like to see it repealed; he'd like to see it changed. And I can tell you, I've seen those guys work up there. This is—I'll put in a little plug for Hillary—[laughter]—no matter whether a Republican Senator says he's pro-choice or not, they will make their lives miserable, should they win the White House, if they don't back the White House. You can't imagine—I have seen them dance—

[At this point, a luncheon participant excused herself and said good-bye to the President.]

The President. Good. Bye-bye.

I have seen these things happen where I've had these Republicans come up to me in virtual tears and apologize for the way they were voting on first one thing and then another and just say they had to do it because they didn't want to lose their committee position or they didn't want to lose this, that, or the other thing that was being done.

Now, I don't think we're going to have a Republican President. I think Al Gore's going to be elected. But if you care about this issue, you should work harder for Al Gore and for people in the Senate that will support that position.

Now—and I'll just give you one other example. Ed Rendell was talking about the Log Cabin Republicans. I know that there have been a lot of people in America who won't support me because of the position I have taken on gay rights. But I have to tell you, I just don't see how you can run a democracy if you say that certain people, no matter how law-abiding they are, no matter how honorable they are,

no matter how talented they are, ought to be discriminated against. I just think it's wrong.

I don't think it's really complicated, and I think we ought to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" and the hate crimes bill. And I stood on the tarmac—let me just say this—I stood on the tarmac in Austin, Texas, at the airport and embraced the weeping daughter of James Byrd—who was dragged to death in Texas—who came all the way back from Hawaii to lobby for the hate crimes bill, pleading with the Governor to meet with her. He refused. Finally, he did, because it was a pretty hard case to make, why he wouldn't meet with her. And all he had to do was lift his hand, and they would have had a hate crimes bill. And it did not pass because they did not want it to pass, because they did not believe that gays and lesbians should be protected by hate crimes legislation.

Now, these are facts. And the American people can simply make up their own mind. But what you need to know is: When it comes to taxes, when it comes to the budget, when it comes to these other specific issues, there are huge differences.

And I don't have to condemn them and engage in the kind of politics of personal destruction that others find so helpful. I think most of them are good people who really just disagree with us. I don't think that somebody with a different political view is an evil person. I think our country's really been hurt by all this sort of attempt to believe if you don't destroy your opponent, there's something wrong with you.

I don't believe, by the way, that John McCain is against breast cancer research, either, which was the main thing I heard about in the New York primary. And I might tell you, that program was supported by me. It was in the defense budget. But that was a total misrepresentation of what was going on. It was completely unfair. And that's the most charitable word I can think of to characterize it.

But you need to understand here, I'm not running for anything, but I care a lot about what happens to my country. Yes, I want Al Gore to be President, because he's been the best Vice President in history and because I love him but also, more important, because he understands the future, and he's strong enough and experienced enough and smart enough and he cares enough about the policy issues to lead us there.

I'll just leave you with this thought: When we celebrated in February the longest economic expansion in American history, and all my economic advisers came in and said that, and they were all jumping up and down, I said, "Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?" For a long time, it had been the longest peacetime expansion in history. I said, "When was the longest expansion of any kind in American history?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Now, here's what I want to tell you about this. A few of you are around my age, anyway. I graduated from high school in 1964. John Kennedy had just been assassinated. But the country had united behind President Johnson, and I was very proud of him. You know, he was from my neighboring State, passionately committed to civil rights.

And when I finished, in 1964, in high school, every kid my age was full of optimism. Unemployment was low; inflation was low; growth was high. We believed that all the civil rights problems would be solved by the Congress and in the courts, peacefully. We believed we would win the cold war because of America's values. And no one thought that there would ever be any trauma coming out of Vietnam. In other words, we were pretty relaxed about being, then, at the high point of the longest economic expansion in American history. We thought things were just going to take care of themselves.

Now, a year later there was Bloody Sunday in Selma. Two years later, there were riots in the streets. Four years later, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle.

And a few months later, Richard Nixon was elected President on the first of what became a whole series of what I called "us" and "them" campaigns. You remember what his slogan was? He represented the Silent Majority. You remember that? Which meant that those of us who weren't for him were in the loud minority. And it was a very clever slogan for the time.

But the point is, it was "us" versus "them." And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" for a long time ever since. And I have done my best to end that, here and around the world,

because I think it is dumb, counterproductive, wrong, and I haven't yet met a person who was genuinely happy demonizing other people.

But I'm telling you this to make this point: I have waited 35 years for my country to be in the position that we now enjoy today, where we can literally build the future of our dreams for our children, where we can be a force for good around the world, where we can take on all these challenges.

But what I want you to know is: I have lived long enough to know that the worst thing we can do is take all this for granted, to believe that no matter what we could do, that there are no consequences to this election, there are no consequences to how we behave in our lives and in our communities, that this thing is somehow on automatic and everything's just going to be hunky-dory. That's what I thought in 1964, and I have waited 35 years for my country to be in this position again.

So if somebody asks you why you came here today, you tell them what I told you, and you tell them we don't want to blow this chance. We have fewer crises abroad, fewer crises at home, and a greater opportunity to do right. And we're Democrats, and we need to do it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Denise Rich, Laura Ross, Betsy Cohn, Sharon Patrick, luncheon co-hosts; Susan Patricof, member, national board of directors, Women's Leadership Forum; Agnes Varis, president, Agvar Chemicals, Inc.; Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, and Carol Pensky, national finance cochair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina; Representative John Lewis; civil rights activists Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Bob Dole, 1996 Republican Presidential candidate; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.

Remarks at the Selfhelp Austin Street Senior Center in New York City March 30, 2000

Thank you so much. Well, Linda, based on your speech here, I would say you have a good chance to succeed your mother as an effective senior politician—[*laughter*—when your time comes. Didn't she do a good job? I thought she was great.

I want to thank you and your mother and your family for being here. Congressman Anthony Weiner, thank you for welcoming me to your district, and for the truly outstanding leadership that you have provided to your constituents and to this country. You should be very proud of him. He's done a great job in Washington, DC.

I want to thank Richard Aronson, the CEO of Selfhelp Community Services, for what you do, and for the whole self-help movement, which I believe so strongly in. I'd like to thank Rabbi Skolnik of the Forest Hill Jewish Center for hosting the Selfhelp Austin Street Senior Center. I want to thank my long-time friend, your borough president, Claire Schulman, and all the people from Queens, the officials who are here. Thank you for coming.

I have brought a number of people from the White House. There's a big crowd here. But I brought two people I want to acknowledge. First of all, Tom Freedman, who works with me in the White House, because he's an old friend of Congressman Weiner's, and he lived with him. And whenever the Congressman gets a little too pushy with me, I remind him that I know things about his lost youth. [*Laughter*] So I thank Tom for coming—although I must say, that crack about the busy life of a political spouse is one of the best jokes I've heard on me in a long time. [*Laughter*] I loved that.

And I want to recognize one person who has played a major role for 8 years now in the economic success of this administration. I think, clearly, the most knowledgeable Director of the Office of Management and Budget, member of the President's Cabinet, in the history of that office, a man who got his bar mitzvah in the synagogue upstairs and who had the party here in this very room, Mr. Jack Lew, who's here with me today. Thank you, Jack, wherever you are. Stand up, Jack. When he told me he got his bar mitzvah here, I asked if he were pre-

pared to go through the exercise again today. [*Laughter*] And he said his head was too crowded with my budget numbers.

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly honored to be here and to be in the presence of Americans who have served our country in so many profoundly important ways. Many of you, well into retirement, continue to serve today, providing the volunteer power that runs this center and doing other things of immense value to your community. Your energy and your experience are a precious natural resource. They are part of the answer to how we are going to deal with the challenge of Americans living longer lives, to ensure that those lives will also be better and more fulfilling lives.

But there's another thing that I worry about all the time, that you just heard so eloquently discussed by Linda Nadel. I am the oldest of the baby boomers; I was born in 1946. The generation between—of people born between 1946 and 1964 is loosely known as the baby boom generation. We were, until 2 years ago, the largest number of children ever to go through the public schools of America. Only now, for the last 2 years, have we had a larger number of children in our schools.

When we retire, there will only be, at present rates of childbirth and immigration, about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I can tell you, I grew up in a medium-sized community where most of my friends were just middle class working people, and most of my childhood friends whom I still know today are middle class working people. And they all worry very much about whether our society is prepared for the retirement of the baby boom generation. And all of us who are parents are worried to death that our retirement might somehow burden our children and their abilities to raise our grandchildren.

So I came today to talk to you about the challenges that American seniors face today—one of which has already been discussed by Congressman Weiner, which is the challenge of prescription drugs and the fact that it's not covered by Medicare today—and the challenges that America will face when we have even more seniors in the future.

Social Security and Medicare are the foundation of our commitment to seniors and to millions of Americans with disabilities. Fiscal responsibility has been the foundation of my answer to the challenge of the baby boomers' retirement.

Seven years ago, when I became President, we had a \$290 billion deficit, our national debt had quadrupled in 12 years, and Medicare was predicted to run out of money in 1999, last year. We had to make some tough choices. Vice President Gore and I presented the budget to the Congress, and he cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate—one of his good jokes, Congressman, is that whenever Al Gore votes, we win, because he only gets to vote when the vote is tied—[laughter]—and the first budget passed by a single vote in the House.

But it began to turn the country around. We got the deficit coming down. We got interest rates coming down. We got the economy growing again. And now, we've been able to have balanced budgets and surpluses, doubling our investment in education, and still providing needed tax relief to working families.

This strategy was very controversial when we first started it, but it's not so controversial anymore. We've had the first balanced budgets back to back in 42 years, the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, and 21 million new jobs. If we keep going, we'll be able to make our country debt-free in the next dozen years, for the first time since 1835.

Now, I want to focus, though, on the specific challenges you face and the specific challenges that we baby boomers face as we move into our senior years. What does all this mean?

On that score, remember, again, when I took office, I got a report that said the Medicare Trust Fund was going to be broke in 1999, last year. But the strong economy has helped. So have a lot of the Medicare reforms and a lot of our antifraud measures. And Medicare and Social Security are now on a path to a sound future. Today the Social Security and Medicare trustees issued the report they issue every year at this time on the financial health of these two vital programs. But the first thing I'd like to do is to tell you what kind of shape they're in.

The Social Security trustees announced that the economy has now added 3 years to the expected life of the Social Security Trust Fund. It is now solvent until 2037 with the present situation.

The Medicare trustees told us that Medicare is in the best shape in a quarter century, better managed, more efficient, and now solvent until 2023, 24 years longer than the solvency on the day I took office. And I am very pleased by that. This means that the commitment to fiscal discipline and good Government can make a difference in the lives of families, not only here in Queens but all across our country.

Let me just give you a couple of other examples. Just a decade ago, Medicare premiums were increasing at double-digit rates every single year. Today, with better management and with a strong economy, we've been able to slow the rate of growth dramatically, producing a savings of more than \$200 a year in the premiums for a couple over 65.

We're also enabling seniors who are willing and able to work, to do so without losing their Social Security benefit. Last year I asked Congress to work with me to allow our seniors to work without being penalized, and both Houses have now passed that legislation to eliminate the Social Security earnings caps for seniors.

Now, that's the good news. But let me say to all of you: While the trustees reports showed that Social Security and Medicare are secure today, we must stay focused on the challenges of the future. In 30 years, the number of Americans on Medicare, the number of Americans over 65, will double. I hope to be one of them. But they will double.

Now, let's face it. This is a high-class problem. This is the kind of problem we have because we're living longer and better lives because of the miracles of modern medicine, because of the miracles of basic public health, because we're taking better care of ourselves, and that's all very, very good. But we have to prepare for it. And we have to be ready for the challenges we know ahead. We want all seniors to have access to state-of-the-art medical care. We want all Americans to be able to live out their lives in comfort and dignity, without fear of being a burden to their families.

I'd like to just mention one of the families here with us today: Wichna Szmulewicz and her husband Szymon are Holocaust survivors. Szymon has Parkinson's disease. Wichna takes

care of him. Their prescription drug costs take almost 20 percent of their annual income. This is not right. Wichna does not want a handout, but she doesn't want to be a burden to her grown children, and she does need some help. That's what our proposal, that Congressman Weiner and the other members of our caucus support, to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit in Medicare, is all about.

I think we ought to do our part to help these folks and people like them in this room, in this community, and all over this country. We should not consume our surpluses with big, risky tax cuts until we have first used the surplus to strengthen Social Security and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and to invest in our children's future through education, science and technology, and medical research. And we ought to pay this national debt off. I was so pleased to hear you clapping for that. That means we'll have another generation of prosperity with lower interest rates, more growth, higher incomes, and more jobs.

So I have asked the Congress to use every dollar of our Social Security surplus to pay down the debt and use the interest savings from it to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. If we just took the interest savings we'll get from paying down the debt with the Social Security taxes you are paying and we put that interest saving into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could extend the life of Social Security to 2054, beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

It's a simple bill. We're for it. The President is for it. The Vice President is for it. The Congressman is for it. The Democratic candidate for Senator from New York is darn sure for it. [Laughter] And if we can just get a little help from our friends on the other side of the aisle, we can extend the life of Social Security to 2054, beyond the life of the baby boom generation, and no baby boomer will have to worry about being a burden to his or her children or grandchildren. That is a wonderful opportunity and a simple thing to do.

The second thing we have is a great opportunity to strengthen and modernize Medicare. You know, if Lyndon Johnson were President today and he were starting Medicare again, he would never sign a bill that didn't include prescription drug coverage.

Just think how different medicine is today than it was 35 years ago. Today, often the most cost-effective medical treatment, keeping people out of hospitals, keeping people out of surgery, lengthening life and quality of life, involves prescription drugs. Well, when Medicare was enacted, we didn't have CAT scans or MRIs. We certainly didn't have drugs that lowered cholesterol or fought osteoporosis. Now, not having a prescription drug coverage in Medicare is like paying a mechanic \$4,000 to fix an engine because you wouldn't spend \$25 to get the oil changed and a clean filter.

I simply propose to add a purely voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare. It will make, also, preventive drug screenings more affordable, will have an extra pot for people who have truly catastrophic costs for drugs, if they need insurance for that.

I also want some further changes to make Medicare more efficient. One of the reasons we've got the life of the Fund out as far as we do is that we have a much, much lower error rate—in other words, things being done that shouldn't be done, things being paid for that shouldn't be paid for—than we had 7 years ago. If Congress will work with me, we can get this done this year.

But I cannot tell you how important this is. More than three out of five seniors on Medicare in this country today do not have adequate, affordable prescription drug coverage. And I think it is a great mistake, as some have suggested, to limit this coverage to people at, let's say, 200 percent of the Federal poverty line. For a single widow, that's \$16,000 year. Now, that may seem like enough to live on, unless you have \$300 or \$400 a month in medical bills, for medicine alone, and a lot of people do.

So again, since this is a voluntary program, I believe we should make everyone on Medicare eligible to buy into it. The broader the participation, the more cost-effective it will be. Very often, we've got seniors who either don't have any medical insurance that covers prescription drugs, or if they do, it is very limited. And very often the seniors who have the least money are paying the highest prices for drugs of anybody in this country, and it is wrong.

Now, we are in good shape now. The life of the Medicare Trust Fund is secure until 2023—I mean 23d of—whatever it is—I just forgot. [Laughter] What is it, Jack? Twenty-two, twenty-three, I got it right. My budget would

take it out to 2030. I would like to have a 30-year cushion there. I would like for people to know that it would be there for 30 years. But it would also provide this prescription drug coverage.

Now I can tell you what is going to happen. Your Congressman and I are going to go back to Washington, and there will be people to say—oh, mostly on the other side of the political, I would say—“Well we know this is a hot issue, and we’ve got to do something about it. So let’s just provide drug coverage for people up to 150 percent of the poverty line.” It’s not enough. Medicare was intended to benefit all seniors, to help all seniors to keep from being driven into poverty. And this is an insurance program.

We would never, I will say again, we would never, ever think of creating a program, if we were starting all over again with Medicare today, that did not have a prescription drug component. You know it, and I know it. Since we wouldn’t do that, since the program’s in the best shape it has been in in a generation, since we have the funds to take it out to 30 years of life, let’s add a prescription drug benefit that everybody in this room and everybody in this country who is eligible by age and who needs it can buy, to provide the kind of security in health care all American seniors deserve.

I just want to say one other thing, sort of off my script, that a lot of you will remember, and you will identify with this. You only get a few chances in life as a people to do really big, good things, when times are going along so well and the circumstances are there, that you can do this. When Medicare was created, it was during what was up until this time the longest economic expansion in American history. And so the American people felt secure, and they supported their elected Representatives in

doing things like beginning to provide national health to our schools and providing Medicare. Now that’s the last time we were able to do something like this.

Now we are in the longest economic expansion in our history. But these things don’t go on forever. And if we can’t do this now, when will we ever do it? If we can’t do the really big, right things now, in Medicare, in continuing to pay our debt off, in improving the education of our children, in providing economic opportunity to the neighborhoods and the rural communities and the other places that have been left behind, when will we ever get around to it?

So I want to ask all of you, whatever your political background, to give us some support to reform Medicare and provide this prescription drug benefit, to lengthen the life of Social Security to 2054, to make sure that the baby boomers’ entire lives are a blessing to this country and not a burden to our children and grandchildren, and to immediately provide the seniors of today the prescription drug coverage that so many millions of them need.

This is an honorable and a good thing to do, but it is a solemn obligation, and we will never have a better chance to do it. And therefore, we have a solemn responsibility to get the job done.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:01 p.m. in the Crystal Room at the senior center in the Borough of Queens. In his remarks, he referred to Linda Nadel, office manager, Services Now for Adult Persons Senior Center, who introduced the President, and her mother, Ruth Freidman, lobbyist for senior issues; and Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik, Forest Hill Jewish Center.

Statement on the Regional Funding Conference for Southeast Europe *March 30, 2000*

I want to congratulate the countries of southeast Europe, the Stability Pact, the European Commission, and the World Bank on the success of the Regional Funding Conference for Southeast Europe in Brussels.

Last year we launched the Stability Pact with a common understanding that an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe can only be built when the countries of southeast Europe are integrated with the rest of the Continent.

For that to happen, the countries of the region have to accelerate their political and economic reforms, and the donor community needs to support the region's efforts.

I am very pleased by the progress that has been made on both fronts. The Governments of southeast Europe have begun to take steps to implement the reforms they have promised, including those that will improve their investment climate and strengthen the rule of law. And today the donor community, including the United States, has reaffirmed its support for the region. We have agreed to fund Quick Start Projects ready to begin this year that will improve regional infrastructure, fight corruption,

and advance reform. Countries have pledged \$2.3 billion for these projects, out of a broader package of total assistance to southeast Europe in 2000 estimated at over \$6 billion. Over 85 percent of this assistance is being provided by European countries and institutions together with international financial institutions. I congratulate our European partners for their leadership.

The message today from Brussels is clear. A democratic southeast Europe is on the road to a better future. While Serbia was represented at this Conference by the opposition, we look forward to the day when it will be represented by a democratic government.

Statement on House Action on Supplemental Appropriations Legislation March 30, 2000

I am pleased that the House of Representatives today took action that would meet many of the essential, immediate needs in my supplemental budget request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and providing for our troops in Kosovo.

It is vital that Congress avoid delay in meeting these needs; the costs of delay are great. A delay in Kosovo funding would soon jeopardize our current level of military readiness around the world and our ability to help the people of Kosovo build peace and a better future. A delay in support for Colombia's antidrug efforts would signal that Colombia lacks the international support to prevail against drug traffickers. At home, delaying funding for the victims of Hurricane Floyd would leave thousands in temporary housing possibly through their second winter and without funding to replenish the program for home energy assistance. A delay in LIHEAP funds would leave many Americans,

especially the elderly and infirm, vulnerable in the event of an extreme heat wave this summer.

The bill produced by the House today, while meeting essential needs, is also flawed. The House bill is too large—providing unnecessary funding for certain areas while failing to fund areas of the highest importance, including Embassy security for our diplomatic personnel in Kosovo and elsewhere in the region, building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops, and contributing our Nation's share to the U.N. peacekeeping force there. In addition, the House bill fails to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations.

Because the needs in my budget request are essential and immediate, I urge the Senate to turn swiftly to its work on the budget request and to produce a better, right-sized bill, that includes the necessary level of funding for Kosovo and debt relief, and that should pass without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City
March 30, 2000

You know what I want to do? I want to tell you this is Michael Sherman's birthday. It's also—George, where are you? Is that your name, George? George Beirne, it's his birthday also, and he came all the way from Alaska to be here. [Laughter] So I'm trying to think about what I should do when I leave office, and I think I'll do birthday parties. [Laughter] Birthday parties—no, this is good.

John and Margo have been so good to us, and this is going to be such a long, arduous campaign. And Brian Snyder said to me when Ed Rendell was talking about how we just had this wonderful party here, Brian said, "Well, why don't you just stand up and suggest to Margo that she just leave the table settings out"—[laughter]—"and we'll be back several more times." [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, I'm grateful for your presence here, but I'm particularly grateful to John and Margo for being so good to me and to the Vice President and to the DNC and also to Hillary. It means a lot to me. And their son, I'm grateful to him, because he keeps me in Pokémon cards—[laughter]—which I give to my nephew, which raises my status within our family. Far more important than being President is being able to give your nephew Pokémon cards. So I am profoundly grateful for that as well. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, this is my speech—see, I made my big speech here. [Laughter] I know that many of you have come to a lot of these; others may be at your first one. But I wanted to tell you that I'm working very hard in this election, and not only because I like and admire and am grateful to my Vice President but because I think he understands the future and has the knowledge and experience to lead us there, not only because I want desperately to become a member of the Senate spouses club—[laughter]—but because I believe in what we've done in the last 7 years.

I didn't run for President the first time I had a chance to run, because I didn't think I was ready to run. And I had been Governor for quite a long time in 1988, when the election was open, and it looked like we had a good chance to win, and I almost ran. And I realized

that no one should run for President who does not have a very clear idea not only of what the conditions of the country are and the challenges facing it but of what you would do on the day after the Inauguration, across a whole broad range of issues.

All of you, in your own ways, have been quite successful in life, or you wouldn't be here tonight. And one of the things that I always tell people when they ask me about this job is, I say, "Well, I think a lot of folks get in trouble because they forget it is a job." I mean, it's a job like other jobs. And the only difference is, you have to completely define to some extent what it is for you; that is, how you will allocate your time, what you believe the priorities are, and what you intend to do.

So I speak to you tonight as someone who is not on the ballot. For the first time in nearly a quarter century or more, I won't be an active participant in an election as a candidate. Most days, I'm okay with it. [Laughter] So I'm here—as much as I'm here as President, I'm here as a citizen of this country who desperately loves America, who is grateful for the good fortune that we enjoy at this moment but who has had the unique perspective, I believe, to know a few things about where we are and where we're going and what's really at stake here.

So I just want to make a couple of points. Point number one is, there are real differences between these two parties. And they're not the differences people used to believe existed. One of the things I promised myself when I got elected is, when I left, nobody would ever be able to say that the Democrats were weak on spending, weak on deficits, weak on taxes, weak on defense, weak on crime, weak on welfare, couldn't be trusted to run the country. Well, you don't hear anybody even talking about that in this election.

But—so what are the real differences? And I would just like to talk to you about them. And I know you understand it, but I think it's worth focusing on. First of all, we have real differences on the budget, what we do with your money. We believe that we can afford a tax cut but that it has to be targeted and limited

so that there is enough money left to keep paying down the debt, to save Social Security and Medicare when the baby boomers retire, and to continue to invest in what works in education, in science and technology, in health care, in the environment, and the other things we have to go forward with together as a people. That's what we believe.

They believe that we should have a tax cut bigger than the one I vetoed last year, one which would—frankly, it speaks well of you that you're here, because all of you would come out better with their deal in the short run. But what would happen is, I mean, I think—give yourself a few points here for being here. You would all come out better with their deal in the short run. But what would happen is, we would go back to the bad old days of deficits, and then they would have to have big cuts in education, in health care, in the environment, science and technology, a lot of which is powering this economic boom we're in. And in addition to that, they would not have the funds to guarantee that when all the baby boomers retire, we wouldn't impose an unconscionable burden on our children and grandchildren, through the cost of medical care, Medicaid, Social Security.

Now, this is a huge thing. And let me say, I think it's important because it's not like we don't have any evidence. We tried it their way for 12 years, and we had high interest rates, high unemployment, low growth. We quadrupled the debt, and we were in a terrible fix.

Now, we have the longest economic expansion in history, 21 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment and welfare, a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime. So it's not like there's not evidence here, and yet, that is the issue. That is the issue in the Presidential race. That is the issue in the Senate race in New York. That is the issue. Who is right on the economy and the budget? Are they right, or are we right? To pretend that there are no consequences because things are going well would be the height of folly. It's a huge issue.

Now, there are other issues. We have a different view about America's role in the world. We agree on some things, my administration and the Republican leaders; I'll give them credit for that. They're trying to help me pass the bill that would permit China to become a member of the World Trade Organization. I think

it's important to our national security and real important to our economy.

And one of the things I want all of you to understand, since you may not have been thinking about it is, we have to lower no tariffs; we have to lower no trade barriers. This entire bill involves our letting China into the WTO in a way that they lower tariffs; they lower trade barriers; they let us sell things like automobiles and automobile parts and have distributorships in China, they didn't used to do; and we don't have to agree to transfer our technology or put manufacturing plants up there or anything. It's a one-way street. It's 100 percent in our favor. The only reason they do it is that in turn, they get full membership in the World Trade Organization, which is good for us, because that means if they violate their trade obligations, we have an international body to take it to.

So the Speaker of the House is trying to help me pass a bill that literally could save democracy in Colombia by increasing their capacity to fight the drug traffickers and the guerrillas and reducing their ability to import drugs into this country and helping the farmers to find something besides coca to grow.

But on other areas, we're very different. I think we ought to support the U.N. and get people to share our burdens more than they do. I believe in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and they don't. That's a big issue in the Senate race here, a big issue in the Presidential race. I think it would be folly for us to walk away from arms control after the United States has led the way, not just in my administration but in previous administrations, Republicans and Democrats.

This is a departure for the Republicans. To walk away from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and say we'll just always be able to build bigger, more sophisticated bombs, and instead of just a few countries with nuclear weapons, there turn out to be a few dozen, who cares? I care. And I think it's a big issue. And you ought to care. You shouldn't assume that there will never be another nuclear weapon exploded, no matter what, if instead of a few countries with nuclear weapons, you have a few dozen. So there are big issues here.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage. They don't. I think we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights for the 190 million Americans in a managed care system. And at least so far,

they don't. I believe that we ought to pass commonsense gun safety legislation to protect more kids from violence. And I believe we can do it without, in any way, interfering with the rights of sports people and hunters.

But I got asked in my press conference what I thought about all the mean things Charlton Heston's saying about me. [Laughter] And I said I still liked his movies. [Laughter] I still liked his movies, and I liked him. You know, he came to the White House a couple of years ago, and I thought he was a delightful man.

I don't care what they say about me. That's part of the cost of doing business and being President, this being attacked by people who disagree with you. This is not about me and the NRA; this is about whether people stay alive or not. This is a big issue—huge issue in the Presidential race.

Their position, the Republican position in Washington is that guns are the only thing in our national life where there should be no prevention; it should all be punishment. Now, if you raised your children on the theory that there should never be any prevention, there should only be punishment, your kids wouldn't turn out so good, even if they had welts across their back from being punished.

Or as I never tire of saying—they always say, "Just enforce the laws on the books. Just punish people when they violate them." Well, we have increased gun law enforcement over what the previous administrations have done. And in my budget, I've asked for a lot more people to help us enforce the gun laws more strongly. And there's something to be said for that. You would be amazed what a small number of gun dealers are responsible for selling guns to such a large number of criminals. So there's something to be said for enforcement.

But one of the reasons that gun crime is at a 30-year low is that the Brady bill has kept a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. And they were against that as a party. We only had a handful of Republicans supporting us in Washington. And Governor Bush and the Republican congressional leadership, they've been against closing the gun show loophole, against banning the importation of large-scale ammunition clips, which makes a mockery of our law against assault weapons, because you just bring them in, those clips, and then modify the guns. And this has a lot to do with whether your kids are safe.

And again, it's the difference in the way they think than we think. Suppose I said that I agree with the Republican philosophy we should abandon all prevention and only do punishment. For example, I've been in a lot of airports in my life, and nearly everybody I've ever met is honest in an airport—99.9 percent of the people in airports are perfectly honest. They bear me no ill will. And they're overcrowded anyway, and people are frustrated, and they're often late. And if you walk through one of those metal detectors and you've got a big, heavy money clip or an elaborate belt or something, you're liable to set it off three or four times, and you're angry and frustrated. And I'm just sick of it, and so I just think we ought to take those metal detectors out of the airport. And the next time somebody blows up an airplane, we ought to throw the book at them. [Laughter] That's the philosophy.

This is a big deal here. It's a different way of thinking. I do not believe it is necessary to demonize them the way some of us have been demonized in the past and still are. I don't want us to have our counterpart of Richard Viguerie, who represents the hard-core far right and does Mayor Giuliani's fundraising letters—you know, thinks my wife is basically up there with a Communist brigade or something. [Laughter]

We don't have to do that. We can talk about the honest differences. But I'm telling you, there are big differences here. And it's not like we don't have any evidence. What they're saying is, "Don't bother me with the evidence. We know where the money is. We know where the votes are. We know where the intensity is. Don't bother me with the evidence." And to be fair, they just disagree. I'm not willing to let another child die for their theory. I think we ought to have a safer country.

And so—and I think it would be a disaster for us to give up the fiscal responsibility that has brought us this far when we can take this country out of debt in a dozen years for the first time since 1835 and guarantee all the young people another generation of prosperity. And I could give you lots of other examples.

But the point I want to make is: There are big differences, and the record is clear. The evidence is in. And I hope you will share that with people. And I just want to make one other point, which I try to say at every turn. In February, we had this big celebration of beating the longest economic expansion in history. Now,

we've got the longest economic expansion in history, and there was not a war in it, which I'm especially proud of.

So when this happened, being kind of obsessive about American history, I asked my Council of Economic Advisers—we were in there talking about it, and I said, “When was the last longest economic expansion in history?” And they said 1961 to 1969, which many of you in this room remember well and participated in.

Now, I want to tell you something about that, why this election is so important. I graduated from high school in 1964 at the high water mark of that economic expansion. President Kennedy had just been killed, and the country was heartbroken, but we united behind President Johnson. He was wildly popular, won an historic victory in 1964. Inflation was low. Unemployment was low. Growth was high. Optimism was rampant about the ability of Congress and the courts to resolve the civil rights challenge of the country in a peaceful manner. Everybody thought we were going to win the cold war as a result of the superiority of our system, and nobody would have believed that Vietnam would tear the heart out of the country—1964. And so, we all just went merrily along our way.

Now, within a year, there was the terrible incident in Selma, Alabama, at Bloody Sunday, which I just celebrated the 35th anniversary of. Within 2 years, there were riots in our cities and the country began to split apart over Vietnam. Four years later, in 1968, I graduated from college, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for President anymore because the country was split right down the middle over Vietnam.

Then President Nixon won the election on one of those divisive campaigns. He said he represented the Silent Majority, which, by definition, meant that the rest of us were in the loud minority. And so it was one of those things of “us” versus “them.” And that's something the Republican Party was very good at. They demonized us real well and quite effectively all during the eighties, and they still make a lot of votes making people think that we somehow don't share their values because I'm for things like the hate crimes bill and “Employment Non-Discrimination Act,” and I don't think gay people ought to be bashed if they're good citizens.

But that happened. And then, shortly after that election in early 1969, the longest economic expansion in American history vanished. And we went on to the oil price shocks, the inflation of the seventies, the stagflation of the late eighties, and everything that's happened ever since. What's the point of all this? The point is that I've lived long enough to know nothing lasts forever; nothing can be taken for granted. And I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children.

This is a big election. And you cannot let people believe that this is something that they can approach casually, just because times are good. When times are good, you have to look to the next generation. We can take this country out of debt. We can save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation. We can dramatically reform our schools. We can provide opportunities in areas that haven't participated in this recovery. We can lead the world toward greater peace and freedom. But we cannot do it unless we have leadership who understands the future, has the knowledge and experience to take us there, and is committed to it. We dare not risk, by our inaction or our cavalier attitudes, blowing what is, I know, the chance of a lifetime.

I've worked as hard as I could as President to turn this country around. I am grateful for the chance I've had to serve. But I really think as a country we should view this as the beginning, not the end, that we've sort of turned this thing around. And now, we have a chance to paint on a canvas our dreams for tomorrow. That's what this whole deal is about.

So if somebody asks you tomorrow why you were here tonight, say, “There's a difference between the parties. I think the last 7 years were right, and the stakes could hardly be higher.” And those of you that are about my age, you just think about it. We've waited for 35 years, and we need to seize the chance.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:42 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Sherman, president, M.J. Sherman Group; dinner guest George Beirne; dinner hosts John and Margo Catsimatidis and their son, Yianni;

Brian Snyder, investor, Biocraft Laboratories; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; Gov. George W. Bush

of Texas; Richard A. Viguerie, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, ConservativeHQ.com; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City March 30, 2000

Thank you, Mark. Thank you, Jeff. And thank you for coming, all of you.

And I wanted to say a special word of appreciation to all of our musicians here. Thank you for playing tonight. You did such a wonderful job. And I want to thank Luther Vandross. We've never had a conversation about "Evergreen," but I think it's the best love song of the last 25 years. [Laughter] And so I was very happy when he sang it tonight.

I want to thank all of you for coming here. And I will be quite brief, because I want to spend time visiting with you and letting you say whatever you want to say to me or ask questions or whatever.

But you know, I'm not running for anything this year. [Laughter] And most days, I'm okay about it. I am campaigning to become a member of the Senate spouses club, however. [Laughter] And I'm feeling better about that.

But I want to say just a couple things to you, to amplify what my good friend Ed Rendell said. When I came to Washington in January of 1993, our country was, I thought, in quite a bit of trouble. We had high unemployment. We had high interest rates. We had quadrupled the debt of the country in 4 years. We had no real, serious technology policy, no real, serious environmental policy, no real, serious long-term economic policy. We certainly had no health care policy.

And our elections were basically—I thought it almost turned into caricature affairs, where basically for several years, even decades, the Republicans had succeeded in convincing enough Americans that the Democrats were weak on defense, weak on the economy, weak on the budget, weak on welfare, weak on crime, weak on this, that, and the other thing. We couldn't be trusted with the White House. And the wheels had to practically come off before any

of us could win. And I happened to be standing there when the wheels ran off.

It wasn't quite that simple. But I guess what I would like to say to you is that all of you here in your different ways have been immensely successful, or you wouldn't be here tonight. All of you also are capable of looking beyond your immediate self-interest, or you wouldn't be here tonight, because the other guys would give you a bigger tax cut quicker. And yet you're here.

So the first thing I want to say to you is that all these elections are for people to hold jobs. They're not to posture. They're to hold jobs. It matters what your vision of the country is. It matters what your vision of the job is. It matters what you know and how you go about your business and whether you care. In other words, it's a job, the Presidency.

You know, I want Al Gore to be elected because I know him better than anybody in this room and most people in the world. And I think he's a good man, and I know he's a courageous person. And I'm devoted to him, and he's been loyal to me. Yes, that's all true. But I also want him to be elected because I think he understands the future and has not only the ideas but the experience and the work habits to get us there. This is a job. It's not a place just of rhetorical or political posturing.

And the same thing is true of the Congress. And I go about doing as much work as I can to try to help all these folks raise enough money to be competitive. They're all going to be outspent. You know, our candidate for President is going to be outspent. Hillary's going to be outspent. They're all, no matter how much money we raise, they're all going to be outspent.

But in 1998, we were outspent by \$100 million, and we gained seats in the House of Representatives in the sixth year of a President's

term for the first time since 1822. Why? Because we had ideas, we had a message. People thought we were interested in them, and they thought the Republicans were interested in themselves and playing Washington power games. And it didn't matter that they had more money; all that mattered was, we had enough.

So I thank you for being here. But I hope that in addition to being here, you'll be able to manifest this commitment throughout this year. Because this is a profoundly important election, this millennial election. And there are real differences between us. The differences that we have, from our nominees for President to the nominees for Congress, including the big Senate race here in New York, over the budget alone, should determine the outcome of the election.

We want a tax cut, all right, but we think it ought to be small enough and targeted enough to help families like those who served us tonight and entertained us tonight to raise their kids, provide long-term care for their parents, get a tax deduction for college tuition, afford better child care; induce people like you to invest your money in poor areas in America so everybody can be a part of this economic recovery and still have enough money left over to pay this country out of debt for the first time since 1835; to save Social Security and Medicare when all the baby boomers retire and there will only be two people working for every one person retired; to invest in world-class education and stop investing in things that don't work; to make major commitments to science and technology and to basic research.

So many of you tonight are here because of your achievements in health care or in the information revolution, the telecommunications revolution, or a combination of both. And I think you share my conviction that we need to continue basic research to enable us to build a new energy future for America. This is a huge deal. You know, this global warming is not a canard. It's not a false threat. It's a reality. And the good news is that for the last several years, it is no longer true that you have to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to grow an economy. In fact, if we were more diligent about building a different energy future, we'd be generating even more jobs, by far. And I won't bore you with a long wonkish solution why, but if you want to talk about it, I'd be

glad to. It is stunning to me, the prospects that we have.

You know, in a few weeks I'll have the privilege of announcing that the sequencing of the human genome has been completed. What this means is that, I think, within 10 years the practice of medicine will be totally unrecognizable, as we know it. And a lot of you who have been on the forefront of trying to get us to live healthier lifestyles and take more preventive action, it will be a joyous treasure trove of opportunity that will lead to a lengthening of our lives and the quality of life.

So what I'm trying to say to you is, there's big, big opportunities out there. But there are not big guarantees out there. Are we going to continue this economic policy that has brought us to this point and continue to pay our debt down and continue to be responsible, or not? Are we going to invest in education and health care, and science and technology, and a different energy future, or not?

Are we going to assume our responsibilities around the world to try to take the world away from a dangerous future of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Or are we going to agree with the Republican Senate, their Presidential nominee, and their nominee here, that we shouldn't adopt the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a historic abandonment by the Republican Party of their normal bipartisan commitment to disarmament? These are big questions.

So I hope that you will embrace this. You know, a lot of you here who have done very well are younger than I am by a good stretch. So I just want to—I'll close with this story. I try to tell this story every time I have a meeting like this.

We celebrated in February the longest economic expansion in American history—21 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 30-year low in welfare, a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime. And I was happy as a clam. But I—I always try to study the history of my country, as well as to think about the future. So I—we had the Council of Economic Advisers in there, and I said, "Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?" And they said, "Mr. President, it was the 1960's, 1961 to 1969."

So for those of you who are my age or older, take a walk down memory lane. And for those of you who are younger than me, listen to this. This is a magical moment of opportunity in this

country. And most of you are completely immersed in the future and imagining all these possibilities. And so am I.

But when the last longest economic expansion occurred in the 1960's, I can tell you—I graduated from high school in 1964—we thought it would go on forever, and we thought it was on automatic. We thought—we had low inflation. We had low unemployment. We had high growth. We had a civil rights challenge, but we thought it would be solved in the Congress and the courts, not in the street. We thought we would win the cold war because of our innate and self-evident superiority and never dreamed the country would be divided over Vietnam. We thought it would just happen—1964, when I finished high school.

Within 2 years, there were riots in the streets over civil rights. Within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the war in Vietnam.

A couple months later, President Nixon was elected on a campaign of representing the Silent Majority, which means if you weren't for him, you were in the loud minority, beginning the construct we saw all the way through the 1980's, right to the '92 election, to the '96 election; that you will see in 2000, where the other party tries to divide the American people between "us" versus "them." And I'm supposed to be one of "them" because I believe things like we shouldn't discriminate against gay people, if they're good, God-fearing, taxpaying citizens and

they show up and do their duty. I'm for hate crimes legislation. I'm for the employment non-discrimination legislation. So that makes me one of "them" instead of one of "us"? I don't think so.

But that was the portrait of what happened between 1964 and 1968. And within 4 months after that, the longest expansion in American history was history.

And what I want you to know, you young people here, is, I have waited for 35 years for my country to have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I am determined to see the politics of America focused on, how can we make the most of the sequencing of the human genome? How can we build a different energy future? How can we bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind? How can we be a force for peace and prosperity and unity in troubled places around the world? How can we build one America? That's what I think politics is about.

If somebody asks you tomorrow morning why you were here tonight, I hope you'll give them that answer. This is the best chance you will ever have to build the future of your dreams for your children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Fox and Jeffrey Arnold, dinner co-hosts; musician Luther Vandross; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Memorandum on Census 2000

March 31, 2000

Memorandum for All Federal Government Employees

Subject: Census 2000

We as a Nation are participating now in the largest peacetime mobilization in our history. I refer to Census 2000, the twenty-first census we have conducted in this country.

The decennial census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution, and responding to it is a civic responsibility for everyone living in this country. It is a truly universal activity that we can participate in, and full participation is important to the success and progress of every community.

The data collected will determine how more than \$185 billion annually in public funds are shared fairly among the Nation's communities.

Mar. 31 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

The data provide the basis for planning and implementing thousands of laws and programs at every level of Government. The census numbers also are used to decide how many seats each State is allocated in the House of Representatives and to equitably draw voting districts at the State and local level.

Census 2000 is an event that offers us an opportunity to engage the spirit of civic partici-

pation that is so important to our representative democracy. The census is important to you and your family. It is important to your community. It is important to our Nation. It is in this spirit that I urge all Federal employees to complete their census forms.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

While the U.S. economy is the strongest it has ever been and inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels, high oil prices have caused concern for many Americans. As a short-term measure, my Administration urged oil-producing nations to take steps to narrow the gap between worldwide production and consumption of crude oil in order to preserve sustained worldwide economic growth. Our focused diplomatic efforts helped produce tangible commitments by oil-producing nations to increase production to more appropriate levels that reflect current demand in the global economy.

While my Administration has worked hard to increase the supply of oil on the market, the House has failed to take one of the most critical steps necessary to maintain America's energy security—an extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which includes authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), authority that expires today. The option to use the SPR is an essential line of defense against an interruption in oil supplies. Although the Senate passed a four-year straight reauthorization of EPCA, the House has failed to act. It is critical that the House reauthorize EPCA immediately to ensure that the United States maintains its ability to use all available tools to respond to the needs of the U.S. economy.

In addition, Congress should address other energy measures. Congress should pass my comprehensive tax package, which includes new tax incentives for domestic oil producers to reduce U.S. reliance on oil imports, as well as other

incentives to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that Congress has failed to enact. Congress should also fully fund the more than \$1.4 billion that I have requested in my fiscal year 2001 Budget and 2000 Supplemental to promote energy security through the use of domestic energy technologies, including more efficient homes and buildings, a new generation of more efficient vehicles, renewable energy sources, and natural gas.

Finally, I have proposed the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to reduce the likelihood of future heating oil shortages. Congress should authorize a reserve with an appropriate trigger to release heating oil to the market in the event of a supply shortage. I have directed the Department of Energy to begin the appropriate environmental reviews of the proposal to determine the correct approach to creating this reserve.

These critical steps will strengthen the sound, comprehensive energy strategy that has helped sustain the longest economic expansion in American history. They will enhance America's energy security, create jobs, protect the environment, and produce long-term savings for consumers. Congress should waste no more time in enacting these measures into law.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address *April 1, 2000*

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about an opportunity to shape the future of our country, and a responsibility we all have to make our voices count. I want to talk about this year's census and the importance of filling out and sending in your census form right away.

The Constitution mandates that our Nation conduct a census every 10 years. The first was taken back in 1790 and was directed by Thomas Jefferson when he served as Secretary of State. Every decade since then, the census has helped tell the story of America—who we are and what we're becoming.

Census 2000 is our chance to write the latest chapter in the unfolding epoch of America. Even though the census is taken only once in a decade, it has an impact on our lives every day. A report I'm releasing today by the Council of Economic Advisers shows just how much we need the census.

We need the census to help decide how almost \$200 billion in Federal funds will be invested in States and communities. We need the census to draw legislative district lines and allocate seats for each State in the U.S. House of Representatives. We need the census to help our hometowns determine where to build everything from roads to schools to hospitals to child care centers. And we need the census to help businesses make decisions about where to invest and help individuals make informed decisions about where to buy a home or take a job.

For all of these reasons, it's important to make sure the first census of the 21st century is fair, accurate, and complete. After all, if we want to make good decisions about where we need to go as a nation, we first have to know where we are.

In the last census, we didn't know where more than 8 million people were. They were left uncounted. Many of them were children, minorities, and low income families. When people are uncounted, their voices are unheard in the Halls of Congress and in their own communities.

Those who suggest that filling out your census form isn't essential are plainly wrong. An inaccurate census distorts our understanding of a community's needs, denies people their fair

share of resources, and diminishes the quality of life not only for them but for all of us. If we believe everybody in our American community counts, we simply must make sure everyone is counted.

That's an enormous undertaking. This year's census represents the largest peacetime mobilization in American history, involving hundreds of thousands of local census takers and community volunteers. But the most important person in the process is you.

I want to thank the millions of Americans who have sent in their forms. As of today, we're halfway there. But we must do better. We need the most accurate picture of America in the dawn of the 21st century.

So today I'm issuing a proclamation declaring this Census Day and urging all Americans to take a little time this weekend to fill out and send in your form. I've also issued a memorandum to all Federal employees urging them to do the same. Having completed our census form, I can tell you it only takes a few moments.

You can also fill out your census form online, as the Vice President did just recently. The on-line form can be found at www.2000.census.gov. It won't take long. The short form is the shortest since 1820. The long form is the shortest in history. And every question on both forms was reviewed by Congress 2 years ago.

But more important, information from the long form is critical for everything from helping communities design mass transit systems to providing 911 emergency services. It also helps us calculate cost-of-living increases for Social Security, military retirement, and veterans' pensions.

I know Americans are concerned about their privacy, and that's why I also want to stress that the information you provide is strictly, absolutely confidential. Individual information will not be available to anyone outside the Census Bureau for any reason.

So whether you have a long or a short form, please fill it out completely and send it in promptly. America is counting on you. This is your future. Don't leave it blank.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:38 p.m. on March 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the

Press Secretary on March 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Luncheon for Hillary Clinton

April 1, 2000

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

The President. —we couldn't have done what has been done without you, and I'll never forget you. I would also like to thank Denis and the New York AFL-CIO. They supported—[inaudible]—and me and supported—[inaudible]—and Hillary. I thought she made a really good talk today.

I just want to make three points very briefly. First of all, when I showed up here in January of '93, thanks to the efforts of many of you and millions and millions of people like you all across America, and the economy was in a shambles, the deficit was huge, and the debt had been quadrupled in 12 years, and the social problems were getting worse, and Washington was like a political blood fight, I had basically some very simple ideas about the economy and how it related to the rest of our lives. And I just want to reiterate that because that's where the differences are between us and our friends in the Republican Party. That's where the differences between Al Gore and George Bush are, and the differences between Hillary and her opponent.

Number one, I believe you could be pro-business and pro-labor. And as a matter of fact, I didn't think you could successfully have an economic policy unless you help both labor and business.

Number two, I believe you could be pro-work and pro-family, so that I thought we ought to have things like annual leave and health insurance, and if people were going to be required to move from welfare to work, we ought to give them child care and food and medicine for their kids and transportation to get to work and training to know what they were doing, instead of just talking about welfare cheats and all of that. I thought you could be pro-work and pro-family.

Number three, I thought you could be for economic growth and for environmental protection. I thought working families could be able to take their children to parks and that we could generally still grow the economy.

I believed all those things. And essentially, our friends in the other party believe that they can only help business by sticking it to labor, that every family protection is bad for the economy and the work ethic, and that the environment's a nice thing as long as you don't have to take too much trouble to protect it. Now, that's what they believe. And so we've had this donnybrook for 7½ years.

But I think the evidence is in, and you need to think about that in terms of Hillary's race, the Vice President's race, every other race this year. It's not as if there is a debate here based on the evidence. We have the longest economic expansion in history. We have these 21 million jobs. We have the lowest unemployment and welfare rates in 30 years. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest income tax burden on average families in 4 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 4 years.

This is not some sort of fluke, friends. You're on the right side of history. So when you fight for the Presidential campaign and you fight in the senatorial race, tell people that this is not a debate, and they are making a deliberate decision, if they vote for the other candidates, to go back to a failed economic theory, a failed social theory, a failed environmental policy.

And you've got to be serious and blunt here. And I'm not running for anything, and you know, most days, I'm okay about it. [Laughter] What is at stake here is bigger than me or the Vice President or Hillary or all of you. It is the direction of our country. And you need to go out and say you're not anti-business;

you've proved you could be pro-labor and pro-business. You've proved you could be pro-family and pro-work. You've proved you could clean out the environment and grow the economy. That's where you are. And they are making a deliberate decision to reject policies that have worked for America if they don't support the Vice President, Hillary, and our whole other crowd.

The second thing I want to tell you is, as you can see, my wife is an enormously talented and passionate person. But what I want you to know is that, particularly for a State like New York which has always had high-quality people in the United States Senate, I think she would be a worthy successor to Robert Kennedy and Pat Moynihan. I think it's important for people to understand that she's not just somebody who lived in the White House for 8 years and would now like to be a Senator. For 30 years, she has been a leading advocate for the cause of families and children; for 20 years now, for specific, provable advances in the quality of education for our children.

There is hardly anybody who runs as a private citizen for the United States Senate in my lifetime—I can't think of anybody who ran as a private citizen for the Senate who had as much knowledge as she has or as much experience as she has on the things that will really count in the terms of the shape of America and the children who are—[*inaudible*].

The third thing I want to say is, is this: The most important point Hillary made about me and us and our politics is that we believe that we should try to bring together, not drive them apart. They believe you have to drive people apart in order to win elections. And since they're wrong on the issues, they're right. In other words, people won't agree with them on the issues, so the only way they could win is to convince them that we're the first cousins of space aliens. [*Laughter*]

Now, this is not a complicated deal. And so that's why Hillary's opponent can raise a double ton of money, besides being mayor and having special relations with a lot of those people that—[*inaudible*—New York. You've got this rightwing—[*inaudible*—machine geared up against her again. You know, when he wanted to be mayor of New York, he said, "I'm a moderate." When he wants to be Senator from New York, he wants all those rightwingers that helped Governor Bush in the nomination and are rep-

resented by the Bob Jones University flap you all heard about—he gets Richard Viguerie to write letters that raise the hair on the back of your head.

Now, there's a reason they've got to do that: because they like political power and the majority of the people do not agree with them. They've got this figured out now. We're right and they're wrong on these big issues, so the only way they can win is to convince people that we're space aliens. But that's not good for America. Far better for them to modernize their party and their ideas and then engage in a debate and let the people move back and forth, depending on who they think is right on the specific issues. That's the way America is supposed to work.

But I want you to understand what's at stake in this election in New York and in America, because we've got a chance now, finally, to reject the politics of division. If you do this one more time, you've got a real chance to elevate the politics of America.

And let me tell you why it's so important. I want to close with this point. In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of this country. And that's the good news. The bad news is it might put people to sleep and think they can afford to just go through—[*inaudible*—or indulgences or on a whim or not vote at all in this election, because they think things are going along real well.

And let me tell you why what Hillary said—the most important point she made is about the politics of division. When we celebrated this economic expansion, I asked my economic advisers—I said, "Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?" Do you know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, let me take you on a little walk down memory lane. [*Laughter*]

In 1964 I was a senior in high school, a graduate. The country was heartbroken about President Kennedy's assassination but were heartened by President Johnson's leadership, strongly united behind him. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. We had a civil rights crisis, but everybody thought it was going to be handled in the context of the courts, not in the streets. We had a few people in Vietnam, but nobody thought it was going to tear the country up. Everybody thought America would win the cold war just in the course of events,

because freedom was clearly superior to communism. And we were happy as clams and totally relaxed about it.

Now, 4 years later I graduated from college here in Washington—2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President because the country was so divided over Vietnam.

A few weeks later, Richard Nixon was elected President, based on a campaign that he represented the Silent Majority. Now, what were the necessary—[inaudible]—of that? Those of us who weren't for him were the loud minority. That was the first of these great "us" versus "them" campaigns—divide, not unite—and we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" now for 30 years.

And when I ran for President, I said I wanted to put people first and have opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. That was the united, not divisive, campaign. When we ran for reelection, we said we wanted to build a bridge to the 21st century that everybody could walk across. That's the united, not a divisive, campaign.

And one of the reasons Hillary decided to enter this race is that she knew how important it was not only to be right on the specific issues but to keep trying to pull the country together as we grow more diverse, not tear it apart. And I like the way things are now, but they could be a whole lot better if we just focus and keep working and remember to be for business and labor, work and family, the environment and the economy; unite, not divide. That's really what her race represents. That's what Al Gore's

race represents. That's what the referendum on what kind of future we're going to have represents. And what I want to tell you is, I've been waiting since I was a boy of 17, for 35 years and more now, to see my country in the position we were in, in 1964, to build a future of our dreams for our children. And this election will determine whether we move to that level.

It took me years just to try to turn this country around and get it going in the right direction and to stop people from trying to take things away from you. Now we've got a chance to do something good. That's what this Senate race is about. That's what this Presidential race is about. That's what this whole election is about.

And you just keep in mind, people know, they know we're right on the issues, so they've got to beat us some other way. And you've got to stand up for unity and progress and the right kind of change.

I am grateful to you for what you've done for me. But what you can do for Hillary, what you can do for the Vice President, and most important, what you can do for America and your children's future will matter even more.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Denis M. Hughes, president, New York State AFL-CIO; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Richard A. Viguerie, chairman, chief executive officer, and president, ConservativeHQ.com. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of John Robert Starr

April 1, 2000

Hillary and I are saddened to hear that John Robert Starr has passed away. He was a legendary figure in Little Rock and Arkansas history. As a former Arkansas bureau chief for the Associated Press, managing editor of the Arkansas Democrat and Democrat-Gazette, and a tough-as-nails columnist, John Robert always said and did what he thought was right.

John Robert was as tenacious a friend as he was a foe. In good and bad times alike, I always

knew him to speak his mind and say exactly what he felt. That kind of candor can be strong medicine, but I learned to respect him for it. His legion of readers might not always agree with his point of view, but they read what he had to say.

Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Norma, their three children, and their many friends.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Brunch in Las Vegas,
Nevada
April 2, 2000

The President. Let me, first of all, say I'm glad to be back. I never get tired of coming here. And most of you know that Brian and I went to college together; in spite of the fact that he now looks younger than me, we did. [Laughter] What can I say? I've had a harder life. [Laughter] And he and Myra have been wonderful to us. And Amy has been good enough to work for me at the White House and for Mrs. Gore, and we feel that she's a part of our family.

Arnold and Rachel have taken me in in Arizona, as well as always coming up here when I show up. And I'm just so grateful to all of you. And Jane always whispers in my ear and tells me what I should really be working on as President and how I should be doing it. [Laughter]

Janie Greenspun Gale. Have I been wrong? [Laughter]

The President. And the thing I really hate about it is that she's normally right. [Laughter] So I feel very much at home here. I'll be quite brief, but I want you to think about a few things.

First, I am very, very grateful to the people of Nevada for supporting me and Hillary and Al and Tipper through two Presidential elections. It's highly unusual for a Democrat to carry this State. And we did it—not by much, but we did it twice. And a lot of you in this room helped.

I am very grateful for the support that you have given all my policies. The nuclear waste issue is very important. I will say this to you—I was not wrong when I said last year—and Brian ran an article in the paper—that we needed Harry Reid back in the Senate, so we would have a veto-proof minority. And we also got—and that was really important. And Shelley Berkley also worked very hard on that, and we now have—my veto can be sustained. And that's very, very encouraging, and I want to thank all of you for that.

But I'd also, in a larger sense, just like to thank you for 7 years and a couple of months of genuine support for a new direction for our country. I want to particularly thank Congress-

man Bilbray, who would still be in Congress if he hadn't supported me. But I want you to know that.

We didn't have a vote to spare in August of 1993, when I asked the Congress to cut the deficit by at least \$500 billion. And I knew if we didn't do it, we'd never get the economy turned around. And it passed by a single vote in the House and the Senate. And Al Gore cast the tie vote in the Senate, and as he said, whenever he votes, we win. [Laughter] That broke the tie, I mean. And every single Member of the House that voted for that bill can claim a large share of responsibility for the economic prosperity this country has enjoyed ever since. And many of them laid their jobs down to do it, and I will never forget it. And I want you to know that I never forgot, and I thank you.

Now, here's what I want to say, and I say this to you partly as your President and partly as a citizen, because I'm not running for anything this year. I'm the only person I know, practically, who's not running for anything. [Laughter] And most days, I'm okay about it.

We're in a position today that is highly unusual for any nation. You know, we're in the middle of the longest economic expansion in history. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years. And the question before the citizens of our country in this election is, now what? What are we going to do with what is truly an unprecedented moment?

If you saw my State of the Union Address, you know what I think we ought to do. I think that we ought to say, this is not a time for relaxing, this is a time for bearing down; that this is a chance of a lifetime, and we ought to identify every major challenge and every major opportunity our country's got out there and go after it, because we will never have a better chance to do it. That's what I believe.

I think that this is the time to build the 21st century education system. This is the time to help all these families, where both mothers and

fathers work, balance work and family. This is the time to help deal with the aging of America, with families who provide long-term care to their parents, for disabled members of their families, to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit.

It's time to pay the country out of debt. We can get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. And if we do, we'll give a whole—when Amy's my age, this country will be more prosperous than it otherwise would have been, if we do that.

It's a time to deal with the big environmental challenges. It's a time to deal with the possibility we now have of making this the safest big country in the world. When I became President, most people didn't think the crime rate could go down. It's gone down now 7 years in a row. But no one believes America's as safe as it ought to be.

It's a time to make a major commitment to 21st century science and technology. We were talking at the other table about energy technology and how, if we can just make one more discovery with biofuels, we'll be able to create 8 gallons of ethanol with 1 gallon of gasoline. And when you have cars getting 70 miles per gallon, which will be soon, it would be like getting over 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline. It will change the whole future of the world when this happens.

In a few weeks, we'll have the honor of announcing that the consortium that the United States and Great Britain have been part of for some years, to unlock the mysteries of the human genome, will be completed. And 3 billion genes in 80,000 sequences will all be out there, thanks to computer technology. And when that happens, it won't be long until somebody figures out how to stop people like me when we get old from getting Alzheimer's. Two people in my family have had it.

They'll be able to figure out how to block the gene that causes Parkinson's, that the Attorney General and many other well-known people, including Michael J. Fox, now are dealing with. They will be able to figure out—and Muhammad Ali. They'll be able to figure out how to identify all kinds of cancers when there are just a few cells collected, and it will dramatically increase the cure rate. All this stuff is right around the corner. Not to mention the fact that I think within a couple of years, you'll actually know what's in those black holes in the universe.

This is going to be a very interesting time to be alive.

We also see, in a more sort of tangible way, the role the United States still has for peace and freedom around the world, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, fighting against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the work I tried to do when I was in India and Pakistan recently.

And I guess what I would like to say to you is that beyond all of the specifics, the simple question of this election is, what are we going to do with this money? And the American people have big choices. And the reason that I support Vice President Gore, quite apart from my personal loyalty to him and affection to him, is that I've worked with him for 7 years, and I know that he understands the future and has the knowledge and experience and the strength to take us there. And that swamps every one of the specifics.

The second reason is that I believe that the Republicans' advocacy of a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed last year—for it to become law would mean we could not get the country out of debt; we would not have the money to save Social Security and Medicare; we would not have the money to invest in 21st century schools. All of you would be better off, but only for a little bit. And I think, far better to have a more modest tax cut that helps people educate their children, provide decent child care, deal with this long-term care crisis, which is going to become bigger and bigger and bigger for all of our families, and get the country out of debt, keep interest rates down, and keep the economy going.

That's what I believe. But these are huge choices. And underneath it all there is something that I have—basically has been the great passion of my life, and that is whether we're going to go forward as one America or we're going to go back to politics as usual, where we just divide up in camps and see which camp is bigger.

A couple of Sundays ago—more than that now, but just recently, on a Sunday, I had an opportunity to go to Selma, Alabama, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, where Congressman John Lewis, then just a young man, and Reverend Hosea Williams and comedian Dick Gregory and a lot of others marched across a bridge over a river at Selma on their way to Montgomery. They were beaten

and beaten back. But a few days later, they marched to Montgomery, and 6 months later we got the Voting Rights Act.

And it was one of the—for me as a southerner, it was one of the great moments of my life. And most of the people who walked over that bridge are still alive, and most of them walked over that bridge with me again. But I was thinking about the 35 years that have—some of you are too young to remember; most of you are around my age. Let me tell you something about 35 years ago.

We celebrated the longest economic expansion in history this February. So we were sitting around talking about it one day, and I had all my economic advisers there. And I said, “Now, before we broke this record, when was the last longest economic expansion in history?” Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. So in '64, I graduate from high school—low inflation; low unemployment; high growth; Lyndon Johnson is President; high optimism that he will be able to lead the country away from the heartbreak of President Kennedy’s assassination, and we’ll solve all the civil rights problems in the Congress and in the courts. We’ve got some people in Vietnam, but nobody thinks it’s going to tear the country apart, and everybody believes America will prevail in the cold war—’64.

And even in the bloody conflicts like Selma, it was all part of progress, you know. Things were happening. Okay. Four years later, 1968, we’re graduating from college, Brian and I are. June 8, 1968, we’re at Georgetown finishing college 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn’t run for President anymore because the country was just split right down the middle on the Vietnam war.

A few weeks later, President Nixon is elected on one of these “us” and “them” campaigns. I call them “us” and “them” campaigns. He represented the Silent Majority—that was his slogan—which meant those of us that weren’t for him, we were in the loud minority, and there was something wrong with us. A few weeks after that, the longest economic expansion in American history came to an end.

Now, what’s that got to do with this? You know, I’m not trying to be a downer here; I’m an inherently optimistic person. But this is a moment for making tomorrows. This is not a moment for indulging ourselves in all this good stuff that’s going on today. And the only way to really ensure that it continues to happen is to keep thinking about tomorrow and keep trying to make them and to take on these big challenges we know are out there.

There are going to be twice as many people over 65 in 30 years as there are today. It’s a big challenge. We can fix it right now. We can basically prepare ourselves for it right now. That’s just one example. But that’s the decision the American people are going to have to make. More than anything else is the general thing: Are we going to go back to an approach that is more satisfying in the short run that we know doesn’t work, or are we going to try to keep building on the change of the last 7 years? Are we going to pick leaders that we know understand the future and can take us there, or are we going to pick people who say things we like to hear and may make it easier for us in the next month or two?

That’s really what’s going on here. And I guess what I would like to tell you—it hit me with Selma—and I say this more as a citizen than as President. I have waited now for 35 years for my country once again to have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our kids. It’s a long time. It may not happen again in our lifetime. That’s why this election is so important.

So if they ask you why you came here today, I hope you can give them that answer.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to brunch hosts Brian L. and Myra Greenspun and their daughter, Amy; Mrs. Greenspun’s parents, Arnold and Rachel Smith; Janie Greenspun Gale, vice chairman, board of trustees, Las Vegas Springs Preserve; former Representative James H. Bilbray; actor Michael J. Fox; former boxing champion Muhammad Ali; and civil rights activists Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee and Nevada State
Democratic Party Reception in Las Vegas
April 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first, let me say I am delighted to be here. When I got up this morning—a little early, because we had this shift to daylight savings time—it was cloudy in Washington. And I think I made a good swap. [Laughter] I just talked to Hillary on the phone, and I'm on my way to northern California to do an event and see our daughter tonight, and I think I made a good decision to travel west today. I love coming back to Las Vegas.

I will say—you know, Jan was kind of joshing with me on the way in. I said, "Gosh, I love this house." And she said, "Well, you know, I'll give you a lot of variety because I move every year." [Laughter] And I think she ought to give this place at least 18 months. This is a wonderful place, and I'm delighted to be here, and I think we all are.

I want to thank Senator Bryan, as he retires. I want to wish him well and thank him for all that he did as Senator, Governor, and attorney general. I'm so old and creaky, I served with both Dick Bryan and Bob Miller, and I thank you, sir, for everything you did. Thank you, and we wish you well.

I want to thank Harry Reid, and I want to thank you, Representative Berkley, for helping to get the votes that will guarantee that when I veto that nuclear waste bill, the veto will be sustained. And I thank you for that.

I told the people of Nevada in November of 1998 in no uncertain terms that if they wanted to have the law observed instead of short-circuited, they had to reelect Harry Reid, and that we needed a Member of Congress from our party who had agreed with us here. And you won, and you won. And Harry was like Jack Kennedy in 1960; he didn't buy a single vote he didn't need. [Laughter]

And I want to be heard again publicly on this. If it hadn't been for your delegation working the Congress, explaining the issue, we would never have gotten enough votes on our side—and we did better this time—to sustain the President's veto. And I would hope the people of Nevada will think about this in this coming Presidential race, because I'm not on the ballot, and I won't be here next time. And I'll guar-

antee it; it is an absolute certainty, 100 percent certainty, that there is a difference in position between the candidates on this issue.

Keep in mind, when the study was originally done, there were two sites that were thought to be appropriate, possibly. One was in Nevada; the other was in rural Texas. So I'll leave it to you. [Laughter] I know you can figure this out.

I want to thank Governor Miller, too, for being my great friend and for all the things that we've done together. We even took a trip to the Balkans together recently, and we had a good time in Bulgaria. I want to thank you, Ed Bernstein, for running for the United States Senate. It's a hard thing to do as a private citizen, and I thank you.

And thank you, Rory Reid, for being the chair of this party. I want to thank all the members of the legislature and the city council, the county commissioners, Mayor Gibson from Henderson, for being here. I want to thank Ed Rendell, my great friend, who when he retired as mayor of Philadelphia, I said I had a little part-time job I wanted him to do. [Laughter] And he's embraced it with gusto.

Thank you, Janice Griffin. There was a couple here who have not been introduced that I'd like to acknowledge. They've come from Chicago, and Lou Weisbach and his wife, Ruth—he's the head of our Jefferson Trust Program for the Democratic Party. And I want to welcome them to Las Vegas and thank them for coming out here with me. And I want to thank former Congressman Bilbray for being here.

Let me say one thing about him, as well, I said earlier. We celebrated—I will begin and end with this fact—we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of America in February. It happened because when Al Gore and I were elected, we first of all said, even before we took office, that we were going to do something about the crippling deficit and the debt of our country, which had quadrupled—quadrupled—in the 12 years before I took office. The deficit was \$290 billion, projected to be about \$400 billion this year. And we said we would do something about it, and

interest rates immediately started to drop. Then I presented a program; they started to drop again. Then, in August of '93, came decision time: Were we finally, after 12 years of irresponsibility, going to actually do something about the deficit that was gripping our country?

Now, don't forget what America was like in 1992: high unemployment; high interest rates; low growth; every time we'd get out of a recession, we'd fall right back in; social problems getting worse; Washington full of name-calling and political division, not much going on. That's what was happening.

And the Republicans made a decision that they would not give us a single, solitary vote on the deficit reduction package in 1993—not one. And the leadership put the word out; no one could budge. And they told everybody this was nothing but a tax increase, in spite of the fact that we cut thousands of programs and eliminated hundreds. And they said it would wreck the American economy, and they washed their hands of it. They said, "We're not responsible for what happens." And they certainly aren't. [Laughter]

And this man, Jim Bilbray, voted with me. And he gave up his seat in Congress because of it, because by 1994 the American people had not yet felt that the economy was doing better. They had not felt it. And the Republicans could come out and say, "Well, they all voted for tax increases." Well, a few of you may have had your taxes increased—about 1.2 percent of the American people did. The rest either had no tax increase or an income tax cut.

But we lost a lot of good people in the Congress, and he was one. But I want you to know, if he hadn't cast that vote, we didn't—we passed that budget by one vote. And everything that has happened since, right down to the longest economic expansion in history, would not have happened if we hadn't gone from deficits to surpluses and gone from high interest rates to low interest rates. And I thank you, Mr. Bilbray, for what you did.

Now, let me say—I want to just get out and say hello to you, and it's a warm day, and I don't want you to have to stand a long time in the sun. But I want you to think about this. If I were to ask you, what's this election about, what would you answer?

This is my answer: Seven years and a few months ago, Al Gore and I took office. And we said we were going to put the people of

this country first by going beyond the politics of division to try to create a country in which there was opportunity for every responsible citizen; in which we had one community across all the racial, religious, and other lines that divide us; in which we're the leading force in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, and that anybody who wanted to be a part of that should have a chance.

And we have now worked for over 7 years. We not only have the longest economic expansion in history and 21 million new jobs, we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the highest homeownership in the history of the country. Now, that is the record. We have also downsized the Government to the point—it's now the size it was when Dwight Eisenhower was President, and that was a year or two ago. And yet, we're doing more.

So there's not a real debate here. What we have stood for works. And what we have to decide now is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? Are we going to give in to our fears, or are we going to act on our hopes? Are we going to take the easy way because there seems to be no adverse consequence, or are we going to sort of lift our visions and take on the big challenges of the future?

The real issue is, here, not what we've done for the last 7 years but, now that we have this moment, what are we going to do with it? And my answer to you is quite simple. You get a chance like this once in a lifetime, a country does. And we have got to use this moment to take care of the big challenges that our children are going to face when they grow up. And I'll just mention a few.

We could create 21st century schools with world-class education for all of our kids. But we've got to have high standards, accountability, and support, from after-school and summer school programs to computers to modernized facilities in a lot of the cities like Philadelphia, where the average school building is 65 years old, and in New York, where many of the schools, believe it or not, are still heated by coal-fired furnaces built in the 19th century. We can build those 21st century schools.

We can deal with the 21st century family. We have to help people balance work and family. What does that mean? It means, among other things, I think people ought to get a tax deduction for college tuition. I think they ought to get a tax credit for long-term care, because more and more families are taking care of their elderly parents or members with disabilities. I think that we ought to have a tax incentive for child care for working families. Those are the kinds of tax breaks I favor.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage again. The last time I raised it, they said it would increase unemployment. Since then, we've had record job growth. People ought to make a decent living. I think these are the kinds of things that we ought to do.

I think that we ought to recognize that when we baby boomers retire, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And we should move now—now, not then, now—to lengthen the life of Social Security to 2053—that's my proposal—out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation; to save Medicare; to add a prescription drug benefit. Sixty percent of the seniors in this country today can't afford the prescription drugs they need. We ought to do it now.

We ought to act now to prove we can grow the economy and preserve the environment and deal with the problem of climate change and all the other environmental challenges we face. It's not necessary to hurt the economy to do that.

You get the idea. I remember one of the members of the other party criticized me for going to India and Pakistan because we didn't, so-called, "get anything." I think we got a lot out of going to India and Pakistan. I don't want them to have a war, and I think that we should do it. I believe America should be a force for peace and against discrimination and hatred, from Kosovo and Bosnia to the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to Africa and India and Pakistan. That's what I believe.

Now, all of this is at issue. I'm for Al Gore for President not just because I'm devoted to him, and I feel loyalty because he's been the finest Vice President in history, but because I know—because I know he understands the future, and he has the experience, the ability, and the will to lead us in this direction.

And I came here to help these folks in Nevada who are running for Congress, because I

think it's important. Let me tell you something, it really matters who is in the Senate. They're going to vote on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The Republicans just voted it down—the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age the United States walked away from its responsibility to a safer world. But he would vote for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It's a big deal. The world these children are going to live in will have all kinds of people trying to build small-scale nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. You can't say it doesn't matter just because we're out here and things are prosperous today. It does matter.

It matters who—the next President is going to appoint between two and four members of the Supreme Court. Who do you want voting to confirm them? You need to think about these things.

And I will say again, this nuclear waste issue, it will not go away. So you need to reelect this fine woman to Congress, and you need to vote for a Senator who will fight with us, and you need to remember that if you make the wrong decision in the White House, you can forget it; it's history. You need to remember these things.

Let me just say again, this is the longest economic expansion in history, and I'm proud of it, and I'm grateful I've had a chance to be a part of it. And I'm delighted that I have had an opportunity to be President, and I love this job. I never would quit if I weren't term-limited, I don't think. *[Laughter]*

But I say this to you as a citizen. The last time we had an expansion this long was in the sixties. And when I—I grew up in it. I graduated from high school in it in 1964, and I did think it would go on forever—low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. I thought all of the civil rights problems of the country would be solved in the Congress and the courts. I had a President, Lyndon Johnson, who was going to do it. I never dreamed the country would be divided over Vietnam in 1964. By the time I graduated from college, Robert Kennedy had been killed 2 days before; Martin Luther King had been killed 2 months before; Lyndon Johnson, 9 weeks before, had to get out of the President's race because our country was divided over Vietnam.

Richard Nixon got elected on a campaign saying he was for the Silent Majority—which means those of us who weren't for him were outcast

in the loud minority—launching whole decades of divisive politics. And just a few months afterward, the longest expansion in American history was gone—history. It was over.

Now, it's a pretty warm day, and we're all in a good humor, and there's not a more optimistic person out here by this pool than me. But I'm telling you, this is the chance of a lifetime. That's what you're here for. Are we going to take on the big challenges, or go back to the easy way out? Are we going to pull together across the lines that divide us with things like the hate crimes bill and the employment nondiscrimination bill, or are we going to go back to "us" and "them" politics?

I've been waiting for 35 years for this to roll around again—35 years since my country had

a chance to build the future of its dreams for its children. I'm a Democrat by heritage, instinct, and conviction. I'm proud of what we've done. But the best is yet to be. You go out and tell people that, and we'll win in November.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Jan Jones of Las Vegas; former Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada; Rory Reid, chair, Nevada State Democratic Party; Mayor James B. Gibson of Henderson, NV; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Janice Griffin, chair, Women's Leadership Forum.

Remarks on Arrival in San Jose, California, and an Exchange With Reporters *April 2, 2000*

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan

The President. I just wanted to say that I have heard today the sad news that Prime Minister Obuchi has been hospitalized with a stroke. He has been a good friend to me personally, a good friend of the United States. And he has been a tireless worker to restore the Japanese economy and to bring Asia back from its financial crisis.

And I just wanted to say that the thoughts and prayers of the American people are with him, his family, and the people of Japan. We hope for a speedy recovery. And in the meanwhile, we will work with Acting Prime Minister Aoki to maintain the strong relationship we enjoy.

But I think Prime Minister Obuchi is a very good man, and I—it's sad news for all of us here in America, but we're pulling for his recovery, and we will—we will keep our prayers there.

Thank you very much.

Q. What are you hearing about—about how he is?

The President. Nothing. I have tried to get more information, but all I know is that he's hospitalized, and the condition was serious enough to appoint an acting Prime Minister. That may or may not mean anything, you know. My guess is that they'll have to wait a while and assess—

2000 Elections

Q. Mr. President, did you hear—did you hear Mr. Lazio's comments today indicating he might get into the New York Senate race?

The President. No, I have no knowledge of that.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at Moffett Field. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Prime Minister Mikio Aoki of Japan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception
in Palo Alto, California
April 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. I must say, when Dick was talking about all those fights we've taken on—and I got to thinking about some more, when I helped Mexico. The morning we gave them financial aid, there was a poll in the paper that said, by 81 to 15, the people thought it was a mistake. So he kept talking about that. I thought, Mr. Gephardt is up there describing a fool, and now I have to get up and speak. [Laughter]

I want to thank Jim and Bridget for having us here. It is truly beautiful, and I always like to have an excuse to come back. And I want to thank my daughter for showing up tonight. Those of you—we were just talking around the table about newborns. When your children grow up, you're always mildly surprised when they want to spend time with you. It's actually quite wonderful. [Laughter] So this is quite nice for us.

I want to thank the Flying Other Brothers. I wonder how many young people here are Dead Heads in the crowd. But they were great. And I apologize, they caught me by surprise. They invited me to play with them, and I thought, well, these poor men don't know that that saxophone mouthpiece has no reed on it. And then after he went back up, I realized they had actually pickled me some reeds in a jar there. So you guys will have to give me a raincheck; I'll do it some other time. We'll have another chance to do it.

Band member. We'll hold you to it. [Laughter]

The President. I want to tell you how grateful I am to the Members who are here, to Patrick Kennedy and Bob Menendez, to my good friend Charlie Rangel, and to Zoe Lofgren and Ellen Tauscher, to Nancy Pelosi and Anna Eshoo. California has a marvelous combination of women there. We also have Martin Frost from Texas here and David Wu from Oregon. We're glad to have them. And I want to thank—and maybe others—I want to thank Mike Honda and Adam Schiff for being willing to run for the House of Representatives, and I, too, believe they will win.

I want to also thank all of you not only for being here but for the work that we have done together actually since I started coming out here in 1991. I wanted the Democratic Party in the 1992 election to be the party of the future in America. And it was quite obvious to me and to anyone who was paying attention that we couldn't be the party of the future unless we came to those of you who are making the future.

And I want to thank you for all the things we've worked on, to pass a pro-competition Telecommunications Act in 1996, to change some of the laws on exports and deal with the visa issues and a whole range of other issues. I want to especially thank—there are many people here, but I see John Doerr and Eric Schmidt within my line of sight, who have called me on your behalf and badgered me at all hours of the day and night to move the Government faster. They said, "We realize that the Government is not in the Internet age, but at least we ought to be out of the stone age. Please move."

I thank them and all the rest of you who have done that over the last 7 years. Dick Gephardt's talked about the issues and the stakes, and you're well aware of them. But I would like to say just a few things to you.

First of all, there is a huge difference in these two parties. And there is no doubt, as Mr. Gephardt said, that the Democrats are in the minority in the House of Representatives today because in 1993 and in 1994 they had the courage to vote alone, without a single Republican vote, to bridle the enormous deficit that had quadrupled the American debt in 12 years—it was \$290 billion a year when I took office, slated to be about \$400 billion this year. And we just decided we had to do something about it—that if we didn't do it, we'd never get interest rates down; we'd never get investment up; we'd never get growth going in the American economy. We had a little bit of a recovery; we were going to slip out of it. We just knew that we had to do it.

And from the moment I announced our plan in December of '92, things really took off. And then we had the vote, and I'll never forget

this—in August of 1993, when all these Members were having to walk the plank and go down and vote—and not a single Republican was going in—all the Republicans were saying, “You know, this is going to be a disaster; it’s going to be horrible. We’re not responsible for anything that happens after this.” And they’re not. [Laughter] That’s what they said, and they were right.

And then we got into the gun business. We passed the Brady bill, and we passed the assault weapons ban, which Senator Feinstein was especially active in passing. And oh, they said the world was going to come to an end. And we lost—I’m telling you, we lost a lot of Members of the House of Representatives on the budget bill, because the people hadn’t felt the benefit of the improving economy by ’94, and on the gun issue. I’ll never forget, when I went back to New Hampshire, which is a State like my home State of Arkansas, where more than half the people have a hunting license, and I said, “I want to go into the middle of a bunch of hunters”—and I went back in ’96, because they beat a Congressman up there because he voted for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. And I told those guys—I remember, there were just all these guys in their plaid shirts just looking at me kind of souled up, and I said, “You know, if any of you missed a day, even an hour in the deer woods on account of the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, I want you to vote against me, too, because that Congressman lost his job because of me. But if you didn’t, they lied to you, and you need to get even.” And they did.

I say that because one of the things that I wanted to do when I ran in ’92 was to change the whole way people thought about politics in Washington. Everything was either/or. You know, there was a liberal position and a conservative position. There was a Democratic position and there was a Republican position. Everybody was supposed to hunker down and fight and get their 15 seconds on the evening news. And as a result, not very much got done, and we kept getting deeper and deeper and deeper in the ditch. And I believed that you could be, for example, pro-business and pro-labor. I thought you could be pro-growth and pro-environment. I thought you could be pro-work and pro-family. I thought we could balance the budget, still invest more in education and technology and scientific research. And lo and be-

hold, it worked. And I want you to understand this. These people here, who have served with me, under the most relentless pressure imagined, have stood up for a politics that will both unify this country and move us forward.

You know, I’m not running for anything this year. And most days, I’m okay about it. [Laughter] I do have a mild interest in the Senate race in New York that I’m—but I come here tonight as much as President as an American citizen who has had a unique vantage point on this last 7½ years. And I will say again, there is a huge difference.

This party—I want to thank Congressman Gephardt. I know you probably all saw the big press he got when he came out for a five- or six-point plan directed specifically at our high-tech future, or a permanent extension of the research and experimentation tax credit—a number of other issues that the Democratic caucus has embraced to move us forward. But there is a big difference.

Now, we’re in Washington today fighting for some things that I think are important. We believe that we ought to stop giving out education money to projects that don’t work, and only fund those things which do. We believe that there ought to be high standards. We think there ought to be an end to social promotion. But we think that every child ought to have a chance to learn. Children shouldn’t be blamed when the system fails.

I thank Governor Davis for his championing the charter school movement, and all of you who have helped that. But we also need to have after-school programs and summer school programs in these schools. We need to close the digital divide and finish the work of hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet. And a lot of you have helped us with that, and I thank you for that.

We need to reform the health care system and add prescription drugs to Medicare coverage. We need to save Social Security and take it out way beyond the life of the baby boom generation. And we can do that if we don’t have a tax cut that’s too big. And that’s going to be a big deal when all of us baby boomers retire.

We need to have a tax cut we can afford, and it ought to be targeted toward helping people send their kids to college, care for their parents and disabled family members and long-

term care, and to help working people on modest incomes afford their child care and other expenses.

We need to carry, I think to a much greater degree than we have, a commitment to the notion that we can improve the environment while we grow the economy. That's what this whole global warming issue is about. All over the world, there are people who just don't believe that you can get rich unless you put more stuff in the air that heats up the Earth. They think you've got to burn more coal and more oil, and in the digital economy that is not true. It is not true.

Pretty soon, we'll all be driving cars that get 80 miles a gallon, and if we can crack the last little chemical barrier, we'll be able to have biofuels where you can make 8 gallons of ethanol, for example, with only 1 gallon of gasoline. And then we'll all be effectively getting 550 miles a gallon.

Pretty soon everybody will be building their houses with glass that keeps out more heat and cold and lets in more light. We saved \$100,000 a year on the White House power bills just by changing the lights in one place. I've ordered the whole Federal Government to do what we did when we greened the White House. It will be the equivalent of taking 1.7 million cars off the road. And it's just the beginning.

These are some of the things where we actually differ with the other party. And Dick was talking about the gun issue. Somebody asked me what I thought about Charlton Heston the other day saying all those mean things about me, and I said, I still like his movies. *[Laughter]* And I do. And I actually liked him—he came to the White House, to the Kennedy Center Honors a couple of years ago. And I know that that's the way they think. But you have to understand the difference between the two parties.

The Republicans who follow the NRA believe that guns are the only area of our national life where we should deal with problems only with punishment and no prevention. They say, just throw the book at somebody if they violate one of these existing laws, but for goodness sakes, don't inconvenience anybody else by closing the gun show loophole, by requiring child trigger locks, by banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which make a mockery of our assault weapons ban. This is a big deal because it shows you how they define community.

How would you feel if I said, "You know, nearly everybody who goes in an airport is a good, honest citizen; 99.9 percent of them are. And those metal detectors when it's crowded and you're late for your plane are a real pain, you know, especially if you've got a big money clip or something that keeps going off. It just drives you crazy. So I want to take all of the metal detectors out of the airports. And the next time somebody blows up a plane, I'm going to throw the book at them." You think about it. That is the logic that the other party has in blocking this commonsense gun legislation. This is a big deal. And it will carry over into other issues. It does carry over into the tobacco issue and many others. So there is a huge difference.

But maybe most important of all, there is a difference about how we define our community. We're for the hate crimes legislation. We're for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." We believe that everybody ought to be a part of America if they're willing to obey the law and work hard, that everybody ought to have a chance. We think everyone matters; we think we all do better when we help each other. That's what we believe.

I think that's even more important than our commitment to high technology and scientific research. One of the unbelievable ironies of this world in which we live is that we think about now, in the next few years, not only these energy advances I mentioned, but just in a couple of months, I will be able to announce the sequencing of the human genome, that it will be finished. And then before you know it, we'll figure out how to block the genes that cause Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. Before you know it, we'll be able to find cancers when there are just a few cells. There will be unbelievable advances in biochemistry, and a lot of you have been a part of that. We'll find out what's in the black holes in the universe in the next two or three decades. It's an amazing time.

Now, isn't it interesting, since all of you are in the dot-com world, that for all the wonders of the modern world, the biggest problem people face is the oldest problem of human society, the fear of the other, people who are different. And therefore, the most dangerous thing in a society are people who seek to exploit that fear of the other and that difference.

I just got back from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh. Now, I was in a little Indian village—you may have seen it; I was dancing with the village women, and they were throwing flowers and everything—a very poor village, but they have a computer with software sufficient to give the poorest villagers, in Hindi or English or good visuals if they don't read very well, all of the information available from every national and state agency in India in a little village. And they have a printer.

So I watched a woman with a newborn baby come in and get the webpage for the health department on the line, and she had it on her screen and exactly what she was supposed to do in the first few months of her baby's life. And then she printed it out, and she took it home, and she had information in this remote rural village in India, just as good as anybody could get here in northern California.

I went to Hyderabad, where I met with the chief government minister. They have 18 government services on the Internet now. If you're there, you can get a car licensed on the Internet. Nobody goes to the revenue office anymore. Governor, if you do that, you'll be elected until the end of your life. [*Laughter*] This is an amazing thing.

If you look at America, there are 750 companies in Silicon Valley, alone, headed by Indian-Americans. There are 200 ethnic groups in America; Indians and Pakistanis both rank in the top 5 in per capita income and per capita education. And yet, they are sitting there staring at each other across the divide of Kashmir with nuclear weapons. And they can't let it go, and they can't get beyond it.

Can you imagine what would happen to the Middle East, in no time, if we could actually resolve the remaining differences? It's no accident that Ireland has the fastest growing economy in Europe, because they finally started to make peace with one another. And yet, everywhere we see these demons.

It's very important that the governing part in Washington believe that we can be one America and be committed to the future and a unifying vision of the future. I want Al Gore to be President, not just because I'm grateful to him for being what everybody knows is the most influential Vice President in history, but because he understands the future, and he has the ideas, the experience, and the will, the strength, to lead us there.

I want these people to get in the majority, not just because I feel terrible that they fell on the sword for me when we had to get this economy moving again and we had to take a stand for sensible gun safety laws, but because I know they can represent that kind of future. I can look at every Member here and imagine some—remember some conversation I've had with them over the years that just made me proud that they were members of my party.

I just want to leave you with this thought. Most of you who have done real well here are younger than I am. And I never thought—you know, the older you get, young is always defined as somebody who's a year younger than you are. But I want to tell you a story about this moment, because I want you to understand, this is a terribly important election. I have worked as hard as I could to turn our country around and get us moving in the right direction. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. That's the good news. But there's still people in places left behind.

We've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years, but the country's still too dangerous. We still haven't stepped up to our environmental responsibilities. And there are still a lot of dangers out there in the world. One of the reasons that I hope so much that this China MFN bill will pass, then getting China into the WTO, is that I think it will reduce the tensions across the Taiwan Strait, and I don't want a conflict there that will totally set back all of east Asia for a generation. I want them to keep moving forward, and I think it's important.

So let me say this. I want you all to listen to this, especially those of you who are younger than me. In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history. So I got all my little team together, and we were laughing, probably being a little too self-congratulatory, because you had as much to do with it as we did. All I did was try to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. But I asked them, I said, when was the last longest economic expansion in history? And it was between 1961 and 1969, when we grew up.

So let me tell you a story about that. And I'm not telling you this to get anybody down. There's no more optimistic person in this tent

tonight than me. But I want you to listen to this—1964, at the high watermark of the last longest economic expansion in history, I graduated from high school. Lyndon Johnson was President, uniting the country after President Kennedy's tragic assassination. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, and everybody thought it was just going to go on and on and on. We had a civil rights challenge, but everyone thought it was going to be handled in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets, because we had a President and a Congress who believed in them. No one believed that what was then a sort of simmering conflict in Vietnam would rip the heart out of America. And so we just rolled along. We thought it would go on.

Then, what happened? Four years later, in 1968, I graduated from college—2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed; 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed; 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President; a few weeks before Richard Nixon was elected President, claiming that he represented the Silent Majority, which means that those of us who were on the other side were outcasts. We were in the loud minority. And it was the first of many elections where we attempted to divide America between "us" and "them." And those that weren't "us" were, by definition, "them." They weren't our crowd, and they didn't have a place at our table. And just a few weeks after that, in early 1969, the last longest economic expansion in American history came to an end.

Now, what I want to say to you as a citizen was that I have waited for 35 years, since I was a little boy, starting out in life, to see my country have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our children. We are free of internal

crisis. The threats we have in the world, while serious, are not paralyzing. You have created a whole new economy that hasn't repealed the laws of supply and demand but has made them infinitely more elastic with infinitely more possibilities.

This is the kind of chance that comes along once in a lifetime. Don't let this election be about little things, and don't let this election be about divisive things. This is a time for building tomorrows. It comes along once in a great long while. You have helped to make it so. And you can make sure that we make the most of this election.

These people should be elected because they represent the future, and they represent unity, and they believe we can go forward together. It is a precious gift. We have fought for it and worked for it and stood for it in strong winds. But now, it must be ratified in this election.

If somebody asked you tomorrow why you came here tonight, tell them that. Tell them we've got the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children, and you believe that these Democrats can give it to you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Jim and Bridget Jorgensen; State Assemblyman Mike Honda, candidate for California's 15th Congressional District; State Senator Adam Schiff, candidate for California's 27th Congressional District; attorney John Doerr; Eric Schmidt, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Novell, Inc.; Gov. Gray Davis of California; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council Conference in San Jose, California

April 3, 2000

Thank you. You saw me do this with my eyes. The lights are so bright in here that we only know when you applaud at the right times that we're talking to a DLC audience. [Laughter] Let me say, first of all, how delighted I am to be at the Tech Museum of Innovation. And

I want to thank all the people from the museum who have made us feel welcome here; a lot of them are sitting over here. But this is a very appropriate place for us to be meeting, and I think we ought to give them a big hand for welcoming us here. [Applause]

I want to thank Mayor Ron Gonzales for welcoming us here and for reminding me of that historic meeting 10 years ago when Al From and I came out here. Some of you here were there then, in addition to Ron. I see Larry Stone and Toni Casey out here. And Steve Wesley wasn't there then, he was there shortly after. There were many others there I'm delighted to see, because we started something profoundly important then.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. In addition to Zoe Lofgren, Cal Dooley, and Anna Eshoo, and I think Representative Martin Frost may be here—someone said he was—from Texas. He was one of our early Members. I want to thank State Controller Kathleen Connell, who is here, and California Board of Education member Reed Hastings. I want to thank all the CEO's who have come today. I see my friend Dr. Irwin Jacobs, and Meg Whitman and Eric Benhamou. There are many others here. And I want to thank one of the people who was the architect of the economic policy that got so many kudos here, Laura Tyson. I think she's sitting in the second row there, although it's very bright.

I also want to thank the young people from City Year who are sitting in the back. When the San Jose contingent came in, I just happened to be coming into San Jose that night, and I welcomed them here. But they are the manifestation of our commitment to citizen service that grew out of one of our DLC projects. We really believed we could build an American community that was stronger and relished its diversity and still extolled its common values, if we could get more people involved in citizen service. And that's what AmeriCorps and City Year are all about, and I'm delighted that San Jose has such a strong representation. They're actually having their national conference out here in a few weeks, and I hope all of you will support them in every way you can.

Let me say, most of what needs to be said has been said. I do want to say a special word of appreciation, too, to Governor Davis. He has done so well on education; he has done so well on the economy; he has done so well on crime. But actually, Gray, I was even coming to California before you got elected and Chelsea came to Stanford. [Laughter] Actually, I think I've been here more than any President in history—I think, you know, something like 35 or 40 times.

But one of the things that I really appreciate is that when you say and when Zoe Lofgren says, we can govern from the center. I think it's very important that everyone understand that we define that as a dynamic, not a static, term; that we get people together and find a common approach that is oriented toward change, not the status quo. It would be difficult to look at a period of American history that has had more consistent, constructive change in the private, as well as in the public sector than we have seen in the last few years. So I think that that's something I want to emphasize.

And while I'm here, because I don't know when I'll have a chance to come back and say this, I want to thank Governor Davis for the work he's done in education to prove that if you have high standards and genuine accountability and you put your money where your mouth is, all our children can learn. I believe that.

I want to thank him and all of you, particularly in Silicon Valley, for your support of the charter school movement. When I became President, there was one charter school in America. There are now over 2,000, and I think we'll make our goal of 3,000 by the end of the year. And I hope we will continue to see it grow and flourish.

I want to thank you for being on the cutting edge of change on the issue of gun safety, as well, Governor. Last year California passed laws to ban junk guns, limit handgun sales to one a month, and to stiffen the assault weapons ban. Since then, we've seen similar State action all across America. Today, just today, Massachusetts is beginning to enforce tougher consumer product safety rules for guns, banning junk guns, requiring trigger locks, and the Maryland Legislature is considering legislation, as we speak, on child safety locks.

Next week I'm going to California to support a citizen ballot initiative—to Colorado, excuse me, in a State that, by registration, has become more and more Republican in the last 7 years. But they've got a citizens' ballot initiative out there in the aftermath of Columbine that would close the gun show loophole and require background checks on all gun sales. So I'm pleased about that.

We also announced a landmark agreement with Smith & Wesson, the large gun manufacturer, to change for the better the way guns

are manufactured, marketed, and sold. And already 10 California cities and counties, including San Mateo County, your neighbor, have pledged, when they buy weapons for their police forces, to support manufacturers who have high standards for gun safety and dealer responsibility.

This is a huge deal. And it is appalling, the abuse that Smith & Wesson has taken from people who don't want to have sensible safety measures, for recognizing the fact, which is, an enormous percentage of crimes are committed with guns, are committed with guns that come from a very small percentage of dealers. And all they've said is, "We're going to try to manufacture safer guns, and we're going to try to use more responsible dealers." And for their trouble, they have been subject to enormous abuse. Smith & Wesson's almost up there with me in the abuse we're getting from that crowd. [Laughter]

But I just want to say—you know, somebody asked me the other day what I thought about all those mean things Charlton Heston said about me. And I said, I still like to watch his movies. [Laughter] And I still think he's a nice fellow. But I think the American people have decided that we can have our hunting and our sport shooting and still have sensible prevention. And this should not be the only area of our life where we don't prevent bad things from happening in the first place.

Once again, I hope the United States will be following the lead of California, and I hope that we can pass our sensible gun safety legislation before the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy on April the 20th. But I wanted to thank Governor Davis for that, as well.

And finally, let me say by way of introduction, I don't know if Al From will ever get the credit he deserves for the political revolution which has been wrought in America over the last decade. But whatever contribution I have made through the DLC—and I love being in the DLC. You know, I love ideas, and I'm sort of a—they used to make fun of me for being a policy wonk when I ran for President. But we believed ideas mattered.

He, however, was willing to devote his life to creating an organization that got people together who believed ideas mattered. He believed that the center should be vital, not stale. He thought the polarizing politics of Washington was nuts and destructive to America's future.

And he gave people like Cal Dooley and Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, and Gray Davis and me a place from which we could work and proudly embrace our party and its heritage. And I just want to thank you, Al, for now over 16 years of service to your country, by preserving its oldest political party's heritage and ideas and ideals. Thank you very much.

Ten years ago, when Al From and I came out here, we figured that if the Democratic Party had a future, it had to be hooked into the future, and that you were making the future. It wasn't very complicated. We did not believe that America could be what it ought to be unless we had sustained economic growth. We didn't think that we could tolerate a situation where we had these huge deficits. But we also knew we had to be for things, not just against things, and we wanted to see the future being made. So we showed up out here, and we just started listening and talking to people and trying to figure out what implications for the way Government works we could find in the way the most successful companies here were working.

We also were trying to figure out whether there was some way we could actually get by the ideological debates that were paralyzing Washington and what was then—it's amazing, but then, the Democrats were still identified with the position that the Government was the solution to every problem, and the Republicans were identified with the position that the Government was the cause of every problem. I thought both were, frankly, somewhat arrogant, since we have a big, complicated country in which Government's interrelations with the other sectors and actors of our society are important.

So anyway, we worked on this. And then, in 1992, Al Gore and I went to the American people and asked them to give us a chance to create opportunity for all and responsibility from all and community of all Americans. We asked them to give us a chance to create a Government which was neither the Satan nor the savior of America but a catalyst for new ideas to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. And the American people gave us a chance. I think the results speak for themselves.

The core of it all in the beginning was trying to get our relationship to the new economy right and then try to bring more people into it. We, first of all, recognized that in a global economy,

whether you were doing something new or traditional, there had to be an availability of capital at affordable interest rates. We had to do something about the deficits. And so we did it, with our crowd alone.

I told a group last night, I never will forget all those guys saying—in the Republican Party—when they were saying my economic plan would be a disaster for America and they were not to be held responsible for any of the consequences.

To be fair to them, they did come back in '97, and we had a Balanced Budget Act that passed overwhelmingly, with both parties and both Houses. It was one of the high watermarks of the last 7 years because it proved that when we get off our high horse, we can work together to move forward to make America a better place. But we had to first get the deficit in order. And now we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, and the consequences are obvious.

The second thing we had to do was to expand trade. All this has been said before, but America has got 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out somehow, some way, you have to sell something to somebody else. [*Laughter*] And I think it's, in a larger sense, the world is becoming a different place, and if you want America to have a positive impact for peace and freedom and security and prosperity, we have to be involved in the kind of networking of the world that you have made a living off of both in America and beyond our borders. It's very important.

The third thing we had to do was to make sure we were investing in the education and training of our people and our scientific and technological capacity, so that we could stay on the cutting edge of change and make sure we were preparing more people to participate in it. And in that connection, there have been some allusions—Zoe made some allusion to this, but we also worked very hard to kind of fix the Government's relationship to the emerging high-tech economy. We worked so hard in the administration on the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to make sure it was a pro-competition bill that would give people a chance to get into business, not squeeze them out; that would give new ideas and new approaches a chance to flourish, not be shriveled by people who were stepping on that. And I think the fight—it was a huge fight;

it was very much a fight worth making. And I think if you look at all the new firms and all the new successes that have flown out of the '96 telecom act, and the developments in the global economy, I think it was worth doing.

We have worked hard to make the other adjustments, some of which I'll mention in a minute, including being more flexible about exports and other things. But we have tried very hard, because 30 percent of the growth of America in the last few years has come out of the high-tech sector, to get this right. And a lot of you have played a major role in that, and I thank you for that.

So, after 7 years, I think we can say that this approach works. And we've had the highest percentage of jobs created in the private sector of any modern economic recovery. We have the smallest Government in 40 years—since 1960. We have about 21 million new jobs and, as all of you know, the longest economic expansion in the history of the country. And the social fabric is getting better: The crime rate is down to a 25-year low; the welfare roll has been cut in half to a 30-year low; teen pregnancy is down; adoptions are up; test scores are up; college-going is up. The country is moving in the right direction.

And as I said in my State of the Union Address, I just want to say again today, I think the main issue in this year's election ought to be, now what? What are you going to do with this prosperity?

And I want to come back to the point we're here about today, but why are we doing all this? And it seems to me that the most important thing the American people have to decide is, do they want to use this moment to have a good time, or would they like to have a good time by meeting the big, long-term challenges that are still manifestly out there?

You know, you know what I think. I think it's a time for dreaming big dreams and for bridging big divides and for dealing with big challenges. And I think that we have now the resources to do things as a nation we've never had before.

I think we ought to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835. I think we ought to prove that we can bring free enterprise and the information economy to the poorest nooks and crannies of America that have been left behind. I think we ought to make America the safest big nation on Earth. I think we ought

to prove we can provide affordable, quality health care to all Americans. I think we ought to prove we can provide world-class education to our children, that every child can start school ready to learn, graduate ready to succeed, and go on to college, because the means are there.

I think we ought to prove that we can meet the challenge of the aging of America and take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boomers, reform Medicare, add a prescription drug coverage, which we never would have left out if Medicare were created today instead of in 1965.

I think we ought to prove we can reverse the course of climate change while we grow the economy, that you, the information economy, broke the iron chain between economic growth and putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. It is no longer necessary to do that. It is scientifically provable it is no longer necessary to do that. And we're crazy if we don't get about the business of preserving the global environment, as well as dealing with our local environmental challenges.

I think we ought to prove that we can lead the world toward greater shared peace and security and that we can build one America at home and be an example abroad for people to let go of their ethnic, their religious, their racial, their tribal, and other hatreds. That's what I think this election ought to be about, because that's what I think the future ought to be about.

You know, in my lifetime we've never had this kind of opportunity. But the point I want to make about all of this for today is that we will not be able to have an election about that or a future that's about that unless we can keep the economy growing. And you would be amazed how much time we have spent over the last several years figuring out, how do you keep this going? Because even though I think you have changed the nature of the economy, I don't believe that the silicon chip has repealed all the economic laws that govern nations. I'm not sure that you've repealed the laws of supply and demand or even totally abolished the business cycle, but I am quite sure you have made them more elastic, less predictable, and that there is more potential for sustained growth.

So we spend a lot of time thinking about, what is it that we have to do now to keep this thing going? And if I could, I'd say—the first thing I think we need to do is go back over the elements of the strategy. We cannot

abandon our fiscal discipline. Now, this is an idea that will be tested in this election debate, because the Republicans now favor a tax cut bigger than the one I vetoed. And I believe that if it passes, they won't be able to keep their own promises on education, and furthermore, they will have to have massive cuts in all these things, and we'll go back to running deficits. But it will be very popular in the short run, and we're doing so well, a lot of people will want to believe we can do this.

So it's a big issue the Americans will have to face. And I hate to sound like the sort of crotchety old schoolmarm, but we ought to stick with what brought us to the dance here. And the increasing value of the NASDAQ is more important than the decreasing burden of taxes if the impact of the decreasing burden of taxes is to go back to deficits, high interest rates, an uneducated citizenry, and lower wealth creation. And we need to—this is an issue that the American people will just have to deal with.

The second thing we have to do, it seems to me, is to redouble our commitment to education and training our own work force. And I will just say—Gray Davis has already said a great deal about this, but it seems to me the key is, we have to have a relentless focus on results.

We have learned—back in the early eighties, when I started this and Hillary and I redid the education laws in Arkansas, we had some pretty good ideas about what would work. But we weren't sure. And now there's really no excuse. There's lots and lots of research which shows what works in education. And we need a relentless focus on results, on standards, on accountability. I'm trying to get the Congress to completely change the way we give out Federal money, and only support things that we know work and stop supporting things we know don't work.

I think social promotion should be ended, but not in a way that blames the kids for the failure of the system. Therefore, I think our proposal would have universal access for every kid in every troubled school in America to after-school and summer school programs, to mentoring programs, because I think it's important that we believe and prove that every child can learn. I think these things really matter.

I think that schools that are failing ought to be turned around or shut down. But I think

we ought to help them be turned around, because we know, as a practical matter, they can be. You heard Gray Davis talk about this incentive program he's giving. When you give a lot—once he's given out a number of these bonuses, then people will go out and start studying the circumstances that these children were in when they started. And it's going to take your breath away when you see the adversity that a lot of these classrooms and schools have overcome. And it will reaffirm the notion that I think is broadly shared in this room, that intelligence is pretty well universally distributed and that there's a role to be played here in this.

I also want to say, we shouldn't forget the importance of technology. We have gone, now, from about, oh, 11 percent of our classrooms connected to the Internet—schools—to over 90 percent of our schools connected to the Internet today, well over half of our classrooms, thanks to a lot of you in this room and the program that we've been working on with the Vice President since '94. We shouldn't forget that.

But I just want to say to you—I believed this before I got here. I believe it, more importantly, today. I have spent an enormous amount of time in our schools over the last 21 years. These schools can be turned around, and all of our kids can learn. But you have to have high standards and genuine accountability and the right kind of support. That's what California represents. That's what I believe our national policy represents. And I hope you will continue to support them.

I also think that we're kidding ourselves if we think we can continue to move this economy forward unless we educate our people to a far higher degree, with much more flexibility. But also, as all of you know and as you have been banging on me for years, what do we do with the shortages that exist right now? Our high-tech industries do face temporary labor shortages, and they have repeatedly, at least during my experience. So we've tried to balance the short-term need to increase visas for high-skilled workers with the long-term goal of actually educating our people so that more of them from untraditional backgrounds can fill these high-wage positions.

Again, I want to thank Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren's leadership. It's been quite imaginative here. She helped our Nation to strike that balance in the past with legislation that dealt with the short-term crisis and set aside funds for

education and training. And now, we've got a similar dilemma, and she and Anna Eshoo and Ellen Tauscher, representing this area, have all taken a real leadership role in trying to help us get a bipartisan solution to have more workers here, to improve the INS, to ensure that our children benefit from the technological innovation of the new economy.

I know you're all interested in this, and I wanted to talk about this, because we will get a solution here. We will work together. We will come up with sound legislation. We will find the high-tech workers you need so that we can keep growing this economy, and we will continue to prepare our children and our workers for the information age. So thank you, Zoe, and thank you, Anna, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Meanwhile, you need to keep helping Governor Davis on this education project.

Now, let me talk briefly about the China issue and trade. We've had over 270 trade agreements in the last 7 years. They have clearly boosted economic growth. Until the Asian financial crisis, 30 percent of our growth was attributed to the expansion of exports. But they have, as Zoe Lofgren said so eloquently in her remarks, the trade issue has become symbolic of people's general unease about globalization and their sense that the world is not about economics alone. It's about the fair distribution of gain. It's also about the preservation of other values, like our values opposing child labor or abusive labor conditions or our desire to see the standing of the entire global economy improve. And somehow, these trade agreements have become a lightning rod for everybody's dissatisfaction with everything, although the evidence is, the more we trade with countries and the more wealth they get, the more likely they are to elevate labor standards and improve the environment.

And I have really tried to be out there on the forefront of arguing for global efforts to integrate an approach to a global society that included labor and the environment along with economic agreements. Now, having said that, none of that is an argument for opposing China's entry into the WTO and, even more specifically, for opposing the Congress in granting permanent normal trade relations to China.

And I think that it's very important that everyone understand exactly what this is. I still talk to Members who are a little bit, I think, uncertain about exactly what this legislation does. We

reached an agreement with China for the terms of their entry into the WTO. When China concludes similar agreements with other countries, it will join the WTO. But for us to benefit from the agreement that we negotiated, China must first be granted permanent normal trading status by Congress. It's the same arrangement we have with other countries in the WTO.

Now, there is a lot of controversy in Congress about this vote. And I've heard all the arguments. But I think that, I have to tell you first of all just on the trade terms, in the entire history of trade agreements, I don't believe there's ever been one this weighted in our favor, for one simple reason. This is not really a trade agreement; it's a membership agreement. It's very important that you understand. This is a membership agreement. This is China saying, "We don't have a modern, open economy. We'd like to be in this modern, open trading system. If you will let us in, here are the changes we are prepared to make." That's what this is about.

Therefore, this vote by Congress is on an agreement that lowers no American trade barriers, lowers no American tariffs, grants no greater access to China to any part of the American economy—nothing, zip, zilch, *nada*, zero. [Laughter]

On the other hand, Chinese tariffs will fall by more than half over 5 years in every sector, from telecommunications to automobiles to agriculture. For the first time, American companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China without having to transfer technological know-how to Chinese firms or put manufacturing facilities overseas. For the first time, China will agree to play by the same trading rules that we follow.

Accordingly, the narrow, or broad, economic consequences are 100-0 in our favor. But I believe the moral and national security arguments also favor this decision.

There is no denying, as some of the opponents of this agreement assert, that China is a one-party state, that it does not tolerate opposition, that it still denies its citizens fundamental rights of free speech and religious expression that we hold very dear. That is not the question.

The question is, what is the most intelligent thing we can do to increase the chances that China will become more open, more democratic, and a constructive member of the global community in the 21st century? I think the answer

is to allow them in and to let liberty spread from within.

Under this agreement, China will slash the tariffs that protect its inefficient state-run industries, industries which the Communist Party has long used to exercise day-to-day control over people's lives. China's leaders feel this step is essential to maintaining their competitiveness. And they're not foolish people. They know it may unleash forces that the leaders, themselves, cannot control.

The late Chief Justice Earl Warren, from California, a former Governor of California, said that liberty is the most contagious force in the world. In the new century, liberty will spread, in part, by cell phone and cable modem. In the past year, the number of Internet addresses in China in one year has gone from 2 million to 9 million. This year the number is expected to grow to over 20 million. There are 1.2 billion people in China. When China joins the WTO, by 2005, it will eliminate tariffs on information technology products, making the tools of communication even cheaper, better, more widely available. American telecommunications firms and service providers are perfectly poised to fill this enormous market.

We know how much the Internet has changed America, and we're already an open society. Imagine how much it will change China.

Of course, there's no question China has been trying to crack down on the Internet. Good luck. [Laughter] That's like that EDS ad. You remember that ad where these cowboys are trying to herd cats? That's the best ad I saw on television last year. [Laughter] The very fact that the Chinese Government is trying to herd these cats shows you how real the changes are and how much they threaten the old order. They are proof that we should keep going in this direction, not that we should hold back.

Now, of course, I recognize that bringing China into the WTO is not a human rights policy in and of itself, and we have to continue to push China in every way we can to improve and observe human rights. We're pressing for a resolution at the U.N. to condemn human rights abuses in China that we object to. We urge other nations to join us.

But I think it is quite significant that the people with the greatest interest in seeing China change agree with our efforts to bring China into the world trading system. There's something almost patronizing in the opposition of some

elements in the United States to China coming into the WTO, when the people they say they're trying to help believe they'll be helped if China does come into the WTO. The citizens of Taiwan, despite all their tensions with Beijing, by and large want to see China in the WTO. And so does Taiwan's newly elected leader. It's a very important point: So does Taiwan's newly elected leader.

Most evangelical Christians who have missions in China want China in the WTO. Most human rights organizations want China in the WTO. I think the more the American people learn about our agreement with China, the more they will support it. I think the more elected Representatives learn about it, the more they'll get behind it. Support is building based on the evidence.

And we have signs of that today. You heard the Governor mention the letter he's signing. Now we have over 40 of our Nation's Governors, Republicans and Democrats, in favor of granting China permanent normal trading status. And they say it will create tremendous opportunities for their companies and farmers and more high-wage American workers. In addition to Governor Davis, I want to thank Governor Locke of Washington and Governor Schafer of North Dakota for their efforts.

We've got more Members of Congress coming on board, and I thank Zoe Lofgren for the brave announcement she made today. And today I'm pleased to announce that the CEO's of over 200 high-tech firms from across our country have also signed a letter urging Members of Congress to support this legislation. In their letter, the CEO's say, "This vote is an absolute priority for high-tech companies, and the most critical vote Congress will take on high technology this year."

Now, here's the clincher I want to explain that I think a lot of people don't understand. If we don't vote for permanent normal trading status and China makes its agreement with Europe, they still get in the WTO. The only difference is Europe and Japan get the benefit of the deal that we negotiated.

Opposition to this—it reminds me of that old Cajun joke I learned when I was a boy. I shouldn't be telling this story, but I'm going to. [Laughter] But, I mean, really, this guy, Pierre, comes up to his friend Jean, and he says, "Jean, why do you have dynamite in your suit pocket? Usually you got those big expensive

cigars." He said, "Yeah, but every time I do that, Raymond, he comes up to me, and he says, 'Hey, Jean,' and he hits me in the pocket. He destroys my cigars." He said, "Now you got dynamite? When you do it now, you will kill yourself." He said, "I know, but I blow his hand off." [Laughter] You think about it.

We made this deal, and now we say, "We take it back. We don't want it. We're going to give it to you." We made this incredible agreement. We've been working on all these problems with China for years. We can't get in the markets. We can't distribute our automobiles. We can't distribute our auto parts. We've got to have manufacturing and technology transfer. It's all gone, and now we say, "We don't want any of that. We're going to give it to the Europeans and the Japanese. Let's see if they can do a good job with the deal we negotiated."

It's very important that you understand this. The main consequence of this will be to hurt America economically and to dramatically strain our relations with China at a time when we need to maintain a positive ability to impact their conduct, to reduce strains along the Taiwan Straits, and to get the leaders in that country to imagine the greatness of their country in future terms, not yesterday's terms. This is a big deal.

It isn't like we can stop the modernization, but we can turn it into a very dark direction. Or we can run a much bigger risk. You all think about that story I told you. How many times have you done that in your life?

Now that I am in the last year of my Presidency and I'm not running for anything, I can tell you, perhaps with some greater credibility, that I think we in America generally tend to overestimate the influence we have by stifling people, and we generally tend to underestimate the influence we have by reaching out a hand of cooperation, not in a naive way, not in a blind way, never abandoning our values. But just—what was this DLC all about in the beginning? We were sick of these partisan rhetorical bombshells that dominated Washington politics. We thought there had to be a way to get underneath and beyond that, to join people together in constructive endeavors. And lo and behold, it worked. And it's not different in the rest of the world.

Now, all I can tell you is, I believe that if we do this, 20 years from now we will wonder

why we ever had a serious debate about it. If we don't do it, 20 years from now we'll still be kicking ourselves for being so dumb. That's what I really believe. And there is no point in my being delicate about this; I think this is a big deal. And our country and my successors in office, and their ability to do the right thing by you and by our values, will turn in no small measure on how we vote on this.

So I realize that in this crowd I'm preaching to the saved—[laughter]—but if you want America's economy to continue to grow and if you want your country to continue to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity and to have an influence on people, to get them to give up their irrational attachment to the animosities of yesterday, we have to be willing to shoulder our burden for the future. This is part of it. And ironically, we will be one of the greatest beneficiaries by doing what is right for China and for the rest of the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. at the Tech Museum of Innovation, to the conference entitled "New Democrats: Meeting the Challenges of the New Economy." In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Ron Gonzales of San Jose; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone; former Mayor Toni Casey of Los Altos, CA; Steve Wesley, vice president of marketing and business, and Meg Whitman, chief executive officer, eBay; Irwin M. Jacobs, chairman and chief executive officer, Qualcomm, Inc.; Eric Benhamou, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, 3Com Corp.; former National Economic Adviser Laura D'Andrea Tyson; Gov. Gray Davis of California; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington State; and Gov. Edward T. Schafer of North Dakota.

Remarks to the AFL–CIO Building and Construction Trades Department Conference

April 4, 2000

Thank you. Well, the first thing I would like to say is John Podesta told me that he exceeded this retirement dinner for Bob Sunday night. And then Hillary came over here for breakfast, and I just kind of got lonesome. Nobody had me come over, so I just thought I would intrude myself on your meeting. And I'm glad to be here.

I want to say I came for two reasons. First of all, I came to thank you for all the support you've given me and for all the work you've done for America and for all the people you represent. I have tried, too, to be a builder, and the builders of this country, to me, embody the best of America. So I want to thank you, because without your help and your support, none of the good things that have happened that our administration, that the Vice President and I have been part of would have been possible.

And the second thing I wanted to do was to say a special word of thanks to Bob Georgine as he retires after 29 years. Thank you for your leadership on raising the minimum wage, on

school construction, on bringing investment to the new markets of America that have been left out of our prosperity, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, and on all the issues that specifically affect your members and working people.

And I wanted to also thank you for last Labor Day, where you taught me to use an electric screwdriver. [Laughter] Now that I'm moving into my own home and it's 111 years old, I might need that skill again, before you know it. [Laughter]

Bob and I are both retiring. And at least he's doing it voluntarily. I'm term-limited. But I tell you, as we look back on the last 7 years, it has been a wonderful experience. And again I say, we could not have done it without you. What I'd like for you to do now is just take a few minutes with me and think about why we are where we are and where we need to go.

I have my politics, I suppose, partly from the way I was raised by my grandparents and my family, partly from what I've learned as a Governor in my home State of Arkansas and

as President, partly from what I've observed about human affairs and human nature. But I have come to believe that there are basically two big approaches here to American politics: One is, obviously, from the bottom up; the other is from the top down. We're on the bottom-up side. The other is unite and lift, against divide and conquer. I think that most of us believe the way we do because we think everyone counts, everyone ought to have a chance, everyone has a role to play in our society, and we all do better when we help each other. That's why we think everyone should have opportunity, and we should have a community of all Americans.

Now, if you think about where we are today, it seems to me that even though I love to hear you cheer for me and for where we are and what we've done, the real issue is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? You know, people can be tested in adversity, but they are also tested when times are good. When you build up a great legacy, what do you do with it? And I've worked as hard as I could for the last 7 years to try to first turn this country around. Just remember what it was like when we all—when Al Gore and I showed up here. We had high deficits. We had high interest rates. We had no job growth. We had social divisions. We had political gridlock. I've worked hard to try to turn it around. The country is moving in the right direction. What are we going to do with it? And that is the real issue.

And I would argue that you have a solemn responsibility in this election season not only to mobilize your members and their families but to reach out to the larger American community to say, "This is not a time for self-indulgence. This is a time to concentrate on our unique ability to meet the big, long-term challenges of America, for the most vulnerable among us, for the children like those children that are in this audience today." And I'd just like to begin with one; Bob alluded to it.

In the next 30 years, all the baby boomers are going to retire, and we'll only have about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Not two people total, but—[laughter]—two people. Even I couldn't get that done. [Laughter] Two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And so there will be a great question here. How are

we going to change that? How are we going to accommodate the aging of America?

Well, I'm about to sign a bill which removes the Social Security earnings limit, so people who want to work in their later years can do so and still draw their Social Security. I think that's a good thing to do. But we also have to recognize that we're going to have to make some changes in order for Social Security to mean in the 21st century what it has meant to the 20th century.

We're also going to have to make some changes in the Medicare program, which was established when President Johnson was here, to make it work in the 21st century. And I've asked the Congress, for example, to dedicate the interest savings from paying down the debt to the Social Security Trust Fund. Why? Because right now, we're paying more in Social Security taxes than we're paying out in Social Security. So as we pay the debt down, I want to take the interest savings from paying the debt down, put it in the Trust Fund. It would now allow us to add about 54 years to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

And I hope you'll talk to the Members of Congress. I know a lot of Republicans have supported many of your issues, and you have relationships with both Republicans and Democrats. This is not a complicated deal. The only reason for the Republicans not to support this is if they want to privatize Social Security, if they can get the Congress and the White House. Now, you need to put the heat on folks to say, "We've got the money now. Let's dedicate it now to saving Social Security and taking it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation."

The other thing we have to do is to modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit for our seniors on Medicare. Now, we just learned last week that Medicare, which was scheduled to go broke in 1999, last year—when I took office, they said the Trust Fund would run out of money in 1999. We have now taken it out to 2023, and I'm very proud of that. But you know, if we were designing a Medicare program today, no one would even think about designing Medicare without prescription drug coverage, first of all, because there's been so many dramatic advances in medication; and secondly, because, again I will say, the nature of people over 65 has changed.

When Medicare was originally designed, people didn't live much longer than 65 years, typically, and this was designed for emergency care or for critical care, for hospitals and doctors. Now, any American lives to be 65 has got a life expectancy of 83. And more and more, we need preventive care and chronic care. And more and more, that is prescription medication. No one—if we were starting all over again today, we'd never even think about having a Medicare program that didn't provide a prescription drug component.

Now, I've just come from a meeting with the Senate Democrats. And the Senate is taking up the budget today, and the Democrats are going to try to, first of all, say we should not spend the surplus on risky tax cuts; we should first take care of our basic business. Senator Robb is going to offer an amendment today, supported by Senator Daschle, that makes this simple statement: After we modernize Medicare with an affordable, broadbased, voluntary prescription drug benefit, then we can move forward with sensible tax cuts that aren't so big they undermine our ability to save Social Security, pay down the debt, and invest in the education of our children. But first things first.

So the Senate is going to get a resolution by Senator Robb today that says, say yes to Medicare and prescription drugs and no to having a big tax cut first. So I hope you will support that.

Now, interestingly enough, a number of people in the Republican majority are saying, "Okay, well, I'll go along with the drug program as long as everybody doesn't get it. We ought to stop at the poverty level or 150 percent of the poverty level or maybe at the outer reaches, some of them 200 percent of the poverty level." Let me tell you something. They want to say that nobody with an annual income of over \$16,700 should get help with this prescription drug benefit. I just think that's wrong.

If you think about it, a lot of you have parents, uncles, aunts, maybe your older brothers and sisters that are on Medicare. If they have a \$300 or \$400 a month drug bill, which is not all that rare, then \$16,000 is not all that much money. And since this benefit is voluntary—again I will say, I don't think a widow earning \$16,000 or even \$20,000 a year is less deserving of drug coverage than someone who is below the poverty line.

So I hope you will stick up for the proposition that all of our seniors should have the option of buying into this insurance program. That's what made Medicare work in the first place. That's what made Social Security work in the first place. It was a universal program that helped middle class people as well as low income people. And this is an opportunity to improve the process of aging in America in a way that is humane and decent and completely affordable. So we need your help to get prescription drug coverage in the Medicare program this year, in the right way, for all Americans.

I also want to thank you for your devotion to the welfare of people on the other end of life's age line, for your support for education and, in particular, for the work you have done to build bipartisan support for school construction and renovation.

This year I have sent a budget to the Congress which will enable us to build or modernize 6,000 schools and to repair 5,000 schools a year over the next 5 years. This is terrifically important. We've got the largest school population we've ever had. We want to have high standards and high accountability. We want to hook all these schools up to the Internet. But there are schools in New York City that are still being heated with coal—with coal. The average age of a school building in Philadelphia is 65 years. I was in a small town in Florida, visiting an elementary school where there were 12—12—housetrailers behind the school to take the overflow of the students.

One-third of our schools are in serious disrepair, a lot of them literally too old to be wired for the Internet; other kids in trailers that need to be in modern classrooms. This is a big issue. We've been working on it for 3 years now. This week the Department of Education released a State-by-State report, telling us that the need has grown and grown. Enrollment is growing; facilities are crumbling. Every year we fail to act, the problem gets worse.

I am very frustrated by those who say, in the majority in Congress, that this is not a national responsibility. That is not true. I'm not trying to tell people how to build the buildings. I'm not trying to prescribe the—we're not trying to micromanage this program. But the school districts of this country do not have the money or the means right now to do what our children need. We have finally more people in the

schools than we had during the baby boom generation after World War II. And we cannot expect them to learn in facilities that are unbearable and, in many cases, unwireable.

So I asked you to work with me. With your help, we actually have now a strong bipartisan school construction bill in the House. And thanks to you, largely, we have both Republicans as well as Democrats supporting this legislation in the Senate and the House. The House bill would allocate \$24.8 billion to help communities build or renovate these 6,000 schools.

So now that you've gotten us some good Republican support, we have to get this to a vote. Once it became obvious on the House floor that we actually had Republicans supporting this bill and that we could pass it, then efforts were made to keep it from coming to a vote. So I say to you, there are a lot of people who believe that this year, because it's election year, should be a year where nothing gets done. And I have challenged every Member of Congress who believes that to relinquish his or her salary for a year, because we didn't get to where we are today by taking a year off. You don't get to take a year off. Nobody else gets to take a year off, and everybody's drawing a paycheck every 2 weeks. There is no reason not to continue to move forward.

Believe me, no matter how much progress we make this year, there will still be significant areas of disagreement between our Presidential candidates and between the two parties in all the congressional races. So let's show up for the American people and do what we can. There is no reason—no reason—not to pass the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not to pass the school construction bill this year. And you can help us do it. I hope you will.

Now, I would like to close with the point with which I began, first, with a simple thank-you and, second, with a reminder that this year, this election year, imposes on all of us an historic responsibility. We did not get to where we are today, with 21 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever measured, highest homeownership in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years—this didn't happen by accident. It happened because we worked together, and we had the right ideas, and we were moving in the

right direction. It happened because we believed in uniting our people and lifting them up and not in divide and conquer. It happened because we believed you could be pro-business and pro-labor, pro-work and pro-family, you could grow the economy and improve the environment, you could balance the budget and run a surplus and still invest more in education and give tax relief to middle income families.

A study last week said that the percentage of Federal income tax coming out of average families' incomes was the lowest in 40 years. That's why we had a unite-and-lift, not a divide-and-conquer theory, and because we kept working. And the only concern I have about this election year is that people will say, "Well, we've got the first surpluses we've had in 40 years, back to back. Things are going well. Why don't we vote for something that makes us feel good in the moment?"

And I just want you all to listen to this, particularly those of you that are about my age. In February we celebrated the fact that we had the longest economic expansion in American history. And so I had all my economic advisers in, and we were sitting around talking about it. And I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history, before this one?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Now, let me tell you what happened then. In 1964 I graduated from high school, at the peak of this economic expansion. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. Everybody thought the growth would go on forever. We had a civil rights challenge at home, but Lyndon Johnson was President. He'd united the country after President Kennedy's assassination, and people believed that the civil rights challenge would be met in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets. We were sort of involved in Vietnam, but people thought that was a long way away, and nobody dreamed it would divide the country. And people thought that we would win the cold war because our values and our system were superior, and things would just rock right along. That's what we thought in 1964.

Four years later, in this city, I graduated from college on June the 8th. It was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, 2 months and 4 days after Martin Luther King was killed. Today is the 32d anniversary of his death. It was 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he

couldn't run for President anymore, because the country was divided right down the middle over Vietnam and there were demonstrations everywhere.

It was a few weeks before Richard Nixon was elected President on one of those divide-and-conquer platforms. And I know a lot of you probably voted for him if you were of voting age—that age. But let me just remind you of what the message was. The message was, “I represent the Silent Majority,” which meant that those of us that weren't for him, we were in the loud minority. So there was “us” and there was “them.” And then we had all these “us” and “them” elections. Al Gore and I came along and said, “We want to put people first. We want to unite, not divide.” But just a few weeks after that election in 1968, boom, the longest economic expansion in American history was over.

What's the point of all that? I'm not trying to get you down. I want you to be up. There's nobody more optimistic than me in this room today. But we need to have a little humility and gratitude for this moment we're in. And we need to understand that these things can get away from us. And we need to be resolved

to make the most of this. This is a moment for making tomorrows, not a moment for being distracted or indulging ourselves but for making tomorrows.

We have a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. And the reason I told you that story about the 1960's was not only to remind you that nothing lasts forever, and you have to make the most of these things, but to tell you that, not as your President but as a citizen, I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to have this chance. And you can make the most of it.

So in everything you do this year, you remember this little story I told you. And you remember that we have the chance of a lifetime that we should be grateful for. And everyone you talk to and everyone you touch and everything you say, remind people: This is our moment for making tomorrows.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

Remarks on Efforts To Bridge the Digital Divide

April 4, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, Julian, I thank you for your introduction, for your remarks, and, mostly, for the power of your example. I find very often when we do these events in the White House, by the time I get up to talk, everything that needs to be said has already been said. And I certainly thank you.

I want to thank you, Senator Barbara Mikulski, for being the first Member of Congress to talk to me about the digital divide. And once I realized you were interested in it, I stopped worrying about whether we would address it—[laughter]—because no one will ever say no to the Senate's sparkplug of energy. I want to thank Secretary Herman for her support. And Secretary Glickman, thank you for being here. Harris Wofford, the leader of our national service movement; and Gene Sperling, my National

Economic Adviser, who has pushed this whole digital divide issue so passionately.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. Over to my left, Senator John Breaux, my neighbor from the Mississippi Delta, where we are very interested in the potential of the computer and the Internet. And we just had a large delegation of House Members that have come in. They've been voting, and I'm glad they're here. I hope I have all their names, but I'd like to introduce them: Representative Maxine Waters, Representative Bart Stupak, Representative Ellen Tauscher, Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, Representative Silvestre Reyes, Representative John Larson, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, Representative Zoe Lofgren, Representative Rubén Hinojosa. Thank you all for being here. Did I get everybody?

Thank you. And Elijah Cummings from Maryland; he's on the front row.

I'd also like to thank Governor Angus King from Maine for being here. He is working to create an endowment fund in Maine to provide portable computers and Internet access to all seventh graders, so they can actually be taken home.

There are many other distinguished Americans here who have worked on this. Bob Johnson, the head of BET, thank you for being here. And I want to acknowledge the presence of former Governor of West Virginia Gaston Caperton, now the head of the College Board. West Virginia, under his leadership, was the first State to provide computer access to all elementary school students. So we're glad to have you here, sir. And I thank you all for being here.

I want to talk about what we're doing now as we set the stage for the administration's third new markets tour, which will begin in the week of April the 16th. But before I begin, I would like to acknowledge two very important developments yesterday in America's ongoing fight to protect our children from the dangers of guns falling into the hands of criminals and children, one of them in Senator Mikulski's home State of Maryland.

Last night I called Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend to congratulate them and the Maryland Legislature for passing legislation requiring built-in child safety locks on new handguns, ballistics testing for new guns, and safety training for gun purchasers. And yesterday Massachusetts began enforcing tougher consumer product safety rules, banning junk guns and requiring trigger locks. Next week I'm going out to Colorado to support a citizen ballot initiative there that would close the gun show loophole.

These are all great efforts, and I think it's worth pointing out that they are bipartisan efforts in these States. Colorado, for example, Republican registration has gone up in the last 6 or 7 years, and this ballot initiative today is overwhelmingly in the lead on the ballot. So this should not be a partisan issue in Washington, DC, if it is not a partisan issue in the rest of the country.

And again I say, I challenge the Congress to send me the commonsense gun safety legislation by April the 20th, the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy. We have to close the gun show loophole and require child safety locks and

ban the importation of large scale ammunition clips that make our assault weapons ban a mockery. It requires national legislation, as well. So congratulations to Maryland and Massachusetts, and I thank the people in Colorado, but we still have to do our job here.

Now, I cannot imagine a better place for us to kick off our next chapter in the new markets effort than here in the East Room, for it was in this very room nearly two centuries ago that Thomas Jefferson and his personal aide, Meriwether Lewis, laid maps on this floor to chart the Lewis and Clark expedition. Today we are here again to chart a new expedition, to open new frontiers of possibilities for America, the digital frontiers. Our mission is to open that frontier to all Americans, regardless of income, education, geography, disability, or race.

This is a fortunate time for the United States. We have the strongest economy in our history, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. But we all know there are people and places that have been left behind.

Over the last year I have traveled to many of these places. I have been to Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta, to the inner cities of Newark and Watts, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Every place I have gone I have seen how we could do more to bring the benefits of free enterprise and empowerment, with private sector and community organization cooperation, for new businesses, new jobs, new training and education that will make a real difference in people's lives.

I want you to understand that while most people talk about the digital divide—and it is real, and it could get worse—I believe that the computer and the Internet give us a chance to move more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in all of human history. That's what I believe. But it won't happen by accident. We'll have to work to make it happen.

On this upcoming new markets tour, we will focus specifically on how to pool resources to help communities get access to and take best advantage of the tools of the information age. We will visit your hometown of East Palo Alto, a community where 20 percent of the residents still live below the poverty line, to show that even in the heart of Silicon Valley there is still a substantial digital divide, but that things are being done about it.

We will visit Shiprock, New Mexico, a small town in the Navajo Nation, to demonstrate the unique challenges faced by geographically remote Indian reservations. I will speak at the influential COMDEX Conference in Chicago, where I'll talk to representatives of every major computer and Internet company in America and ask them to join our cause.

And then the following week I will go to North Carolina, where we will discuss the importance of connecting rural America to the same high-speed, broad-band networks now proliferating in metropolitan areas.

On all these stops, I will make the case that new technologies can be an incredible tool of empowerment in schools, homes, businesses, community centers, and every other part of our civic life, arguing that if we work together to close the digital divide, technology can be the greatest equalizing force our society or any other has ever known.

Imagine if computers and Internet connections were as common in every community as telephones are today, if all teachers had the skills to open students' eyes and minds to the possibilities of new technologies, if every small business in every rural town could join worldwide markets once reserved for the most powerful corporations—just imagine what America could be.

Let me say, first of all, I see Congressman Jefferson and Congressman Rush and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. There may be other Representatives, but as they come in, I'll try to acknowledge them. There's a ton of interest in this.

Let me give you an example. You know, I just got back from India, a country of 900 million people with a per capita income of \$450. We think we have challenges. But I saw what you could do there to close the digital divide, to use technology in an affirmative way.

I went to a little village in Rajasthan called Naila, typical low income Indian village. And in the public building, the village's public building, there is a computer with software where the programs are in both English and Hindi and can be adapted to other local languages as the case may be.

And the first thing I saw was a mother who had just given birth to a child come in. And they have all the public information from the Federal and State government on this computer, so she goes—she brings up the Health Depart-

ment's page on newborn babies. And there's so much visual—there's such a good visual component to this software that you could be almost illiterate and still work it. And she identifies the instructions that any new mother might want to have, and then she pushes a few buttons. And there's a printer. She prints it out, and she now has information just as good as she could get if her baby were born at the Georgetown Medical Center here and she were going home.

Then I met with this women's dairy cooperative—keep in mind, in this little village in India—where every transaction, every time they brought milk in, it was all entered on the computer, what the fat content was, what the volume was, what the price was. And every time the milk was sold, it was entered, so that they got a regular computerized record of not only what they had put in but what they got out.

Then I went to Hyderabad, which is sort of a high-tech center of India. But in that whole State, you can now get 18 public services on the computer, on the Internet. Nobody goes to a revenue office to buy their license anymore. You can get a driver's license on the Internet. Now, Governor, if you do that, you can be Governor for life. They'll repeal the term limits, repeal everything. [*Laughter*]

My point is that you can see the potential of this, for even the poorest people in the world, is truly explosive. That's why we want these 1,000 computer centers out there, because we don't want to wait even for all the schools to do this right. We want adults in rural areas, in isolated areas, in poor areas, to be able to come in and access the same sort of services, and use them and get the same sort of information and access.

The potential of this is truly staggering. We need not see the digital divide as a threat. It is the greatest opportunity the United States of America has ever had to lift people out of poverty and ignorance.

But I will say again, if you look at the whole history of economic development, whenever there's a change in the paradigm, there's a divide that opens, because some people are well-positioned to take advantage of the new economy. It happened when we moved from being an agricultural nation to an industrial nation. Some people are well-positioned to take advantage of it, and others aren't. So new divides always open when the dominant way of making

a living in any society changes. But this empowerment tool gives us a chance not only to close the divide quickly but to actually lift poor people in a way that has never before been possible.

I just got back from northern California, and I learned that now—I met with some people from a lot of different computer companies, but the people from eBay told me that there are now 30,000 people plus, making a living just trading on eBay, not working for the company, and that many of them used to be on welfare. So it's important that we see this not only for the problem it presents, but for the phenomenal opportunity that it presents, important that we see it not only as a way to close a gap so people don't fall further behind but a way to give people a tool that will enable them to leap further ahead. But again I say, it won't happen by accident. It requires government, business, educators, librarians, civil rights, religious leaders, labor union leaders—thank you, Mr. Bahr, for being here today—community-based organizations, foundations, volunteers. Everybody has got to work together.

Today I want to issue a national call for action on digital opportunity, to help us achieve two vitally important goals: first, to bring 21st century learning tools to every school. That means we have to finish the job of connecting every classroom to the Internet, ensuring that all students have access to multimedia computers, creating more high quality educational software, helping all teachers learn how to make the best use of these tools. And this is very important.

Again, I want to thank the Members of Congress here who have supported our efforts in the aftermath of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to create the E-rate, which has made it possible for the schools, no matter how poor they are, to have access to the Internet.

The second goal is to expand efforts far beyond our schools, to give every citizen Internet access at home, by bringing technology centers and high-speed networks to every single community, by helping adults to gain the skills to compete for IT jobs, and inspiring more people to appreciate the great value of getting on line.

Today is the opening of this national call to action. More than 400 organizations already have signed the pledge, and this is just the beginning. For the rest of the year we will try to inspire hundreds, indeed, thousands more to sign up. We will work with Congress across party lines

to build support for budget and legislative initiatives to meet these goals. And you heard Senator Mikulski outline some of them. We have to be willing at the national level to do our part. This is a worthy Federal investment.

During the new markets tour, we'll have an opportunity to announce many commitments tied to this call to action. Today I'd just like to review four of them, all of them vivid illustrations of the kind of visionary partnership and barn-raising spirit that we are working to foster.

First, to reprise something Senator Mikulski mentioned, AmeriCorps will make an enormous contribution to closing the digital divide by marshaling the power of active citizen volunteers. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Mikulski and Harris Wofford, AmeriCorps is committing \$10 million to recruit 750 new members to serve in a brand-new E-Corps. The E-Corps will be a large battalion of volunteers, trained and devoted exclusively to projects like providing technical support to school systems and teaching computer literacy to adults and children.

The Corporation for National Service will also unleash the power of students helping students by providing funds to allow 90,000 high school students to get involved in digital divide projects as part of their educational curriculum.

Most young people I know can run circles around me and most people my age when it comes to computers and the Internet. AmeriCorps is going to tap their capacity so that they can help others in their communities to close the digital divide.

Second, to help get AmeriCorps' E-Corps off to a running start, Yahoo will donate a million dollars in Internet advertising to attract potential E-Corps members with high-tech skills.

Third, in partnership with the YWCA, 3Com is launching an innovative initiative called NetPrep GYRLS—g-y-r-l-s. Currently less than 30 percent—listen to this—less than 30 percent of our computer scientists and programmers are women. NetPrep GYRLS will help to right this imbalance offering free computer network training and certification to hundreds of high school girls across our country.

Fourth, the American Library Association has pledged to greatly expand the information literacy programs of its members in at least 250 communities. So this is just the beginning, but I want to thank the people who were involved for these four initiatives. There will be many more, but I thank you very much.

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I've heard Harris Wofford, who worked with Martin Luther King and who was in Selma with me the other day and was in Selma 35 years ago when the first march took place, say that making sure all young Americans share in the opportunity and promise of America is the unfinished business of the civil rights movement.

It is appropriate that we are meeting here on this subject 32 years to the day after Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis. He was there working to lift the economic fortunes of disadvantaged people. I think if he were with us today, he would therefore say closing the digital divide is a righteous cause.

In his last Sunday sermon, he ended with a prayer that said, "God grant us all a chance to be participants in the newness and magnificent development of America." That's what this is all about. We need more people like Julian. We need more people like you, not only clapping for people like Julian but helping them to live their dreams.

We do that when we help young people, when we help seniors in rural America get med-

ical advice over the Internet, when we create tools that allow people with disabilities to open new doors of possibility. We give our neighbors a chance to participate in this astonishing American renaissance. We have done something that would have made Dr. King proud. And the new technology of the digital age gives us a chance to do it for more people, more quickly, more profoundly than at any time in human history. It's up to us to seize that opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to computer skills teacher and website developer Julian Lacey, who introduced the President; Harris Wofford, Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service; Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; and Morton Bahr, president, Communication Workers of America.

Statement on Maryland State Action on Gun Safety Legislation

April 4, 2000

Last night the Maryland Legislature took an important step forward to address the problem of gun violence by passing commonsense gun legislation. I commend the Governor and the legislature for their efforts to enact key gun safety measures that will, among other things, require built-in child safety locks on handguns, ballistics testing for newly manufactured handguns to help solve more gun crimes, and safety training for handgun purchasers.

Maryland joins a growing number of States across the country that are taking actions to make guns safer and to keep guns out of the wrong hands. The Congress should follow their lead and make passage of commonsense gun legislation its top priority. I challenge the Congress to enact gun safety legislation before the one-year anniversary of the Columbine tragedy on April 20th.

Statement on the Democratic Amendment to the Budget Resolution

April 4, 2000

Today the Senate begins its work on its budget and, in so doing, will lay out its investment and reform priorities for the FY 2001 budget. The Senate Democrats, under the leadership of Senator Robb and Senator Daschle, will be of-

fering an amendment to this budget resolution designed to put America's priorities in order. This amendment insists that we do first things first and modernize Medicare with an affordable, accessible, and voluntary Medicare

prescription drug benefit for all seniors. Once we've done that, we can move forward with a sensible tax cut.

I commend the supporters of this amendment because I believe it reflects good policy, the will of the American people, and addresses a long-standing unmet need. We should not be

recklessly spending money on an excessive tax cut before we take action to ensure that all seniors have the potentially life-saving choice of a prescription drug benefit. It is my hope that every Member of the Senate will support this critically important amendment.

Statement on the Supplemental Budget Request

April 4, 2000

I am very disappointed that Senator Lott plans to deny prompt consideration of the urgent and essential needs in my 2000 supplemental request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops there without jeopardizing our current state of military readiness worldwide. It is also

essential to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations undertaking economic reforms so that they can join the global economy.

I firmly believe that any action to delay consideration of these pressing needs would impose unnecessary costs to Americans at home, to our interests abroad, and to our military readiness around the world. Therefore, I urge the Senate to consider the interests of the Nation and to move ahead quickly with work on these urgent and essential needs.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

April 4, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 19(3) of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992 (Public Law

102-356), I transmit herewith the report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 4, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Patrick J. Leahy

April 4, 2000

Thank you. Well, first, let me say to Bobby and Solange, thank you for having us in your home. I actually came to hear you sing, Emmylou, so you've got sing for me when I finish.

I want to thank Pat and Marcelle for being wonderful friends to me and to Hillary during our sojourn here in Washington. I may have been younger than you when I got here, but I'll be older when I leave. *[Laughter]* I want to thank Senator Reid for being here. My great

friend and former Senator DeConcini, thank you, sir, for being here.

I want to thank all of you for being here for Pat Leahy. I have been in public life now for more than 25 years. I have, among other things—when I was a Governor, I served with over 150 Governors. I have known hundreds of Members of Congress. And I think that Pat Leahy is one of the ablest and most visionary legislators and one of the finest people I have ever served with in 25 years of public life.

And Mr. Axworthy, I appreciate your being here, but you can't have him. *[Laughter]* And he also, by the way, tells a pretty good joke now and then. *[Laughter]*

I'll be very brief. I think the American people are going to be tested this year in this election season and in the years ahead, because of our prosperity and because all the social indicators appear to be going in the right direction. Normally, democracies can be summoned to any sacrifice or difficult decision when people are evidently under the gun. And sometimes, therefore, they are most at risk of making foolish choices or going in the wrong direction when things seem to be going very well. In that way, groups of free people are like individuals. Most of us who are over 30, anyway, can recall at least one time in our lives when we made a serious mistake not because things were going so poorly but because things seemed to be going so well.

And I say that because I think there really are very clear choices now between the direction that someone like Pat Leahy would take in his work for peace, for the health of our children, for the health of our environment, for research or a whole range of issues, and the choice that the majority in Congress would take or their nominee for President would take.

Yet, it may seem to many voters that, oh well, there may not be much difference; things are rocking along here; the economy is on automatic. And I think it's very important that people like you get together to help people like Pat Leahy. I also think it's very important that you be able to tell your friends and neighbors who never come to political events like this why you came and what the stakes are.

And I'm old enough now where I remember things sometimes I wish I didn't remember. I was in this city 32 years ago today, when Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis, and I remember it. I was in this city 32 years ago driving

down Massachusetts Avenue, 32 years ago 5 days ago, when Lyndon Johnson told us he couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

What does all that have to do with this? In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history. So I had all my economic team in, and we were celebrating, and we were happy. And we were happy because we also had a 20-year low in poverty, a 30-year low in unemployment, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. It was a wonderful time.

And we were talking about the State of the Union Address, where I kept saying we've got to do these big things now, these big things. And I said, "Hey, just for my information, when was the last longest economic expansion in American history?" And it turns out it was between 1961 and 1969. And I will go back to what I said in the beginning, how you're in danger, when things seem to be going well, of breaking your concentration and not making good decisions, not just individuals but nations.

I graduated from high school in 1964, when there was low inflation, low unemployment, high growth, and we thought it would go on forever. Lyndon Johnson had united the country after President Kennedy's tragic assassination, and we thought then the civil rights challenges of America would be handled in the courts, in the Congress, not in the streets. We knew that we had a few people in Vietnam, but nobody thought we'd have over 500,000 or that 58,000 would die or that it would tear the country apart.

And then 4 years later, all this stuff I just told you started to happen, so that by the time I graduated from college at Georgetown on June 8th, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed and the city burned, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. And a few weeks after that, President Nixon was elected on the first sort of divide-and-conquer campaign of the modern era. He represented the Silent Majority, which means people like me were in the loud minority. It was "us" and "them." And just a few months after that, the longest economic expansion in American history was history.

Now, I am very optimistic; I'm the most optimistic person in this room. But what I want

to tell you is, I have a memory, and I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position once again to be free to build the future of our dreams for our children, to be responsible citizens of the world, to lead the world toward peace and freedom and security. That's what this is all about. And we can't afford to let a single American treat this election in a casual fashion because of the evident responsibilities we have and because of the opportunities we have.

I know Pat Leahy is not on the ballot this year, but I'm glad you're out here helping him, because I told you the truth. In 25 years, he's one of the finest people and one of the ablest, most visionary public servants I've ever known. That's what you need to think about all year long. And tomorrow if people ask you why you

came here, you need to be able to give them this answer. And if you're around my age, you need to remind them of what happened to the last longest economic expansion in American history, when we were casual and careless enough to think it was on automatic. There's nothing we can't do. But we have to work at it, and we have to work together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Robert Muller and Solange MacArthur; singer Emmylou Harris; Marcelle Leahy, wife of Senator Leahy; former Senator Dennis DeConcini; Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy of Canada; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

April 4, 2000

Thank you. First of all, let me say, Carol, I am very grateful for those words and for your friendship, and I thank you and David for opening your beautiful home. Nancy, thank you for being my true friend, and I thank you and Harold for being here.

People are always asking me what I am going to do when I leave office. I think tonight would be an appropriate time for me to make the announcement: David and Harold and I are going to open a consulting firm for political spouses. [*Laughter*] We're reasonable but not free. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Joe Andrew, who came out here from Indiana and gave us a real boost of energy. He took over the leadership of the Democratic Party when most people thought it was not much of a prize. And then we got Ed Rendell to come help us, and a number of other people. But Joe was there, working day-in and day-out, and he was indefatigable, and he was enthusiastic when even someone as optimistic as me wasn't sure he should be enthusiastic. So we owe you, and we're grateful, and we thank you.

I want to thank all the people here in our administration family: Carrie, thank you for being here; Minyon; and I thank Molly Raiser

for being here, my former Protocol Chief; and Ann Lewis, who has defended me better than anyone else—I think—just about—on television consistently, which is a job from time to time. [*Laughter*]

I would like to make two or three points about why I think what you've done is important and why I want to urge you to continue to support the Democratic Party, to broaden our base, to reach out to new people, and to be especially vigilant in this election year.

First of all, there is a real difference between these two parties. There is a difference on specific issues. Look at what we're debating today, gun safety. Last night I called Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in Maryland to congratulate them on passing their legislation regarding child safety locks and other protections. It didn't have anything to do with people hunting in Maryland. They'll still have a duck hunting season this fall in Maryland, I'll bet you anything. And all the dire predictions of the NRA will be wrong, but kids will be safer. Massachusetts did the same thing.

We're different: We think we ought to close the gun show loophole. We think if you buy a handgun at a gun store and you have to get

your background checked, if you go to a gun show on the weekend you ought to do the same thing.

And it reflects—and we believe in child safety locks, and we believe in building safe guns that can only be fired by the adults who buy them. We believe in banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which make a mockery of the assault weapons ban. And there are differences there.

We're different on the Patients' Bill of Rights. I don't oppose managed care myself; I think it's saved America a lot of money. But I think that, ultimately, health care decisions ought to be made by medical professionals and the patients themselves. And I think that this system ought to be priced and structured to support that. So we're for that, and we still can't get it out of this Republican Congress. We're for a minimum wage increase, and they're not. These are just the things that are being debated today.

Look at their budget. We're for continued big investments in education, hiring more teachers in the early grades, repairing 5,000 schools a year, building or doing major reconstruction on another 6,000 so that we can have excellent facilities. And they don't support that.

We're for a tax cut that is affordable and is targeted to what real working families need. We want to increase the earned-income tax credit because we think low income working people with kids ought to not have their children in poverty. We want to increase the child care tax credit. We want a \$3,000-a-year long-term care tax credit, because so many people are having to take care of their parents or their disabled relatives. We think the cost of college tuition ought to be tax deductible, because we think 4 years of college ought to be universal. That's our tax program. Theirs is a lot bigger and a lot different, and most of you in this room would be better off under theirs than ours in the short run. You are here because you disagree with that, because you want us to go forward together. So the first thing I want to say is, there's a difference.

The second point I want to make is, it's not like we don't know which one works. That's the amazing thing. This ought to be an easy election for the American people, because their nominee for President, even though he says he is for education, is for a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed. And all of them have

endorsed him, so you would have to conclude that they are serious.

I vetoed a tax cut last year because it would force us to run deficits again, and we could never save Social Security and Medicare, and we couldn't increase investment in education and science and technology and all of these things. So now, they are going to the American people saying that "President Clinton made a mistake. He doesn't know what he is doing in his economic program, and the Vice President is wrong, their nominee. Elect us, and we'll give you an even bigger tax cut than the one he vetoed."

Now, they also are going to appoint between two and four members to the Supreme Court. And they are clearly on record as being against *Roe v. Wade* and wanting to reverse it. And there are big differences on the environment. There are big differences on all these other issues.

Now, what I want to say to you is, it is not like you don't know which one is right. It's not like the American people don't know. We've got now—we have 8 years of doing it our way after 12 years of doing it their way. And you can look at the difference in the consequences. You have got to be able to tell people this in real blunt terms. There is an economic difference, and you have evidence. There is a social difference.

They were against—my goodness, most of them were against the family medical leave law. They said it would really hurt the small-business economy. We've got 21 million new jobs, and 21 million people are taking advantage of family and medical leave. And I think you could argue it's made our economy stronger, because having people secure at work, knowing they can also be responsible in their family life, is a good thing, not a bad thing.

So there is a different economic policy. There is a different social policy. By and large, they were against our 100,000 police. They were against the Brady bill, against the assault weapons ban, except for a handful of them. Now we've had evidence: We now have half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers couldn't get handguns under the Brady bill. We've got a 25-year low in crime, a 30-year low in gun crime. So the question is, are we going to build on our successes, or change course?

We have proved that you can improve the environment and grow the economy. We've got

cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. And now we want to take on the big challenges like global warming and getting us a more secure energy future, which the American people should want after this last scare with the oil prices.

But if you look at what I've had to deal with since 1995—and they are trying to weaken our environmental protections and impose further burdens on our ability to protect the environment. They think that's what is necessary to grow the economy. Now, it's not like—we don't have any excuses here. We know, we've tried it their way; we've tried it our way. We've got a stronger economy and a cleaner environment.

So point number one: There are big differences. Point number two: We've had a test run, a long test run, 12 years for them, 8 years for us. The results are better under our way.

Now, the third point I want to make, to me, is more important than that. And it goes beyond just whether the country is better off, to the larger question of, how do you want to live, and how do you want to relate to each other and to the rest of the world?

Basically, I think the reason we have succeeded is that we've had a good philosophy that works, that everybody counts; everyone should have a chance; everyone has a responsible role to play; we all do better when we help each other. Simple ideas; they work.

We had a big press conference today—a couple of you there—on closing the digital divide. It's an empowerment device that I think is very important. I think the computer and the Internet—yes, they could make American society more divided, but they give us the chance—the chance—to lift more people out of poverty more quickly than ever before in all of human history, not only in the United States but all around the world—if we do it right.

But we have to be governed by the right philosophy, the right values. And that is weighing on my mind a lot. A lot of you have been hearing me talk about this—you know it is. But I believe that our attitude, our basic approach to life and public life and citizenship, determines in large measure how we make the most of this world we are living in.

I'm very grateful—I went this morning—I started off the day at the Building Trades, and there were 2,500 people there. And Bob Georgine, the head of the union, is retiring after 29 years. And it was wonderful, and they were all saying, "Thank you very much." And it was

great for me. You know, you always want to think one or two people will miss you when you are gone.

But the truth is, I feel much more strongly about what we are going to do with this election and with our future than I do about the achievements of this administration for the last 7 years, and what I am going to get done in this last year, because I've worked very hard to try to help the American people turn the country around.

But this is what counts, because now we are in a position to really take all this success and do big things with it. We can get the country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We can make sure no kids grow up in poverty. We can give every child a world-class education. We can deal with the challenge of climate change, deal with our energy security, and actually create jobs doing it. We can bring economic opportunity to the places and people that have been left behind. We can be a stronger force for peace and freedom throughout the world because of all this success we've had. We can make America the safest big country in the world. There are big, big things we can do. We can save Social Security and Medicare for all the baby boom generation—big things.

But we have to have the right attitude. We have to really believe that everybody matters; everybody ought to have a chance; everybody has a responsible role to play; we all do better when we help each other. We've got to really believe that. And we've got to act on it. That's what this whole election is about.

It's weighing on my mind now, because today is the 32d anniversary of Martin Luther King's death. Five days ago was the 32d anniversary of Lyndon Johnson telling us he couldn't run for President again because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

Now, I'm not trying to be a downer for any of you; there is not a more optimistic person than me in this house tonight. But I'm telling you this to make you sober, because we're celebrating the longest economic expansion in history. And in February, when it happened and we were all patting ourselves on the back—probably a little too much—I asked my economic team when the last longest economic expansion in history was, and they said, 1961 to 1969.

And I remember it very well, because I was coming of age. And when I finished high school

in '64, we had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. We thought, oh, this thing was going to go on forever. We had President Johnson uniting the country after President Kennedy had been killed. We thought he was going to get rid of poverty. We thought all the civil rights problems would be handled in the Congress and the courts, not in the street. We thought everything would be fine.

And a couple of years later—so I come to Georgetown, to college, this big-eyed kid, believed in America and the promise of America and living the American dream, and everything was going to be great. And all of a sudden, we've got riots in the streets, and people are fighting over the Vietnam war. And by the time I graduated from college, it's 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, and 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, and 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection, and a few weeks before President Nixon was elected on a very different idea from the idea I just gave you.

My idea is unite and lift; theirs was divide and conquer. That's what the Silent Majority was all about. Do you remember the Silent Majority? If you weren't part of it, you were part of the loud minority. That was me. [Laughter] I remember that. But it was "us" and "them," not "us" together. And just a few weeks after that election, poof, the longest economic expansion in American history was history, over.

Now, what's that got to do with today? Well, today, we're blessed. We have less internal crisis and external threat, but we're not free of those things. And all of life, every day, is a gift. We should be humble, humble in the face of this great prosperity of ours and absolutely determined to make the most of it.

So what I want you to do—thank you for your money. Thank you for helping us to be able to compete. And don't be discouraged when you see they have more than we do. It doesn't matter; they outspent us \$100 million in '98, and we won anyway—in historic terms. All that matters is that we have enough to get our message out. But you need to be messengers. You need to say, "I'm for them, because there are differences between these two parties." You don't have to badmouth them; you don't have to demonize them. You don't have to do what they so often do.

You just have to say, "Look, there are differences between these two parties, and I agree

with our position on the economy, on crime, on social justice, on individual rights, on the concept of community. I'm for hate crimes legislation. I'm for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." I don't believe we ought to single out racial minorities or women or gays or anybody else and run them out of our community. As long as they're law-abiding citizens, they ought to be protected and be a part of our future." There are differences, number one.

Number two, we tried it their way; we tried it our way. Our way is better. We've got the evidence. We've got a stronger economy, a cleaner environment, a lower crime rate, a more cohesive society, and a strong role in the world for peace and freedom.

Number three, this can get away from us, and we have to make the most of it. And the most important thing of all is how we feel about ourselves and one another. And we really do believe we all do better when we help each other. So we don't want to go back to divide-and-conquer; we're for unite-and-lift.

I've waited for 35 years for a day like this. I'm sorry I won't be around to keep on doing it. [Laughter] But I'm quite confident that if we make the right decisions in this election, the best days of this country are ahead.

The thing that matters is not all that we have done. The thing that really matters is what will we do with it and whether we'll all benefit. That's why I'm a member of this party. That's why I'm here tonight, and why I implore you to be messengers every day between now and November.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Carol and David Pensky; Nancy Zirkin, director of government affairs, American Association of University Women, and her husband, Harold; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Director of Presidential Scheduling Correspondence Carrie Street; Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs Minyon Moore; Counselor to the President Ann F. Lewis; Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

Remarks at the First Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy

April 5, 2000

The President. Thank you, and good morning. I want to welcome all of you here for this conference. Let's get right to work.

We meet in the midst of the longest economic expansion in our history and an economic transformation as profound as that that led us into the industrial revolution. From small businesses to factory floors to villages half a world away, the information revolution is changing the way people work, learn, live, relate to each other in the rest of the world. It has also clearly changed the role of Government and how it operates.

This conference is designed to focus on the big issues of the new economy: How do we keep this expansion going? How do we extend its benefits to those still left behind in its shadows? What could go wrong, and how do we avoid it? That's what I hope this conference will be about.

The roots of this meeting stretch back to our first economic conference in December of 1992 in Little Rock, shortly after I was elected President. Then, some of the leading minds from around the country and across the economic spectrum addressed a challenge that, to all Americans, was immediate and clear: Unemployment was high; interest rates were high; the deficit was exploding; the debt had quadrupled; even an apparent recovery was generating no jobs; and inequality had been increasing for well over a decade.

Thanks to a strategy designed to bring down the deficit and convert it into surpluses, to expand trade, to invest in education, training, and technology, and to establish conditions in which the new economies could flourish, especially in the Telecommunications Act, which was passed about 4 years ago now, the American people, American entrepreneurs, have given us a remarkable recovery.

The performance of the new economy has been powered by technology, driven by ideas, rooted in innovation and enterprise. It has opened doors of opportunity and challenged our very understanding of economics.

I remember sitting around a table in Little Rock in 1992, asking my economic advisers how

low unemployment could get without triggering inflation. The consensus was somewhere between 5½ percent and 6 percent. Now, bear in mind, these were people who were philosophically committed to low unemployment and were willing to resolve doubts in favor of it. No one believed then we could have 4 percent unemployment on a sustained basis without inflation. No one believed that this economy could generate productivity rates of more than 2 percent a year on a consistent basis. Now, we're nearly at 3.

There is no single answer about how this happened. I think, clearly, the nature of the new economy and the strength of the American entrepreneurial system led the way. The fact that many of our traditional industries and workers increased their productivity played a role. I also believe the Government's commitment to fiscal discipline, to expanded trade, to investment in people and technology, and to cutting-edge research—and again I say, to establish the conditions in which the new economy could flourish—played a large role as well.

Now, one of the things that I think is important to focus on is just some basic facts. Information technology today represents only 10 percent of American jobs, but is responsible for about 30 percent of our economic growth. It accounts now for about half of business investment. And just as Henry Ford's mass-produced cars and the assembly line itself had broad spillover effects on the productivity of the American economy, these new technologies are doing the same thing, rifling through every sector of our economy, increasing the power of American firms and individuals to share broadly in its prosperity.

Today, information technologies allow industries to recognize, instantaneously, changes in demand and to manage their inventories more efficiently and quickly. They are speeding the development of new products to market. Supercomputers, for example, have helped Detroit automakers cut the development times of new cars by half or more. They've helped pharmaceutical companies cut down the development time for new anticancer drugs by several years.

Clearly, they will have a profound effect, information technologies, in biomedical sciences in the 21st century, as we see by the simple fact that in the next few weeks we will announce for the first time the complete sequencing of the human genome, something that will have been literally impossible without information technology. And of course, just contemplating the potential impact of nanotechnology on the biological sciences alone staggers the imagination.

Information technology clearly is also creating a lot of more mundane opportunities in E-commerce for traditional businesses, as well as the dot-com companies. And business-to-business E-commerce is growing even faster than business-to-customer commerce. In 3 years, it may reach a staggering \$1.3 trillion in the United States alone.

We know all of this is just the beginning. So now we want to share the best ideas and ask the right questions. Economists, for example, like to talk about speed limits for the economy: Do we have higher speed limits today? Do they exist anymore? How do we measure the impact of technology in this economy? What will be the sources of tomorrow's growth?

We know when it comes to education that the right teacher and the right computer can give a student in the poorest neighborhood the same access to every library and every source of information as a student in the most privileged private school. But those who are left out will be left further behind. How do we close the digital divide?

Can poor areas in the United States and entire developing nations leapfrog an entire stage of development, jumping ahead to cutting-edge technologies, avoiding not only the time it takes to go through the industrial economy but also the unpleasant side effects, particularly of pollution and global warming? How can we best make that happen? How important is information technology relative to other pressing needs of developing nations, such as health or education or improving agricultural productivity? Or do they go hand-in-hand? Technology can allow nations to grow their economy without harming the environment. How do we convince people around the world, and even in the United States, that this is true?

I believe the computer and the Internet give us a chance to move more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in all of human

history. I believe we can harness the power of the new economy to help people everywhere fulfill their dreams. On my recent trip to South Asia, I saw the beginnings—just the beginnings—of that potential.

But it is clear that none of our hopes for the new economy—which are really hopes for a better society, one in which we are brought together, not driven apart; one in which we sustain our Earth, not exploit it; one in which we lift up the poor, as well as those of us who are better off—that these developments will not just happen. They, too, will take new ideas, new initiatives, new innovation, the kind of thing that so many of you have done for so many years now. I thank you for being here. I thank you for being part of this dialog. And I'd like to get started.

Our first panel discussion is entitled, "Is the New Economy Rewriting the Rules on Productivity and the Business Cycle?" And I'd like to ask Abby Joseph Cohen, chair of the investment policy committee at Goldman Sachs, to begin.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the first panel discussion began, and the President called on several of the participants.]

The President. Thank you. I promised myself I wasn't going to inject myself into this until we—[laughter]—until we heard from everybody. But I just want to throw out two or three questions, because I want to get—after we hear from the panelists, I want Secretary Summers and our CEA Chair, Martin Baily, to say a few words. And then I want to have some questions.

But just—all of you have raised a couple of issues. Let me just ask you to think about this, everybody. On this question of the business cycle, we've had, since the Second World War and before the information technology revolution, generally a trend of longer expansions and shorter recessions. So that's, presumably, the product of generally better economic management. Is there something inherent in the technology revolution, as Professor Romer at Stanford and others have argued, that basically, if it doesn't repeal the business cycles, it makes them far more elastic even than better economic management would warrant?

The second thing I think worth questioning is, have we avoided inflation due to wage demands because workers are smarter than they used to be and they understand that they're

in a global economy and they can't ask for more than their company's profits will warrant?

And the third thing I wanted to just ask you to think about, since I was hoping Professor Galbraith would raise this question of whether I was making a mistake to try to get us out of debt, because some of my good friends have accused me of practicing Calvin Coolidge economics—let me tell you what my reasoning is, and I just want you all to think about this, because I'm prepared to have somebody say I'm wrong about this.

The reason that I wanted to continue to pay down the public debt is that private debt in this country is so high, both individual and business debt, and I worry in the same way you do about that coming down not only on individual firms and families but also on the economy as a whole. So I figured what really matters is the aggregate savings rate or the aggregate debt-to-wealth ratio, and if I can keep bringing down the public debt, we could keep interest rates down and at least lengthen the time between now and some darker reckoning on that.

So the reason that I always thought it was important to pay down the public debt, once we got into surplus, is that private borrowing is so high in this country. And the debt-to-wealth ratio is not bad at all, because of the value of the markets. But still, the individual and firm debts are quite high. So I was trying to get the aggregate balance right, and that's been my logic all along and why I think it's different from previous times when, I admit, the Government's been in surplus when it should not have been.

Professor Nordhaus.

[William D. Nordhaus, a professor of economics at Yale University, made brief remarks, and the panel discussion continued.]

The President. Thank you. They did a great job, didn't they? Let's give them all a hand. Thank you.

I would like now to ask Secretary Summers, and our CEA Chairman, Martin Baily, to make a few brief remarks, and then I will open to the audience and the panel for discussion.

Larry?

[Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. Anybody in the audience like to make a comment or ask a question to any of our panelists? Yes, ma'am. If you could stand and identify yourselves, and then I'll just move around the room as best I can.

[The question-and-answer portion of the session proceeded.]

The President. I would just like to make a couple of observations just very briefly about this. Even though the participation of women in the labor force is the highest it has ever been, the unemployment rate among women is the lowest in 40 years. That's the good news. The bad news is there is still about a 25 percent pay gap.

The unemployment rate among African-Americans and Hispanics is the lowest we've ever recorded, although we've only been disaggregating it for, I think, just a little less than 30 years. But still, it's much lower. But the per capita income is still quite—there's a lot of difference.

The poverty rate has gone down dramatically among African-Americans and Hispanics but not as much for Hispanics as African-Americans—I suspect because we have more first generation immigrants coming in still, who are classified as Hispanics in all this data collection that we do.

I would just like to posit—first of all, my sense is—and I've fought this battle hard for all these years—that the opposition to affirmative action is easing again, as the middle class members of the majority feel a little more secure. But what I am interested in is, how do we take these hopeful numbers and sort of translate them into genuine economic parity?

For example, we're debating in the Congress now how much we ought to raise the cap for the H-1B visas, basically to get the high-tech workers into Silicon Valley, into the Washington, DC, area and other places. And I basically—I'm a pro-immigration person, generally. I think it's made our country stronger, and I'm not against this. But we don't still have, in my judgment, a comprehensive enough strategy to move a lot of African-Americans and Hispanics who are in the work force now—so they have X level of education, but they're not yet in the new economy—into that so that they're fully participating. And I think this is still a continuing challenge for us. Two years ago African-

American high school graduation rates equaled white graduation rates for the first time in history. That's the good news, and all these things you've said are absolutely right. But we're still not there on college-going, college graduation, and participation in the new economy. And we need a lot of focus on it.

The second question you asked is, what happens the next time there's a recession? I'd like to point out, if I might defend the position I took, briefly, in welfare reform, we basically—welfare reform, in terms of the money that welfare recipients got, was already a State-determined entitlement before welfare reform, because the States got to set how much they were given. So the rate for a family of three varied everywhere from \$187 a month, roughly, in Mississippi, and about that much in Texas, to \$655 a month in Vermont, before welfare reform.

We kept the national requirement for food stamps and for medicine. And what we're trying to do is find more efficient ways to move people into the work force. We have done that. The great unanswered question is, if there is high unemployment again, what do we do with the work requirements and how do we make sure people get a good income stream when they literally can't go into the work force? And that's a challenge that will have to be addressed. But the tools are there to do it.

Yes?

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Since we want to hear from everybody, I can't possibly answer the education question, but I will give you one sentence on it. Every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. There are public schools performing at an astonishing level with children from very diverse backgrounds, in terms of income, race, ethnicity, and first language.

The big challenge in American education is nobody has figured out a mechanism to make what works in a lot of places work everywhere, which is why we're trying to change the law to stop giving out Federal money to people who don't produce results and spend it based on things that we know will work.

This is not a cause for despair. There are success stories everywhere, under breathtakingly difficult circumstances. The problem is, we haven't figured out how to replicate it, or we don't have enough incentives to replicate it. And

that ought to be something that we focus on, plus bringing opportunity out there. In New York City, you've got kids going to school in buildings that are heated by coal. We have schools that are too old to be wired for the Internet. We've got a lot of physical problems, and we have to continue to invest in. But we are moving on that.

On the patent thing, you know, Tony Blair and I crashed the market there for a day, and I didn't mean to. [*Laughter*] But I think what happened is—when the market's recovered, I think what happened is people actually read the statement instead of the headlines, or whatever.

I think in the biotech area, our position ought to be clear. General information ought to be in the public domain as much as possible about the sequencing of the human genome. And where public money contributed to massive research on the basic information, we ought to get it out there. If someone discovers something that has a specific commercial application, they ought to be able to get a patent on it. And the question is always going to be, are you drawing the line in the right place? But I believe we've got the people together with the skills and the experience to draw the line in the right place. And I think that's the right policy. I'm quite confident it is. And what we really need now is to make sure it is implemented in the right way.

Fred? And then we'll just keep going.

[*C. Fred Bergsten, director, Institute for International Economics, made brief remarks, and the question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. If I could just make one comment about this. I'm worried about it, the size of the trade deficit. But I would like to just make two counter-arguments that you should all consider.

There is no question in my mind that the openness of our markets in the last 7 years has kept inflation down and enabled us to grow more. And I could give you lots of very specific examples when we began to see tightening of supplies and various products and services where there would be a little spike, and it would come down.

The second thing is, we had a very strong economy, stronger—more growth than our friends in Europe and Japan did, both at the time of the Mexican crisis, which imperiled all of Latin America, and at the time of the Asian

financial crisis. Now, I think those things happened for reasons that all of us could debate till the cows come home, and I think there have been some improvements in the international financial architecture which will minimize the likelihood of the recurrence of that.

But I believe that America keeping its markets open, even absorbing a bigger deficit, helped Asia to recover more quickly, helped Mexico to recover more quickly, and over the long run, therefore, was good for the American economy as well as being the responsible thing to do. So I'm worried about it, but given the historical facts surrounding each of the last 4 or 5 years, I don't know that we could have avoided it.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. If I could just make one observation. I think another thing we're going to have to make up our minds to do, if we want the schools to function well, is to pay the teachers enough to get good teachers. California has just passed a very impressive reform proposal that will allow very large bonuses to go to teachers that actually produce results. And I'm going to be very interested to see whether it meets with the support of the people and actually produces improved learning and outcomes.

But teachers in California actually are going to make a decent living as a result of the reforms just adopted by the legislature that the Governor supported. So I think you all have to come to terms with this. We've got the biggest student body in American history, the most diverse one, and 2 million teachers are about to retire. So for all of our reform prescriptions, if you want good people to go into these classrooms, they're going to have to be paid.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I want to call on the gentleman over on the left, and then I'm going to have to call this session to a close, because we've got to go to breakout sessions. And we have two more panels, and we'll all be able to continue this conversation.

Go ahead; this is the last question.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. What I'd like to do is give our panelists here a chance to comment. I have some thoughts on it, but we're going to have a panel, the last panel of the day is going to

deal with the impact of the new economy on governance. And that's a very, very important issue, so I hope you will all hang around for it. But I'll defer what I have to say till then. But would any of you like to talk about this?

Go ahead.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Let me say before we leave, since a couple of you mentioned the global aspect of this, I just got a note that I think is very good news. The Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, announced this morning that he scheduled a vote on permanent normal trading relations with China, which would open their markets to our goods and services, for the week of May the 22d, and this is very good news.

This agreement slashes tariffs by about half on everything from automobiles to agriculture to telecommunications, and it also slashes those tariffs which protect the state-run industries in China which, in large measure, have been the instrument of single-party control there. So I think it will lead to an opening of the society and a rise in freedom and personal choice. We're talking about the new economy. Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users in China; last year there were 9; I think this year there will be somewhere between 20 million and 25 million.

So I think that this is very, very important. And I want to thank the Speaker and the leadership of the House for doing this. And I assure you, I will do what I can to pass it. I think it's not only in our economic interest, this is a profoundly important national security interest for the United States. So we end the panel on a piece of good news.

Thank you very much. Let's go into our breakout session.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Paul M. Romer, professor of economics, Stanford University; James K. Galbraith, professor of public affairs and government, University of Texas-Austin; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Gov. Gray Davis of California. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Remarks at the Second Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy April 5, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Well, I hope you've enjoyed the conference to date. I heard the breakout sessions were wonderful. One of the things that I have not yet been able to do—although I still have hope that quantum physics will enable one of my successors to be in five places at once—but I haven't figured out how to do it yet. I'm delighted that you're all here again.

After Mr. Greenspan speaks, we will have our two final panels, one on closing the global divide in education, health, and technology, and the second on strengthening civil society and empowering our citizens with new economic tools.

The afternoon discussions will take up where the last one left off. This morning we had a panel which acknowledged that this new economy presents phenomenal opportunities and new challenges. The next panel will explain that the stakes are even higher for developing countries and, by extension, for poor areas within our own country. Today, there are more phone lines in Manhattan than there are in all of Africa. So we can imagine what the information infrastructure could mean to that entire continent.

I want to discuss in the panel what we can actually do to help deal with a lot of these challenges. And I also hope in the second panel we will discuss not only how we, as citizens, relate to each other, our communities, and our Government but how Government itself should change in the information age.

Now, I want to introduce Chairman Greenspan by saying first that, as far as I know, he was one of the first people to speak of the new economy, the impact of information technology, and the extent to which it has rewritten the rules. Of course, he's done more than talk about it. His analysis has helped to shape the public's understanding of this powerful transformation, and his decisions have helped it to continue in our country apace. We're grateful for his 12 years of stewardship at the Federal Reserve. We're grateful that despite the seismic shifts in the global economy, he's kept his feet firmly planted on the ground.

For 7 years now, I've had elaborate instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury and from all my staff about what I was supposed to say and not say—[*laughter*]—about the Fed's decisions and about the Chairman of the Fed. One of our major newspapers ran a story a couple of months ago referring to us as the "Odd Couple." I took it as a compliment—[*laughter*]—and I hope he wasn't too chagrined.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

[*Chairman Alan Greenspan made remarks.*]

The President. Thank you very much, Chairman Greenspan.

I'd like to now begin the panel. The topic of this discussion is "The Global Divide in Health, Education, and Technology." This is something that also, as I have said before, exists within each country. We have attempted to address it here and are attempting to do more with our new markets initiative and our efforts to close the digital divide. But I think it's clear to all of us that we have a special responsibility and, indeed, a real opportunity to make a better world, including for those of us who live in wealthy countries, by addressing this issue globally.

The United States has supported substantial debt relief for the poorest nations. We have attempted to craft a response to climate change, which would enable sustainable economies to be developed in poorer countries with our help, and we have tried some microeconomic approaches with our aid programs. Last year, for example, the Agency for International Development funded some 2 million microenterprise loans in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. But there is a great deal yet to be done.

And we have a truly amazing panel, and I want to thank them all for being here. I want to begin by calling on Bill Gates, the founder and chairman of Microsoft. And I want to say, I have noticed in my many trips to Silicon Valley and other repositories of the new economy that while there are a lot of people who have amassed amazing amounts of wealth, I see more and more younger Americans more concerned

about what they can do with their wealth to benefit the society and to solve the larger problems of the world than how they can spend it. And the Gates Foundation has made some phenomenal commitments to the education of minorities in America and to dealing with a lot of our most profound global problems. And I want to thank you for that, Bill, and offer you the floor.

[*Mr. Gates made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me just say, briefly, we had a meeting here, as you know, I think, with the major pharmaceutical companies in our country not very long ago to discuss what we could do with them to give them tax incentives and other support to help to develop vaccines in areas where most of the users will be in countries that are too poor to pay market prices for the vaccines. So I do think that we—and I hope our European colleagues will follow us—should take the lead in providing financial incentives so that these vaccines can, A, be developed and then, B, delivered. I think this is profoundly important.

If you just think about malaria, TB, and AIDS, just take those three, the difference it could make if we developed the vaccines and then got them out would be quite profound. And the fact that we have so much of a commitment from you I think will make a real difference, and I thank you.

I want to call now on the President of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn, who from the first day he took office has really had as a critical part of his mission bridging these divides in traditional and in new and innovative ways.

Mr. Wolfensohn.

[*Mr. Wolfensohn made brief remarks.*]

The President. To give you some idea of the dimension of the education issue, there are about 125 million primary-school-aged children in the world who are not in primary school—elementary school, 40 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. That 125 million figure is about the same number of kids, the total number of kids, in grade school in the United States and Europe.

So there is the issue of getting them in; then there is the issue of what their opportunities are when they get there. And I hope there will be more discussion about this. But it occurs to me that one of the things we always see—

I was in a little school in Uganda where they're very proud of the fact that all their children are going to elementary school. These beautiful children in their beautiful starched pink uniforms were in this old school looking at a map that had the Soviet Union on it.

But if you could put a computer with a printer in every small village in every developing country, they wouldn't need textbooks anymore because, among other things, the Encyclopedia Britannica is entirely on the Internet. So we need to really be thinking about things like this in different ways.

I'd like to now call on Henry Cisneros, who did yeoman's duty in this administration's first term as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and is now the CEO of Univision, where he has more influence than he did in the President's Cabinet, I'm sure. [*Laughter*]

Henry.

[*Mr. Cisneros made brief remarks.*]

The President. I'd like to now call on Dr. Amartya Sen, who won the Nobel Prize in 1998 for his magnificent work on poverty, ethics, and economics, and who has come from Cambridge University to be with us.

Thank you, sir. We're honored to have you here.

[*Dr. Sen made brief remarks.*]

The President. Now I'd like to call on Mirai Chatterjee, who is the secretary of the Self Employed Women's Association of India. I met her recently in Mumbai, when I took a couple of hours just to have a little roundtable with some of the younger people that I believe are shaping the future of her country. And I'm very interested in her comments not only about what she is doing, but about how her efforts might be amplified by the availability of new technologies.

Thank you for coming this long way to be with us.

[*Ms. Chatterjee made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, I have a couple of things I want to say about that, but I want to wait until our last panelist has a chance to speak. And again, I thank both of you for coming such long distances to be with us.

I'd like to now call on Bob Chase, who is the president of the National Education Association and has been a leading advocate for closing the educational divides in our country.

Bob.

[Mr. Chase made brief remarks.]

The President. I want to call on anyone who has a question or a comment from the floor. But first, I'd like to make four points very briefly about what our panelists have said, because I find this not only fascinating but profoundly important to our future.

First of all, with regard to the health issue, while I think the vaccine matter is terribly important, we haven't mentioned something that may be even more important: clean water. We should all be investing more in clean water.

I visited a West African village on the edge of the desert in Senegal where Dorothy Height, a great American citizen, and her United Council of Negro Women had joined with our Government in building a new well and securing a fresh source of water, so that the children could be healthy and there was a sustainable agricultural environment. And all of a sudden, all the young people started coming home from Dakar back to their village to work and live, sort of like what Mirai told you about the Indian village.

I think that if you look at the number of children who die from diarrhea every year, it is inconceivable that we can meet this health challenge without both a commitment to the vaccine issue and to clean water.

The second point, Dr. Sen talked about the importance of democracy in India and throughout the world. And then you thanked me for going to Rajasthan, and you talked about how backward it used to be. They are convinced, the people in the little village of Naila I visited, that the reason that things are happening is because of the local government law which was passed a few years ago, which guaranteed that various tribes, various castes, and a certain percentage of women would be represented in every local government.

And when I was there in this very poor little village, among other things I saw that they had a computer that operated in both Hindi and English—and they assured me they had the software to put it into other languages—that even a person with basic literacy skills could operate. And I saw a young mother come in and call up a website from the Health Department in India on what you should do in your children's first 6 months, with very great software visuals. And they had a printer, so she got to print

out information that looked to me to be about as good as she could get at a doctor's office here in Chevy Chase.

And I will say again, their goal is, in the State, to have one of these in a public place in every village in the State of Rajasthan within 3 years, that has all the information from the National and State Government on it. The same principle would apply if you could have one in every village for the schoolchildren, with a printer. Somebody has to pay for it; somebody has to pay for the paper. But it's still—the economies to scale are much different than they would be otherwise.

In Hyderabad, which is a wealthier place obviously, the chief ministers, their goal is within a year and a half to have in every village every State service on the Internet. For example, as poor as India is, a lot of people own cars, and you can now get your driver's license over the Internet, which as I said already a couple of times since I got back, any American Governor who did that would find all the term limits laws repealed. He'd be elected for life. [Laughter] This is very important.

So I think we should—I just say this to point out that the local governments work. I also saw in this small village a women's dairy cooperative. They had a simple little machine that tested the fat content of their milk. It doubled their income. They also entered all their transactions on a computer. They got computerized records every week. And they were making lots more money than had ever been made in this modest industry before because of technology and the women's self-help organization. So I do think democracy and local government have a lot to do with it.

The third point I'd like to make is that the reason I wanted Mirai to come here is that in the 7 years I have been President, I've been privileged to represent this country, as my critics never fail—tire of saying, in more nations than any other President in history. And in every continent I visited, the self-help organizations of poor people are the most impressive groups with whom I have met. And they are overwhelmingly village women.

I'll never forget the people I visited with in Africa, this women's group that ended the genital mutilation practice in their village and how they brought the handful of men who supported them to meet with me, because Hillary had

previously met with them. This is very important.

I visited with Muhammad Yunus and people from the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and you talked about the telephone. The Grameen Bank is actually trying to finance a cell phone in every village in Bangladesh, because they see it's a moneymaker, and it connects poor people to the rest of the world. You just think about it, if you had a cell phone and, where there is electricity, if you had just one computer with a good screen, easily accessible, with good software and a printer, what a difference it could make.

The final thing I'd like to say, to echo what Henry Cisneros and what Bob Chase said is, the United States and other wealthy countries have got to start looking at this as a form of our future security. We don't spend nearly enough money on this stuff. I said I'm proud of the fact that AID, since I've been in, we've shifted our emphasis, and we financed 2 million microenterprise loans last year. We should have financed 20 million microenterprise loans or 30 million or 50 million.

People come to Mr. Wolfensohn all the time, other leaders of developing countries. They want him to finance big powerplants and big projects. What we really need to do is to take these things that work to scale. That's what Henry's talking about and what Bob's talking about. How can we take these things that work to scale?

And we've got to build, in our country particularly, a bipartisan consensus that recognizes that we'll get a lot more security out of financing more of these things than we will an extra fighter plane or an extra missile or an extra something else.

And I believe I've earned the right to say that, because I've supported increases in the defense budget every year I've been here. [Laughter] I supported improvements in the quality of life for the men and women in uniform. But you know, this is pocket change in the United States, to make a sea change in the rest of the world. And we have got to develop a global consensus for it.

And I think that the wealthy countries also need to consider whether we should increase the financing of the World Bank, because they're in the position—the people who work for the World Bank understand these things. They have the expertise. They should be doing

it. We don't have to all do it through our national efforts.

But anyway, those are my observations. This can be done—I'll say again—the biotechnology of the 21st century and the information technology, if we can take it to scale, can close the divide. And if we don't, it will get worse. And no matter how you cut it, the wealthy countries are going to have to pony up most of the money.

And then the people that run these governments in the developing countries are going to have to understand that the opportunity returns of efforts like yours are greater, sometimes, than the opportunity returns of big projects that look bigger. The President of one African country I think is one of the best governed countries in Africa told me that until I took him to a little village to show him the microenterprise projects, he didn't even know about it. He was too focused on how he was going to get financing for the next powerplant. Now, in his defense, ever since then he's been a great promoter of this.

But we've got to start thinking about taking things that work to scale, if we really believe that technology can help developing countries leapfrog a whole generation in what was otherwise a predictable and unavoidable pattern of economic development.

Who would like to say something? Yes? Please stand up and identify yourself and ask your question.

[At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the session proceeded.]

The President. If I could just say, I think that if someone from another country were to ask me how they should structure their information dissemination based on our experience after the telecom act, I would go back to the first conversation I ever had with Vice President Gore about this, when he said, "You know, the two things we have to do is make sure that there are discounted rates so that every school, every library, and every hospital can access the information. And the second thing we have to do is to make sure that it's a pro-competition setup, so that people—no matter where they are, no matter how meager their resources are—have a chance to succeed as entrepreneurs, because they'll have an explosive impact." Those are basically the only two things we fought for

in that telecom bill, and I think the results, in our country, at least, speak for themselves.

Yes sir, you had a question back there?

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I can only tell you what for me—I have supported every initiative of which I have been aware that would increase the access of disabled Americans to the workplace, and I believe that technology in this area will become more and more user-friendly, including user-friendly to the disabled. I think there are just—there will be, by definition, a market for it. And I think it's terribly important.

I noticed—it's interesting you said this—when I was in Mumbai, I stopped at two different schools for blind students and said hello to them, and I was thinking about that at the time. But I think, on balance, we should see this as a positive thing to the disabled community, because it's far more likely to bring more disabled citizens of the world into the new economy than it is to keep them out, as long as we make sure that as user-friendly technology is developed, it's made available on the most equitable possible basis.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I have to bring this to a close, but let me tell you what I'm going to do here. We're going to have about a 15-minute break between now and the start of the final session. And what I would like to encourage you to do, if you have more questions, is to come up and talk to our panelists during the 15 minutes.

I want to close by giving our guests who have come the furthest away a chance to answer this question. Dr. Sen and Ms. Chatterjee, if you had \$2 or \$3 billion to spend on this topic, closing the global divide, how would you spend it? In India.

[*Dr. Sen and Ms. Chatterjee made brief remarks.*]

The President. Last comment, for Mr. Gates. The information technology revolution has created more billionaires in America in less time than ever before. And we have just scads of people worth a couple hundred million dollars which, to people like me, is real money. [*Laughter*] And what could I do as President, or what could we do, to encourage more philanthropy like the kind the Gates Foundation has manifested? And what can we do to make sure that we leverage all this so that there is some synergy in the movement of the philanthropic world toward this?

You know, 100 years ago, when J.P. Morgan and all these people made all their fortunes, they built great monuments to our culture, the great museums, the great public—the great libraries. But now, we have all these younger people who made lots of money who really want to transform society itself—really without precedent. We've always had some foundations that were interested in doing this. But the potential we have to leverage private wealth here through philanthropy to transform society, I think, is without precedent in history. What can we do to see that there are more efforts like the one you're making?

[*Mr. Gates made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let's give them all a hand. [*Applause*] We'll take a 15-minute break.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:56 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dorothy I. Height, chair and president emerita, United Council of Negro Women; Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, India. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Remarks at the Third Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy

April 5, 2000

The President. All right. Please be seated, everyone; let's go. The final panel today is one

of particular importance, to me at least, and that is, how can the new economy's tools

empower civil society and government? And I'm going to call on Esther Dyson first, the founder and chairman of EDventure Holdings, because she has to catch a plane.

Ms. Dyson. I can stay.

The President. But you can go first, anyway—so there. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Dyson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. I think it would be good now—I'll just go over to Kaleil Tuzman, the cofounder and CEO of govWorks.com, to talk. The floor is yours.

[*Mr. Tuzman made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. I'd like to now call on William Julius Wilson, who is now a professor of social policy at Harvard, the JFK School. He's been very generous with his time to me and to this administration over the last 7 years, and who I think, better than anyone else I know, chronicled the disappearance of work for minority males in inner cities as the economy changed and as jobs moved to the suburbs, and the implications that had for economic and social dislocation and racial tensions in our country.

So I would—I think the title of his last book was "When Work Disappears."

[*Professor Wilson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me say, as you know, we're trying to get another substantial increase in the earned-income tax credit, including one that would help working families with more than two children. The last time we—we nearly doubled the earned-income tax credit in '93, and it took—that helped us to move over 2 million people out of poverty.

Most of the people in poverty today, by American definitions, are working people, which would surprise a lot of Americans. It wouldn't surprise anybody from any developing country, where all the people in poverty are working people unless they're disabled. But it's also true in America, and I think it's very important.

And clearly, we ought to raise the minimum wage again. It still hasn't recovered its former levels. And indeed, all we will do if we raise it to my proposal is to basically recover where it was about 20 years ago in real dollar-purchasing-power terms. I hope we can do that.

I'd like to call on Professor Robert Putnam now, who is also at Harvard, and who gave

us the concept of social capital, defined as "rules, networks, and trust," and has really, I think, broadened the understanding that we have of civil society and its role in how our economy works and how we all live together. And I also have the galley copy of your latest book, so you can hawk it, too, if you like. [*Laughter*] I think you should. "Bowling Alone," it's called; worth it for the title alone. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

[*Professor Putnam made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, first of all, I thank you all, and I want to give you a chance to comment on what each other said. But let me just observe, every time I hear Bob Putnam speak, I think that Washington, DC, needs more social capital. And I'm not kidding. And I think, also, that there is a deep yearning for this sort of thing among young people.

We have a big increase in enrollment in the Peace Corps. We have a huge increase in AmeriCorps. We've had more people in AmeriCorps in 5 years than the Peace Corps had in 20 years. That shows you there's something to what you're saying, and I think it's very real.

And I saw it in very stark ways. I'm thinking of this because we're coming up on the fifth anniversary of the Oklahoma City tragedy, where person after person down there told me they sort of uncritically bought into the antigovernment rhetoric, and all of a sudden, there were these people, and their children were in school with their children, and on and on and on, all the obvious things. But there was this instantaneous sense of cohesion. It had nothing to do with Government or the fact that they were Government employees.

And I do—the whole question of whether the Internet will be an atomizing or a unifying, cohesive force in our society is, I think, an open question.

Esther, do you want to talk about it? Bill?

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Anybody out here want to say anything, ask any questions?

[*At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the session began.*]

The President. Well, when you talked about that—I want to give you an example. When you talked about all these organizations that

were created in the aftermath of the industrial revolution in America, arguably, they were filling need for social capital, for networks that didn't exist when people worked in smaller work units and had more kind of comprehensive relationships with a smaller number of people.

When you did your book and you talked about Italy, for example, and how northern Italy had massive amounts of social capital, partly around the economic units that were patterned on the medieval guilds, I got to thinking about this. I'll just give you an example of something that's going on in the Internet economy.

You know, eBay, the website where you can buy or sell on eBay and you can trade, they keep up with their customer base. I just was out there last weekend, and I always ask, every time I see somebody that has anything to do with them—they're now up to approximately 30,000 people who are making a living on eBay. That's what they do for a living. They buy and sell, swap and trade on eBay. And they know that a significant percentage of these people who are now making a living were actually very poor, were actually moved from being on public assistance, on welfare, to making a living on eBay. So they have, in effect, recreated a small village.

On the other hand, they're working alone on a computer at home. Does this phenomena add to or subtract from the stock of our social capital?

Professor Robert Putnam. Yes. [Laughter]

The President. You ought to run for office if that's your answer.

[The question-and-answer session continued.]

The President. Let me just give you one other example. I've seen this in several contexts in all of the controversies in which I've been involved here over the last 7 years. You can create a virtual national movement over the Internet in 48 hours.

Professor Putnam. Yes.

The President. Somebody supports my position on the assault weapons ban; somebody opposes my position to close the gun show loophole—I can give you 30 examples of this. And all of a sudden, you will have 200,000 people that are in touch with each other all for the same thing. And I think in a lot of ways that's empowering and a very, very good thing. And a lot—but the thing that bothers me about it is, even though it has infinite possibilities and it's really reinforcing, in some sense you want

communities to be places where people of different views have to meet and mediate those views—

Professor Putnam. Yes. Exactly.

The President. —where you have to confront not only those that agree with you and you want to swell your numbers so you will have a defined political impact, but you have to sit down at the table with people who totally disagree with you and try to figure out what in the Sam Hill you're going to do to live together and work together and move forward. That concerns me as well, because it's like the specialty magazines or the 69 channels on your cable or other stuff. I think all this, on balance, is a big plus. It's more fun for me. I like it, you know, and everybody else does.

But the question is, where do we find the commons? And how can we use the technology to find the commons and to honestly discuss in a respectful way with people with whom you disagree those matters that have to be dealt with? Because no matter what our opinion is, you know, our action or inaction will define who we are as a people.

You know, for example, I think about a developing country that—what I hope from what Ms. Chatterjee was saying is that, in the beginning of her opening remarks, is that somehow technology can be used to bring decisionmakers face to face with the poor, en masse, and force them to interact with them in a way that in effect creates a community that wouldn't be there, because we all know in every society the people who are really poor and downtrodden tend to be invisible to people until they're intruded upon.

I don't have an answer to this. I just know it's a serious problem. It's a problem—you know, when I leave the White—I don't have an option, as President, not to deal with people who disagree with me. And I think it's a good thing, because I'm constantly having to reexamine my opinions on the issues or wondering whether on the edges I might have been wrong or whether we can do better, you know?

But when I leave here, you know, I can do just fine and be happy and sassy going through the rest of my life just being around people that agree with me all the time. And I don't know that that's the best thing for a community. There needs to be a common space where we come together across the lines that divide us.

[The question-and-answer session concluded.]

The President. I agree with that. Let me say to all of you, one of the things in our budget this year, in addition to our efforts to connect all the schools and libraries, is funds to set up 1,000 community centers in poor rural communities, Native American reservations, and relatively isolated urban neighborhoods, so that it will, by definition, build social capital if you have community centers where people can come and access the net, with people there who are trained to help people use it who otherwise

would never use it. I think it can make a big difference.

Well, we stayed an hour late, but it was certainly interesting. I think you did a great job, and I thank you all for your patience.

Thank you for being here today. It was great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Putnam, Stanfield Professor of International Peace in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Statement on Signing the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century

April 5, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1000, the “Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century.” This legislation contains important measures to improve aviation safety, increase airline competition, protect air travelers with disabilities, and boost assistance for the families of victims of aviation disasters. The bill also takes an additional step toward our long-term objectives for modernizing and reforming the FAA’s provision of critical air traffic control services.

I call on Congress to join me in moving forward to further system-wide reform of air traffic

control. While this legislation seeks to provide substantial funding guarantees for airport construction and other capital investment, I remain concerned about the possible effect of the bill’s procedural requirements on future appropriations for air traffic control and other crucial safety functions funded by the FAA’s Operations account. My administration will work with the Congress to achieve more balanced funding of aviation programs in fiscal year 2001.

NOTE: H.R. 1000, approved April 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106–181.

Statement on Signing the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century

April 5, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1000, the “Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century.” Several of the broad, fundamental improvements in aviation safety supported by Senator Ford are contained in this legislation. It is particularly satisfying to see the Congress bestow this recognition on such an outstanding advocate of U.S. aviation.

Since the last major aviation law was enacted in 1996, both my Administration and the Congress have committed significant time and resources to bring about a new era for aviation. I remember well my trip to the Boeing plant in Washington State in 1993 to signal our concern for the renewal of an industry then facing very difficult economic times. The subsequent

focus by this Administration on flexible solutions—from the Open Skies agreements we have negotiated worldwide to the “free flight” rules in the safety and air traffic area—has combined with the Nation’s truly impressive economic performance to make this industry a winner.

This bill contains many new provisions to advance aviation safety. Of particular note is the inclusion of the “Aircraft Safety Act of 1999,” which my Administration proposed to help stop the indefensible practice of manufacturing, distributing, and installing fraudulently represented, nonconforming aircraft parts. Several significant provisions to provide “whistleblower” protections to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and air industry employees, to close a potential loophole in the prosecution of hazardous materials cases, and to combat “air rage” incidents in flight, will also address real safety concerns we face today.

In addition, the bill builds on the reforms proposed by my Administration and enacted in 1995, and represents an additional step toward our long-term objectives of modernization and stability of the FAA’s critical air traffic services. However, we have yet to achieve fundamental structural reform of the FAA. Toward that end, I recently directed the FAA to report back to me at the end of April with options for achieving broader reforms. While I applaud the Congress for the management reforms already provided, I call upon the Congress to join me in moving forward to further system-wide reform of air traffic services.

Although this legislation seeks to provide substantial funding guarantees for airport construction and other capital investment, it jeopardizes funding for safety. I remain concerned about the possible effect of H.R. 1000’s procedural requirements on appropriations for air traffic control and other crucial safety functions funded by the FAA’s Operations account. The bill mandates unnecessarily large increases for FAA capital spending under the budget caps, thereby making it more difficult to fund other discretionary programs, especially transportation programs such as FAA Operations, Amtrak, and the Coast Guard. Because the bill also limits the ability of the appropriators to reallocate aviation-related capital spending to meet more pressing operational needs within the FAA, the bill creates an extra hurdle to fully funding the amounts authorized and required for FAA operations. My Administration will work with the

Congress to achieve more balanced funding of aviation programs in Fiscal Year 2001.

Moreover, certain provisions of this legislation must be interpreted and applied in a manner that avoids violating the constitutional separation of powers. While I applaud the new focus that the oversight subcommittee established by H.R. 1000 will bring to bear on FAA air traffic services, neither the subcommittee’s authorities nor the “for cause” removal protection for its members may be construed to grant it discretion to block significant executive branch policies and directions, particularly to the extent those policies bear on the interrelationship between civilian and military aviation and on the conduct of foreign affairs. Similarly, because the bill provides for the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of the Appointments Clause of the Constitution, the Administrator will be unable to delegate to the Chief Operating Officer those responsibilities that properly may be exercised only by an “Officer” of the United States within the meaning of the Constitution. Finally, in light of my authority to make recommendations to the Congress and to control negotiations and diplomacy in the field of foreign affairs, I must reserve the authority to revise executive branch budget requests before they are submitted to the Congress and to enter into only those negotiations with foreign states and international organizations that I believe appropriate.

This new law also includes an important legislative advance for air travelers with disabilities. My Administration proposed the extension of protections in domestic travel to travel on foreign carriers, along with higher penalties for violations, and I commend the Congress for providing such protections—and for making protections of other civil rights explicit in domestic air travel. Aviation consumers will benefit in other areas as well. For example, the bill increases funding for enforcement of air traveler safeguards, such as those prohibiting deceptive advertising and those providing denied boarding protection. The bill also improves the “family assistance” provisions enacted in 1996 and 1997 to comfort those with friends or family involved in an aviation disaster.

I am also pleased that Title VIII of this legislation codifies the recommendations of the National Parks Overflights Working Group on regulating air tours over national parks. These provisions represent a consensus approach to minimizing the impact of commercial air tours on the natural and cultural resources in national parks.

As proposed by my Administration, substantial changes are included in H.R. 1000 to increase airline competition. Certainly one of the most significant is an end to the “slots” rules that restrict access to O’Hare, LaGuardia, and John F. Kennedy International airports. The restrictions will be eased almost immediately, and then ended completely in 2002 in Chicago and in 2007 in New York City. This Act also substantially achieves a second Administration proposal to enhance competition. We proposed allowing a \$2 increase in the current \$3-per-segment Passenger Facility Charge, with a condition that a “dominated hub” airport provide a competition plan that lays out how new entrants and other

competing carriers can be included in the airport facility plans. This bill includes the requirement for a competition plan and a \$1.50 increase. Because effective competition has not worked as well on lightly traveled routes (with resulting high fares), we endorsed the Senate’s rural air service pilot program that is substantially adopted in this Act.

This legislation provides benefits to passengers and the aviation community, and represents a first step toward our long-term objectives for modernization and stability of FAA’s critical air traffic control services. I thank the Members of Congress who led the 3-year effort to enact this bill, and I am pleased to sign it into law.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 5, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 1000, approved April 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106–181.

Statement on the Conclusion of the Independent Counsel’s Investigation of Alexis Herman

April 5, 2000

I am very pleased to learn that Independent Counsel Ralph Lancaster has concluded his investigation. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman has for many years served our Nation with selfless dedication and extraordinary talent. She did not deserve what she has had to endure over the past many months. As I said at the start of this inquiry, nearly 2 years ago, Secretary

Herman did nothing wrong. But throughout it all, she was never deterred from her mission: making life better for America’s working families. I am proud to call her my friend, and I am honored that she has been willing to work in this administration on behalf of working people everywhere.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation

April 5, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I herewith transmit the Department of Transportation’s Biennial Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation for Calendar Years 1996–1997. The report has been prepared in accord-

ance with the Federal hazardous materials transportation law, 49 U.S.C. 5121(e).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Apr. 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

April 5, 2000

Dear _____:

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading “International Organizations and Programs” in title IV of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104–107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking mem-

ber, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Mitch McConnell, chairman, and Patrick Leahy, ranking member, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdensen, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Sonny Callahan, chairman, and Nancy Pelosi, House Committee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs.

Remarks to Corporate Leaders on the One America Initiative

April 6, 2000

Thank you. Let me begin by welcoming all of you here and thanking our previous speakers. I thank Ben Johnson for making sure I won't be alone to turn the lights out at the end of my tenure here—[laughter]—and for what you can see is his evident passion for his work. I don't know if I've ever heard anybody tell a centipede joke before. [Laughter] I grew up in a place when I was a kid where I could collect centipedes, scorpions, brown recluse spiders, all kinds of snakes. I never thought they were very funny before. [Laughter] But he made it funny.

I want to thank George Fisher for his leadership on this and so many other issues. I have really loved working with him over the course of my Presidency. And I want to thank Duane Ackerman for what he said. We didn't know each other very well until I started on this whole new markets tour, which is an important part of building one America, giving everybody a chance to participate in our prosperity. And I realized that he had come, like me, from pretty modest circumstances to a very high position, and he never forgot where he came from. And he's interested in giving all people a chance to be a part of it, and I am grateful.

I was looking at these two leaders of our business community and looking at many of you out here with whom I had the privilege to work, and it made me feel very proud of my country and very confident of our future success.

I'd like to thank the members of the administration who are here: Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman; our FCC Chair, Bill Kennard; and the front row here has a whole lineup of our White House stars. I thank them for all being here and for their commitment to this work.

As Ben said, this is the third time we have brought key leaders to the White House to talk about the role of specific elements in American society for building one America. Last year we had a distinguished group of lawyers here who answered our call to use the power of the legal profession not only to fight discrimination and empower citizens who want to do the same but to have their law firms reflect the legal causes that lawyers have been fighting for, for decades in this country, and I appreciated that. Last month we had a coalition of religious leaders here who pledged the power of faith in our ongoing efforts. Today we recognize that corporate America is an equally, perhaps even more

powerful force in the movement for building one America.

Dr. King once said, "We refuse to believe there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this Nation." Today, there is a new understanding that actually building one America replenishes the funds in the vaults of opportunity, that this is not an act of charity or kindness or even constitutional obligation but enlightened self-interest.

For the past 7 years, I have tried to unlock those vaults and let the river of opportunity flow to every community and every person. And I am grateful for the chance that we have had to be part of building the longest economic expansion in our history and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. I'm proud of the fact that we have an administration that looks like America, with the most diverse Cabinet and staff in history.

But we all know there are still people and places left behind, and there are still places where problems exist even when people try to root them out. And I appreciated George Fisher citing his own company. I am quite sure that any of us, including me, who had any organization of any size have similar experiences somewhere in the operations which we lead.

Now, a part of what we're trying to do is just to get economic opportunity out there. That's what the whole new markets effort is about. We've been to the Mississippi Delta, to Appalachia, to the Pine Ridge Reservation, to inner cities. On April the 16th, I'm going to go out to East Palo Alto, to the Shiprock Native American Reservation in New Mexico, and to one or two other places to try to focus specifically on what technology can do, not to open but to close the digital divide and increase economic opportunity for our people.

But it is also important to put the power of diversity to work for our economy in daily ways. And that means encouraging diversity throughout every single corporate organization in America, from the boardroom to the stockroom, forging partnerships between corporations and others who need them, schools and communities, to promote educational opportunities. It means working with efforts like the Welfare to Work Partnership, the School to Work Partnership, to get more young people on the path to good careers. It means doing more business with small, minority-owned suppliers of all kinds.

It means using the corporate bully pulpit to convince others that an investment in diversity is the right and the smart thing to do.

Yesterday we had a fascinating economic summit here at the White House. It highlighted how the rapid development of information technology in the last years—10 years—has dramatically transformed our economy, giving us unprecedented growth, wealth, and job creation.

We also faced the fact that a lot of people have been left behind in this development. We know that minorities and poor whites have participated at a lower rate in the new economy because they don't have the skills necessary to fill a large number of the high-tech jobs being created every day.

Even though we have a very low unemployment rate, the lowest in 30 years, it's very interesting—to highlight this—where the shortage of high-tech jobs is. The Congress, once again, is debating the need to raise the ceiling on what we call the H-1B visas. Those are visas that people get because they have special skills to come to contribute here. And we will raise it, and we should raise it, because first of all immigration is good for our country, and secondly, these companies need to continue to grow.

But it is very interesting that in the largest center of pure information technology employment, Silicon Valley, right next to it you have East Palo Alto, where I'm going, which has a 20 percent poverty rate and a high unemployment rate. Now, if you believe as I do, that intelligence is evenly distributed throughout the human race, that means some of those people could fill some of those H-1B slots if only they had had the education and training to do it.

The second-largest concentration of high-tech information technology jobs, interestingly enough, is not in New York or on Corridor 128 in Massachusetts, it's here in the Washington, DC, area. The city of Washington, even though the unemployment rate is now—I think we've got it down below 6 percent—is still the second or third highest in the country compared to all the other States. And there's a huge job shortage here.

And if you believe that intelligence is evenly distributed and a lot of these people could be filling those jobs, if more people had had attitudes like those we've had here expressed and more systems in place like those that many of the corporate leaders here have put in place, and they could fill some of those H-1B jobs.

Now, the trick is to do both at the same time, and that is what we're committed to doing. But I think it's worth pointing out.

According to our Office of Science and Technology Policy, African-Americans and Hispanics are less than half as likely, still today, to earn degrees in science and engineering as whites. According to a February issue of Black Enterprise magazine, only 4 of the top 50 blacks in corporate America work in the high-tech industry.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate that information technology will need 3 million more workers by the year 2008. So, this is just one example of something we need to be doing. And I might say this: This is not just these dot-com companies; information technology is dominating, driving, and making more efficient all kinds of traditional corporations. In that sense, they're just as important as they are to Duane Ackerman's connecting people. They also will create more Kodak moments for George in the years ahead. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad you mentioned that Kodak moment, by the way. I've often thought I should be getting some sort of stock benefit—[*laughter*—]for all the film I use here.

Let me just say, I want to make a couple of announcements today, to put some teeth into this enormously important event. First of all, 25 companies, all of them represented here today, have pledged to commit at least \$1 million a year for the next 10 years to expand diversity in the high-tech work force. That's a \$250 million long-term commitment by American corporations to close the technology skills gap.

A classic example of doing well by doing good will help us to create one America. The funds being pledged today include contributions to strengthen math and science education; to provide scholarships for minorities and women; to train more math and science teachers in our inner cities, a very important thing; to help young people pursue careers in science, engineering, and information technology. This is a very important proposition.

Many other things can be done. And I hope that this meeting today will just be the beginning of a whole new burst of effort by corporate America. And I want to thank George Fisher for saying that you don't want to judge your performance by just whether the numbers look good or whether you've met the minimum or

whether you can't be sued in a court of law. That's not what all this is about. This is not about keeping something bad from happening. This is about making good things happen. And the more I represent you around the world, the more I realize that this effort to build one America is, in a way, the most advanced example of a struggle going on all over the world, which has gone on throughout human history.

I was in this little village in India a couple weeks ago, and I met with this women's dairy co-op. And they showed me how they had some, for them, very high technology to test the fat content of their milk and how proud they were that even in this poor village they had—everything that they did, all their transactions were conducted by computer.

And then I saw, in this little poor village, that the State government there had put a computer up in whatever language the people who would come to it spoke, so that even the poorest village people could get the information they needed that the Government had. And one woman who had just had a baby came in, pulled up the Health Department's page, and found out what she was supposed to do the first 2 months of her baby's life, and then printed it right out. And she went home with information as good as you could get if you had walked out of a doctor's office in Chevy Chase here today. That is the kind of thing we ought to be doing.

But the point I want to make is, what they told me was, all these changes started in 1993 when the Government adopted a new law that said the local governments had to reflect all the tribes and all the castes of India and that women had to be given 30 percent of the positions in local government. And they told me, these people in this poor village—you'd think, well, they'd think, "Gosh, you know, we're so poor we've got to work together." They told me that until this law passed and they all got elected, that people had never had dinner together in this tiny village across the caste lines and the tribal lines. And now that they've been doing it, you know, they know what they were missing, and they can't imagine why they didn't do it all along.

You see these things happen; you all know all the terrible stories from Bosnia to Rwanda, to the continuing strife we have in the Middle East and the struggles we're having in Kosovo. But what I want you to understand is, there's

something endemic in the human condition that both makes us afraid of people who are different from us and beneath that makes us long to reach out and connect with them.

And I think it's important to point out that this whole effort of building one America is not about homogenizing us. Four or 5 years from now, they will be having events like this at the White House, and—certainly within 10 years—it will be impossible to have four speakers and they will all be middle-aged gray-haired guys and three of them will be white. It won't happen. It will change. In my lifetime, I think we will have a woman President and certainly an African-American or Hispanic or an Asian-American President—maybe all three.

But the point is, it won't diminish white guys. It will make life more interesting. *[Laughter]* But the struggle is to understand it that way. This is not a matter of homogenizing this country; it's a matter of celebrating, relishing our differences and somehow finding a way to affirm our common humanity. And the older I get, the more I become convinced that it may be one of the two or three most important journeys in life for all of us—not just as an organization, just individual journeys—figuring out how to understand and respect the differences between people and not feel that in order for you to matter more, someone else has to matter less; in order for you to be secure, someone else has to be insecure; in order for you to win, someone else has to lose.

It is a constant theme throughout all human history, and it is something that, in positive and profoundly negative ways, is being played out all over the world today. And I am grateful that in our country, we are largely dealing with—in spite of the tragedy of the hate crimes against people because of their race or their religion or because they are gay, which we have to try to stamp out—largely, we're playing this out in positive ways today.

But I would ask you to remember as we close—just one last thing—what George said. This is not a matter of getting everybody right with the law. It's not a matter of having the right statistics. It's a matter of making the businesses of America a joy to work in, because they will be more productive, they will be more profitable. People are happy to go to work because they are proud of who they are; they respect those who are different from them; and they are making progress on this very difficult journey of life. Now I think it is a great, great endeavor in which to be involved, and I thank you so much for your support.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to George M. C. Fisher, chairman, Eastman Kodak Co.; and F. Duane Ackerman, chief executive officer, BellSouth.

Statement on the Death of Former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba *April 6, 2000*

Hillary and I are saddened by the death of former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba. On behalf of the American people, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to President Bourguiba's family and to the Tunisian people.

President Bourguiba was a historic leader, a pioneer in Tunisia's struggle for independence and for social and economic progress. He also

played a courageous role in efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. He leaves behind a nation that can be proud of its social achievements, particularly the steps it has taken to advance the status of women, and a nation poised to take on the critical challenges of deepening democracy and respect for human rights—and building a better future for all Tunisians.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the
National Endowment for the Arts
April 6, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 959(d)),

I transmit herewith the annual report of the National Endowment for the Arts for 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 6, 2000.

Interview With Dan Rather of the “CBS Evening News”
April 6, 2000

Mr. Rather. First of all, thanks for doing this.
The President. Glad to.

Elian Gonzalez

Mr. Rather. I want to talk to you about guns, gun legislation. But the day’s news is on Elian Gonzalez. His father is here; the boy’s father is here. How soon can he expect to see the child?

The President. Well, first, I think we should say it’s a good thing that he’s here. I’m glad he’s here. And the Justice Department is working on that, and I think in a way we’re fortunate to have an Attorney General who understands this issue, because Janet Reno was the prosecutor in Dade County for many years. And they’re working on it. I don’t know, I can’t answer with any specifics. But I have confidence that they’ll do the best they can to handle it in an expeditious and sensitive way.

Mr. Rather. “In an expeditious and sensitive way.” Mr. President, from almost all other citizens, if the Immigration Service rules, and a Federal judge backs the ruling, then people will obey the law. What’s happened here?

The President. Well, I think the people—you can ask them; they can speak for themselves better than I do. But they, I think they feel that they’re not sure that the process was adequate since it occurred in Cuba. I think that’s basically what’s going on.

And you know, some of the people there are just against anybody going back to Cuba. But I think there are a lot of people who have genuine questions about it. And I think the fact

that the father has come here and will be in a position to show his concern for and desire to be reunited with his son should be a big help. And as I said, I think the Justice Department will do a good job here, and I think Attorney General Reno really understands what’s going on. And I think we’ll work through it.

Mr. Rather. You have consistently said that the father speaks for the son. You stand by that?

The President. Well, that’s the decision that was made by the INS. They went down and interviewed the father extensively. And they concluded that based on his previous contacts, which were regular, with his son, that he was a fit representative to speak for his son. And under our law, since Elian Gonzalez is a very young child, someone must be the designated person to speak for him. And under our law, the parent, as long as he is a fit parent, is that person.

So the INS made the decision that they felt was appropriate, and the judge ruled that they had the authority to make it. And now the family members in Miami are appealing to the Court of Appeals and arguing that there ought to be a more extensive inquiry into his best interests. That’s the legal position.

But I think that the main thing is that the Justice Department is handling it and that in the end the law ought to prevail. And I don’t think that the young man’s best interests are served by the rest of us talking about it too much. I think the Justice Department is going

to try to work through this, and I have confidence that Janet Reno will handle it in a good way.

Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade County, Florida

Mr. Rather. I respect what you say about perhaps we shouldn't discuss it too much. But the mayor of Miami—I have in mind you saying, well, the law takes care of this. But the mayor of Miami has said that if anything bad happens, he will hold you and Janet Reno directly responsible, and—I think I quote him, at least indirectly, correctly—don't expect any help from him or the city of Miami in enforcing the law. Did that surprise you?

The President. It did. But I think there's been some indication since then that he and others want to get this back in a lawful process. And I think the mayor of Miami is a fine young leader with an enormous amount of potential. But he represents the Cuban-American community. He's part of it. They have—I think that it's fair to say they have a big presumption against anything that happens in Cuba, including an INS proceeding.

But I think that in the end, the rule of law will prevail in this country. The overwhelming majority of Cuban-Americans are law-abiding good citizens. They've made a great contribution to our country. And I think in the end, the rule of law will prevail. And I think we ought to have—just take a deep breath here and realize this is a highly unusual case, and let the Attorney General work through it. I believe that they will. I believe she'll do a good job on this.

Vice President Al Gore

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, you've consistently said that we should not politicize the case of this 6-year-old boy. But your Vice President has broken with your administration's position, a clearly political move. One, were you surprised by that? And two, are you irritated or angry about it?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't know that it was clearly political, in the sense that there was a bill introduced in the Congress to deal with what the people in Miami say is the main defect in the INS proceeding. They say—you know, it's interesting. If you notice, they haven't attacked the father. They haven't claimed that he was an unfit father.

Their claim is entirely different. Their claim is that even if he is a fit father, that it's not in Elian Gonzalez's best interests to be returned, at least at this moment. That's their position. So they say, if the INS followed the law, then the law ought to be changed so that a determination of his best interests can be made.

Now, once the bill was introduced—there are a lot of reasons I don't agree with the bill. I don't support the bill. But once the bill was introduced, I think every public figure in America, national figure, was going to have to take a position on it.

And as a matter of fact, I don't believe it was a purely political position. I know the conventional wisdom is that the Vice President's position was purely political, but he talked to me—I don't know, a day or two after Elian Gonzalez's case became public, weeks and weeks and weeks ago, and said, "You know, I'm very worried about this process. I'm afraid we're going to have a lot of problems with this process. I'm just not sure it's adequate."

So you know, he personally and privately said that to me long before this bill was introduced and long before it became a matter of big public debate. So that's the way he personally feels. And because of that and, I think, because he is himself a candidate now, I think he had to take a position and say what he thought.

Mr. Rather. Respectfully, Mr. President, a member of the Vice President's staff has been quoted as saying that it "was a political decision." And too, he went on to say, the Vice President isn't going to "fall on his sword" for you. That would lead a reasonable person to believe that it was a political decision.

The President. Well, I don't know. You know, if I knew who said that and they were quoted by name, I would have more regard for the quote.

I don't think he should fall on his sword for me. He's out there now making his own case to the American people. All I can tell you is, I'll bet you that staff member didn't know that I talked to Al Gore shortly after this case became public, and he said to me privately that he was disturbed about the process and whether it could adequately account for this young man's best interests. That's what he told me a long time ago, purely privately, and long before he ever said anything publicly about it.

Mr. Rather. I want to move on to the subject of guns, but before we—just as we leave this—

The President. He might have meant, you know, that falling on your sword sometimes means that you have to agree with the President, whether you really agree with the President or not. That's what Vice Presidents do when they're not independent candidates. And since I don't think he agrees with me, and since he is a candidate, I don't think he should mask an honest disagreement. And it's one that I believe that he actually believes, based on a private conversation I had long before he ever made a public statement.

Mr. Rather. So you don't have any problem with it?

The President. No.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Rather. Let's talk about guns. Next week, is it fair to say you're dedicating the week to doing what you can to get increased, at least, handgun control?

The President. Yes.

Mr. Rather. You're going to Maryland to be seen with the Governor as he signs a new handgun control law into law. Then you're going to Colorado, where there is a State ballot initiative that you're backing, and this initiative contains many of the provisions that you seek in Federal law. Question, why no focus on getting new State laws passed, rather than press forward with Federal legislation?

The President. Because it'll take forever and a day. And because if you have Federal laws, they can be more efficiently administered. I mean, if you look at—and let me back up and say, I consider these measures gun safety measures. I think gun control is still sort of an explosive term to the American people, because they think we're going to take somebody's guns away from them.

And the truth is, all we've tried to do is to take preventive measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And I think that on the specific measures, I think the overwhelming majority of the American people support us. And Colorado, which is a predominately Republican State, I believe this initiative will pass because they've had experience with it.

And I think that it's unconscionable for Congress to hide behind the fact that there are States taking action. Maryland required child

trigger locks this week, for example, and required safety training courses and things of that kind for handgun purchases. The State of Massachusetts applied its consumer protection laws to handguns, and Colorado has got this initiative to close the gun show loophole, which I think is very important. But it will take forever and a day for all the States to do that, and the Federal Government ought to do it. It's a Federal responsibility and a national problem.

You know, it's simply an extension of what we did with the Brady bill. We had all this hoopla when I signed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban about how damaging it was to the rights of gun owners, the legitimate hunters and sports people. Not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods; not a single sports person has missed a sport shooting contest. Nobody has been burdened by this, and a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not gotten handguns as a result. Gun crime is at a 30-year low in America, not just because we've increased gun prosecutions, which we have, but because we have done more prevention. That's what this is about.

Mr. Rather. You're in a fierce fight on Capitol Hill to get Federal additional gun safety legislation passed.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Rather. And you set April 20th, the anniversary of the Columbine, Colorado, high school shootings as the goal. Is there any chance that it would get passed by that time?

The President. Probably not. We have a majority for it in both Houses, I think. But the Republican leadership in the Senate may be able to keep it from coming to a vote. They can't really keep things from coming to a vote in the House, so I think there is a majority for closing the gun show loophole, a majority for banning the importation of large scale ammunition clips.

Who could be against that? We've got an assault weapons ban in the country, and then we turn around and make a mockery of it by letting people import these big ammunition clips which they can put on the guns and convert them into assault weapons.

There ought to be child trigger locks on guns. Most manufacturers do it anyway. It ought to be a national requirement.

But I think we're making progress. I think the action in these States indicates it; the initiative in Colorado, with the support of many Republican officials in Colorado; the incredibly brave action that Smith & Wesson has taken to try to improve the way it markets and distributes guns and the way those handguns are sold. I hope they'll find some resonance among other gun manufacturers. So we're making progress. But this is a brutal fight. The interest behind it, the status quo, are very strong.

Mr. Rather. Do you suppose, if I may—I don't mean to interrupt—you say the interest behind this is very strong. As Butch Cassidy said to the Sundance Kid, "Who are these guys?"

The President. Well, the NRA and other groups even to the right of them, and a lot of people in the Congress, in the Republican Party, really agree with them. A handful of Democrats do. But it's basically a party fight.

And again I say, if they had any evidence that we had undermined hunting or undermined sport shooting or even undermined legitimate self-defense, it would be one thing. They don't. The only evidence they have is we have kept handguns out of the hands of half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers. And the last place, besides person-to-person transactions, that such people can get handguns with impunity is at these gun shows. So we ought to close the gun show loophole and do a background check. It's a no-brainer.

There are some minor details of adjustment that would have to be undertaken to do these background checks, to make it work when you do these one-day shows out in rural areas. But they can easily be taken care of, and we ought to do it.

Mr. Rather. You mentioned the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate. What I and other reporters talk to them, they say, basically, "Look, the President could get a lot of what he wants. He could get the trigger locks for children on handguns. He could get the ban on importing the extra long clips—if the President would simply compromise on the criminal background checks for gun shows." Why not make that compromise?

The President. Well, first of all, we already offered a compromise. John Conyers has offered a compromise to Representative Henry Hyde that we were hoping could prevail in the conference. You know, the bill is in conference

now. We got a good bill out of the Senate on this gun show loophole because the Vice President broke the tie. The bill is in conference, and Mr. Conyers offered a compromise.

Let me say, if you look at the gun shows, they want insta-check. And here's the problem. When you do these background checks—let's just look at the facts—when you do the background checks, you can get over 70 percent of the background checks done in the first hour. You can get 95 percent of them done—or over 90 percent in the first day. So they say, "Well, just agree to a 24-hour background check or an insta-check system." The real difficulty is, of the roughly 10 percent you can't finish in one day, the rejection rate in that 10 percent is 20 times higher than the rejection rate in the 90 percent. So what we tried to do was to work out an agreement where we let everybody who would be cleared, be cleared, but we didn't have an automatic release for the others, because they're 20 times more likely to have background problems which would not enable them to purchase these guns.

So I think it is an almost bizarre development, since we're more than willing to meet them halfway. We've offered them a good compromise—that they would hold this whole bill up to protect that 10 percent when they know that's where a huge percentage of the problem gun-buyers are, people that are likely to use those guns for criminal conduct.

So we have offered a compromise. John Conyers offered a good compromise to Representative Henry Hyde, and I hope and pray that they will take it or something like it. I'm willing to compromise, but I don't think that we ought to gut the main purposes of the background check. And again, you know, they say, "Well, we have these shows out in the country. They occur on the weekend. They're not all basically at big-city convention centers." But the gun could be deposited with the local sheriff's office for the weekend while the background check is completed, for example. You could deposit the gun and the check and return one or the other or both. It would be easy to work through this if they really wanted to.

I just think it's important—I think the child trigger locks are important because the accidental death rate in America of the children are so high, 9 times higher than the next 25 biggest countries combined. But we ought to close the loophole in the Brady law. I am willing

to compromise, but I don't want to destroy the purposes of the background check.

Mr. Rather. Our correspondent Maureen Maher has been doing some investigation of some of the loopholes in the Brady law, which turn out to be pretty extensive. If you could close one loophole in the Brady law, what would it be?

The President. Oh, the gun show loophole. That's the most important one. There are some other loopholes in the Brady law, but if you look at the numbers, it's been quite successful. For all of its problems, it's been quite successful. And when you do the insta-check, you know, we have to do instant checks whenever we can—when you do the insta-check, you actually—you lose some people, because if you can't wait 3 days, there are some records that haven't been logged in, for example, that won't be picked up on the insta-check. But when we passed the Brady bill, that's the best we could do. We had to take a bill that would say a 3-day waiting period, but insta-check whenever possible when it became possible. And so we're stuck with that for the time being.

I have a totally different view of this than the people on the other side of the issue. I think I've demonstrated in 7 years here I've never tried to take a gun away from a law-abiding citizen. I've never tried to interfere with hunting or sport shooting. But I believe that guns are like every other area of national life where there is a lot of loss of life and injury. Prevention is always the first line of defense.

Their position, basically, is: Punish people that violate the law; throw the book at them; but in this area alone, let's don't have much prevention, because we're worried about the second amendment or a slippery slope or whatever. And I just think they're wrong. I think that we can save so many more lives by sensible prevention and not interfere with legitimate gun owners.

President's Experience With Guns

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, did you ever own a gun?

The President. Oh, yes. I've owned a shotgun. I had a .22 when I was little kid. I had a couple of handguns when I was a Governor.

Mr. Rather. Did you hunt?

The President. Oh, yes. I suppose I was 12 the first time I had target practice, you know, shooting cans off fenceposts. And I normally went hunting, duck hunting, once a year when

I was Governor. On occasion, I went bird hunting. I've been duck hunting a couple of times since I've been President.

Smith & Wesson

Mr. Rather. Let me follow up on this Smith & Wesson deal. A number of people, none of whom want their name attached to it, say, "Dan, you have to look into this deal," because, one, Smith & Wesson was about to go bankrupt, and so this was a form of what they call financial blackmail. Anything to that argument?

The President. Not that I know of. I don't know that—if it's true, I don't know it.

Mr. Rather. I understand. Any agreement that you know of, the Federal Government has agreed to supply Federal law enforcement officers with Smith & Wesson weapons?

The President. No, that was not a part of the agreement. Since then, we have looked into the question of whether we—as have many local jurisdictions looked into the question—whether they can give any kind of preference or consideration to Smith & Wesson in their purchases because they've taken this action. But obviously, whatever they do will have to take account of the need to get the best possible weapons for their law enforcement officials.

But that was not a quid pro quo; that was something that came up later. And we're looking into—I wanted to look into to see what, if anything, we can do as well. But I know that a lot of cities were so appreciative of what Smith & Wesson did.

See, here is the deal. This is another thing. This is like the Brady bill gun show loophole. The main thing Smith & Wesson did in changing its marketing and distribution policies was to focus on a fact that I would think that the NRA would want us to focus on, and that is that an inordinately high percentage of guns used in crimes are sold through a very small percentage of the gun sellers. So the main thing, when you strip away everything else Smith & Wesson did, what they're really trying to do is to stop providing weapons to people who obviously are careless in enforcing the Brady bill or have a criminal clientele or otherwise just aren't taking care of their business.

I would have thought when Smith & Wesson came forward, since this had nothing to do with the Brady bill or anything else—this was about having gun dealers clean up their act and gun manufacturers putting the hammer on them to

do it, rewarding those that are good, punishing those that aren't. I would have thought that's the kind of thing the NRA would like. I was actually kind of surprised that they and the gun dealers went so totally the other way about this, because you can't get out of the fact—we now have evidence—a very small percentage of gun dealers sell a very high percentage of the guns used in serious crimes. That's what we're trying to get at.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I have all kinds of things I'd like to ask you about, including China and the World Trade Organization, but the clock is running on us. Let me ask you two questions, and I'll let you get on to your next meeting.

You recently said at a meeting that the First Lady, in her bid for a Senate seat in New York, faces—I think this is your direct quote—"a right-wing venom machine that's collecting double tons of money to defeat her." Was that too strong, on reflection?

The President. Well, it depends on how you interpret the facts. Richard Viguerie is doing Mayor Giuliani's mail. Mayor Giuliani, when he was mayor of New York, basically said, "I'm not a Reagan Republican anymore. I'm a moderate Republican. I'm pro-choice. I'm for the Brady bill. I'm for the assault weapons ban. I'm for the President's crime program." We worked together. We had a good relationship.

Now he's got Richard Viguerie doing this venomous mailing, talking about what a left-wing crazy my wife is, when—while he was mayor of New York, he was in agreement with her and me on most issues.

Mr. Rather. While he was helping the mayor.

The President. No, while Rudy Giuliani was mayor. But the Viguerie mailings, which are being sent to people who have fought me the whole time I'm here—which is fine—are basically using the same old standard hard-core right-wing stuff, the kind of stuff we saw Governor Bush do to Senator McCain in South Carolina, that kind of—sort of that kind of thing.

And I think if he's going to do it and get the benefit of it, he can raise a lot of money, because a lot of us folks see beating Hillary or beating the Vice President as another way of going after us for what we've tried to do here on issues like gun safety and vetoing the big tax cuts to keep a balanced budget and

the surplus and other things we've fought for. They see that as a way of continuing the battle.

He can raise a lot of money that way, but I don't think he should be able to raise it for free. That is, I think he ought to have to be accountable for the rhetoric being used in his behalf and the money that's coming in as a result of that kind of inflammatory right-wing rhetoric.

Mr. Rather. Would you be surprised if I told you that tonight's CBS poll indicates the First Lady is up by 8 points now in the race with Giuliani?

The President. A little bit. But I think it's going to be a close race and a hard race. But she knows why she's running. She knows what she wants to do for New York. I'm really proud of her, and I just—I think these polls will change a lot between now and November. He's a very formidable opponent.

Mr. Rather. You don't think that what one newspaper has called the "wealthy hate Hillary campaign" will, in the end, sink her?

The President. No, I don't. I think the main thing that she's got to think about is not what they're saying about her but what she's going to say to the people of New York. I think a lot of that is—when you have opposition in politics, a lot of times what they're trying to do is distract you from doing your main job, which is to communicate with the people and to serve the people. And I think if she'll just focus on that, talk about her life, her work, and what she wants to do, I think she'll do fine.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I'm getting the cut signal. I so much appreciate you taking the time to do this. Thank you very, very much.

The President. Thanks, Dan.

Mr. Rather. Tell the First Lady hello for us.

The President. I will.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 2:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was embargoed for release until 6:30 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Juan Miguel Gonzalez, father of Elian Gonzalez; Richard A. Viguerie, chairman, chief executive officer, and president, Conservative HQ.com; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner April 6, 2000

[Prior to the President's remarks, music from the movie "Titanic" was played.]

The President. Haunting, isn't it? [Laughter] You know, usually, I go for "Hail To The Chief"—[laughter]—but this week I can't seem to get that song out of my head. [Laughter]

Good evening, President Nolen, Senator McCain, Members of Congress, members of the Radio and Television Correspondents Association, distinguished journalists, Mr. DiCaprio. [Laughter]

Now, ABC doesn't know whether Leo and I had an interview, a walk-through, or a drive-by. [Laughter] But I don't know if all their damage control is worth the effort. I mean, it's a little bit like rearranging the deck chairs on the set of "This Week With Sam and Cokie." [Laughter] Don't you newspeople ever learn? It isn't the mistake that kills you. It's the cover-up. [Laughter]

Now, look, I want to say right now, I have nothing against ABC. I like ABC just as much as I like all the other networks. [Laughter] Just the other day, for example, Diane Sawyer came to the White House for an interview. Actually, she called it a visit. [Laughter] And everything was fine until she asked me to do some crayon pictures in the Oval Office. [Laughter] That was weird.

But I just want to say this to David Westin. You know, I've been in a lot of tough spots. Don't let this get you down. [Laughter] You may not be America's news leader, but you're "King of the World." [Laughter]

Wait a minute, before I go any further, I want to welcome the really funny person who is here tonight, the man who impersonates me every week on "Saturday Night Live," Mr. Darrell Hammond. And Darrell, I want you to know I used to think you were really funny but not so much anymore. I think it's Clinton fatigue. [Laughter]

Poor Darrell, what's he going to do when I leave office? [Laughter] Come to think of it, what am I going to do? [Laughter] I know that you've heard me say I hope to join the Senate spouses club. But I've been thinking, I don't really want to be a member of the Senate

spouses club. I want to be president of the Senate spouses club. [Laughter]

You know what the big, hot issue on Capitol Hill is today? The majority party, otherwise known as the Republicans, are raising a ruckus about this census long form. They say these questions are too intrusive. Maybe it's just a matter of perspective. [Laughter] Depends on whether you're the asker or the answerer. [Laughter] But I'd be pretty hard-pressed to call these questions intrusive. You should look at the questionnaire those guys sent me. [Laughter] Maybe again, I don't think you should. [Laughter]

You know what question really upsets the Republicans on the census form? Question 19: "Are you better off today than you were at the last census?" [Laughter] I mean, even a Presidential candidate has made this an issue. Just the other day he said he might leave his own census form blank. Hmmm—a blank census form? An adult literacy program? It's starting to add up. [Laughter] Sounds like a cry for help to me. [Laughter] Governor Bush even refused to state his date of birth, on the grounds that it happened more than 25 years ago. [Laughter]

But he's not the only person who's uptight about this long form. Let me just read you some of the questions that other prominent public officials refused to answer. For example, except for Senator McCain, the entire Republican caucus refused to answer this one: "Have you recently changed your policy on interracial dating?" [Laughter] "If so, do you know for sure your date is not a Catholic?" [Laughter] "Regardless, please attach parental approval slip."

Here's the second one. "What is the deal with your hair?" [Laughter] Trent Lott refused to answer that. [Laughter] Then again, so did Hillary. [Laughter] Wait a minute. How about this one—I thought this was important—how about this one: "Do you work and play well with others?" [Laughter] Mayor Giuliani had no comment. [Laughter] There's a first time for everything. [Laughter]

But look, I know the question that's on everyone's mind today, this custody battle involving the Gonzalez family and the United States and

Cuba. And I know the new hot issue is about my difference of opinion with Vice President Gore. But with all respect, you newspeople have missed the real story here, and there is a real story. We have finally found the one immigrant Pat Buchanan wants to keep in America. [Laughter]

Look, it's no secret, Presidents and Vice Presidents have always disagreed. So it's time to set the record straight on the whole range of issues where the Vice President and I differ. For example, in June he will reveal his plan to relocate the United Nations Headquarters in Nashville—[laughter]—a bold new idea. But I don't agree with it. Indeed, I'm growing more partial to New York every day.

When it comes to campaign finance, we differ. In our beverage of choice, I drink coffee; he drinks iced tea. However, if I'd known back then about the iced tea defense, I'd have drunk tea, too. [Laughter]

In the days before the Democratic Convention, Al will publicly announce another longstanding disagreement we've had. We've kept it under wraps for over 7 years now. It involves our weekly White House lunches. He strongly believes it is rude for one person to eat off another person's plate. [Laughter] Me, I think it's a sign of friendship and familiarity. [Laughter]

On technology issues, God bless him, Al invented E-mail. Me, I just can't find them. [Laughter] Everybody now knows the Vice President prefers earth-tone; all you see me in is "Primary Colors." [Laughter] We both share an abiding interest in Buddhism. [Laughter] But when I visited the Buddhists in India, it cost the taxpayers millions. When Al meets with Buddhists, he turns a tidy profit. [Laughter]

Now, our differences notwithstanding, I am a strong supporter of the Vice President. But beyond that, I'm not going to comment. After all, I'm not running for anything. For the first time in more than 20 years, my name is not on the ballot. This election is not about me. And hey, I'm okay with that. [Laughter] Suits me just fine. It's all of you in the media who keep trying to drag me into this thing. I mean, I don't see how it involves me at all. I'm the Commander in Chief. I've got a lot of responsibilities. Even if I were inclined to impose myself, which I'm not, I wouldn't have time. Ex-

cept for last weekend, when I did find just a few hours to produce a few campaign ads for Al. I'd like you to take a look at them and tell me what you think.

[At this point, a videotape of the President was shown, in which he spoke as follows.]

"This November, Americans face the future. The stakes are high, and the choice is clear. One candidate has worked for 8 years with Bill Clinton. He's considered by Bill Clinton to be a close personal friend, helping make his toughest decisions, a partner in progress as Bill Clinton moves America forward. The other candidate has never worked a day with Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton hardly even knows the guy, and when Bill Clinton first ran for President, he voted against Bill Clinton. Al Gore—he's Bill Clinton's choice. Shouldn't he be yours?"

"When Bill Clinton chose Al Gore as his running mate, the conventional wisdom called it a mistake. They said Gore was too much like Clinton. Too much like Clinton? Too visionary? Too strong? With a plan that would bring America too much prosperity, and the world too much peace? Bill Clinton stood up to the pundits and stared down the pollsters. Choosing Al Gore was one of his very best decisions. And doesn't that tell you a lot about Bill Clinton? Al Gore—too much like Clinton? Good for him; good for us.

"As America's greatest Vice President, Al Gore has been a voice for our values, a fighter for our families, more than that, a strong partner to Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton, a small-town boy from Arkansas who dared to dream big dreams. Young Bill worked hard and played by the rules. He went on to lead his country and build a bridge to the 21st century. Most important, Bill Clinton created AmeriCorps. Bill Clinton still believes in the promise of America, and he still believes in a place called Hope. Al Gore—because there's a 22d amendment."

[The videotape ended.]

The President. Unfortunately, all these ads would be illegal under the Vice President's campaign finance proposal—[laughter]—not because they're unethical, certainly not because they're untrue, because they're just dumb. [Laughter]

Of course, in America, each of us has the constitutional right to silly or dumb speech. I

have certainly asserted my right here tonight. But I think we should take another moment to honor that essential freedom, to recognize that vital principle, by asking the members of the McLaughlin Group to stand. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, I really am okay most days about not being President next year. And it will be nice for all of you to have someone else to chew on. But I have loved coming to this dinner, and I have been privileged to come every year but one that I have been here. I have enjoyed all my interactions with you, the battles, the agreements, the disagreements, the probing, the jabbing, even the occasional bloodshed. And believe it or not, I appreciate the efforts you make to bring Washington's world to the world beyond Washington. I know it's important; I know it's difficult.

I've tried to keep you entertained, and I've tried to keep you involved. [Laughter] And I hope you've at least had some pretty good, substantive things to write about for the last 7-plus years. But for all you have done, and especially once a year for giving me, and indeed all of us, the chance to have a good laugh, I thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to John Nolen, president, Radio and Television Correspondents Association, actor Leonardo DiCaprio; David Westin, president, ABC News; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City; and author Patrick Buchanan.

Memorandum on Leadership of the Emergency Response Assistance Program

April 6, 2000

Memorandum for the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Director, Office of Management and Budget, Director of Central Intelligence, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Director, United States Secret Service

Subject: Designation of the Attorney General as the Lead Official for the Emergency Response Assistance Program Under Sections 1412 and 1415 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-201) (the "Act")

Under sections 1412(a) and 1415(a) of the Act, the Secretary of Defense is responsible for implementing the Emergency Response Assis-

tance Program, commonly known as the "Domestic Preparedness Program," to provide civilian personnel of Federal, State, and local agencies with training and expert advice regarding emergency responses to a use or threatened use of a weapon of mass destruction or related materials, and for testing and improving the responses of such agencies to emergencies involving chemical or biological weapons and related materials.

Under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 1412(a)(2) and 1415(d)(1) of the Act, I designate the Attorney General to replace the Secretary of Defense as the lead Federal official with responsibility for carrying out these programs.

These designations are effective October 1, 2000, and constitute designations pursuant to sections 1412(a)(2) and 1415(d)(1) of the Act.

The Attorney General is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: The memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 7. It was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Remarks on Signing the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000 April 7, 2000

Thank you. Let me say, first of all, to Flo Mallonee, I thought she did a great job. Her family must be very proud of her. And if you get tired of the job you're in, you might consider elected office. [Laughter]

I'd like to welcome all the former Social Security Commissioners here and say a special word of appreciation to our current Commissioner, Ken Apfel, and Deputy Commissioner Bill Halter. I'd also like to acknowledge the contributions of Jim Roosevelt, until recently the Associate Commissioner for Retirement Policy at the Social Security Administration, something that would have made his grandfather very proud of him; and former Representative Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut, who is the current Associate Commissioner for Retirement Policy.

There are many leaders of the aging community here today; I welcome them. But most of all, I want to welcome this very large delegation from the United States Congress, and at risk of—if I forget anybody, do not be shy. But my notes say that present here today are: Chairman Bill Archer; our minority whip, David Bonior; Representative Ben Cardin from Maryland; Representative Mac Collins from Georgia, who is here with his granddaughter who is happy that her grandfather can continue to work into his later years—[laughter]—Representative Joe Crowley from New York; Representative Sam Johnson from Texas; Representative Sandy Levin from Michigan; Representative John Lewis from Georgia; Representative Ron Lewis from Kentucky; Representative Bob Matsui from California; Representative Jim Ramstad from Minnesota; our subcommittee chair, Representative Clay Shaw from Florida; Representative John Spratt from South Carolina; Representative Jerry Weller from Illinois. I don't think I've missed anybody. And you should give them all a big hand; they did a fabulous job. [Applause]

Over 7 years ago now, when I took office, the Vice President and I made a commitment to a 21st century vision of America, with oppor-

tunity and responsibility for all American citizens and a community of all American citizens. To do it we thought we would have to reward both work and family and create a Government that would borrow less and invest more. For 7 years, we've worked hard on that.

Today, the size of the Government is about what it was in 1960, 40 years ago, thanks in large measure to higher productivity from the Federal work force and the advent of new technologies. Thanks to strong cooperative efforts in the Congress, we have turned record deficits into surpluses, and we've enjoyed the longest economic expansion in history.

We've tried to find ways to reward work and family, doubling the earned-income tax credit for working families with modest means, passing the Family and Medical Leave Act, improving the college loan program, and providing tax credits for college costs that were never there before, and many other initiatives. But we know, increasingly, how we deal with Social Security will be a test of our commitment to family and, increasingly, to work.

In the 65 years since President Roosevelt signed it into law, Social Security has dramatically transformed the lives of older and disabled Americans. Seniors were once the poorest people in America. Today, thanks to Social Security, they are the least likely to live in poverty. In spite of the fact that many seniors enjoy other sources of income, if there were no Social Security in America, almost half the seniors in the country would be below the poverty line.

Thanks to Social Security, many of our seniors have a level of independence that few older Americans could even have dreamed of 65 years ago. And thanks to Social Security, we Americans continue to uphold the sacred compact between the generations.

But FDR himself said, and I quote, that "Social Security represents a cornerstone in a structure which is by no means complete," and that "new conditions impose new requirements upon

Government and those who conduct Government.” He would have been the first to agree, I believe, that Social Security must change to keep pace with changing times in America.

The system originally was designed to encourage older Americans to retire by withholding benefits from those 65 and older who worked. Keep in mind, 65 years ago, when Social Security was initiated, the life expectancy in this country was not 65. The so-called retirement earnings test made some sense in the Great Depression, when the Nation was desperate to find jobs for young workers with families and the unemployment rate in our Nation was 25 percent.

Conditions today could hardly be more different. The economy is booming, the unemployment rate at its lowest point in 30 years. Companies desperately need more workers. Older Americans have the skills and the experience that businesses need. Indeed, one of the most interesting things that was said to me today before we started is—Flo said it’s a good thing we did this, because she’d be hard to replace at her present position. *[Laughter]*

That’s true. Increasingly, older Americans want to work. Many of them for various reasons need to work. And we know, as a practical matter, that unless they’re in terrifically physically draining jobs, that continuing to work may well add not only to the length but to the quality of their lives.

Today, one in four Americans between 65 and 69 has at least a part-time job. Eighty percent of the baby boomers say they intend to keep working past age 65. And I’m the oldest of the baby boomers, so I can speak for our generation. One of the reasons I went to law school is so nobody could ever force me to retire. *[Laughter]* Although I spent the better part of my life trying to escape law practice—*[laughter]*—I still remember vividly how I felt about it, even as a young man, and I still have some solace in that.

Yet, because of the Social Security retirement earnings test, the system withholds benefits from over 800,000 older working Americans and discourages countless more—no one knows how many—from actually seeking work. It has long seemed senseless to me.

In the 1992 campaign, Vice President Gore and I campaigned on scrapping the retirement earnings test. When it became obvious that the work that we had all done together to balance

the budget and run a surplus and to stabilize the fund would make it possible to do so with no adverse impact, in my 1999 State of the Union Address, I proposed it.

But what has happened here is truly astonishing. I hope this will go out all across America today. All you ever hear is how much we fight up here. This bill passed unanimously. Nobody was against this. And it is a tribute to the people who work on these issues in the Congress and those who have listened to them, but also it shows that there is a keen awareness here of how the aging of America and the improved financial condition of our country and our Government has totally changed the landscape.

But I think it also reflects the understanding that this is a genuine human rights issue. We want people to have this right to choose the life they want or they need. The Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act means that hundreds of thousands of older working Americans will get checks next month reimbursing them for all the Social Security benefits withheld this year.

Yesterday morning, in Chappaqua, New York, I went to get my morning cup of coffee in my new little village—*[laughter]*—and a lady came up to me and said, “You know, I’m a public school teacher, and my district needs me. But I’m 65 years old. Are you guys ever going to get around to lifting that earnings test?” And you know—it’s terrible—I’m embarrassed to tell you this, but I can hardly keep up with my schedule from one day to the next, and I didn’t remember that I was doing it the day after tomorrow. I said, “In just a few days I think you’ll be very happy.” *[Laughter]* So if you’re looking at me today—*[laughter]*—we did it.

This bill not only means that our seniors will be able to enjoy extra income and personal fulfillment that comes with work without being penalized. It means companies with labor shortages will have a fresh supply of experienced workers, increasing our ability to grow without inflation. In the future, it will mean more baby boomers working longer, contributing more to the tax base and to the Social Security Trust Fund at precisely the time when the percentage of younger workers paying into the system will be dropping.

This is a big deal. If present work rates continue and present birth rates and present immigration rates continue, when all the baby boomers get in here, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing

Social Security. This may also change that and help to further stabilize the Social Security Trust Fund itself.

The retirement earnings test means higher benefits for—ending it means higher benefits for working seniors with no negative effects—I say this again—no negative effects on the long-term fiscal health of the Social Security Trust Fund. So it's the right thing to do for seniors, but it's also a smart thing for our Nation.

I'm also pleased today to announce another important innovation to upgrade Social Security for the information age. Beginning today, Americans of any age can find out in seconds what their Social Security benefit levels will be in the future. All they have to do is to log on to the Social Security Administration's website, www.ssa.gov, and click on the new Social Security retirement planner. It provides estimates of future benefits based on your past, present, and estimated future income, and a new tool for the growing legion of Americans who are learning to use new technologies to make their own investment decisions and retirement plans.

Two days ago, at the White House Conference on the New Economy, I discussed with leading experts on technology how Government could use the Internet to empower individuals and strengthen civil society. This new retirement planner is just a small but powerful example of the kind of innovations that I believe have the potential to transform the relationship between the United States Government and the American people.

Let me, finally, just add one cautionary and hopeful note. These steps today are profoundly important, but I believe we should do more to strengthen Social Security. I think we should extend the life of the Trust Fund well into the middle of this century, while strengthening benefits for older women living alone, who are still much more likely to be in poverty than other seniors.

Last fall, I proposed legislation to pay down our debt for the first time since 1835 and use the benefits of debt reduction, which would now—if we took the benefits of debt reduction that we're getting because of the surplus in Social Security tax collections now, the benefits are manifested in lower interest payments for the United States on this debt as we pay the debt down. If we took those lower interest payments, that benefit, and we put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could extend the life

of the Trust Fund to 2054, which will be well beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers.

I hope we can work with Congress to pass that plan this year. It is a simple measure. Some of us would like to do more. We may not be able to do more in an election year, where there are genuine and honest differences between the two parties and even within the parties about how to proceed on this issue. But at least, if we could simply take the interest savings the American people have given us with their Social Security taxes, which are now in surplus over distribution, and pay the interest savings from paying down the debt into the Trust Fund, think of it: We'd have 54 years on the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. So I hope we can do that.

I also hope we can strengthen incentives for working families to save by passing the retirement savings plan that I recommended. And I hope we can expand high-quality pension coverage for millions of workers. I have proposed tax credits for small businesses to establish good pensions for their employees. It's harder for them, and I think we ought to give them more help to do it.

Again I say, conventional wisdom says that nothing important happens in Washington in an election year. Today we have proved the conventional wisdom wrong. This is an election year. This is important, and it happened by unanimous vote of the United States House of Representatives and Senate. So, so much for the conventional wisdom, and good for the seniors in America and those of us who hope to be part of the doubling of the senior population in the next 30 years.

Let me also say, I think it's important to point out that it's not just seniors who should be happy about this, and I'm glad Flo has got her whole family here. One of the most profound worries of the baby boom generation is that, because we are so large, when we retire, if we haven't made adequate provision for it, our retirement will impose a big burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. So this should be a happy day for Americans of all ages today, because a very good thing has been done for the future.

So I thank you all for being here. I look forward to working with you to further strengthen Social Security, to strengthen Medicare. I hope we can agree to add a prescription drug

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benefit there. I hope we can reauthorize the Older Americans Act. I hope we can do a lot of other things this year. But the spirit—again, I want to thank the Members of Congress, the Republicans and the Democrats, for the spirit behind this action. This is how America is supposed to work. You have done a good thing today.

Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to invite the Members of Congress to come up here for the bill signing. And

I'd like to invite the seniors to go over this way and kind of stand behind me, too.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Florence Mallonee, Social Security recipient, who introduced the President, and Brittany Collins, granddaughter of Representative Mac Collins. H.R. 5, approved April 7, was assigned Public Law No. 106-182.

Remarks on the Legislative Agenda for International Family Planning Assistance

April 7, 2000

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House on this beautiful day. I want to thank all of you who have joined us, particularly the Members of Congress who are here. Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jim Greenwood will speak in a moment, but I also want to acknowledge the presence of Representatives Nita Lowey, Nancy Pelosi, Ellen Tauscher, Lois Capps, Connie Morella, Joe Crowley, and Barbara Lee. Thank you for being here.

I thank Secretary Shalala for being here and for her strong advocacy. And Secretary Albright and Dr. Ifenne of Nigeria will talk in a moment. We are joined today by the Ambassadors from Albania, Colombia, and Nigeria. We welcome them.

I want to thank the foundations and the non-profits who are here, who have stepped up their own support for women's health and family planning, and all the individual citizens who have also come here to take part in this endeavor.

This week Congress begins debate on a new budget. And we have a new chance to return America's support for family planning around the world to the level it ought to be, a new chance to lift the international family planning debate out of partisan politics and back to what it's really about, human potential and human lives. I have proposed an increase of \$169 million in USAID's international family planning assistance this year and \$25 million to support the U.N. Population Fund.

Members of the administration and I have made clear at every opportunity that we are ready to fight, and I know you are ready to help us win.

One person who is not here today, who wanted very much to be here, is Hillary, but she's out struggling to make sure I gain a place in the Senate spouses club. [*Laughter*] But I would like to quote something she said last year at the Hague forum: "We know that no nation can hope to succeed in the global economy of the 21st century when its women and children are trapped in endless cycles of poverty, when they have inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, limited education, or when they are constrained inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams."

Two weeks ago I was in a little village in India, a country with nearly a billion people and a per capita income of about \$450 a year. I met the women who, with the smallest amount of encouragement, have started the women's dairy cooperative and taken over the local milk business. I saw their community center's computer that any village woman, poor or nearly illiterate, can use to get the latest information on caring for a newborn child.

Think about how life in that one village is changing for the better because women have access to education and health care. Hillary and I have seen again and again around the world, in the smallest, poorest rural villages on every continent, how empowering women lifts the

lives of individuals and transforms the future of communities.

Family planning is a vital part of that empowerment. It allows women and families to make their own choices and plan their own futures. If you believe God created women equal, if you believe every society needs women's contributions to succeed, then you must be in favor of returning decisions on family life to the hands of women and their families.

Around the world, the complications of pregnancy kill about 600,000 women every year. We all agree on fighting child and maternal mortality, just as we're working to eradicate polio and TB. But maternal mortality has been stuck at the same level for more than a decade now, even though we know family planning could help women bear healthier children and save the lives of 150,000 women a year. If you're in favor of healthy mothers raising healthy babies, you ought to be in favor of family planning.

Around the world, 34 million people are now living with AIDS, and in the developing world, almost half of them are women. Last year, AIDS killed 1.1 million women, leaving broken communities, crippled economies, and millions of orphaned children. If you care about stopping the spread of AIDS, you ought to care about empowering women to make safe choices for themselves and for their children.

Around the world, more than a billion young people are entering their reproductive years, the largest generation in history, and the one behind it is 2 billion strong. More than 150 million women worldwide would like to limit or space their children, but they have no access to contraception. The option these young people have and the choices they make will have vital consequences for every one of us and will, in large measure, shape the world of the 21st century. So if you're concerned about the health of our planet and about the health of everyone on it, you ought to support our family planning assistance around the world.

America has a profound interest in safe, voluntary family planning, a moral interest in saving human lives, a practical interest in building a world of healthy children and strong societies. And because we are a nation that believes in individual freedom and responsibility, we have every interest in supporting others around the world who seek the same rights and responsibilities we ourselves enjoy.

That is why we have consistently supported family planning since 1993. We do not fund abortion. We fund family planning we know reduces the demand for abortion. And I have asked Congress to return our support for international family planning to the level it reached in 1995, a level that serves our interests, keeps our promises, and leverages support from other donors around the world.

I urge Congress to give us that money without restrictions that hamper the work of family planning organizations and bar them from discussing or debating reproductive health choices. Those congressionally sponsored restrictions impose a destructive double standard. When would we ever accept rules telling Americans at home not even to discuss women's health and women's choices? And how in the name of democracy and freedom can we impose those rules on others, which would be illegal here in the United States? That is not the American way.

We know Americans favor family planning at home and voluntary family planning assistance abroad. We should not cloud what is at stake here. Does the United States want to save lives, promote mother's and child's health, and strengthen families and communities around the world? Together, we must make sure the answer is a resounding, unequivocal yes.

Now I would like to turn to someone who has been a leader for us in the administration and around the world in making this case for women's health and women's empowerment, herself a trailblazer and a role model, who has distinguished herself, I believe extraordinarily, as our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

[At this point, Secretary Albright made brief remarks, followed by Dr. Enyantu Ifenne, Director, Center for Development and Population Activities of Nigeria, and Representatives Maloney and Greenwood.]

The President. Well, I want to thank all of the speakers. Secretary Albright, thank you. And I thank Representative Carolyn Maloney, purist though she is. *[Laughter]* We need a few. *[Laughter]*

And I thank Representative Greenwood; so many other Members who are here: Representative Pelosi, who had to leave, Representative Lowey have been leaders in this fight. And I thank, particularly, the Republicans who have joined in this fight. Representative Connie

Morella here. I was just looking at Connie thinking, she's probably got more kids and grandkids than anybody else in this audience—[laughter]—and therefore probably has more standing on this issue than anyone else. And we thank her and all the Members of the House who are here. I thank them.

But mostly, I want to thank you, Dr. Ifenne, for being here. I think you could see what a responsive chord you struck. But when you were speaking and then when Congressman Greenwood got up to speak and he talked about visiting a village in Bolivia, you know, the fundamental problem here, I believe, is that too many people are voting on this issue based on either pressures they receive or personal values they hold dear, genuinely. But they've never actually seen this.

If I hadn't been President, I don't suppose I ever would have gone to those small villages in Latin America and Africa and India and East Asia and met with all those village women who are, I think, the most impressive citizens in the entire world today, changing the whole future.

When Dr. Ifenne was talking, I remembered, when I was in Senegal, I visited with a group of village women who came to see me from their little village. They wanted to come to the capital to see me, because Hillary had gone out to see them. And it was a village where genital mutilation was practiced. And these women organized the village and got rid of it. And so they got up, dressed in their beautiful native dress, and they came to see me, and they even brought along a handful of men who supported them. [Laughter]

When you see these things, when you see people in the most basic ways taking control of their lives, and you realize it is pro-child,

pro-family, pro-every value that any of us ever proposed to espouse, I believe that the United States is—in my budget, I think it's the least we should be doing. And frankly, I only proposed that much because I thought it was the most I could get passed.

But if you were to ask me what I have learned as President about our dealings with other countries, I would say two things. One is, large countries too often forget the little people in other countries. You can't afford it here, because they can vote you out. But we know that the citizens are the strength of this country; the same is true everywhere. The other thing I have learned is that we get far more—that foreign policy is a lot more like real life than most people imagine. You get a lot more, on the whole, out of cooperation than coercion.

So, Doctor, we thank you for coming. It's a long way from Nigeria. I hope your trip will prove to be worthwhile. If every Member of the United States Congress could hear you, I'm quite confident we would prevail. For the rest of us, we have to do our best to add to your voices.

But I hope as you argue this, you will remember to talk to those who have never been to those villages about what we know is true. The empowerment of individuals in difficult circumstances is the ultimate answer to all of our challenges, and this is a very important part of that.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassadors to the U.S. Petrit Bushati of Albania, Luiz Alberto Moreno of Colombia, and Jibril Muhammed Aminu of Nigeria.

Radio Remarks on the Social Security Internet Retirement Planner *April 7, 2000*

For more than 60 years now, Social Security has provided a measure of financial security for seniors after a lifetime of work. Beginning today, Americans of all ages can log on to the Internet and find out in seconds the amount of Social Security benefits they can expect in retirement. The new on-line retirement planner estimates

future benefits based on past, present, and projected future income. Just log on to the Social Security website at www.ssa.gov, and click on the new Social Security retirement planner. It's never too early to plan your financial future.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 3:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks

were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on the Republican Budget Proposal

April 7, 2000

This new Republican budget combines bad fiscal policy and a flawed economic strategy. It undermines our efforts to strengthen Social Security and Medicare, makes it harder to pay off the debt, and rests on dramatic cuts in education, law enforcement, the environment, and efforts to promote peace in national security.

I remain committed to working with any Member of Congress from either party on a budget that will strengthen Social Security and

Medicare, add a prescription drug benefit, eliminate the debt by 2013, expand access to health coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and strengthen education and other key investments. Let's put this empty political document aside and work together to keep America on a responsible fiscal course that meets our Nation's long-term challenges.

Remarks at a Screening of the PBS Documentary Series "The American President"

April 7, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, and welcome. I want to say a special word of welcome to all the voices of the Presidents who are here—and they were supposed to give me a list of them. I don't know what happened; I just saw it. *[Laughter]* But I know we have Senator Bumpers, Senator Glenn, Senator Simon, Representative Rostenkowski, Governors Weicker and Weld. Bill Ferris, we welcome you here. And a special word of thanks to Sy Sternberg and his family. We appreciate the fact that New York Life has underwritten this.

I also want to thank the coproducers, Philip Kunhardt, Jr., and Philip Kunhardt III and Peter Kunhardt. And there are some other voices here from the series: Ben Bradlee, Walter Cronkite, James Roosevelt, Charlie Rose—I don't know if he's here or not—and Tim Russert.

Tonight this is a fitting way for us to open the first in a series of events celebrating the 200th anniversary of the White House. It is clearly the right thing to do to begin by honoring the lives of individuals who have roamed the halls and carried the burden of the Presidency within the walls of the White House.

This room has not only witnessed historical events, it has played a role in shaping them. It has hosted 42 administrations and 41 different personalities, every President except George Washington. The East Room began as a laundry room for Abigail Adams—an auspicious beginning—*[laughter]*—reminding us that there are certain basic elements to this job.

Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis laid maps and animal skins on this floor where you're sitting and charted the Lewis and Clark expedition. Later, in 1814, a banquet was being held here in this White House and in this room when James Madison sent Dolley word that the Army had miscalculated where the British were going to assault Washington, and he told her to cut Gilbert Stuart's painting of George Washington down and get out of the house as quickly as possible. She did, and they had to leave the banquet here. The British came in, ate the food, and then burned the White House. *[Laughter]*

Later, this house and this room was the headquarters for battle-worn Union troops during the Civil War. President Roosevelt's children roller-skated here. Over the years, this room and this

house have survived a major fire, two wars, a plane crash, and five weddings. And of course, it has been a gallery for some priceless art which embodies the history of this country.

Each President in his own time has survived unique challenges, striving to fulfill the purpose of our Founders to form a more perfect Union. Tonight we will have the opportunity to see two of these selections from the "American President" series, the first documentary series ever to profile all of our Chief Executives.

The first viewing is on the life of Thomas Jefferson. Every American President has been inspired by Jefferson, affected by his decisions, fascinated by his life story. He spent a lifetime shaping our new and ever-evolving democracy. It would become, as he said, more developed, more enlightened as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, manners and opinions change.

One hundred and fifty years later, our 35th President, John Kennedy—whose sister, Eunice, is with us tonight, and we thank you for coming—brought that same spirit of innovation and progress to the White House. His fleeting time in this house remains a singular story in our history. Our President for only a thousand days, he changed the way we think about our country, our world, and our own obligations to the future. The New Frontier inspired millions of Americans to take a personal responsibility for making our country stronger and more united. As he said, "The New Frontier is not a set of promises. It is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer the American people but what I intend to ask of them."

Many great people have called this house home. All of them, so far, have been white males of European descent. I am absolutely convinced that in the not-too-distant future, there will be a woman President, and a person of color will occupy the White House and the Oval Office. But the Presidency was not built by one person. And in a fundamental way, it has been carried forward by the American people since the beginning.

I have spent a lot of time reading the histories of various periods in the White House and the biographies of some of my lesser known predecessors. One of the things that I hope this series will do is to give people a feel of the mixture of the personality and character and skills of a President and his time, and also a sense of

what personal joys and tragedies surrounded Presidents.

Just for example, Franklin Pierce, one of the only other Presidents who came from a small State and was a Governor, is generally accounted not to have been a very good President. But when you consider the times in which he served, I wonder whether Lincoln could have succeeded in 1853, instead of 1861. And almost never do I hear anyone talk about the fact that when Franklin Pierce was on his way to be inaugurated, with his wife and his only child, he took the train from New Hampshire to Washington, and there was a minor accident in which 10 or 11 people received minor bruises. But his son fell on his head, cracked his spine, and died. He never recovered. His wife never recovered.

I've often wondered why it was that Abraham Lincoln, who would have a hard time getting elected today because he had terrible periodic persistent bouts of depression before he became President, was married to a wife who was bubbly and strong and happy and, as far as I know, has the distinction of being the only woman in American history to have been courted by three of the four candidates for President in 1860. [Laughter] For John Breckenridge and Stephen Douglas also pursued her, and clearly she made the right decision. [Laughter]

But they had lost a child before they came to the White House. They lost another child here. She lost three half-brothers fighting for the Confederacy. And then all the carnage of the Civil War, the burden of the tragedies they faced broke Mary Todd Lincoln, and in history she is seen as a very different person from the person she really was for most of her life. And yet, in some magical way, all the personal and national trauma of that time was absorbed by Abraham Lincoln in a way that enabled him to become stronger, to overcome his own demons, to leave aside his own depression, and to become, in my view, the greatest President we ever had.

So I hope when this whole series is done, there will be a greater appreciation for people like Rutherford B. Hayes, who Senator Glenn is the voice of in this series. Rutherford B. Hayes was one of four or five Union generals from Ohio who became President. After the Civil War, if you were a Union general from Ohio, you had about a 50 percent chance of

becoming President. [Laughter] It's the only category in our history that has ever been like that. And a lot of the rest of us wish that it had been so easy. [Laughter]

I hope we'll understand those people that we don't know very much about. I hope we'll have a better understanding of the personal circumstances that Presidents face. I hope we'll have a better understanding of how they fit with their times and how they overcame their difficulties, as President Lincoln did.

Theodore Roosevelt once complained that he would never be viewed as a great President because he had the misfortune to serve when there was no great war. He couldn't have been more wrong. And I'm convinced his temperament was absolutely perfectly suited to the times in which he served. Ironically, since he complained about having no war, he's the only President ever to win the Nobel Prize for peace. [Laughter] Which all goes to show you, you've just got to show up every day and do your best. [Laughter]

Now, I'd like to ask Sy Sternberg, the chairman of New York Life, to come up. And again, I think we should all thank him for making this evening possible. [Applause]

[At this point, Seymour Sternberg, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Life Insurance Corp., made brief remarks and introduced coproducer Philip Kunhardt III, who made brief remarks and presented two clips from the series.]

The President. Well, I would like to, first of all, congratulate Hugh Sidey and Richard Neustadt on the marvelous job they have done with this program, and all of you who are involved in it.

When I was watching those two very important pieces of our history, I couldn't help feeling grateful for some of the things which have been passed down to the present day, to me. The day before I became President, I received a copy of the only book that Thomas Jefferson ever wrote, "Notes From the State of Virginia," which is remarkable for its incredibly detailed analysis of everything about the State. But it's most important today because it contained the first known recording of Thomas Jefferson's condemnation of slavery. And it always struck me that every person in this job lives with a certain ambiguity, and I wondered how he dealt with it. But I'm grateful for what he left us.

Shortly after I became President, Pamela Harriman gave me a copy of the ink blotter that President Kennedy used in his office in the White House, that Mrs. Kennedy had given to her husband, Averell, about 12 days after President Kennedy was killed—with the letter that Jackie Kennedy had written. And because it was my great good fortune to know Jackie and her children, it is one of my most precious possessions. About once a month I open the ink blotter and read the letter again, just to remember how fleeting life is and what a great gift every day is.

I think one of the most treasured pictures I have from my time in the White House is the picture I have of young John Kennedy looking at his father's portrait on a visit he made here, when we had a wonderful preview here of the great series on space that HBO did.

So the history of the country goes on, and the families come and go. But you have given us a great gift tonight, and this whole series will be a great gift. And one of the things that I had hoped would occur, you have done, even with people who lived long ago: You have reminded us that for all their achievements and all their failures, they were also people.

The great premise of democracy is that ordinary people will make the right decision most of the time; that no one is irreplaceable, but that freedom is.

I hope you'll all join us now in the Dining Room for a reception. And thank you again to the Kunhardts; thank you again, Sy; thank you again to PBS; and thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senators Dale Bumpers, John Glenn, and Paul Simon; former Representative Dan Rostenkowski; former Governors Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., of Connecticut and William F. Weld of Massachusetts; Ben Bradlee, former executive editor, Washington Post; Walter Cronkite, former CBS News anchorman; James Roosevelt, grandson of Franklin D. Roosevelt; Charlie Rose, host of PBS' "The Charlie Rose Show"; Tim Russert, host of NBC News' "Meet the Press"; and Hugh Sidey, narrator, and Richard Neustadt, on-camera scholar, "The American President."

The President's Radio Address April 8, 2000

Good morning. In less than a week, Members of Congress will adjourn for spring recess, leaving behind a great deal of unfinished business. Today I'd like to speak with you about some of the pressing priorities that are languishing in Congress and the real consequence of this delay on people's lives.

First, we've waited far too long for a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Last October the House passed the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights by an overwhelming margin. I would sign that bill tomorrow. Unfortunately, the Senate passed a much weaker bill. Now, both bills have been gathering dust on a shelf for more than 5 months.

Delay may be easy for the congressional majority, but it's proving very hard on our families. According to a new analysis of physician reports, every single day the Congress sits on this legislation, thousands of patients experience serious declines in health as a direct result of bottom-line-driven managed care decisions.

At this time of great change in our health care system, patients need a guarantee that they can see a specialist and go to the nearest emergency room; a guarantee that their doctor can discuss the best treatment options, not just the cheapest; a guarantee to an internal and external appeals process; and a guarantee that they can hold a health plan accountable if it causes them great harm. They need a strong Patients' Bill of Rights, and they need it now.

Second, we've waited too long for an increase in the minimum wage. Last year we introduced legislation to give a well-deserved raise to 10 million working families by lifting the minimum wage by a dollar an hour. A dollar an hour—it may not sound like much, but in the 7 months that have gone by since our legislation would have gone into effect, families have lost more than \$600 in income. That's enough to pay for 2 months of groceries or almost a semester of community college. For these hard-pressed families, the cost of congressional delay can be measured not just by the day but literally by the hour.

Third, we've waited too long for Congress to fund our supplemental budget, budget priorities like helping the victims of Hurricane Floyd, aid-

ing families struggling with high energy prices, supporting our troops and our peacekeeping efforts to build stability in Kosovo, providing debt relief to the poorest nations, and combating drug traffickers in Colombia. Now, delays in this funding could jeopardize military readiness, undermine international support for Colombia's democracy and its antidrug efforts that directly protect our people here, and leave many hurricane victims in temporary shelter for the second straight winter.

Finally, we've waited too long for common-sense gun safety legislation. Last year, with a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Gore, the Senate passed a bill that would require child safety locks for every handgun sold, ban the importation of large ammunition clips, and close the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows. Unfortunately, the House failed to pass similar measures. And even more disturbing, 9 months now have gone by, and the Congress has taken almost no action to complete a bill for me to sign.

Every day we wait, 89 Americans—12 of them young people—are killed by gunfire. Of course, no legislation can prevent every act of gun violence or every gun accident. But when there are simple safety measures we can take, measures that will save lives, there is absolutely no excuse for sitting on our hands. Two days ago Senators from both parties voted to push congressional negotiators to produce a final gun bill by April the 20th, the anniversary of Columbine. That's the very least we can do.

With only a week to go before recess, I ask the congressional leaders to think about these daily tallies: 12 children dying from gunfire; thousands of managed care patients suffering unnecessary declines in health; millions of working families missing out on a long-overdue raise. These are just some of the everyday costs of failing to do the people's business. So let's get back on track. Let's work together to protect the health, the safety, the welfare of the American people. Let's safeguard their financial security, and in so doing, our national security. And let's do it now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:00 p.m. on April 7 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 8. The tran-

script was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in New Orleans,
Louisiana
April 8, 2000

Thank you. Well, thank you very much, Arnold. And Celia, thank you. We would have all come here today just to see your beautiful home. And unless you're lucky, half of us may take a swim before we leave. *[Laughter]* But I thank you so much for opening your home and for reminding me of that speech that I gave. It seems like a long time ago in one way, and another just like yesterday.

I want to thank my good friend Sheriff Harry Lee, who proved to me that you could get bad press and the people would stay with you. *[Laughter]* So I simply decided to test the theory, and it got a little out of hand. *[Laughter]* Now, that's a crack I probably wouldn't make anywhere in America outside of Louisiana. *[Laughter]*

I got tickled when Mayor Rendell said he'd never met anybody like Ray Reggie. I thought, that's true, but if you stayed down here long enough, you'll meet 4 or 500 people you never met anybody like before and never will again. *[Laughter]*

So Ray, thank you. Thank you, David Young. Thank you, Mary Lou Winters. I want to congratulate our young State representative, Karen Carter. Her father has been a friend of mine forever. And once Karen came up and accosted me and chewed me out over something she thought I was wrong about, and then she later thought maybe she'd gone too far. And I told her daddy that I'd be proud if my daughter could talk to the President that way. *[Laughter]* Not because—because she wasn't disrespectful; she was just aggressive and articulate. And I'm glad to see her being so successful.

And Mrs. Morial, it's nice to see you. I want to say a special word of thanks to Bill and Andrea Jefferson for being here. Bill Jefferson was for me when only my mother thought I could be elected President. *[Laughter]* In our immediate household, it was a close call. *[Laughter]*

So I thank him for all of his friendship and support over the years.

And I thank all of you who worked so hard to raise these funds for our party. I want to thank all the young people who worked on this event. And my friend Mayor Rendell—you know, when I first met Ed Rendell, we went to Philadelphia. I was running for President, and he took me to a neighborhood where he had worked to eradicate gangs and drugs, in a very poor neighborhood. And we walked down the street, and I could see his evident pride that he had helped to change the lives of people who were very often overlooked by other public officials. And then we got to the end of the street, and he challenged me to shoot baskets. There was a little park there. And even though he knew I might become President, he beat me anyway—*[laughter]*—which I sort of respected. And we've been friends ever since. And I have been waiting for 8 years for a chance to get even. And when I talked him into becoming chairman of the Democratic Party, I said, "You know, it's just a little part-time job; it won't take much work." *[Laughter]* He had a full head of hair when he took this job. *[Laughter]*

But he's really been wonderful. And I think it's a great thing to have our party headed by someone who's actually been elected to something, served people at the grassroots level, understands the problems and the promise of all different kinds of people. And Philadelphia is a magnificent city that's been very good to me and to the Vice President. So I want to thank him.

I've been to Louisiana a lot since I've been President, about half as many times as I would have liked to have been. And I want to thank you all, and through you and the media here, to all the people of this State, for voting for

me twice for President and for giving me the chance to serve.

I am a little perplexed some days that this is the first time since 1974 they've held an election and my name hasn't been on a ballot. [Laughter] I like to joke that most days I'm all right about that. So today I'd like to talk to you from the perspective of someone who is not a candidate but is profoundly grateful for what this country has given to me and for what this State has done for me. I'm grateful that I had the chance to serve at a very crucial moment in American history, when we were in need of making some difficult decisions about what kind of country we were going to be and how we were going to prepare for a new century.

And I guess I want to make just two or three brief points, because when you come to a deal like this I'm sure maybe for a few days afterward people say, "Well, what was it like? And what did the President say? And was it really worth all the money it cost you to go? And why did you do such a stupid thing?" [Laughter] I'm sure you get asked all those questions. So I'd just like you to think about a few things.

First of all, this country is in a lot better shape than it was in 1992. We had high unemployment, high interest rates, slow growth, almost no new jobs. Our social problems like crime and welfare were getting worse, and we didn't seem to have any governing vision for taking us into the new century. And I think ideas matter a lot.

You mentioned—Ed Rendell made the remark about what a diverse group we have here, and he made a remark about the contributions of people who have brought lawsuits on behalf of injured people that I agree with. But I—sometimes I get criticized from the other side because I want to pay America's debt off. One columnist, a couple of weeks ago, who is a friend of mine, a man I admire very much, accused me of embracing Calvin Coolidge economics. I'll explain why; I want to do it in a minute. But the point is, when I ran in '92, I had been, as President Bush said, the Governor of a small southern State, somewhere to the north of here. And I was so dumb, I thought he was complimenting me when he said that. [Laughter] I was kind of proud of it, myself. I still am, to tell the truth. And the way Washington worked didn't make a lick of sense to me. I mean, there was a liberal position and

a conservative position; there was a Democratic position and there was a Republican position. And the one thing that you couldn't do without being accused of heresy is try to unlock the differences or come out with a third position that would go beyond both of them. And it looked to me like it was a very serviceable setup for politicians who needed to get on the news for 15 seconds every night, because only conflict will guarantee you a place on the airwaves. But it wasn't doing very much good for the American people.

And so I asked the people to give me a chance to try a different way. I really believed we could have a country that could get rid of the deficit and still increase our investment in education and our children and their future. I believed we could grow the economy and improve the environment. I thought we could be pro-business and pro-labor. I thought we could get rid of unnecessary Government bureaucracy and still be more vigorous in the pursuit of those things we saw to be pursued. I believed all that.

And I remember when I first started giving these talks, the people who had been covering politics for years looked at me as if I were some sort of heretic or it was just political gobblede-gook.

But first I want to say, ideas matter. Because after 8 years, we have—instead of record deficits and a debt that was quadrupled under the previous administrations and their theory, we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years and the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded and the lowest overall unemployment in 30 years, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years.

So we did it by being pro-business and pro-labor. We did it by getting rid of the deficit, and we've about doubled our investment in education and training for our children and dramatically increased access to college and raised the standards for education. So, you can do these things.

The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've tripled the number of toxic waste dumps we cleaned up over the previous two administrations. And the economy is stronger. So it makes sense.

We've got a stronger Federal Government, but it's the smallest Government since 1960. We've eliminated hundreds of programs, and I

will give anyone here the ticket price here—I'll give you your money back if you can stand up right now and name three of them. Any takers? [Laughter]

I say that because I didn't think it was anti-Democratic or anti-progressive to recognize that we had programs on the book that were no longer serviceable, that just kept getting funded because people couldn't think of anything better to do with the money. And we were up to our ears in debt, and we had to get out. And we needed the money for education; we needed the money for health care; we needed the money for the environment; we needed the money for helping poor people move from welfare to work.

So that's the first thing I want to say to you. Ideas really matter. I've learned that in over 20 years of public life and over 7 years of being your President. One of the reasons that I support the Vice President is that he understands the future. He understands the importance of ideas; he knows how to get us there. These things aren't just slogans to him. I've spent too many hours with him doing too much work, making too many difficult decisions.

The second thing I want to tell you is, our adversaries are smart, and they want back in in the world's worst way. And they've figured out the way to do it is to try to blur the differences within the parties until they get in and they start appointing their judges and passing their bills and doing their thing. But in the meanwhile, they'd like to blur the differences.

So I want to tell you there are differences. Let me just cite a few. We worked hard to turn this deficit around and start running these surpluses. And we're paying off the debt at a rapid rate. Now, I'm not against a tax cut. I'm actually for a tax cut if it's small enough to enable us to save Social Security, reform Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit to the 70 percent of our seniors that can't afford it today; continue to invest in education, health care, and the environment and science and technology and research; and pay the debt off. We can get out of debt, for the first time since 1835, in 12 years. And I think we ought to do it, not just because it sounds good, but because if we keep paying the debt down, we'll keep interest rates down, and there will be more money for people to borrow to start businesses, to hire people, to invest in their equipment, to move the economy along. That's what I think.

Now, in spite of all that, I still have offered a tax cut, and the Vice President has offered one, I think, in the campaign, in the same range. We could give people a \$3,000 tax credit for long-term care costs for their parents or disabled relatives; let people deduct the cost of college tuition for their kids, up to \$10,000 a year; increase the child care tax credit; increase the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people. Nobody who works for a living and has kids at home should be in poverty. The tax system ought to take them out. That's what I believe.

We still have a sizable tax system. We could even give them some relief on the marriage penalties, an issue where our Republican friends say they're interested. But I don't think we ought to do that at the expense of what got us here. We've got the longest economic expansion in history because we said we're going to get rid of the deficit, invest in education and technology, and sell more American products around the world. That's how we got here. And so there's a big difference.

What's the difference? The other party wants a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed last year. Even bigger. Now, they'll tell you they're for education; they're for the environment; they're for this, that, and the other thing. The truth is, they're not going to have any money. They promised this huge tax cut and even bigger increases in defense than I've advocated, and the money won't be there. Or if they do spend this money, it means that we won't be able to save Social Security for the baby boom generation's retirement. Or it means we go back and start running a deficit again, and we'll have all the same problems we had the last time we did that.

Now, so I would say to you, I don't think this is rocket science. What they're running on—now, they're using different words and blurring the distinctions, but what they're running on is the exact same economic program they pursued for the last 12 years the last time. And so the American people—when they ask you why you're here, you say, "Well, I think we're better off than we were 8 years ago, and we've got a choice that's the same choice we had before about which economic strategy we're going to follow." Except in 1992, you took a chance on me, but in 2000, you now have evidence about how their system works and how

ours works. And you need to tell people about this.

Because every day all these folks are going to be saying different things. All the ones running for Senate and Congress and President, they're all going to be emphasizing this issue and that. But I'm telling you, I've been there. You can make promises until the cows come home, but if you're going to deliver the promises, there is a price tag on it, and it all has to add up in the end. Or if it doesn't add up, you're going to cut something else or start running deficits again.

The central thing you need to know about the economic differences between the parties is, after I vetoed that huge tax cut last year to keep the economy going—and I might add, after I did it, the economic growth in the last quarter of last year was 7.3 percent, the biggest in a coon's age. Nobody can remember when that was there—[laughter]—forever and ever. Nobody can remember that.

Now, they come back and say, "That tax cut he vetoed wasn't big enough; we want a bigger one." And let me tell you what's on the other side. The number of people over 65 in this country is going to double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. There will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. The baby boom generation—that's anybody here between the ages of 54 and 36—and I can only tell you about the older baby boomers, because I was born in the first generation of them—we are panicked about the prospect that our retirement might undermine our children's ability to raise our grandchildren.

Now, we've got the money right now, if we don't throw it away, we have the money right now to pledge the interest savings from paying down the debt to the Social Security Trust Fund and take it out to 2054—54 years from today—beyond the life of all but the most fortunate baby boomers. We ought to do it. And it's more important to your long-term financial health than a tax cut we can't afford.

If we were starting Medicare again today—now, we're for that; they're not—if we were starting Medicare again today, we would never design a Medicare program without a prescription drug component. When Medicare was set up 35 years ago, it was basically a critical care program; the fund covered doctor and hospital bills. Now, anybody that lives to be 65 years old has got a life expectancy of 83 years, and

it's going to keep going up. There needs to be more attention to preventive care, to chronic problems, to all kinds of things that medicine can have a big impact on.

And literally, almost three-quarters of our seniors either don't have any or don't have an adequate and affordable prescription drug coverage. It's a big deal. You overdo the tax cut, you can't cover enough people. And we have differences on how many people we want to cover with them.

In education, it's fine to say you want to have higher standards for our schools and all these other good programs, but you've still got to pay for them. They've still got to be paid for. Our program is: Repair our schools that need repairing, build thousands of new schools, hook them all up to the Internet, put another 100,000 teachers out there—2 million teachers are going to retire in the next few years, and more kids in the schools than ever before. So I think we ought to help put more teachers in the early grades. Have higher standards, but give schools the help they need for after-school, for summer school, for the reading, the mentoring programs, so that you don't blame kids for the failure of the systems. I've got no problem with ending social promotion and having higher standards, but if you're going to do it, you've got to give the kids a chance to succeed. And I think most people believe that. So there are differences. And it all starts on the economic front with this.

There are also differences on a lot of other issues. I'm trying to raise the minimum wage a buck a year over 2 years. And they won't just pass a clean minimum wage bill; they're trying to get a humongous tax cut out of it. But you know, the last time we raised the minimum wage, about 6 years ago, they said, "Oh, boy, this will drive up unemployment." Twenty-one million jobs later, we know that if you've got a good economic policy and a strong economy, paying people a decent wage who are working hard does not hurt the economy. And it's time to raise it again.

And do you know, if we raise it again, it would still be, in real dollar terms, we'd still only be back where we were about 30 years ago, in terms of the purchasing power? So we ought to raise it. We're for it; they're not.

On the gun issue—I grew up down here. I grew up in a culture that valued hunting, sport shooting. When I signed the Brady bill

there was the awfulest commotion you ever heard in the assault weapons ban. People said, oh, they were going to lose their guns and all that. We heard all that stuff. Well, nobody has missed an hour in the deer woods. But 7 years later, 500,000 people—felons, fugitives, and stalkers—have not gotten handguns, and it could be a reason why we have a 30-year low in gun death rates.

So now the issue is, should there be child trigger locks on the guns; should we ban the import of large capacity ammunition clips, which makes a mockery of the assault weapons ban because you just import the clips, then you adjust the gun to take the new clip; and should we do a background check at the gun shows?

Now, when we passed the Brady bill, the people that were against it said, "It won't do you any good to do a background check of people who buy guns from gun stores because all the criminals buy their guns at the gun shows." I said, "Oh, surely some buy their guns at the gun stores." And sure enough, a half-million did, anyway. [Laughter] So now I go back to the same people and I say, "You remember when you told me 7 years ago all these people were buying their guns at the gun shows? Well, we have the technology to do these background checks now. They're not particularly burdensome. Let's do them." They said, "Oh, my goodness, we couldn't do that. It would be the end of civilization as we know it." [Laughter]

And all I can tell you is, I think it will keep kids alive. And I have never done anything, to the best of my knowledge, not one thing in my public life that interfered with the legitimate rights of hunters and other lawful gun owners. That is not what this is about. It's not about scare tactics and slogans.

Somebody asked me the other day what I thought about all the mean things Charlton Heston has said about me. I said, "I like his movies very much." [Laughter] And I actually—he came to the White House a couple of years ago for the Kennedy Center Honors. I liked him very much. This is just a difference of opinion here.

I think it's really unfair to even say the Republicans are sort of in the pocket of the NRA, as if they're doing something they don't believe. I think they believe that. We think differently about this. This is a difference of opinion.

They believe that basically this is the one area of our national life—guns—where there

should be no prevention, all punishment. They do say—and I've increased gun prosecutions and want to increase them some more, and they're going to support me on that, I think—give us more prosecutors and all that. But they believe the only answer is, wait until somebody breaks the law and throw the book at them, but this is the one area of our national life where we can't have prevention.

Well, you think about that. We have prevention everywhere else. We've got crosswalks for walking across the street, trying to keep people from getting run over. We put seatbelts on when we get in the car, trying to keep our heads from going through the dashboard. We put our kids in these child safety seats, trying to keep them from flying around if we have to slam on the brakes. We've got speed limits. We have airport metal detectors. Why do we have all this stuff? Most people are law-abiding, sensible, careful, and safe, in every endeavor. But you still do what you can to stop bad things from happening in the first place, right? I mean, that's what you do. When it's your family and your life and your kids, that's what you do. And that's what smart societies do. All this is about is whether we're going to do sensible things to prevent bad things from happening.

I said it in my press conference the other day—I don't know if any of you saw it—I said, what do you think the country would think of me if I said, "You know, I'm really worried about how many people are crowding in our airports and how hot they are and tired they are and pushed together they are. And 99.9 percent of them are the best people you ever want to meet in your life. They're totally law-abiding; they would never think of doing anything. And it drives them nuts to be late for an airplane and go through one of these metal detectors; and they've got a rodeo belt on or a big old heavy money clip, and they go, 'bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing.' They have to go out, and you take everything out of your pockets, you go through it, it goes off again, and you have to go out and do it again. It just drives them nuts. And I just think it's so burdensome, and since almost all of them are law-abiding, let's just take them all out. And the next time a plane blows up, we'll throw the book at them." [Laughter]

Now, that is the logic. That is the logic behind not doing these background checks. But man, this has got nothing to do with the deer season.

It's got nothing to do with the gun shows. It's got nothing to do with anything. It's a question of whether you believe there should be prevention in this area of our national life.

See, I believe America could be the safest big country in the world. When I got elected President, nobody even thought the crime rate could go down. I did, because I'd been out to places like Philadelphia. I'd seen this. I believe America can be the safest big country in the world now. And if I were running the NRA, I would have a whole different take on this. I'd say, "I'd like to prove that you can have the safest big country in the world and still have people who like to go hunting, go to these shooting contests and have a big time, own guns lawfully, be trained carefully, that use them." I'd like to prove that. I wouldn't be against all this prevention stuff. I think prevention is an important part of life. But there are differences here. And you know what the other differences are.

So the first thing I want to say is, the country is in better shape. Ideas matter. We've tested ours; we've tested theirs. On the economy, they want to do what they did before. And if you do it, you'll get the same consequences you got before. And all the other things they talk about, all of them running for all these offices, you have to view in view of their commitment to a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed.

The second thing I want to say is, I think these other issues matter, what you do in education, what you do with the environment, what you do with crime, and how you do it.

The last thing I want to say is this. The Democrats have lost some votes since I've been in here, I'm quite sure because we take a very inclusive view of society, and we don't believe that people ought to be discriminated against just because they're female, just because of their race, just because they're handicapped, or even if they're gay—in the workplace—subject to hate crimes or anything else. That's what we believe. And some people are threatened by that, and they don't think we're good Americans, and they won't vote for us. But I think most people are with us on this.

My view of this is real simple. I think if you get up every day and you show up for work and you go about your business, you obey the law, you pay your taxes, you're a good citizen, you ought to have a chance to live in this country and live up to the fullest of your

ability, and nobody ought to get in your way doing it. That's what I believe. That's what I believe.

And I believe that—I think that we define our sense of community in terms of how we live. They, I think, believe we define our sense of community more in terms of whether we say we believe the same things. And all I can tell you is, if you think about the time I've spent since I've been President working on peace around the world, what's the problem in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in the tribal wars in Africa, all these places? People killing each other because they're different—racial, ethnic, tribal groups, or religious groups—difference, right?

Why did that guy in Los Angeles shoot those kids at the Jewish community center and kill that Filipino postman? Why did that guy in the middle West, who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy, shoot the black former basketball coach at Northwestern and the Korean Christian when he was coming out of church, and three or four other people? Why was young Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming? And why was James Byrd dragged to death in Texas? And what has all this got to do with us?

I really believe one of the great challenges every person's life faces—every person, even people who themselves have been discriminated against—is figuring out how to get it right when it comes to how to deal with people who are different from you, and how to find a way to appreciate other people's differences, enjoy them, and still somehow feel that what we have in common is more important than what is different about us. And that's hard to do. And the more I try to make peace around the world, the more I understand how much progress we've made in this country, for all of our problems. It's hard to do.

And all over the world, people are raised to believe that they can identify themselves as good by having somebody else to look down on, that their religion only has meaning if somebody else's doesn't. They were raised to have pride insofar as it's set off against, in conflict with, somebody else. It's not just American. This is everywhere. And in this most modern of worlds, we are bedeviled by this old conflict.

So I just want you to think about that. If somebody gave me one wish today, they said,

"I'm sorry you can't finish your term; you've got to check out tomorrow," and God came down to me and said, "I'm no genie. You're not getting three wishes. I'll give you one," I would not wish for prosperity or even a Democratic victory in November. I would wish that this country could truly be one America, across all the lines that divide us. Because we're smart people; we're good people; we work hard. If we could ever get our hearts and minds right about this stuff, the rest of it would work out. That's what I believe.

And I'll just leave you with this thought. The most important question of all in this election is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? Are we going to make one America? Are we going to give everybody a chance to be a part of it? And are we going to meet our big, long-term challenges? The biggest danger for the Democrats in this race is that people will do what they often do when things are going along well; they'll get relaxed. They won't concentrate. They won't feel a sense of urgency. And they'll either stay home, or they won't be sharply focused on what this could be about.

How many times—everybody here over 30, how many times have you ever made a mistake in your life, not because you were under the gun but because things were going along so well you didn't think there were any consequences to what you did today? Now, that's the big question here. What will we do with this unique moment of prosperity?

In other words, all these differences only matter, that I just went through to you, if we're going to do something about it. And the only thing I'd like to tell you about that is, the older I get, the more my friends pass away, the faster time goes, and the more I realize nothing lasts forever. And I say that not to be morbid. I'm the most optimistic person you'll ever meet. I believe in the promise of America. I believe no one is irreplaceable. I believe in our country only freedom is irreplaceable. I don't believe there is anybody, including me, who's irreplaceable. But I believe moments come and go.

And the last time we had an expansion like this was in the 1960's. It was the last time we had the longest economic expansion in history. And it's when I graduated from high school, in 1964, where everybody thought the economy would go on forever; we would never get mired down in Vietnam; the cold war would be over before you knew it because we were

good and strong; and civil rights would be solved in the courts and in the Congress—1964, middle of the big expansion.

When I graduated from college 4 years after that, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King had been killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President because the country was too divided over the Vietnam war. Mr. Nixon got elected President. He was a very able man, but he got elected President on one of these "us" and "them" divisive campaigns. He represented the Silent Majority, and those of us that were on the other side, we were in the loud minority. We were kind of out of the club there. And a few months later, the longest expansion in American history was over, boom! And we blew a chance to solve a lot of our problems in a wholesome, peaceful way.

Now, I'm not running for anything, but as an American citizen, I want to tell you, I've waited 35 years for that opportunity to roll around again for my country, where we could build the future of our dreams for our children. Ideas matter; there are differences. We've got to do this together.

The most important thing right now is that we focus on the importance of this election. Do not take our prosperity for granted. Do not take our social progress for granted. Do not take your ability to even come to something like this for granted. We've got to make the most of this. If we do, we'll be proud for the rest of our lives. If we don't, we'll never forgive ourselves. This is a moment for making tomorrow. That's why you came today. If somebody asks, you tell them that.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Arnold and Celia Lupin; Harry Lee, sheriff, Jefferson Parish, LA; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee (DNC); luncheon cochair Ray Reggie; David Nelson Young, Louisiana DNC national committeeman; Mary Lou Winters, vice chair, Louisiana State Democratic Party; Louisiana State Representative Karen R. Carter; Sybil Morial, wife of Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; and Representative William J. Jefferson and his wife, Andrea.

Remarks Following a Performance of “Messiah 2000” in Alexandria,
Louisiana
April 8, 2000

Well, I am rarely at a loss for words. I use words for a living. I have done reasonably well at it. And I am virtually speechless.

First, I want to say to my friend Anthony—we were talking, oh, maybe 6 months ago, about how much I wanted to come down here one more time before I left office and see this “Messiah” service as President. And it worked out for me to be here. I wish Hillary could be here. I wish Chelsea could be here. We came, the three of us, 11 years ago. Chelsea and Miquell were just little girls; Gentry was so small he was almost invisible. [Laughter] And our friendship goes back long before that, to 1977.

So I just want to say how much this has meant to me. I thank you for acknowledging all the people who came down with me, and I’d like to thank the people from your church from Arkansas who came: my good friends Keith and Janice Sjostrand, and brother Bill Harden, Mrs. Harden, and the others who came. Thank you for coming to be with us tonight. I love you, and I’m glad to see you.

We’ve had an unusual relationship, Anthony and Mickey and Hillary and I and our kids. We’re sort of an odd couple. I say that so that you will not hold him responsible for anything I have ever done you disagreed with. But we love each other a lot. I bet I cried through more of this tonight than anybody else here.

I want you to know something about this guy. There for a period of time, a day or two at least, there was some question about whether I would finish my term. He called me on the phone, and he said, “Mickey and I want to come spend 20 minutes with you. And we won’t spend more than 20 minutes, because we know you’ve got a lot to do.” I said, “You’re going to come all the way to Washington, DC, from Alexandria, for 20 minutes?” And he said, “Yep. And we won’t stay long.” So I said, “Okay, come on.”

So he shows up. She shows up. First thing they did was give me a tape of a song she sang, wrote and sang for me, that I was supposed to listen to every day to keep my head in the right place—[laughter]—which I dutifully

did. Then he gives me about seven pages of points he wants me to study up on every day to make sure I know where I want to be. [Laughter]

Then he says, “I don’t know how this is going to come out.” But he said, “I know you. You are my friend. We have raised our children together. I love you. I was here when you were going up. If the ship starts to sink and other people start to bail out, you call me; I want to go down with you.” He said, “I will be there. If not another living soul were standing there, I would be there.”

And I say that not for some personal reason but because that was the embodiment of his Christian faith and the witness of the Pentecostal Church that I have been blessed by for 23 years now. And I just want you to know I’m grateful to you and your wife and kids and both sets of parents that are here and your extended family, for what you meant to me and Hillary and to our daughter.

And I’m grateful that you gave me the chance to help your church advance the cause of liberty in—last time I counted, three or four different countries, now. I would have done it for anybody, but you gave me the chance to do it for you.

And I’m grateful that one more time in my life I got to sit here and be bathed in the glorious love of all these singers and actors and all the people that put together this “Messiah” service. It was a blessing that I will have with me for the rest of my life.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 p.m. in the sanctuary at The Pentecostals of Alexandria. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Garold Anthony Mangun, pastor, The Pentecostals of Alexandria; his daughter, Miquell Mangun Hennigan, his son, Gentry, and his wife, Mickey; Rev. Keith Sjostrand, pastor, First United Pentecostal Church, Lonoke, AR, and his wife, Janice; and Rev. Bill Harden, pastor, First Baptist Church, Picayune, MS, and his wife, Margaret. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message on the Celebration of Jubilee 2000 *April 7, 2000*

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in our nation's capital to celebrate Jubilee 2000. You can take pride in being a part of this extraordinary grassroots effort to reduce the debt of the world's most impoverished countries. Your work is helping to raise awareness and put this issue at the forefront of the national agenda.

In too many countries around the world today, excessive debt and unwise economic policies divert crucial resources from health, education, environment, and other social investments. Every year, two-thirds of the world's heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC) spend more on debt service than on health or education. At the same time, basic human needs go unmet. In these countries, one in ten children dies before his or her first birthday, one in three children is malnourished, and the average adult has had only three years of schooling. This is wrong.

Last year, we worked with other creditor nations to reach agreement on a plan to triple the debt relief available for the world's poorest nations. The Cologne Debt Initiative promises to reduce more than 70 percent of the total

debt of these countries, enabling them to commit additional resources to the health and education of their people. Thanks to your efforts and the efforts of a bipartisan group in Congress, we have made significant progress in lifting the burden of debt from half a billion people around the world. This year we must build on that progress. For debt relief to move forward, Congress must take action on my request to cover the remaining cost of the U.S. share of debt relief.

I applaud each of you for your commitment to Jubilee 2000. Let us say today that no nation on this Earth should be forced to choose between feeding and educating children or paying interest on excessive debt. Let us say that no children—no matter where they are born—should be deprived of the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Best wishes for a memorable event and continued success in your efforts.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9.

Statement on the V-22 Aircraft Tragedy *April 9, 2000*

On Saturday, April 8, the United States lost brave members of the Marine Corps, who died in the line of duty in the service of their country. They sacrificed their lives in a training accident involving a V-22 aircraft in Arizona. This terrible loss of life is a reminder of how so many men and women in the Nation's military put their lives at risk each and every day, so that we might be a free people and the cause of peace can be advanced throughout the world.

Hillary and I offer our prayers for those we have so suddenly lost and for their family and friends, whose burden of grief is so great. We pray that God may bless them all. Though their names and faces were not known to most of America before this tragic moment, I know that the American people will recognize in their names and faces in the days ahead the genuine quality of heroism.

Apr. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on the Department of Health and Human Services Report on Prescription Drug Coverage *April 10, 2000*

Today's release of the Department of Health and Human Services report on prescription drug coverage, spending, and pricing practices provides further evidence of the need for a voluntary, affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit that is available to all beneficiaries. This report makes clear that uninsured seniors not only lack prescription drug coverage but also are denied the significant discounts and rebates that those with coverage receive. This price gap is wide and growing. It's time to level the playing field for both coverage and prices for all of America's seniors.

Although the HHS report provides the most comprehensive analysis to date on prescription drugs, there is still much that needs to be learned and conveyed to the general public and to policymakers on this important issue. For this reason, I am also announcing that the administration will hold a national conference this summer on drug pricing and discounting practices and their impact on Medicare beneficiaries and pharmaceutical innovation. I believe this conference will help us determine how the best

purchasing and quality improvement practices from the private sector can be incorporated into a Medicare prescription benefit.

I am encouraged that there is growing support from both parties to address the prescription drug cost and coverage problems that burden our Nation's seniors and people with disabilities. As today's report makes clear, the challenge of prescription drug coverage for the uninsured and underinsured Medicare populations is one that afflicts millions of beneficiaries of every age and income level. However, we must make certain that any legislative proposal is more than a benefit in name only. As I have said repeatedly, the only way this issue can be adequately remedied is through a Medicare drug benefit that is voluntary, affordable, accessible, and administered competitively, using the most successful private practices to negotiate discounts on behalf of seniors. It should be enacted in the context of broader reform that modernizes and strengthens the program. I believe that the release of today's report shows how vital it is to reach this goal.

Statement on the Announcement of a Summit Meeting Between South Korea and North Korea *April 10, 2000*

I welcome the announcement that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will hold a historic first summit in June. Direct dialog between the two Koreas is something we have long advocated and is

fundamental to solving the problems of the Korean Peninsula. This announcement is testimony to the wisdom and long-term vision of President Kim Dae-jung's engagement policy. I congratulate both leaders on their decision to meet.

Statement on the Greek Legislative Elections *April 10, 2000*

I congratulate Konstandinos Simitis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, and his PASOK party for their victory in the Greek leg-

islative elections on April 9. I also applaud Konstandinos Karamanlis and the New Democracy Party for running a fine campaign. The

elections demonstrated yet again the vitality of democracy in the land of its birth and should serve as an example to the rest of the world.

The election results and the debates fostered by the campaign show a broad consensus in favor of the course Greece has chosen: economic prosperity at home and fuller integration

with the European Union; leadership in building stability in the Balkans and southeastern Europe; improved relations with Turkey; and progress toward a just and lasting settlement on Cyprus. On these and other issues, the United States pledges its continuing support and cooperation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions

April 10, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1), and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was dated January 7,

2000. I shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at a Maryland State Bill Signing Ceremony in Annapolis, Maryland

April 11, 2000

Thank you very much, Governor and Mrs. Glendening, Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Secretary of State Willis, Attorney General Curran, Mr. Speaker, President Miller. I also want to acknowledge the Members of Congress who are here, who are on the right side of this fight, Senator Mikulski, Representative Morella, and Representative Wynn. You can be very proud of what all three of them are doing on this issue.

I thank the members of the legislature, the overwhelming numbers of Democrats and the brave Republicans who joined you to pass this legislation. I thank the students from the Young Kids Against Violence and the Students Together Against Guns and from Largo and Potomac schools for their work. And I want to say a little more about each of you in a moment.

Let me say, I think it is fitting that we are here today in this magnificent old place where

our forebears walked the halls more than 200 years ago. It's a site of firsts. The Speaker mentioned George Washington resigning his commission just a few steps from here. The State House was also the site of the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, which officially put an end to the Revolutionary War and marked the birth of our new Nation.

Today we are trying to end another kind of war, an ongoing struggle to reduce the staggering toll of violence on our citizens and especially on our children. The Maryland Legislature once again has made history, and I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I came up here today more than anything else to say thank you.

I applaud first your Governor. I remember after I first met him—you know, he's sort of low-key; you have to keep listening to Parris Glendening. *[Laughter]* But I must say, he

wears well. The more I watched him—I remember once, a couple years ago, I was talking to people at the White House about what was going on in the States about a completely different issue. And I said, “You know, it is astonishing; in almost everything I have tried to accomplish as President, Maryland has been out there on the forefront of change, ahead of the other States in virtually every area.” And I might say, in the area of gun safety, it’s worth pointing out for the record that Maryland has already banned assault weapons, cheap handguns known as Saturday night specials, already limited handgun sales to one per month. And with this new law, you are again leading the way.

Last year California passed legislation to limit handgun sales to one a month, to ban junk guns, new generations of assault weapons. Last week Massachusetts began enforcing consumer product safety rules for guns, to ban junk guns, and to adopt devices to prevent children from firing guns. Tomorrow I’m going to Colorado to support a citizen ballot initiative to close the gun show loophole and require background checks on all gun sales.

We ought to talk for a moment about how this came to be. I was looking at Mike Miller up here, and I’ve had the privilege to know him well for many years now. I know what kind of district you represent. This can’t have been an easy fight for him. I heard the Speaker talking. I used to go down to the Eastern Shore when I was a student at Georgetown. I’ve had the privilege of spending a little time at Camp David since I’ve been President, traveling in the neighborhood. I know not all of Maryland is Baltimore, and I know what the Speaker was saying. I know how hard this vote was for a lot of you.

And I know something else, too. None of us want to really pay tribute to the people who are truly responsible for us all being here today. We thanked each other. The truth is, we’re all here because too many children got killed. And I was so moved by what Kathleen said, and I couldn’t help thinking how proud her father would be of her today.

Most of the history of the United States to bring sanity to our gun laws has been a sad history, littered with the lost lives of people we could ill afford to lose. President Johnson, to his everlasting credit, proposed sweeping gun legislation in the aftermath of the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. He got

something past the Congress in 1968, which was better than nothing but woefully weak. I will remind you that that law only required gun sellers to ask but not to verify whether purchasers had a criminal record or a mental health history.

And then, somehow, we just forgot about it. And a lot of people like me who came from places like Arkansas and Maryland, who always knew we ought to be doing something, just didn’t. I remember in 1982, when I ran for Governor, I actually blurted out what I thought. I said I would support a waiting period and background checks for gun sales, handgun sales, 18 years ago. It sparked a withering firestorm. And when I got elected, I saw there was no support for it. So I just walked away and went on to other things.

My life was changed when a friend of mine who ran a hardware store in a small mountain town of about 1,000 people—a man, I knew him and his family very well—was in his store one day, and a guy came in he hadn’t seen in a long time, and he said, “Where you been?” And he said, “Well, I went away to the service, and then I lived in other States, and I just got back. I want to buy a gun. I want to do some target practice.” And he kind of joked about the gun control form, “Well, have you ever been in prison, ever had a background check, a mental health history?” And the guy said, “No, no.” He handed him the gun; 18 hours later 5 people were dead. He had broken out of the State veterans mental hospital that morning.

And it nearly destroyed my friend. He lost years of his life trying to get over what had happened. He was not responsible. The law, in any case, would not have found out what had to be found out; it was totally inadequate. But he lived with the nightmares of those people.

And then the NRA started trying to pass legislation all over the country to actually require States to keep cities from having gun control laws more stringent than the State did. And I vetoed it a couple of times, and had some rather interesting exchanges with them. Then, when the Brady bill was vetoed in 1991 or ’92, whenever it was, I just promised myself if I ever had a chance to start again, I would.

And unfortunately, our cause has been aided by the deaths of all these children in all these schools and in other settings. And I think we should pay tribute to them. They are why we’re

all here today. You know it, and I know it. They are what made our constituents in places like rural Arkansas and rural Maryland—who now know, because of the experience of the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, we have no intention of interfering with hunting season or sport shooting events or any other lawful activities—they made those folks willing to say, “You know, this is something we probably ought to do.”

And now, in truth, the people are ahead of most of the politicians. And what I would hope today is that we could just keep on. We could make it clear that we have no intention of undermining the legitimate interests of people who hunt and sport shoot. We can also make it clear, to go back to what one of the previous speakers said, that we think the NRA ought to join us in this. What possible interest could anyone have in being against child trigger locks or being for safe gun technology that would permit handguns to be fired only by the adults who own them? There is a need, as they say, for more training of people, for more sensible education to make sure that responsible conduct is the rule for people who do lawfully own these guns. And it's time for us to get together.

There's just one other thing I would like to say. The Governor talked about the terrible toll of deliberate killing, handgun killing, and how the—if my math is right—the death rate is roughly 30 times in America what it was in the other countries that he mentioned. I think it's worth also mentioning that the accidental death rate of children from handguns is over 9 times that of the next 25 biggest industrial countries combined. And this is something else that's worth pointing out. We are here not just to prevent crimes; we are here to prevent accidents that also, tragically, take the lives of these children.

I hope that the United States Congress is paying attention to this event today, because every child in America deserves the protection you have given Maryland's children, and only Congress can provide that. There are very few people in Congress who represent districts any tougher, any more resistant to the argument that will be made against such legislation than some of you do who are sitting here—very few.

There are more than enough people in the Congress who represent districts who would support this kind of action by more than 2 to 1, to pass this legislation in a landslide, legisla-

tion to require child safety locks, to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, to close the gun show loophole. But for 9 months now, there has been no action. Oh, a good bill passed the Senate, as the Governor said, because the Vice President broke the tie. And a weaker bill passed the House, and we have been in conference. And the Democrats, through Congressman Conyers, have even offered a reasonable compromise. But nothing has happened.

And I'll say again, every single day Congress waits, we lose 12 children, nearly 90 people overall, to gun violence. Congress should follow Maryland's lead.

Since the passage of the Brady bill, half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers have been unable to get handguns at gun stores. Gun crime is down by more than 35 percent. The people who opposed closing the gun show loophole 6 years ago said the Brady bill would be ineffective because criminals didn't buy guns at gun stores; they only bought guns at gun shows and urban flea markets. Now they say, well, even if that's true—which it wasn't entirely true—it's just too burdensome.

But it isn't. It isn't. The modest amount of time that would be required at rural gun shows in the most isolated area where people drive the longest distances are more than worth it to save one child's life. Over 70 percent of these background checks can be done in about an hour, over 90 percent in a day. People say, “Well, why are you holding out for the other 8 or 9 percent?” Because the rejection rate of the 8 or 9 percent that can't be checked in a day is 20 times higher than the rejection rate of the 90 percent that can be checked in a day.

So I say to you, we have got to do this. Do we need more enforcement? Of course we do. We've increased enforcement, and I've asked for 500 new ATF agents and 1,000 new Federal, State, and local gun prosecutors.

You mentioned the Smith & Wesson announcement where they agreed to change the way guns are manufactured, marketed, and sold. I hope that did help you. It was a courageous thing for Smith & Wesson to do. And let me just explain the practical issue here again. An enormous number of the guns used in crimes that are bought from stores are bought from a very small percentage of the stores. That's what this is about, primarily. And I only hope

that other gun manufacturers will follow their lead instead of excoriating them. They don't deserve to be condemned; they deserve to be applauded. And others ought to step up to the plate and do the same thing.

Now, Governor, you said the NRA ought to stop attacking me. I'll tell you what, if they stop attacking this legislation, I'd be happy for them to attack me for the rest of my life. I've kind of gotten used to it. What we say about each other doesn't amount to a hill of beans. But whether all these kids here live to have their children standing on these steps some day fighting for some other issue, that's what matters. That's what matters.

So again, I say a simple thank you. Thank you, once again, for leading the Nation to a better tomorrow. And again I say, Washington should follow Maryland's lead.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:04 p.m. in the Maryland State House at the signing ceremony for Maryland's Responsible Gun Safety Act of 2000. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Parris N. Glendening, Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Secretary of State John Willis, and Attorney General Joseph Curran of Maryland; Governor Glendening's wife, Frances; and Maryland State House Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr., and Senate President Thomas V. (Mike) Miller, Jr.

Statement on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

April 11, 2000

Today I met with my national security team about the critical stakes in China's WTO accession and our decision regarding permanent normal trade relations.

The economic reasons for PNTR are clearcut. Our markets already are open to China; the agreement we reached to bring China into the WTO doesn't require that we open them further in any way. What it does is to open China's markets to our workers, our farmers, our businesses. That means more jobs, growth, and exports for Americans. China will join the WTO regardless of what we decide to do. The decision before Congress is whether the United States will receive the same trade benefits from China as will our trade competitors.

The national security implications are even more far-reaching. Bringing China into the WTO will entwine China in the global economy, increasing its interdependence with the rest of the world. It will bring the information revolution—with the knowledge and freedom of thought that entails—to millions of people in China in ways its Government cannot possibly control. It will accelerate the dismantling of China's state-owned enterprises—a process that is getting government out of people's lives and sparking social and political change all over China. It will strengthen China's reforms and the reformers behind them.

That is reason enough to vote for PNTR. But I am also concerned about what a vote against PNTR would do. It would have extremely harmful consequences for our national security. Because the economic case for PNTR is so strong, the Chinese will see a rejection as a strategic decision by the United States to turn from cooperation to confrontation, to deal with China as an adversary. That would undercut the reform-minded leaders who signed this agreement with us and strengthen the hand of hardliners who believe cooperating with the United States is a mistake. Those are the same forces most threatened by our alliances with Japan and Korea, the same forces that want the Chinese military to sell dangerous technologies, and the same forces that would pursue confrontation with Taiwan rather than dialog.

It's no surprise that Taiwan's President-elect Chen strongly supports China's membership in the WTO and wants us to grant PNTR. He understands the importance of the stability that will come from good U.S.-China relations and China's membership in the WTO. If both Beijing and Taiwan are in the WTO, it will increase their interdependence and, therefore, the cost to Beijing of confrontation. If China is shut out, tensions in the Taiwan Strait will likely rise. Our ability to ease them will diminish.

We will spare no effort in the coming days and weeks to make sure that the Congress and the American people understand what the stakes are. And I am confident that when the debate

is over and the votes are cast, the Congress will do what is right—both for our prosperity and our security.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

April 11, 2000

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, why did you call Mr. Barak so urgently to come to Washington? What was the urgency in the matter?

President Clinton. Well, we wanted to talk to each other. It was as much his idea as mine. I think that he wants to continue to energize the peace process, move forward with the Palestinians and with his withdrawal from Lebanon, and I strongly support that, and we're going to talk about it.

Q. Mr. President, what is the United States going to do to prevent an outburst of violence in Lebanon when Israel pulls out in only 3 months?

President Clinton. Well, if Israel pulls out in accordance with the United Nations resolution, what justification will anyone have for violence? They've been asking for this for years—years and years and years.

Q. Justification or not, there is a warning that there could be a real violent—

Q. That doesn't stop Hezbollah from doing its—

President Clinton. We'll talk about that.

Q. Is there anything the U.S. can do for Israel to make the withdrawal serene, to make it peaceful?

President Clinton. Well, "serene" is a word not normally used in the context of the Middle East these days, but we'll do what we can to help, and we're going to talk about it.

Q. Mr. President, are things as bleak on the Syrian track as it seems to us?

President Clinton. Excuse me?

Q. Are things as bleak as they seem to us, on the Syrian track?

President Clinton. Well, I got an answer back from President Asad to several of the points that I raised when I met with him in Switzerland. And there are still differences, if that's

what—but that's no bleaker than it was before we met. And so I think what we've got to do is figure out where we go from there. But I think there's a lot of hope for more rapid movement on the Palestinian front, and that's what we're going to talk about.

Q. Is the door still open? Is the door still open on Syrian track? Is the door still open?

President Clinton. You should be asking him, but I think so. But there's got to be a willingness. So we've got to bridge some of these divides, and so we need to make progress where we can.

Q. Are you going to discuss a new proposal on the Syrian front?

President Clinton. Today we're going to discuss, I think, mostly the Palestinian track and Lebanon.

Q. Are you satisfied with the pace of Israel's withdrawal on the Palestinian track?

President Clinton. I think you should wait and see what happens in the next few weeks before we talk about that.

Q. Well, the—

President Clinton. We're going to talk about what's going to happen from here on in.

Israeli Weapon Sales to China

Q. [*Inaudible*—Israel's view of China? Can you talk about that issue, when you come back from the Prime Minister, Israel's sale of weaponry to China? Is that going to affect things?

President Clinton. We're going to talk about that. I'm concerned about it; you know I am, and we'll talk about it.

Q. [*Inaudible*—on the Palestinian track today?

Prime Minister Barak. We have a variety of ideas to discuss about how to move to give new momentum and energy to the Palestinian track

in order to live up to the timeline that we have set together with Chairman Arafat.

Q. And what are you going to tell the President about China, selling arms to China?

Prime Minister Barak. We'll discuss it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:33 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. Prime Minister Barak referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a Gun Safety Rally in Denver, Colorado April 12, 2000

The President. Thank you. Thank you so very much for making me feel welcome. And I thank you for reminding me again what this is all about. I want to thank my long-time friend Wellington Webb for his leadership in this fight and his leadership of Denver. I thank Tom Mauser for having the courage not to be broken by his loss but to give his son the legacy he deserves.

I thank John Head and Arnie Grossman for reminding us that this is not about party politics; it's about saving people's lives. And I also want to thank my longtime friend, your former Governor, Dick Lamm, who's here, and former Governor John Love, who's not here, for also reminding us this is not about party politics. I thank Attorney General Ken Salazar and Governor Bill Owens, who is also not here, but I want to thank them both for what they tried to do in the legislature and for what they're trying to do to help you pass this referendum.

I want to thank the other SAFE board members who are here on stage. And I want to acknowledge—it's already been mentioned by Arnie, but I want to tell you that I had the privilege of meeting with the SAFE students, David Winkler, Ben Gelt, and their other colleagues, in Washington. They told me today, David and Ben, that they've now been to 30 States, and they have 10,000 young people across America enlisted in this cause. So I want to thank them. I think we ought to give them a big hand. [Applause]

Finally, I will say more about this in a moment, but as you know, I'm trying to pass some legislation on this subject in Washington, and there are three people I want to acknowledge. First of all, a former Congressman from Maryland, Mike Barnes, who's the president of Hand-

gun Control, who came with me, and he's up here today. Mike, thank you for coming. Secondly, Representative Diana DeGette from Colorado, who is supporting our legislation in Washington. Thank you, Diana, for what you're doing. Thank you. Thank you. And someone who's not on the platform, I don't think, today, but who came all the way from Washington with me because he believes so strongly in this, and he wanted to express his solidarity with you. The Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Dick Gephardt from Missouri, came all the way from Washington to be here today. And I want to thank him for doing that.

Let me say that not only Denver but the whole State of Colorado is a mile high in the eyes of your fellow Americans today. You come from all backgrounds, different communities, and surely different political parties, to speak with a single voice for common sense and safety and the future of our children. I want to tell you, first, you are not alone; and second, America is listening.

All across America, people like you are speaking up: here, where you're taking the lead, working to close the gun show loophole because the legislature wouldn't do it for you, in spite of the leadership of Governor Owens and Attorney General Salazar; in Maryland, another State with a lot of hunters and sport shooters, which yesterday became the first State to require built-in safety locks for all new handguns; in California, which banned junk guns, a new generation of assault weapons, and limited handgun sales to one a month; in Massachusetts, now enforcing consumer product safety rules for guns, banning junk guns, requiring child trigger locks and other devices to prevent children from firing guns. All these steps have helped to protect

more of our children. But every child in America deserves these protections. Reducing gun violence is a national challenge.

I came here, first, to say I support what you're doing. And in spite of all the attempts to put roadblocks in your way, you must not be deterred. Your leaders told me you need 62,000 signatures to put this initiative on the ballot. The purpose of all these delaying tactics is to put off the day when you can start gathering the signatures. I want every one of you who is here today to sign up with these folks when you leave, because you ought to be able to get 62,000 signatures in 2 hours if everybody who is for this will sign up and go get the signatures.

The second thing I wanted to do is to say that you deserve a National Government that follows your lead, and Congress is the only body that can provide the kind of national approach we need to protect all the children in every State. That's why I asked—

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. That's why I asked—

[*The disturbance continued.*]

The President. Sir, this meeting is not about you and not about me. So would you please let me give the speech? [*Applause*]

I'll be glad to speak to him out there, but you came here to talk about something else.

Now, let me say to all of you, the thing—I'm very proud of the fact that you've made this a bipartisan effort. And as John said when he spoke, it is true that even in Washington not every Democrat is for this legislation, and not every Republican is against it. This is largely a matter of political organization and power among the opponents of this legislation—here, too—and a matter of culture.

One of the reasons I wanted to come here is that I grew up in a State not all that different from Colorado. I was 12 years old when I first shot a can off a fencepost with a .22. Unlike most elected officials in Washington, I've actually been to gun shows. I understand what is going on here.

But I will say this: The message you are sending the country is not that this is the only answer but that it's an important answer. The message you are sending the country is not that we shouldn't have stronger enforcement of the

laws—we should; not that we shouldn't teach firearms safety—we should; not that we shouldn't have community efforts like our national campaign against youth violence is promoting, to strengthen the role of parents and families and schools and community groups—we should. But that is not an excuse for saying that guns are the only area of our national life where there will be no prevention. That is their position, and that is wrong.

We punish reckless drivers, but we still have seatbelts in our car and child safety seats for our kids. We punish people who hijack airplanes and terrorists who blow them up, but we still—thank God—have got airport metal detectors. Every one of us, just about, at least my age, were raised by usually our mothers telling us that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Gun safety cannot be the only area of our national life where we say no to prevention. Colorado is here to say we have lost enough of our children; it's time to have prevention, too, in this important area of our national life.

When I signed the Brady bill into law in 1993, a law which had been vetoed by the previous President, the same people who are fighting you said the Brady bill would do no good because all the criminals bought their guns at gun shows and urban flea markets—[*laughter*—and out of the back of trunks from one another. And therefore, this prevention would do no good; it would just be a terrible burden for hunters and sports people.

Well, 6 years later and a few months, over half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers have been unable to get handguns; gun crime down more than 35 percent; homicide down to a 31-year low. It worked.

But no one believes this country is safe enough. I don't want any future President to have to go to Columbine, or to Springfield, Oregon, or to Jonesboro, Arkansas, or to all the other places I have been. It's tough enough to comfort the families of our service men and women who die in the line of duty. Children have no duties, except to their studies and their families. Our duty is to protect their lives and give them futures.

I know I'm talking to the converted here, but I want the evidence to get out. This gun show loophole is now a serious problem. Last year a study by the Departments of Justice and Treasury of 314 gun show investigations showed

the following: 34 percent of the sales investigated involved guns later used in serious crimes, a total of 54,000 gun crimes. This is a serious problem.

Now, should we have—I will say again—should we have a comprehensive strategy? Of course we should. Does the media have a responsibility? Do communities have a responsibility, schools, parents? Absolutely. Is teaching people gun safety an important part of this responsibility? Of course it is. When the NRA was focusing on teaching young people gun safety in my home State, I supported them in every way I could. But it is no excuse not to have prevention.

Let me tell you something. I come from a State where factories in small towns shut down on the first day of deer season every year. And when we were debating the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, I heard all this stuff, and I told them, I said, “If you miss a day, even an hour in the deer woods, I’ll be against this bill.” Of course they haven’t. That’s not what this is about. So I say to you, you have to go out and say this. Now, people say—the same people who said 6 years ago that all these criminals were getting their guns at gun shows and urban flea markets, and therefore the Brady bill wouldn’t work, now say you can’t have background checks at gun shows because it would be so burdensome.

Well, let me tell you what the burden is. More than 70 percent of these checks can be done within minutes; 95 percent can be done within a day. The 5 percent that can’t be done within a day should still be done. Why? Because they are 20 times more likely to be rejected because of a criminal background or another problem. Those are the facts. Now, I don’t know about you, but I think it’s worth a little bit of inconvenience to save a few thousand lives over the next few years.

Now, should we enforce the law? Yes, we should. Gun crime prosecutions are up by 16 percent since I’ve been President. The average person convicted is serving 2 years longer. Gun crime down, as I said, by 35 percent.

Here in Colorado, your U.S. Attorney, Tom Strickland, is working with local officials on Colorado’s Project Exile. They’re enforcing the laws more vigorously, including against those who violate the Brady bill. But I will say again, the real question is, with the children’s lives at stake, with the accidental gun rate of kids

under 15 in this country—the accidental gun rate—9 times higher than that of the next 25 biggest economies combined, how can we say prevention has no role?

You all believe this, but I want you to have these facts to argue. And I want you to understand that the country is looking very closely at Colorado. We know it’s a State that has Republicans and Democrats. We know it’s a State that has a strong culture that favors hunting and sport shooting. We know it’s a State with a broken heart over Columbine. We know it’s a State where people can put aside their partisan differences and maybe even their lifetime culture to look at the facts.

Now, other States will follow your lead. I hope and pray Congress will follow your lead, as well. But you must not get tired or frustrated. You must not even get angry. You’ve got to go talk to these people. Believe me, not every member of the National Rifle Association is dead set against you. They get this stuff in the mail; they hear this stuff over the airwaves, but they love their children, too. I wouldn’t give up on anybody.

But the main thing you have got to do is win here. So I will say again, if you haven’t signed up to be with SAFE, sign up on your way out, and find out when those petitions get circulated, and do your part.

Look how many people are here. If everybody in this room—everybody in this room—there’s about 3,000 people here, right?—if you got 20 signatures, it would be a done deal.

In the end, change is always difficult. But you must understand how important it is for your children and people all over the country. If you do this, you will give so much energy to people who have been sitting around in other States like yours, thinking it was a hopeless battle, thinking they couldn’t win. If you do this, you will give enormous impetus to our efforts in Congress to try to provide national protections.

And most important, if you do this, you will say, we’re going to treat this area of our life like every other area of our national life. America is the country that respects the rights of people. But we’ve still got our rights over 200 years later, since we started, because we also exercise our responsibility, especially for our children and their future.

I admire you. I support you. Don’t quit until you win.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Colorado Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver; Tom Mauser, political director, and John Head

and Arnold J. Grossman, co-presidents, Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic (SAFE) Colorado; former Governors Richard D. Lamm and John A. Love and current Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado; and Colorado State Attorney General Kenneth Salazar.

Remarks at MSNBC's Townhall Meeting on Guns in Denver April 12, 2000

Tom Brokaw. And to start our discussion here at the University of Denver, the President of the United States, who earlier today spoke at a rally here in Colorado organized by the families of the victims of Columbine. Mr. President, what message do you bring on gun control, not only to the citizens of Colorado but to the rest of the Nation as well, with these appearances?

The President. Well, first of all, I wanted to come to express my support for the people of Colorado who are trying to put this initiative on the ballot to close the gun show loophole. A bipartisan effort led by Governor Owens and Attorney General Salazar failed to get the legislation through the legislature, so the people are trying to put it on the ballot, and I wanted to support it.

And secondly, I wanted to highlight the fact that even though Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, California, and other States are moving to increase gun safety, we really can't do what we need to do until there is national legislation passed by the Congress to close the gun show loophole, to require child safety locks, promote safe gun technology, and stop importing the large capacity ammunition clips that make a mockery of our assault weapons ban.

Mr. Brokaw. But do you think that this issue has become so highly politicized, especially in a Presidential election year—Governor Bill Owens, for example, didn't want to appear in this hour with you; he'll be appearing later tonight on MSNBC—that it's become so politicized that it's highly unlikely that we'll achieve any consensus in this year?

The President. Actually, I think the fact that it's an election year increases the chances that we can get something done. If it weren't an election year, there would be no way, because the—in Washington at least, the influence of

the NRA is so great that even though some people are afraid of them at election time, they know the public is for commonsense prevention measures, overwhelmingly. So I think in a funny way, the fact that it's an election year might help us to pass it, especially since—you know, I'm not running for anything, so I'm just out here trying to do what I think is right.

Mr. Brokaw. It seems that one of the real hangups is this whole question of how long the waiting period should be at a gun show for a background check. The NRA and other people who are critical of your position say they would be willing to take the 24-hour waiting period. You've been holding out for 72 hours.

The President. Here's the problem—and there may be a way to split the difference—but 70 percent of these checks can be done in minutes. Over 90 percent can be done in 24 hours. The problem is that the less than 10 percent that can't be done within 24 hours, where you need 3 days, they have a rejection rate of 20 times the rejection rate of the other 90-something percent.

So their position puts them in—I think it's a totally untenable position. They're basically arguing for the group that is most likely to have criminals in it. So there's got to be a way to do the checks, clear them, let the people have their guns who clear, and still hold those that can't be cleared and—in rural areas, for example, I've actually been to very rural gun shows, because that's the kind we mostly had in my State—there's got to be a way to find that common place to deposit the gun and the check if it's over the weekend, and then do the background check, and send for the gun—to the gun owner and the check to the seller.

Mr. Brokaw. So there may be some room for compromise in the 24 versus 72 hours if

you can find, if in effect, what we would call an escrow for the gun?

The President. Sure. There are practical problems in these rural gun shows, but they don't approach the cost to society of not doing the background checks. And the problem is—again, once the background check is done, people ought to be able to get their guns. But the problem is, if you don't have the provision for 3 days for the small percentage of buyers that can't be checked in a day, then you're giving up a huge percentage of the people that have a criminal background.

Mr. Brokaw. Let's talk about the larger picture when it comes to safety checks and gun controls and the question of gun control versus gun safety. If you put all of that on the table, and then you look at what happened in Columbine High School—and we know what was in the minds of Harris and Klebold; we've heard the tapes—there are no laws in the world that would have kept them from carrying out that act.

The President. Well, you may be right. The young woman who provided one of the guns said that if she'd been subject to a background check she wouldn't have purchased the gun at the gun show. But you may be right about that. There's been a recent study showing that a lot of these terrible instances don't necessarily fit a profile, that young people nearly always give some heads-up to some peer and never do it to their own families.

But one of the things we do know is, since we passed the Brady bill and increased gun enforcement at the same time, a half-million people who were felons, fugitives, and stalkers haven't gotten their handguns. Gun crime is down 35 percent since I took office, and we've got the lowest homicide rate in 31 years. So we know we can do better.

You can't—there is no society that can prevent every tragedy, every outrage. But you do—if you have sensible prevention measures, you save more lives. That's what this is about. It's not being perfect; it's about not making the perfect the enemy of the good.

Mr. Brokaw. You have a big deal on the table at Congress. You want to get additional money for enforcement of gun laws—1,100 new prosecutors, 500 new ATF agents, \$10 million for smart gun research. This comes at the end of your 8 years in office, and the NRA has been

after you for a long time about enforcing the gun laws that are already on the books.

The President. Well, they say that, but they haven't endorsed this measure yet. And look at the facts. Since I've been President, we've increased Federal prosecutions by 16 percent; we've started operations like the one in Richmond and here in Colorado; we have increased by 2 years the average sentence of a violator of a gun law. We've increased enforcement. That is not an argument not to have prevention.

My argument with the NRA is not on enforcement. My argument is that guns can't be the only area of our national life where we don't have a balanced approach. I agree with them; we should do more to educate young people about gun safety. I agree that the media and parents and communities and schools have a responsibility.

But this shouldn't be the only area of our national life where we don't have sensible prevention measures. We would never think of applying this principle to airport metal detectors, to taking all of the seatbelts out of cars or—that's what my problem is. Prevention ought to be a part of our strategy. And the evidence of the Brady bill is, it works, it drives down crime, and it saves lives. And we ought to close the loophole. That's what I believe.

Mr. Brokaw. One of the interested observers we have here is Gerry Whitman, who is the police chief, the acting police chief of the city of Denver. Mr. Whitman, one of the claims that the NRA makes is that around the country, law enforcement officers are unhappy with the Federal Government for not doing enough to enforce the Federal gun laws. Is that your judgment?

[*Gerry Whitman said that Federal partnership in law enforcement should go further and stressed the need for consistency in the laws, in order to protect the officers on the street.*]

Mr. Brokaw. What happens when you have a gun show here in the Denver area? In a number of other communities, they say the crime rate goes up, crimes committed with guns. Has that happened in Denver?

Mr. Whitman. Well, in 1989, the city council and city government put into law an assault weapons ban in the city, so we don't have gun shows in the city itself. I haven't noticed any increase as a result of the gun shows outside

the city limits with the crime rate in the city of Denver.

Mr. Brokaw. And we also have in the audience Doug Dean, who is the majority leader in the Colorado State House of Representatives.

You were among those who defeated your own Governor's gun control bill that he put before the House. Why did you do that?

[*State Representative Dean responded that the legislation would not have had any effect on the Columbine tragedy since Robyn Anderson, who purchased the guns for Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, would have passed the background check supported by the President.*]

The President. I agree with that. She would have passed the background check. What she said was, if she'd been subject to one, she probably wouldn't have bought the gun. But let me point out—again I say, you can't solve—you can't refuse to vote for a law because it's not perfect, it won't solve every problem.

Last year we had a study done by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury, involving over 300 sellers at gun shows—and without background checks. Thirty-four percent of them resulted in sales of guns that were later used in serious crimes, a total of 50,000-plus gun crimes committed. Now, if there had been background checks, those would not have occurred.

So to say, well, it wouldn't have solved every problem, therefore we won't do it—I don't think that's a good answer.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. Dean—

The President. If the Brady bill works, if you believe in the Brady bill, if you accept the fact that it's kept a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns, then it would by definition work to have the same background check at the gun shows.

And let me just say one other thing. Everybody says, enforce the law, enforce the law, enforce the law. The more we prosecute violations of the Brady bill, the more we enforce the law, the more illegal people will turn to the gun shows to buy their guns, unless we close the loophole.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. Dean, a question that I have for you. Eighty percent of the Coloradans, in a survey about gun laws in this State, said they really did want to crack down on gun shows; they wanted to crack down on sales to 18-year-olds. All of this is possible—and they wanted

background checks for gun shows. So, are you representing the people of Colorado when you defeat those very measures?

[*State Representative Dean stated that the vast majority of people in his district did not support the measures.*]

Mr. Brokaw. But let me just ask you, so I understand perfectly well your position personally. You think that there can be unlicensed dealers at gun shows, and that background checks should not be required at gun shows, and that guns can be sold to 18-year-olds at gun shows. You're in favor of all three of those points?

[*Representative Dean responded that 18-year-olds were adults who could serve in the military and be sent to war. He said he was concerned that regulation of every private firearm transaction would create a Government registry of firearm owners. The program then paused for a commercial break.*]

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, we're back, and these are just some of the Federal firearms regulations that we already have on the books. If you could add just one or two that you think would change the current climate in this country, what are the two priorities that you have for the end of your term?

The President. I would close the gun show loophole, because the Brady bill has worked superbly. It has given us a 35 percent drop in gun crimes and a 31-year low in the homicide rate and kept a half-million people—felons, fugitives, stalkers—from getting handguns. That's the first thing I'd do. And then the second thing I would do is to require safety provisions for children.

I also believe that the loophole in the assault weapons ban should be closed; we banned assault weapons and then we still allow the import of these large capacity ammunition clips. But I think that child safety and doing more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals through preventive measures that haven't delayed by a day or an hour a hunter going to the deer woods, anybody going to a sport shooting contest, any law-abiding person buying a handgun for safety at home—hasn't done any of that—I think it is a tiny burden to pay to give lots of people their lives back. So that's what I'd do.

Mr. Brokaw. But do we have to get beyond the laws and get to a dialog as well about the place of violence in our culture?

The President. No, no, that should all be a part of it. I mean, I think the media has a responsibility here. I'll say again, communities, schools, and families have heavy responsibilities. I think when we've got a lot of guns out there, we should do more to teach young people how to use them safely. But you can't say that guns are the only area in our life, because of the second amendment, where we're not going to do prevention.

You know, the same people that are arguing now, we can't close the gun show loophole, said to me 6 years ago when I signed the Brady bill that it wouldn't do any good, it would just burden people, because all the criminals bought their guns at gun shows, they didn't buy their guns at gun stores. Turned out that wasn't right. Prevention makes sense in every area of our national life. That's my message and my belief.

Mr. Brokaw. One of the places in America where this dialog has been going on with a very, very heavy price, of course, is Columbine, Colorado. And Lance Kirklin is with us today. He was one of the students who was shot in Columbine. And Lance and his family also still like to use guns.

Lance, what did you learn about guns in the last year, being a victim of a gunshot?

Lance Kirklin. Well, I mean, it's not guns that kill people; it's people who kill people. You don't see guns jump off tables and start shooting people. It's people that have it in their possession, and it's their mind that does the crime.

Mr. Brokaw. What would you change, however, in the teenage culture, if you will, or in the culture of young people, not just in Columbine but across the country, in terms of their attitudes about violence and the use of guns?

Mr. Kirklin. I don't know.

Mr. Brokaw. Do you think that they are open to change? Do you think that they learn—I mean, you go out hunting with your father, for example, right? You shoot guns from him, and you've learned from him. But how many other young people only know about guns from video games or from some violent movie and don't really know what the impact is?

Mr. Kirklin. I think a lot of people my age know about guns from movies and video games and stuff, but they also know the other side

of it. You know, they are dangerous, and they also can be used for hunting and good, I guess.

Mr. Brokaw. Would you be uncomfortable if the gun show loophole were closed?

Mr. Kirklin. Kind of.

Mr. Brokaw. You would be uncomfortable?

Mr. Kirklin. Yes.

Mr. Brokaw. Let's ask Dave Thomas, who came to be known nationally as well, who is the district attorney for the county in which Littleton resides, about how his attitudes have changed toward guns in the last year, or having to deal with the tragedy there?

[*Mr. Thomas stated that he agreed with Lance Kirklin, but that people's access to guns increased the lethality of the acts that they might commit. He agreed that the Brady bill worked better than anticipated and advocated closing the loophole, as well as providing resources for investigations and prosecuting violators aggressively.*]

Mr. Brokaw. We also have—in that very area is Diana Holland, who is the co-chair of the Littleton Community Task Force. The task force is officially neutral on the whole question of gun control. But I wonder, Ms. Holland, has your work, in effect, been impeded some by the emotional divisions of gun control debates bring to the table?

[*Ms. Holland said that task force members left their political and personal agendas out of their work. The program then paused for a commercial break.*]

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, I know it's no surprise to you that you have been a very large target for the National Rifle Association and its spokespeople in political arenas and on television. We're going to share a couple of the ads that they've been running so that you can respond to them and so that we can talk to some people here who are supporters of the NRA.

Let's see one of those ads.

[*A videotape was shown.*]

Mr. Brokaw. Pretty harsh language, Mr. President.

The President. Well, actually, Mr. Heston is right, I guess. If you say something is wrong unintentionally, it's a mistake; and when you know it's wrong, it's a lie. That's what he said.

Now, when that child—when the one child killed the other child, I said, A, there ought to be child safety locks. And B, another provision of my bill, which I couldn't get through either House, was to hold people like the people in that crackhouse criminally responsible when they allow children like that little boy to have access to guns. That was a provision of my law. That was my position. And actually, I believe they supported me. So they knew I was for that, because they supported it. But he didn't say that on the airwaves.

Now, I'm not going to call him a name, like he did. I still like his movies, actually. [*Laughter*] But this is not about me and him. You have to understand—the NRA, if they can make a demon out of me, then they can raise more money. If they can terrify people who live in a district like the house majority leader there, where there really is a cultural divide here—because they don't have many people in his district who would ever violate the gun laws, and they have a lot of people who own guns, they use them safely, they taught their kids to use them safely, and they can't imagine the kind of culture that a lot of these kids live in, these urban cultures. So they don't understand what the deal is, and they're afraid it's a slippery slope.

So that's what this is about. They just keep everybody all agitated, and they raise a lot of money, and maybe they beat the bill. But again I say, let's calm down here. Since I've been President, gun crime is down 35 percent, nobody's missed a day in the deer woods, nobody's been unable to go to a sport shooting contest, and the prevention has worked. And what we need is more prevention that doesn't unfairly burden the right of hunters and sports people and people who want guns for their own safety. Those are the facts.

The gun death rate in America is still higher than any other country in the world. And I want to say this: The accidental gun death rate of children under 15 is 9 times higher here than in the next 25 largest countries combined. We could use a little more prevention. That's what this is about. That's all it's about—not about a fight with the NRA—it's about a fight to save lives.

Mr. Brokaw. We had hoped in our next hour, which we'll play tonight, to have Wayne LaPierre, who is a very conspicuous officer of the NRA, appear with us. And he had accepted,

but then cited a scheduling conflict, so he won't be with us later tonight. But we do have in the audience, I know, some people who are not only enrolled members of the NRA but are outspoken proponents of the NRA's position on a lot of things.

Bob Ford is the president of Rocky Mountain Arms, Inc. He is a gun dealer, and he joins us now. Mr. Ford, right here. Mr. Ford, Wayne LaPierre has said two rather provocative things about the President, in addition to the Charlton Heston commercial that we just saw. He said the President "has blood on his hands" as a result of what happened to the coach that was tragically shot in the hate crime shooting in Northwestern. And he said that this President wants a "certain level of violence in America to further his political agenda." Do you agree with that?

[*Bob Ford disagreed and said there was too much rhetoric on both sides. He emphasized that felons must get the message that if you use a gun, you will go to prison.*]

Mr. Brokaw. And what about gun shows in places like Colorado and across the American West and across the American South, for that matter, where they're so popular? You're a regular gun dealer and represent gun dealers. Do gun shows unfairly compete with people who go out and set up their shop in a brick-and-mortar operation?

[*Mr. Ford stated that individuals selling private or estate gun collections were engaged in business transactions and thus should have to apply for a license to sell firearms or get out of business, and the ATF should enforce that position.*]

The President. I agree with that.

Mr. Brokaw. But this administration raised the standards for licensing. And here in Colorado, just this week, after I arrived, many Colorado Republican legislators were saying they've made it too hard to get a license. They only raised the price from \$10 to about \$30 and put some additional standards in there. Wasn't that the appropriate thing to do, or not?

[*Mr. Ford said some dealers who used to have Federal firearm licenses were liquidating their personal inventory, but ATF was requiring them to get a license and perform background checks. He emphasized that no dealer in the country objected to performing background checks.*]

Mr. Brokaw. Were you surprised when the Colorado Legislature defeated the attempts to tighten the laws governing gun shows?

Mr. Ford. No, I was not. Our members of our Colorado Legislature are responsive to their constituents.

Mr. Brokaw. Thank you very much.

Matt Bai is a colleague from Newsweek magazine, and he has been covering extensively this whole question of the gun culture in America, the gun laws, and the political debate that has heated up across America. Matt?

Matt Bai. Well, Mr. President, the NRA, in a letter to gun dealers last week, called you “the most antigun President in history.” That may or may not bother you, but along the same lines of what we’ve been watching, there are a lot of gun owners and gun dealers who believe that you won’t stop until you get an outright ban on handguns, and that whatever you get, you’re going to want more. I’d like to know what specific provision, of the ones you’ve outlined today, it would take for you to go away and leave the gun companies and the gun dealers alone.

The President. Well, first of all, I have said specifically I would not support a ban on handguns. You may know that a major newspaper in Washington, DC, the Washington Post, has actually advocated that. And so we were all asked about it, and I said, no, I wouldn’t support that.

I would go further than my proposals here. I also think that it’s all right to register these sales the same way we register cars, because what I’m trying to do is improve the ability of law enforcement to trace weapons when they’re used in a crime. And none of this in any way interferes with the second amendment. You know, historically there were a lot of people who had to have a license to carry a concealed weapon. No one ever thought that interfered with the second amendment.

So my basic view is, I am for anything that will increase our capacity to prevent guns from going into the wrong hands. But I’m not for preventing law-abiding people from having a gun that they have the right to have, to hunt, to sport shoot, or, if they choose, to protect themselves in their own homes.

I do think, in addition to that, we should invest a lot more in this smart gun technology. We will be able—within 3 years, we will have guns on the market that can only be fired by

their lawful owners. I think we ought to have internal as well as external child trigger locks. I believe that. That’s what I—and I believe when we do that, you will see a much safer country. I think that if you look at the evidence here, there have been no assaults on hunting; there’s been no assaults on sport shooting. But we do have a safer country than we did because I’ve taken on these fights.

And so I think that the fears are unfounded. We should take—instead of getting into big verbal battles, we ought to look at the specifics of every proposal and debate it and decide whether it’s right or wrong.

Mr. Brokaw. As you know, many people believe that if you register every handgun, that’s going to be a national registry, and the Government someday is going to show up at your door and say, give me your guns.

The President. Well, I don’t agree with that. But that wasn’t my proposal. I think first of all, that’s impractical, because there are already over 200 million guns out there. And now, that just scares a lot of people. The truth is that the vast majority of them are in the hands of collectors and law-abiding hunters and sports people. There are too many that are kind of floating around on the streets and in the criminal culture, but the answer to that, I think, is aggressive local buyback programs, which we’ve tried to support.

But if you registered new gun sales, then they could be—the guns could more easily be traced in the event of a crime. That’s all I’m interested in. I would oppose any effort to say that people couldn’t have firearms in this country. You know, maybe others disagree, I suppose, but it’s part of the culture I grew up in, and I’m still a part of it. But I also think that the people—most of the folks I grew up with, if I have a chance to talk to them, and they understand we’re trying to save kids’ lives and trying to prevent crimes from happening in the first place, and it doesn’t burden their ability to do what they want to do lawfully with their guns, will support these specific measures. That’s the direction I think this debate ought to take.

Mr. Brokaw. You’ve tried to make it a local State option as well. Would that be the answer, that gun owners would be more inclined to trust their State governments than the Federal Government? The Federal Government can provide the appropriate incentives for the States to install those kinds of laws?

The President. Well, they probably would. But to me, how it's done is not as important as whether we have done everything we possibly can.

Look, let me just say this. When I started in '93 as President, we had a rising crime rate. Most people didn't think you could drive it down. Now, the Congress not only passed the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill, they put 100,000 police on the streets. They put more resources into law enforcement. They did more to help local agencies, as well as to strengthen our Federal efforts. And crime is at about a 25-year low, the murder rate at a 31-year low. But I won't be satisfied until America's the safest big country in the world.

And if I were running the NRA, I would love—I'd have a whole different take on this. I would be for all this prevention business, because I would want to prove that a country where lots of people hunt, sport shoot, and have guns for their home protection could also be the safest country in the world. So I would have a totally different take on this. I might not raise as much money through the mail, but I think it would be better.

Mr. Brokaw. Let me just be absolutely clear about this. You're going to be out of work in less than a year. Does that mean that you're thinking about running for the NRA presidency? [Laughter]

The President. I think—you know, somehow I think I'd have a better chance of getting elected to the school board at home than I would to the NRA presidency. [Laughter] But I'm just trying to say—again I will say, let's go back to what the gun dealer there said. We don't need to turn this into personal animosity. We need to debate every single one of these issues, bring out all this stuff, and figure out how we can make America the safest big country in the world. That's really what we all want, isn't it? Wouldn't you like it if your country was the safest big country in the world? I mean, that's what we all want.

Mr. Brokaw. I think we have a question from the audience for you, Mr. President.

Q. I'm a junior here at the University of Denver. I have a question I'd like to direct to the President. Sir, do you believe the second amendment is absolute or something that can be limited by gun control legislation?

The President. Well, there is no such thing as an absolute, if you mean it can never be

restricted. The first amendment, which most people believe is the most important one, let's say freedom of speech—the Supreme Court has said there's a limit on the freedom of speech. Pornography is not protected; you can't shout "fire" in a crowded theater when there's no fire. Freedom of religion—the courts have upheld that people who want to join the United States military, for example, may not be able to have beards, even if their religion says they're supposed to have one.

So all of these amendments have to be interpreted over time in terms of the real circumstances. If you look at the history of the second amendment and what led to its adoption, there is—it's my view—nothing in there which prevents reasonable measures designed to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. To say that criminals have an absolute right to get guns and we're just going to throw the book at them if we catch them, but we can't prevent them from committing a crime in the first place, I think is wrong.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, we have in the audience a group of women who are interested on both sides of this issue, and one of them is Robin Ball, who is a spokeswoman for the Sisters of the Second Amendment. Is Robin here? I was misinformed. [Laughter]

Tom Mauser is here, though, from Columbine. He lost his son at Columbine, and he appeared, obviously, at the State of the Union speech, and you came out here to speak to this group today. Mr. Mauser, have you been surprised, in the almost year now since the tragedy at Columbine and the loss of your son, by the divisions in the Colorado community generally, and specifically in Littleton, about how to resolve these issues of violence in America and especially what we do about guns?

Tom Mauser. No, I haven't been that surprised, because I think Littleton is no different than any other community. There are differences of opinion of how we deal with this terrible epidemic of gun violence.

Mr. Brokaw. And where do you think it will lead to in Colorado, given how the Colorado Legislature voted this time?

Mr. Mauser. Well, clearly, where it's leading to right now is that we're taking—my organization, SAFE Colorado, is taking a ballot initiative to the people to close the gun show loophole. And I think, clearly, the polls show that people see that it's reasonable common sense.

Mr. Brokaw. We also have in the audience Richard Gephardt, who represents your party in the House of Representatives. There is a letter, Mr. Gephardt, that we got a copy of just today. It may come as some surprise to you. It's signed by—Henry Hyde is the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and John Conyers, who is the ranking Democrat on that committee, and they're sending it to Orrin Hatch, saying they want to request a juvenile conference meeting as soon as possible, because they think that they have agreed on some terms of where they can get to in closing these loopholes. For example, on gun shows, John Conyers is signing off on a 24-hour check. Does that have any chance of passing?

Representative Richard A. Gephardt. Well, I hope that that can happen. We've been trying to, on a bipartisan basis, get this conference to meet and get them to bring out something that we can get a vote on in the House and the Senate. I'm very optimistic that we can get this done. And as the President has said, we all have our eye on safety, and this bill would help.

Mr. Brokaw. Twenty-four-hour checks would be okay with you?

Representative Gephardt. If it can be done feasibly, if we think that we can catch the people. As the President said, even under the 72-hour rule, 90 percent of the people passed the check; we're only inconveniencing about 10 percent, and a large portion of them are the people that we're trying to stop from getting guns.

So if we can work it out to get a 24-hour check, clear everybody or not clear everybody in that period of time, that would be great.

Mr. Brokaw. Would you sign that bill?

The President. Well, I want to see the details, but I almost certainly would sign anything that had the support of both Mr. Conyers and Mr. Hyde and, therefore, got a majority of both their caucuses.

You know, we may never get a perfect bill, and I don't know what they mean by 24 hours, because John Conyers had offered Henry Hyde 24 hours before, but he wanted some provision for this group—small, small group for whom there is a very large rejection rate. So I don't know where they settled; I want to see the details. But if we could get a big, bipartisan bill to come out of the House that would save people's lives, even if I thought it weren't perfect, of course, I would sign it.

Mr. Brokaw. Would it be worth trying a conditional bill—we'll try the 24-hour check for 2 years with a time limit on it, and if it's not working, we'll come back to it again, just so that we get some effort to begin to close the door on gun shows?

The President. I think we ought to do the very best we can on that. The one thing I did not want to do that was suggested by some is that we just go for the child trigger locks and leave the gun show loophole alone altogether, just because it's almost impossible to come back. So if we can make some progress, obviously I'm open to it. But I think that even—without regard to party, what is uncomfortable is, everybody would like—because a lot of these gun show are held on the weekend, and people are passing on. And as a gun dealer, a gentleman pointed out, a lot of these people are just getting rid of their own personal stock.

And I've been to gun shows way out in the country where you're 10 miles, 15 miles from the nearest town, and they're passing through. So everybody would like to minimize the inconvenience. The real issue is, what do we do about this very small percentage of people that don't clear within a day and do have a 20 times higher rejection rate?

But I can't believe we can't find a fix for that so we can let everybody else go in a day. Look, the ones that clear in 30 seconds, I'm for letting them go in 30 seconds. I don't want—the Government should never be in a position of imposing a burden for which there is no benefit. I can't believe that we can't work this out, and I'm encouraged by this letter.

Mr. Brokaw. Speaking of that, Smith & Wesson recently came to you and volunteered to put in place a number of guidelines that rankled other gun manufacturers in this country: not only gun locks but they're not going to allow their guns to be sold at gun shows; they're not going to allow multiple handgun sales in the course of a fixed period of time. The NRA has already pointed out that that's a foreign company, and it may be up for sale. Are you going to put the pressure on other gun manufacturers to follow the Smith & Wesson model, or are you going to leave it to them to do what they want to?

The President. Well, first of all, I think they did a good thing. Second, let me tell you exactly what they did, because I think it's important.

And you might want to go back to some of the people in the audience.

What they said was, they would not allow their guns to be sold at gun shows unless all the people selling at the gun show did a background check. Then, they said they would require trigger locks, both internal and external, and within 3 years would have smart gun technology. And they said that they would not continue to distribute their guns through dealers that had a bad record.

Another thing, a lot of these gun dealers get an unfairly bad name. An extraordinary percentage of the guns sold to criminals by gun dealers are sold by a tiny percentage of the dealers. Most of the dealers are perfectly law-abiding and very vigilant. So Smith & Wesson said, "Hey, I want to get in and support this process." And what I'm going to do is encourage other manufacturers to do the same, and I think you're going to see a lot of city and State governments that buy a lot of guns and encourage other manufacturers to do the same.

Now, there is some evidence that a lot of the other manufacturers are trying to gang up on Smith & Wesson, which I think is a mistake. Again, what did they do that was wrong? All they did was to promote prevention. And they're in the business of selling guns. They're obviously not trying to ban guns; they're making money selling guns.

Mr. Brokaw. There's somebody in the audience who has some pretty strong feelings about that. Paul Paradis is a gun dealer here in the State of Colorado. You've decided, Mr. Paradis, not to sell the Smith & Wesson weapons?

[*Paul Paradis said that his store no longer sold Smith & Wesson guns and noted that the agreement involved more ATF inspections.*]

Mr. Brokaw. Why do you think that selling Smith & Wesson weapons would bring more ATF inspections?

Mr. Paradis. It's one of the things that dealers have to do. There's a number of other things. I carry over 400, 500 guns in my store.

Mr. Brokaw. Right.

Mr. Paradis. One of the things that they were requiring us to do is remove every gun from the shelf and lock it up in a safe every night. Well, you take two employees, me and my wife, usually, to spend a couple of hours unpacking and putting guns up and next morning taking them out; that's a lot of money lost.

You know, the States, a short time ago, were very upset about Federal unfunded mandates. Now, it's businesses, especially small businesses like mine, that are receiving Federal unfunded mandates.

Mr. Brokaw. Do you have an answer to that, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I think what Smith & Wesson agreed to do, though—and they kind of initiated a lot of this—was to try to make sure that if a gun store was broken into at night, that it would be harder to steal the guns, and if you left them all out in full view, that it would be. But I can see—it's obviously some burden on them. It's an extra lot of trouble for 2 people to store 400 guns. But again you have to ask yourself, on balance, is this a good requirement if these stores might be broken into?

Mr. Brokaw. I think a lot of people in America probably don't realize that most gun manufacturers are now shipping their guns with trigger locks.

The President. They are. They've been great.

Mr. Brokaw. Are they getting enough credit?

The President. No. But I've tried to give them credit. You know, we've had at least two events at the White House to compliment and thank the manufacturers who are putting trigger locks on their guns when they ship them now, the new guns. And there are, I think, even—there are some people I think out here that are even providing trigger locks to people that can be applied to guns that they already have. And all this is good. We should do more of it.

Mr. Brokaw. We have one quick question. I'm sorry, it's going to have to be very quick.

Q. I am a sophomore here at DU. How many laws were broken last April 20th at Columbine, and why do you think one more will make a difference?

Mr. Brokaw. I think there were 18 broken, if I can help you with that, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] Is that right?

The President. Well, as I said—let me go back to Columbine. If you look at the troubled history of those young men, no one can be sure that anybody could have done anything in law enforcement to stop it. And you all know the facts better than I do. You must have all asked yourself a thousand questions about whether anybody, including any of their classmates, should have known, could have known, could have done something. But the main thing is, you shouldn't

evaluate these proposals solely in terms of Columbine. What you should say is, would it make a difference?

Why do I think one more will make a difference? Because if you close the gun show loophole, then all gun sales will be subject to the same background checks the Brady bill imposes on gun dealers today, which has resulted in a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers not getting handguns. And the gun crime rate today is 35 percent lower than it was 7 years ago. That's my argument.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Brokaw. On behalf of NBC News and MSNBC, I certainly appreciate this attentive and very articulate audience, and especially the President of the United States to take time out of his busy schedule to address this issue that, clearly, so deeply divides so many Americans. But I hope that with this dialog here today and many others like this in the course of the coming months in Colorado and across the country, we can take that one step toward some common ground.

This, after all, is a debate about much more than just gun safety, gun laws; it's about who we are and what we want our children to think of us in the future. Thank you all very much for joining us here today.

[Following a commercial break, Mr. Brokaw invited the President to make further remarks.]

The President. I think this country would make better decisions across the whole range of issues if we could all find a way to give each other forums like this, because I have seen repeatedly how, on this gun issue, each side—once one side strikes a personal blow, then the other one wants to strike a personal blow back. And before you know it, we're all into demonizing each other, which is—it may make for good television—no offense—[laughter]—but it makes for bad decisions.

We're not talking about—there's no need in us demonizing each other. And I think we have to recognize that most of the advocates of strong gun control and most of the advocates—opponents of it really come out of different cultures and have different experiences which lead them to the positions they hold. And what we've got to do—I've spent a lot of time, since I came out of—basically out of the hunting and sport shooting culture, I've spent a lot of time explaining to the people on my side of this why the people on the other side think the way they do and argue the way they do and feel the way they do. And I think it's important that we try to minimize calling each other names, and try to hear what each other is saying. And I thought the gentleman who is the gun dealer today made some particularly cogent points. And I appreciate what you said.

And I also want to say, not every problem has an easy answer. I don't have an answer to what the gentleman up there said, that he quit using Smith & Wesson guns because he and his wife didn't want to spend 2 hours every night that they didn't have running their small business to load up 400, 500 guns. There's not an easy answer to every one of these things.

But we'll get through this, and we can make this the safest big country in the world if we keep listening to each other and dealing with each other respectfully, the way all of you have today. And I just want to thank you. And I want to thank all the officials who came here today for the role they played in this.

Thank you.

NOTE: The townhall meeting began at 1 p.m. at the University of Denver. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Bill F. Owens and State Attorney General Kenneth Salazar of Colorado; and Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the America's Private Investment Companies Initiative

April 12, 2000

Last fall in Chicago, Speaker Hastert and I agreed to work together on a bipartisan legisla-

tive initiative to bring new private investment to America's economically disadvantaged

communities. Today I am pleased to report that we have made some progress on that pledge. Passage of the APIC's initiative by the House Banking and Financial Services Committee represents the first crucial step in this bipartisan effort. America's Private Investment Companies (APIC's) will spur as much as \$1.5 billion in new private investment in new markets across America. They represent a smart, innovative way

to help ensure that all communities share in America's economic prosperity.

I would like to thank Representatives LaFalce, Leach, Lazio, Kanjorski, and Baker for their leadership in moving this legislation forward. I look forward to continue working with Congress on comprehensive legislation to help renew America's communities and tap into the full potential of our new markets this year.

Statement on Organ Donation Legislation

April 12, 2000

I am pleased by Senator Frist and Senator Kennedy's announcement that they have reached a compromise on legislation that moves our Nation forward to promote greater equity and effectiveness in the allocation of our Nation's organ supply. This compromise takes a

first step towards ensuring that those Americans most in need of receiving these life-saving resources will be able to better access them. At the same time, we must redouble our efforts to encourage voluntary donation by all Americans.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspaper Editors

April 13, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, Chris. And thank you for asking me again—I think. [Laughter] I want to say I am delighted to be here. And I'm glad you said it was the sixth time. I knew I had been here more than half the time, but we were talking on the way in about how when you live a busy life, how memory fades. And I've enjoyed these six occasions, or at least the previous five, and I think I'll enjoy this one.

I was asking myself on the way over here, why am I doing this? I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] And I read the Vice President's speech to you and the jokes that he made, the joke he made about Chris and the Orange County Register. I was so delighted to carry Orange County, I didn't care whether the newspaper was for us or not. [Laughter] And surprised.

But I am delighted to be here. And I want to talk primarily today about the present debate over the budget and tax proposals on Capitol Hill. But I would like to say one thing very

briefly at the outset about the census and to ask for your help.

Because the census is, at its core, information about who we are as a democracy, I would imagine everyone in this room is particularly interested in it. The information especially from the long form helps hometowns do everything from design mass transit systems to provide 911 emergency services. The census helps us to calculate cost-of-living increases for Social Security, military retirement, veterans' pensions. It serves as a foundation for a variety of economic surveys, including the monthly jobs reports, and it's important in the calculation of the Consumer Price Index.

So far, about three of five census forms have been returned. That means about 40 percent have not. We want everyone to count, and we hope that you will help us to reach them. So I would just say, anything you can do to help encourage the people who read your papers to fill out their census forms, every one of them, would be very much appreciated.

More than 35 years ago, President Johnson spoke before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, at a time superficially not so unlike this time. Unemployment was low; inflation was low; growth was high. The economy was humming in the middle of what was then the longest—to prove to be the longest economic expansion in our history. It lasted from 1961 to 1969.

President Johnson spoke of our obligation to look beyond the moment, to think of America as what he called “a continuing community,” to see how decisions affect not only today’s citizens but their children and their children’s children, “to build for tomorrow,” he said, “in the immediacy of today.” I think that’s a good way of capturing what it is I believe we should be doing today: building for tomorrow in the immediacy of today.

It was very different 7 years and 3 months ago when I came to office. The economy was in trouble; the society was divided; the politics appeared to be paralyzed here. I had a vision of 21st century America and a roadmap I thought would help get us there. I saw an America where the American dream of opportunity was alive for every person responsible enough to work for it; an America strong, of strong communities with safe streets, good schools, a clean environment; and a national community, which not only respected but celebrated our diversity and found even greater hope in our common humanity. And I saw an America still leading the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity.

We had a strategy to achieve that vision, one rooted in opportunity, responsibility, and community. The roadmap included economic reforms, education reforms, welfare reforms, health care reforms, reforms in criminal justice, reforms in environmental policy; greater efforts to strengthen the combined roles of work and family in the modern world; efforts to support our American community through community service; and initiatives in foreign policy against wars rooted in racial and ethnic conflicts, against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and for peace processes all across the world; efforts to build new partnerships in Asia and Latin America, to advance the cause of world health, and to relieve the debts of the poorest countries in the world.

We also had an idea to reform the role of the Federal Government, to make it smaller but

more empowering and more aggressive in creating the conditions and the tools within which people could make the most of their own lives.

Strengthening the economy, of course, was key to realizing our vision. Doing that made all the rest of this possible. Our strategy was quite simple: We wanted to pursue a course of fiscal discipline, the greatest possible investment in education and technology, science, and other things that would advance our objectives, and to expand trade in American products and services around the world.

Now, we are in the midst of the longest, strongest economic expansion in history, with 21 million new jobs, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record, the highest homeownership in history. We also have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Gun crime is down 35 percent since I took office. We have cleaner air, cleaner water, fewer toxic waste dumps, greater land preservation in the lower 48 States than in any other period, except the Presidencies of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. Twenty-one million people have received the benefits of the family and medical leave law; 150,000 young Americans have earned money for college by serving in AmeriCorps; 2 million children, with 2 million more on the way, have been given health insurance under the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Ninety percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in our history. In our schools, test scores are up; college-going is up. And America has been a source of support for peace and freedom in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Balkans. We have done it with the smallest Federal Government in 40 years.

In the course of all this, the nature of the economic debate has changed radically. If I had come here the first time I spoke with you and said, “Give me a few years and we will eliminate the deficit, run three surpluses in a row for the first time in half a century, double our investment in education, and we’ll have tax relief for middle class and lower income working people, including the earned-income tax credit, the HOPE scholarship tax cut, the child tax credit, and we’ll actually lower the tax burden on average American families”—and according to the

Treasury Department, income taxes for a typical family of four are the lowest percentage of income they have been since 1965. If I had said that, and I had said, “Now, give me a few years and the main question we will be debating is, what are we going to do with our surplus?” you would have been forced to write editorials complaining that the new President was slightly deranged, but he seemed like a pretty nice fellow. [Laughter]

Now, nonetheless, that is now the subject of debate in Washington: What do we do with the surplus? The question really, I think, is a larger one: What do we make of this moment? Do we believe, as President Johnson believed when he came here in the early sixties, that we should plan for tomorrow in the immediacy of today? To me, the answer to that question is clear. We should be looking at our long-term challenges and opportunities, the ones I outlined in the last State of the Union Address.

The challenge of the aging of America—the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. There will be only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security at present rates of Americans maturing and immigration and retirement. We can extend the life of Social Security beyond the expectancy of the baby boom generation, and we can extend the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit so that baby boomers, when they retire, are not a burden to our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren.

We have the challenge of expanding opportunity for all the children of America, the most racially and ethnically and religiously and linguistically diverse group of children ever in our schools. We can give every child a world-class education, and now, unlike 15 years or so ago, when we started the education reform movement of the late 20th century, we actually know how to do it. And we know that all children can learn; we know what strategies work; and we have evidence, abundant evidence all across the country.

We have the challenge of securing the long-term health of America. I believe to do it, we ought to continue to pay down the national debt and make America debt-free for the first time since 1835. And I believe we have a challenge to extend economic opportunity to people and places that have not been part of this recovery even yet, which is the heart of my new markets initiative.

We have the challenge of continuing to help people balance work and family, and eliminating what is still a scourge of child poverty in the United States. We have a challenge of proving that we can meet our environmental challenges, including global warming, and still grow the economy; a challenge of making our country the safest big country in the world; a challenge of accelerating our leadership in science and technology and spreading the benefits of it not only across America but to every corner of the Earth; the challenge of continuing to lead the world toward peace and freedom and continuing to build one America here at home. Now, I think that’s what we ought to do with this magic moment of possibility.

In large measure, the decision about what to do and whether we continue on that course is what the budget debate in Congress is all about and what the election of 2000 is all about. There are those who say, “Well, even if the tax burden as a percentage of income is the lowest it’s been in 35 years for most Americans, we still ought to give some of this money back to the American people.” We can do that, but I believe the tax cuts should be responsible and targeted, to help working families raise their children, provide for long-term care for their parents, tax deductibility for college tuition, and better child care.

I think there should be incentives to wealthier Americans to solve our common problems, for example, to invest in new technologies, to help us combat global warming and promote environmental protection, and to invest in our global vaccine initiative to help eradicate AIDS, TB, and malaria from the world, and especially to invest in the poor areas of America which have not yet fully benefited from our recovery.

We can do all that, and it will actually reinforce our efforts to meet our long-term challenges. But I believe the budget now being debated in Congress and put forward by the majority takes us in the wrong direction and risks safeguarding this unique moment in our history, primarily because the tax cuts that are proposed in the aggregate would take us back to the policy that I have worked for over 7 years to reverse.

I vetoed their tax bill last year because it would have ended the era of fiscal discipline that has served our economy so well. This year Congress is working on last year’s tax bill page by page, piece by piece. In separate measures,

it has already voted to spend in the aggregate nearly half a trillion dollars, more than half the surplus. And we don't know how much is on the way because their budget, unlike the projections I try to do, only covers the next 5 years rather than 10 years.

Last year their tax cut cost about \$150 billion over 5 years, but it would have exploded to nearly \$1 trillion over 10 years. This year, from Capitol Hill to the campaign trail, we're hearing positive statements about investing in health care and prescription drug coverage and education. But after a \$1 trillion tax cut—and I believe the one they're running on this year is even bigger—there will be no room left for these investments or for saving Social Security and Medicare, unless we're prepared to go back to the bad old days of deficits.

Congress has a responsibility now to show us how all these separate proposals add up, how the choices made today will affect our ability to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Before we talk about massive tax cuts that would derail our hard-won economic prosperity, I say again, we should put first things first.

First, we should strengthen the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. These two programs represent the bedrock of our commitment to seniors and to millions of Americans with disabilities. Fiscal responsibility has been the foundation to keep these programs strong.

When I came to office, Medicare was projected to go broke last year, 1999. We have taken action to put Medicare and Social Security on a better path to the future. Just last month the Social Security trustees announced that the economy has now added 3 years to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund; it is now solvent until 2037. The Medicare trustees announced that Medicare is now solvent until 2023, 24 years beyond where it was projected to be in 1993. That's the strongest Medicare has been in 25 years.

Now, to be fair, there is a consensus in Congress that we should use all the Social Security surplus for debt reduction, and that is a good thing. But my budget goes one step further. It's an easy step, I believe, but one the congressional majority has not yet embraced. Debt reduction produces interest savings. Rather than using those savings to pay for an exploding tax cut or a spending increase, my budget locks away the interest savings from the Social Security surplus to lengthen the life of Social Security

to at least 2054. This would cover all but the most fortunate baby boomers. I'd have to live to be 108 to run out the Social Security Trust Fund.

My proposal also lengthens the life of the Medicare Trust Fund to at least 2030, by investing a significant portion of the surplus while also making Medicare more competitive and efficient. For example, we'd allow seniors to shop around for health plans that meet their needs. If they find a plan that saves money, they'd pay a lower Medicare premium. This would increase competition, give us better quality and lower costs. We would also modernize Medicare by creating a voluntary prescription drug benefit, something we plainly would provide if we were creating Medicare in the first place today.

Medicare was created at a time when it was basically designed for acute care, for hospital and doctor costs. Today, the average person who lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of 83, and the crying need is for chronic and preventive care. And today, unlike 35 years ago, pharmaceuticals can very often dramatically increase not only the length but the quality of life.

So one of my problems is that the budget pushed by the congressional majority this year would not extend the life of Social Security or Medicare by a single day. It is very important that everybody understands it. It's one thing to say you're saving the Social Security surplus and you're not spending it. That does not add a day to the life of the Trust Fund. It does help you pay down the debt, and I like that. And I'm glad we've got bipartisan, virtually, unanimous support for it. But if you really want to solve the problem of the aging of America, you have to take the interest savings that come from paying down the debt from Social Security taxes, which all of you are paying in excess of what we're paying out every month, and put it into the Trust Fund so we can take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

The second thing we ought to do, I believe, is to stay on course to eliminate all of our publicly held debt by 2013. By the end of this year alone, we will have repaid \$300 billion in our national debt. This is having a real impact.

For our economy, it's set in motion a virtuous cycle of reduced interest rates, more capital for private investment, more people investing in new businesses and new technologies. For families, debt reduction has meant more money on

average, \$2,000 less in home mortgage payments every year for the typical family, \$200 less in car payments, \$200 less in student loans, than would have been the case had we not reduced the debt. That amounts to a sizable tax cut for American families. We need a fiscally responsible budget, not one that risks economic growth and makes it impossible for us to continue to pay down the debt.

Third, we need to continue to invest in key priorities that are clearly essential to our future: education, health, law enforcement, science and technology. The budget proposed by the Republican majority has nearly a 10 percent average cut in virtually all domestic priorities. This would lead to serious cutbacks in everything from reducing class size to cleaning up toxic waste dumps to putting more police on our streets.

Furthermore, the budget is based on the assumption that the cuts will grow even deeper over time. This is very important for all Americans to understand. It is one thing to go out and propose all these programs that cost money, and quite another to say, "But we have to have a tax cut first. And somehow, I'm sure it will work out."

We tried it that way before, and it didn't work out. So if you have a trillion-dollar, or even a larger, even bigger than a trillion-dollar tax cut over a decade—plus, keep in mind, their defense spending increases proposed are even bigger than the ones I have proposed, and I proposed an increase in defense every single year I've been here, and they've never failed to do that, to fund that—then you're either going to have to drastically cut all these programs, education, health, the environment, or go back and start running deficits, or have a combination of both.

In other words, as I found out the hard way when I put together the budget in 1993, if you're going to be fiscally responsible, sooner or later arithmetic intrudes on politics. [*Laughter*] And this is very important. Far be it from me to tell you how to do your job, but I hope that arithmetic will be part of this year's campaign debate as well.

The proposal, from my point of view, defies common sense. I think the argument is over. We had a test run. We had 12 years of their proposals—do the big tax cuts first, and it will all work out—and we had 8 years of arithmetic in public policy. And I think if you compare

the results, the argument should be over. Our commitment is to fiscal discipline and to investment to move the country forward.

Still, in spite of all this hard evidence, later today the Republican majority will vote on a budget resolution that is loaded with exploding tax breaks and untenable cuts in critical investment. It will take us back to an approach that failed before and will fail again; back to ideas that didn't work before and won't work now; back to putting Medicare and Social Security on the back burner, instead of up front where they belong.

So I say again, we cannot afford to veer from the proven path onto a trail of unmet obligations, unrealistic cuts, and unnecessary giveaways. We can't squander the moment by squandering the surplus. We can't go back to the rosy scenario of the 1980's. The new scenario bases tax cuts we can't afford under the assumption that unrealistic spending cuts will be made, at the very time they're out there in the election season telling us that they want to spend more on education and health care and the environment.

But the bottom line is this: The choices Congress will make this spring are fundamentally the choices that Americans will make this fall. What are our priorities? Will we maintain our commitment to fiscal discipline? In a larger sense, what is our vision? There is room in the vision I have outlined for the best ideas from both parties. When we have determined to do it, we have worked together—in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which passed both Houses by big majorities from both parties; in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which passed both Houses by big majorities in both parties; in the fundamentally education budgets of 1998 and 1999, which passed both Houses by big majorities in both parties. We can do this, but we have to make up our mind to stay within the framework of what has served us so well for the last several years.

When I started, I quoted President Johnson, who said, "We should plan for tomorrow in the immediacy of the moment." And I told you that when he spoke those words in the early sixties, it was in the full flush of what was at that time the longest economic expansion in history.

In February, when we celebrated the longest economic expansion in history, I asked my economic team when the last longest expansion was, and they told me it was '61 to '69. And I got

to thinking about that. We tend to think about yesterday, I suppose, as we get older. But while I think we should keep focused on the future, we shouldn't forget the past.

There is a tendency, when you're in the middle of a boom like this, to think that you have to do nothing to shore it up, that it will last forever, and that there are relatively few consequences to whatever you decide to do or not to do. So indulge me just for a moment, before I take your questions, and let me remind you of what happened to the last longest economic expansion in history.

Johnson was here speaking to this group in the early sixties, about the time I graduated from high school in 1964. Unemployment was low; inflation was low; growth was high. Vietnam was somewhere in the outer range of our consciousness. No one really doubted that we would win the cold war because our ideas were superior and our values were superior, and no one expected the country to be rendered by that conflict. And at the time we had a serious civil rights challenge, but most people believed then, in the optimism of the moment, that it would be solved in the Congress and in the courts in a peaceful manner.

A year later, we had Bloody Sunday in Selma. Two years later, we had riots in the street. Four years later, I was here in Washington, graduating from college 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war. And so we had a Presidential election with three candidates amidst all the turmoil of the moment, and in a few months, the longest economic expansion in American history was over.

If I seem insistent about this, it's because not as President but as a citizen, I have waited for 35 years for my country to have the chance to build the future of its dreams for our children and to have the kind of positive role in the world I believe we can now have. I have worked as hard as I can to turn the situation around and get us pointed in the right direction. And I just don't want us to do anything to squander this moment, as it was once squandered before in my youth.

We have a chance that none of us may ever see again in our lifetimes. And we have to make the most of it for our children.

Thank you very much.

N. Christian Anderson III. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President's time is very limited, but he has graciously agreed to take three questions. So, following our usual—well, I don't need to give you the rules, because I see who's at the microphones. So let's begin with Margaret [Margaret M. Sullivan, Buffalo News], please.

Possibility of Pardon

Q. Mr. President, first of all, as a New Yorker, although Chappaqua is a few miles from Buffalo, where I'm the editor of the Buffalo News, I wanted to say welcome to the neighborhood. [Laughter]

Yesterday Vice President Gore, before this group, answered a question about whether he would, if elected, use the power of the Presidency to pardon you in relation to the investigations being pursued by the independent prosecutor. He said you had said that you would not accept such a pardon by your successor. It turns out you didn't exactly say that yourself, not publicly. So we seem to have a rather public forum here. Would you request or accept such a pardon?

The President. Well, the answer is, I have no interest in it. I wouldn't ask for it. I don't think it would be necessary.

I think it's interesting that you would ask that question without going through the facts here. Let me remind you that there was a truly independent review of the whole Whitewater matter, which was concluded 4 years ago, in 1996, by a predominantly Republican law firm for the Resolution Trust Corporation, that said neither my wife nor I did anything wrong.

If you want to know what's really been going on, you have a good book here, Mr. Toobin's book; you have the Joe Conason and Gene Lyons book, which explains how this all happened. There are independent counsels and then there are special counsels. The independent review was over in '96. So I won't be surprised by anything that happens. But I'm not interested in being pardoned.

We had—if you remember, during the House Judiciary Committee hearings, there were five prosecutors, former prosecutors, including two Republicans, who said that no prosecutor would even entertain bringing any kind of criminal charges against an ordinary citizen like this.

But there is something fundamentally changed in the last 7 years about how the counsels were appointed and who they were and what their priorities were. And no one has yet written the full story. I can imagine why you wouldn't—particularly given the way a lot of this has been covered.

But the answer is no. I don't have any interest in that. I don't want one. And I am prepared to stand before any bar of justice I have to stand before. But I would like just once to see someone acknowledge the fact that this White-water thing was a lie and a fraud from the beginning and that most people with any responsibility over it have known it for years.

Next question.

Presidential Library

Q. Mr. President, Brian Stallcop from the Sun in Bremerton, Washington—over here in the middle. You spent the last several minutes talking about what I think you hope will be your legacy as President. And I wonder if you could think ahead 5 years from now, when you open your Presidential library and all the living Presidents are there with you. Will there be a wing in your Presidential library to your impeachment trial and to that whole era of your Presidency?

The President. Yes, we'll deal with it, and I will deal with it—we'll have to deal with it. It's an important part of it. But I have a slightly different take on it than many of you do or at least than the Washington media does. I made a terrible personal mistake. I think I have paid for it. I settled a lawsuit I didn't—that I won. I won that lawsuit, remember. I won that lawsuit. I settled it anyway because of the political nature of the people that were reviewing it, and because—so I gave away half of my life's savings to settle a lawsuit I had won because I wanted to go back to work being President. And we now know that the questions asked were asked in bad faith, because they knew the answer and they knew it had nothing to do with the lawsuit—something hardly anybody ever points out.

So I think I've paid quite a lot. I struggled very hard to save my relationship with my wife and my daughter. I have paid quite a lot.

But on the impeachment, let me tell you, I am proud of what we did there, because I think we saved the Constitution of the United States. I think—first of all, I had to defeat the Republican revolution in 1994, when they shut

down the Government, and we beat back the contract on America. Then we had to beat it in the impeachment issue. Then we had to beat it when I vetoed the tax cut last year. Then the voters had their verdict in the 1998 election and in the 1996 election.

But as a political matter, you have no idea—I'm not ashamed of the fact that they impeached me. That was their decision, not mine. And it was wrong. As a matter of law, the Constitution, and history, it was wrong. And I am glad I didn't quit, and I'm glad we fought it. And the American people stuck with me, and I am profoundly grateful.

That has nothing to do with the fact that I made a terrible mistake, of which I am deeply regretful. But I think that an average, ordinary person reviewing the wreckage left in that would say that I paid for that. And I should have paid for it. We all pay for our mistakes.

But I'll deal with the impeachment. But you have to understand, I consider it one of the major chapters in my defeat of the revolution Mr. Gingrich led, that would have taken this country in a very different direction than it's going today and also would have changed the Constitution forever, in a way that would have been very destructive to the American people.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, Edward Seaton, the Manhattan, Kansas, Mercury. I want to turn to the news events of today. The Attorney General has set a 2 p.m. deadline for the Miami relatives to turn Elian Gonzalez over to his father. Is your administration prepared to send Federal marshals in if that happens?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say this. Attorney General Reno has done her best to try to resolve this in a peaceable way. This has been a very painful situation for her, personally, because she was the prosecuting attorney in Dade County for 12 years. She knows a lot of the people involved in this. And she went there to try to handle this personally. And she hopes, and I still hope, it won't come to that.

Since she's on site and events are unfolding almost by the minute, I think I should let her address what we're going to do and when we're going to do it from the site. I think that's the best thing to do, because I haven't talked to her today about it.

Let me just say, I think the issue here for me is the rule of law. We have a system. The

system has—if you don't think it's right, then you can say, well, we ought to change the laws. But we have a legal system, and it has been followed. And the decision that was made, that Elian Gonzalez's father was a devoted and fit father and could proffer to speak for his son and, therefore, to make decisions for his minor son, was ratified in a district court and is now on appeal to a court of appeals. But none of the courts have granted any kind of interim relief which would justify opposition to the plain rule of law. So, to me, this case is about the rule of law.

I've done everything I could to stay out of it to avoid politicizing it. But I do believe that it is our responsibility to uphold the law, and we're doing our best to do that.

Constructive Criticism of the Press

Q. Mr. President, I'm Tom Koenninger, editor of the *Columbian* at Vancouver, Washington. This organization, ASNE, takes pride in receiving constructive criticism from its readers. As a reader of America's newspapers, I would like to offer you the opportunity now to provide your constructive criticism. And I'm speaking of newspaper and wire service coverage, not broadcast media.

The President. Well, the only difference in me and somebody writing a letter to the editor to give you constructive criticism is that what I'll get from my constructive criticism is a bomb on the head. [Laughter] I know I'm not running for—I realize I'm not running for anything, but I'm not totally dumb here. [Laughter]

Q. Well, this is your last opportunity, though, to address us.

The President. No, it's not my last opportunity, it's just the last opportunity I'll have when anybody will pay any attention to me. [Laughter] It's ironic, you know, when I can say what I think and nobody will care anymore. [Laughter]

I think the most I should say—first of all, I think it's interesting—I think it's hard to run a newspaper today in an environment in which you're competing with television news, Internet news sources, radio news, and entertainment which abuts on the news, and all the lines are being blurred, both the technological lines and the categorical lines.

And I think the—but I think there is a special role for the old-fashioned newspaper in daily life, although I think it's interesting—the papers

that are being made smaller or more readable or also put on the net and all that, I think that's very good. I think you ought to maximize that.

But it seems to me that one of the things that you have to fight against—I've often felt happened here over the last 7 years—is sort of getting stuck in a place that amplifies the sensational and the emotional, which carves out a certain market share in the short run, but may undermine the fundamental and the purpose of a newspaper over the long run.

And I think that—but I think that it's very hard—I mean, I think it's really quite challenging to run a good old-fashioned newspaper, where you've got the news stories on the front page and the editorial opinion on the editorial page, and you don't really mix the two, and you don't try to get caught up in sort of a given point of view on a big story and then have to keep grinding it and pushing it, no matter what, because that's what's driving the place you've marked out for yourself in an increasingly competitive market.

I don't know what the answer to that is. But I believe—and I'm an old-fashioned person—I don't even—I hate to say this; it will get me in trouble with the networks because—and I need the exposure still. [Laughter] But because of my schedule, usually my only source of news is the newspaper. I'm sort of a troglodyte media person. I actually sit down and read the papers. Normally I'm not home at the time of the evening news, but I watch CNN a lot because I can get it any time of the day or night.

But I have thought about their dilemma. The networks also have real challenges. And I think this whole communications revolution, which I think on balance is an exceedingly positive thing, runs the risk of giving people more information than they have ever had before without adequate perspective or framework or balance or background or back-and-forth.

I still think the editorial page and the op-ed pages of newspapers, where the editorial pages may be consistent and forthright, but you've got people on the other pages with different opinions or even writing about subjects different from the ones that the editors have time to write editorials about—I think that is a great thing. I think it's very helpful.

The thing I worry most about is that people will have all the information in the world; they won't have any way of evaluating whether it's

true or false, A; and B, even if it's true, how to put it in proper perspective. That's what I consider to be the single most significant challenge presented to all of you by the explosion of media outlets and competitive alternatives in the information age.

On balance, I think it's a plus. And people are smart, and they nearly always get it right, which is why our democracy's around here after over 200 years. They nearly always kind of get it right, if they have enough time. But still, you've got—how much will it cost your paper?

I'll just give you an example. When the full sequencing of the human genome is announced in a few months, how much will it cost you to run a long series on exactly what that is, what its implications might be, how it came to be, and where we're going from here? And how many people have to read it for it to have been worth the investment? What opportunity costs did you forgo? And then when things start to happen, spinning out of the human genome, how are you going to deal with that? That's just one example.

I think newspapers actually are going to become more and more important again, because so much of what people will have to absorb about the new century will be advances in science and technology, that it's very hard to put into the time constraints of an evening news program. And I think they will have all kinds of political and social ramifications as they unfold. So I think in a funny way, even if you feel beleaguered now, the nature of what is unfolding may make newspapers and old-fashioned newspaper work more important in the next few years.

But I think the information revolution and the sort of changes in the media structure have presented you with a lot of very difficult chal-

lenges. And if I were you, rather than asking me what my criticism is, I'd sit around and I'd really try to have an organized, honest discussion about how the fundamental purpose of the newspaper can be maintained and you can still make enough money to stay afloat. Because somebody needs to organize and give perspective to all this information and opinions and all the stuff we're flooded with. I think it's very, very important.

I wish I were in your position. I wish I could do it, because I've thought about many times how hard it is for you. But I wish you well, because it's really important. People need more than facts. They need to know the facts are accurate, and they need to understand in some perspective about what it means and where it's all going.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Anderson. Mr. President, on behalf of all of these troglodytes, thank you so very much. One more little bit of trivia, and that is that every year you have been in this country you have come to this convention, during your 8 years in office. We're very grateful for that and grateful for the time you've spent with us today.

Please stay in your places while the President leaves. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the J.W. Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to N. Christian Anderson III, president, American Society of Newspaper Editors; independent counsel Robert W. Ray; authors Jeffrey Toobin, Joe Conason, and Gene Lyons; Juan Miguel Gonzalez, father of Elian Gonzalez; and former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner

April 13, 2000

Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Torricelli, Senator Inouye, Senator Akaka, Senator Johnson, ladies and gentlemen. I think I would like to begin by thanking Jayne for that beautiful prayer and for agreeing to serve on the Indian Arts Board recently; thank you very

much. And I would like to thank all of you for your presence here and your support for our Senators and our Senate candidates.

I don't know whether Bob Torricelli is right about what other people will remember as defining moments of my administration, but I

certainly will remember my trip to Pine Ridge, and I'm very much looking forward to being at Shiprock on Monday afternoon with Kelsey Begaye. Thank you for being there with us in continuing our efforts to bring empowerment and opportunity to Native Americans. We will be there Monday to talk about closing the digital divide, how to bring the power of the computer to lift people up rather than keep them down, in education and economic development and health care and so many other ways.

I have to tell you that my association with the Native American tribes of our country has been one of the most important aspects of my Presidency, to me. I always thought that the United States had something—to put it politely—less than a nation-to-nation relationship, and that sometimes, that the existence of that relationship had been used by the United States to run from our own responsibilities for the health, the welfare, the future of the Native American children and the people of our country.

And for 7 years and 3 months now, I've done everything I knew how to do to increase economic opportunity, to increase the quality of health care, to increase the support for the educational institutions, and, particularly in the last couple of years, to try to increase not only the voice and the respect for the tribal people and your leaders in our National Government's decisions and the right to make your own decisions but especially to try to bring more economic opportunity. And I will continue to do that for as long as I am in this office, and then when I'm not President anymore, I will have more time to work on fewer things. And one of the things I intend to work on when I'm not President anymore is the economic empowerment of people who had been left behind in this country and around the world.

I believe in the potential of all people. I believe that intelligence is equally apportioned among all races and ethnic groups. But opportunity isn't. And I believe that we have done a lot of things over the last 120 years that at least I, for one, wish we could go back and undo in our relations with the Native Americans. But I'm proud of what—not only of what our

administration has done but what our party has tried to do. I'm proud of the leadership of Senator Inouye and Senator Johnson, Senator Akaka. I'm proud that Senator Torricelli is leading this group and that you have joined us.

But the last thing I would like to say is that in the end, the most important thing of all is empowerment and respect, and I have tried to have a Bureau of Indian Affairs that would move beyond where it had traditionally been on that score. I have tried to see that a lot of other decisions were made differently. But your participation in this endeavor and in others like it as citizens is also a form of empowerment, and for that I am profoundly grateful. I'm glad for the progress we've made. I'm glad for the things we've been able to do. I think this year we'll have a good year on education, on health care. I think we'll pass this new markets effort that will help get more investment into all the people and places that have been left behind in this remarkable recovery.

But the most important thing for me is that I hope when I leave office there will have been a fundamental seismic shift in the relationship between the United States Government and our tribes and our tribal governments throughout the country and a dramatic increase in the level of respect and independence and cooperation and partnership that you feel from your Government. I hope it will never, ever be the same. And if that is true, then in large measure, my service will have been justified. And again, if it hadn't been for you, it would not have been possible. So I ask you to keep it up, keep going, and give me every chance I can to be helpful, not only for the next 9½ months but for the rest of my life.

Thank you very much. Thank you all. Senators, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the Georgian Room at the Phoenix Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Robert G. Torricelli, chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Jayne G. Fawcett, Vice Chairperson, Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut, who gave the invocation; and Kelsey A. Begaye, President of the Navajo Nation.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner April 13, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank Bob Torricelli for his leadership of this committee, and I see Senator Wyden, Senator Murray, Senator Bingaman, Senator Leahy, Senator Rockefeller, Senator Robb—is that everybody who is here? We almost have a quorum. [Laughter]

I would like to say, first of all, I want to welcome all of you here, and I want to thank you for meeting with our Senators, and I want to thank them for meeting with you. Just a few days ago, our leader in the House, Dick Gephardt, announced a five- or six-part program of support for the high-tech sector of our economy, which I thought was very good. I'm very pleased to see that, the Senate committee trying to establish a systematic, ongoing relationship with members of the community that I think has powered a great deal of our growth.

In the last 7 years since I've been President, the high-tech sector has accounted for about 8 percent of our employment but about 30 percent of our growth. And in a larger sense, the rifling of technology through traditional work environments has had a far bigger impact, because we know that the reason that we have the longest and strongest economic expansion in history is because of an unusual rise in productivity growth after decades of stagnant productivity.

And what we've tried to do in Washington, essentially, is to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives, including you. So what we've tried to do that directly affects you is get rid of the deficit, keep interest rates down, make capital more available, invest in the education and training of our people, and continue to do basic research in science and technology, expand trade in American goods and services, and to try to open new markets continually—we've negotiated well over 270 different trade agreements in the last 7 years—and deal specifically with the institutional barriers to growth. And I might just mention one.

I think that the way the Telecommunications Act finally came down was a significant contributor to the growth, to the creation of new companies, and to the flourishing high technology in our country. I say that because I believe

that our party, beginning with the Vice President and me, and the support played a very important role in the competitive elements in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. So I hope we have been supportive, and I hope we can do more together.

I would just like to repeat something I said today to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. The great question before the American people now is not how did we get here; the question is, where are we going, and how do we propose to get there? And in a larger sense, what is it that we intend to do with this magic moment of possibility?

I think, notwithstanding the churning of the NASDAQ in the last few days, there are many people, I think, who believe that somehow the prosperity of the last few years will inevitably be projected into the next few, and perhaps for an indefinite period of time. I think it could happen for an indefinite period of time, but not inevitably.

I think that—the real question I have as I see the debate we're having with the Republicans over the budget now—are we going to continue to pay down the debt; are we going to continue to invest in education and technology; are we going to prepare now for the aging of the baby boom generation and then take what's left and give it in a tax cut, instead of have a big tax cut first and then figure out what we're going to do, which means we're either going to cut back on our investments in the future, not deal with the aging of America, or go back to running deficits? In a larger sense, these questions are: What kind of country do we want to be?

I feel very strongly that we should continue to change rapidly, but in the direction of the last 7 years. I feel very strongly it would be a serious error for us to go back to the way we changed in the 12 years before and go back to running big deficits. I think that would be a mistake.

I think that if we make our minds up, we can get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835 and guarantee a generation of new investment at lower interest rates. I think if we're determined to do it, we can close the

digital divide and not only have this technology be the source of vast new centers of wealth and employment but actually help us to reduce poverty for more people more quickly, in the United States and throughout the world, than ever before in all of human history.

I think if we believe in the promise of science and technology, we can grow the economy and solve our environmental problems, including climate change. I think we can use the power of technology to make our country the safest big country in the world, for things like safe gun technology, where handguns can only be fired by their lawful owner—if we think about how to make the most of this moment. And so, that's what I'd like to talk to you about.

You know, I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] And most days, I'm okay about it. [Laughter] But I am old enough, unlike some of you in this room, I am old enough to remember the last, the previous longest economic expansion in history. It encompassed virtually the entire decade of the 1960's.

When I graduated from high school, we had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, high productivity. We had a civil rights challenge that people thought then would be handled in the courts and in the Congress. We were sort of involved in Vietnam. Nobody thought it was very serious, and everybody thought we would win the cold war as a matter of course—1964.

Four years later, when I finished college in '68, we had riots in our cities. It was 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after

Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection because the country was divided on Vietnam. And before you knew it, the longest expansion in American history was over, and we had failed to meet the large, long-term challenges of America.

Actually, I think we have fewer internal and external crises now than we did then. But the challenge is the same, and because we have fewer crises, the responsibility is greater. I believe our party's had a solid economic policy, a solid technology policy, a solid education policy, a good crime policy, a good welfare reform policy. But we need you. We need more and more partnerships. We need to keep working to create the conditions and give people the tools to do more and better. But we've got to be guided by the right vision. And the right vision is not a tax cut so big that it either puts us back in a deficit or keeps us from meeting our long-term objectives.

The right vision is to have a tax cut we can afford, targeted to purposes that are needed in the context of meeting the big, long-term challenges of America. That's what I stand for. I believe that's what our party stands for. And I hope that it's one of the reasons that you're here tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:21 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Phoenix Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Robert G. Torricelli, chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Education Writers Association in Atlanta, Georgia

April 14, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, Kit. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be here with all of you, along with Secretary Riley and Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser.

It has been over 20 years now since Dick Riley and I, as young Governors, first began to grapple with the need to reform education. It's been 17 years since the "Nation At Risk" report sounded the alarm about the state of education nationwide, over 10 years since the

Education Summit in Charlottesville which put us on a path to national action. And as Kit said, it was 10 years ago this month that I got up at 4:30 in the morning to fly to Chicago to speak to this group. I hope you'll forgive me if I don't remember exactly what I said in the fog of that early morning. [Laughter]

Doubtless, some of the veteran reporters here have been around long enough to have seen this whole fascinating drama unfold. Today I'd

like to talk about the progress our public schools have made and the hard work still ahead. First I want to note something astonishing that I think everyone in this room should be proud of: 17 years after the “Nation At Risk” report, over 10 years after Charlottesville, there is still a passionate sense of national urgency about school reform, about lifting standards, improving accountability, increasing learning. I can think of no other issue that has sustained such an intense level of commitment from the public, elected officials, business leaders, and the press.

If anything, the determination of the American people to improve our schools is greater than ever. That’s a tribute to the love of our people for their children, to their understanding of the importance of education in the global information economy, to the realization that we have the largest and most diverse student body in our history, and to the enduring American belief that all our children can and must learn. It is also a tribute to the commitment and the enterprise of education writers in cities and towns all across this country who have kept the story of education reform in the news year after year.

This intense national commitment has produced real progress. Today I am pleased to announce a new report by the Department of Education which documents the progress of the last 7 years, some of which Kit mentioned. The report makes clear that math and reading scores are rising across the country, with some of the greatest gains in some of the most disadvantaged communities. For instance, reading scores of 9-year-olds in the highest poverty schools rose almost an entire grade level on the National Assessment of Education Progress between 1992 and 1996, reversing a downward trend. The report also shows that 67 percent of high school graduates now go on to college, up 10 percent since 1993. This is a copy of it, and it will be available soon, and I hope all of you will read it and then distill it for the people who read you.

Clearly, we’re making progress. Our young people are getting the message they need a college education to have the future of their dreams. We’ve tried to make those dreams more affordable, with the largest expansion of college opportunity since the G.I. bill, including the creation of the HOPE scholarship tax credit, which over 5 million families have already claimed since 1998; education IRA’s; more affordable

student loans, which have saved students \$8 billion—about a third of our student loan recipients are in the direct loan program now—they’ve saved students \$8 billion, and the taxpayers \$5 billion more. They have helped us to take the default level from over 22 percent to under 9 percent, and to triple annual loan repayment rates.

We also have more Pell grants; we’re up to a million work-study slots; we’ve had over 150,000 young Americans earn scholarships by serving in AmeriCorps, many of them in our public schools. And the GEAR UP program is now pairing college mentors with a quarter of a million middle school students who are at risk, to prepare them for college and convince them the money will be there when they’re ready to go. College entrance exam scores are rising, even though more students from disadvantaged backgrounds are taking the test.

And before the Congress this year is my proposal to provide a tax deduction for college tuition of up to \$10,000. If we can do that, along with another increase in the Pell grants and the other proposals I’ve mentioned, I think when we leave, Dick and I, we’ll be able to say that we have truly opened the doors of 4 years of college education to all Americans.

We also see progress in the fact that about two-thirds of all of our classrooms are connected to the Internet, with the help of the E-rate program which the Vice President pioneered. That’s up from only 3 percent in 1993. Ninety-five percent of our schools have at least one Internet connection, including 90 percent of our poorest schools. And I think we’ll be right at 100 percent by the end of the year for not only the schools but for almost all the classrooms, except—and this is a big “except”—in those schools that are literally too dilapidated to be wired for the Internet.

We see progress in falling class sizes in the early grades, and we’re trying to help that with our program to hire 100,000 new highly trained teachers, 30,000 of whom have been funded, and we’re trying to go to 50,000 in this year’s budget. We see progress in the very large increase we’ve had for preschool—and I’ve proposed the largest in history for this year—and in the fact that 1,400 of our colleges and universities are providing volunteers for the America Reads program to help make sure all our third graders can read independently by the time they finish that year.

And we see progress in the growing public consensus about what must be done to reach our ultimate goal, providing a world-class education for every child in America. I think this consensus can be summed up in a simple phrase that has been our mission for the last 7 years: Invest more in our schools; demand more from our schools.

When I became President in 1992, the education debate in Washington, I felt, was fairly stale and predictable and unfortunately divided into what I thought were partisan camps with false choices. On the one side were those, most of them in my party, who believed that money could solve all the problems in our schools, and who feared that setting high standards and holding schools and teachers and students accountable to them would only hold back poor children, especially poor minority children.

On the other side, there were those, mostly in the other party, who fundamentally did not think the public schools were fixable and therefore didn't want to spend much money trying. Also, they felt education was a State responsibility and therefore should not have a comprehensive national response. Some of them, you'll remember, even tried to get rid of the Department of Education.

Vice President Gore and I believed both those positions were wrong. There was plenty of evidence, even then, that high levels of learning were possible in even the most difficult social and economic circumstances. The challenge was to make the school transformation going on in some schools available and active and real in all schools. And we sought to do it by investing more in our schools and demanding more from our schools.

This did not require, as some have charged even recently, micromanagement of our schools by the Department of Education. Indeed, under Secretary Riley's remarkable, steady leadership, Federal regulations on schools K-through-12 have been reduced by two-thirds. In addition, we made ed-flex available to all 50 States, which makes it possible for them to reduce even further Federal regulations on the details of how Federal dollars are spent.

In 1993 we passed a new economic plan that cut hundreds of programs in order to reduce the deficit and improve the economy. But even in that harsh budget year, we boosted education spending. Over the last 7 years, we've nearly doubled investment in education and training,

even as we've turned record deficits into record surpluses.

In 1994 we overhauled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, requiring States to set academic standards for what their students should know. We passed the Goals 2000 legislation, which provided States with more resources to create and implement strategies to achieve standards. Since then, we've gone from only a handful of States having standards to nearly every State with them.

Forty-eight States also have assessments in place to measure student progress in meeting those standards—although, as Kit noted, I have been unsuccessful so far in convincing the Congress that we ought to have national standards and a voluntary national test to measure them. But because we insisted in 1994 that Title I funds be better targeted, 95 percent of high-poverty schools get them today, up from 79 percent 7 years ago. And I think it's very important that this progress not be undone as Congress looks at Title I again this year.

In 1994 we began encouraging more competition and more choice for parents within the public school system, including magnet schools, schools within schools, worksite schools, and the creation of public charter schools. We also invested the resources necessary to get the charter school movement off the ground. When I became President, there was just one charter school in all of America, in Minnesota. Today, thanks in part to our investments, there are over 1,700. Vice President Gore has called for tripling that number.

I think the spread of the charter school movement is one of the great underreported stories in education, one that makes the whole debate over vouchers into something of a sideshow. Charter schools provide choice and competition that proponents of vouchers say they want. And unlike private schools, charter schools are accountable to the public for results. They all haven't succeeded, although most of them have done quite well, but then they can be shut down if they don't. I think we should be working to make all public schools more accountable, not diverting much-needed energy and money away from them.

The strategy of greater accountability and greater investment continues to guide everything

we're fighting for in education. I have sent Congress an "Education Accountability Act" to fundamentally change the way the Federal Government invests in our schools, to support more of what we know works and to stop supporting what we know does not work.

We want quality teachers in all classrooms; report cards to parents on school performance, for all parents and all schools; no social promotion, but help for students, not blaming them when the system fails them; a plan to identify failing schools and improve them, or shut them down; a systematic effort to make our schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free.

I've also asked Congress to make a range of other investments to make accountability work. Yes, we must end social promotion. But I say again, we need more investments in after-school and summer school programs. It is wrong to blame the students for the failure of the system.

We had the first Federal support for after-school programs in 1997, at a million dollars a year; \$40 million in '98; \$200 million in '99; \$453 million in 2000; and we're asking for a billion dollars in 2001. If we get it, we will soon be able to provide after-school programs to every student in a poor-performing school in the United States.

We must also invest in modernizing our schools, to get our kids out of overcrowded classrooms or classrooms where the walls are too old to be wired for the Internet or where it's so stifling hot in the summer that students in summer school can't learn. There are many cities in this country where the average school building is 65 years of age or more. There are schools in New York City that are still being heated by coal-fired furnaces. There are literally school buildings all across the country that cannot be hooked up to the Internet—they simply can't be wired. And we all know the stories of how many of our kids are in trailers. The largest number of trailers I have seen behind the smallest school was 12, outside an elementary school in Jupiter, Florida, a couple of years ago. So I think that is very important.

We have also worked on this for a long time. For 4 years I have tried to get the Congress to approve my tax credit to help to build or modernize 6,000 schools. I have made the proposal again this year, along with an appropriation that would allow us to do renovations on another 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years, in districts that are so poor it is simply unrealistic

to expect that they could float a bond issue and raise the money, even with a tax credit.

Six years ago we passed legislation calling on States and school districts to identify and improve low-performing schools. States have now identified some 7,000 low-performing schools, and they're working to improve them. The education budget that I have presented last year—that we passed, excuse me, we passed last year required States that failed to turn around their low-performing schools to let their students transfer out of those schools to other public schools.

I've asked Congress now to double our investment in the educational accountability fund, so that we'll have adequate funding to help more schools turn around or be shut down. School districts can use this money to make the sweeping systematic changes that have proven so effective in turning around low-performing schools, from Dade County to Kentucky to Chicago.

Last year, for example, I gave a Blue Ribbon Schools award to Beaufort County Elementary in Beaufort, South Carolina. Classified as one of the State's worst performing schools 5 years ago, Beaufort embraced accountability and higher academic standards and started after-school and summer school programs for students who were lagging behind. Today, their math and test scores exceed the State average, and local parents are pulling their children out of private school and putting them in the city's public schools.

If, for whatever reason, a school doesn't turn around, our educational accountability fund can be used to allow parents to transfer their students out of these schools into better performing ones, including charter schools.

The standards movement is making a difference. I believe when we passed Goals 2000 and provided funds to help States develop standards and strategies for meeting them, we made a contribution. Now, the real key is—and I think it's embodied in the topic of your conference—is if we have standards in all the States, how do we get them in the classroom? And how do we make sure they're making a difference in the lives of the students? That, to me, is the real key.

And you have to begin, I think, with improving the capacity of principals and teachers to do their jobs. We have \$40 million in our budget to help States improve school management

and school leadership, instructional leadership, by principals. I have proposed a new teacher quality initiative to recruit more talented people into the classrooms, to reward good teachers for staying there, to give all teachers the training they need. This will build on the strong support we have given for incentives for people to go into inner-city and other underserved areas, that we've given to the National Board for Professional Teacher Certification.

There were no board-certified master teachers when I took office; there are now 5,000. We've done everything we could to support that program. There are 10,000 teachers who are in the application process at this time. Our goal is to provide funding enough to get up to 100,000 teachers that are board-certified master teachers, with the idea that there ought to be one in every school building in America. When that happens, I think it will significantly change the culture of education in our country, because of the rigorous certification process and the work that is done to make sure that the teachers are actually effective at teaching our children.

We're also trying to help deal with some of our teacher shortages. Secretary Riley has established a commission on math and science teaching, and Senator John Glenn has taken that on as his next mission. In October they will give us a report which I hope will spur further action in that area. The Secretary has also called for the creation of more dual schools, that provide English plus education in at least one other foreign language, which could, I think, help to moot the whole English-only debate, show that we're interested in teaching all of our kids English and teaching them in English, but recognize the vast diversity we have in the country and the need we have to have more teachers who are bilingual and who can teach in an effective manner the students who come to our schools whose first language is not English.

I would also like to mention that in our proposal to create 100,000 new teachers for smaller class sizes, the teachers are required—every new teacher under that proposal is required to be fully qualified. And I think that this whole movement to improve teacher quality is really catching on. I know that you know that today the American Federation of Teachers is proposing a national standard and a national test for all new teachers. And I applaud them for it. I've been fighting for testing, for higher standards, for better pay for teachers for almost

20 years now. In 1993 Hillary and I passed a law that made Arkansas the first State in the country to test teachers. That was a really popular law at the time. [*Laughter*] It was an interesting experience. But because our teachers performed, I might add, better than anyone anticipated, it happened that the children began to perform better, as well. Today, I think Al Shanker would be very proud of the AFT, his successor, Sandy Feldman, and all of them. And I think all of you should be proud of them.

We need to demand more of our teachers, but we need to reward them better. We're going to have a couple of million teachers retiring in the next few years. We already have the largest student population and the most diverse one in our history. We're going to have to work very, very hard to get more qualified teachers in the classroom. There are already too many teachers teaching classes for which they're not fully qualified, and this problem is going to be dramatically exacerbated by the size of the student population, combined with the retirement plans and just the ticking of the time clock for many of our teachers. So we have to focus more and more and more attention on this.

And in that connection, let me say I have repeatedly challenged States—I'd like to do it again today—to spend more of their budget surpluses on raising teacher pay. Most of our States are in terrific shape today, but they, too—every one of these States is facing the prospect of too many teacher retirements. With very low unemployment, they're having the same problem recruiting teachers that we're now having in some of our military positions, recruiting and retaining. But they don't have any of the sort of supplemental benefits that you get if you're in the military.

Everybody says this is the most important thing in the world. Most of the money still comes at the State level. When the budget surpluses are there, when the money is there, now is the best time most States have had in a generation to make a dramatic increase in teacher pay, and I hope they will do so.

Now, let me just make a couple of points about where we are and where we're going. The fundamental lesson of the last 7 years, it seems to me, is that an education investment without accountability can be a real waste of money. But accountability without investment can be a real waste of effort. Neither will work

without the other. If we want our students to learn more, we should do both.

The strategy is working. But again I say, with the largest, most diverse student body in history and the educational premium rising every year in the global information society, we must do more. I've been very pleased at the proposals that Vice President Gore has made and the education plans he's put forth. I'm also pleased that, after some struggle, we have had bipartisan majorities for the education budgets of the past few years. Unfortunately, it's still a fight every year. Yesterday the House Education Committee passed a so-called reform bill that eliminates after-school programs, abandons our class size effort, which is totally bipartisan, and fails to modernize a single school in yet another year. This comes on top of the Senate's education bill, which rolls back reform even more.

I believe that the majority of people in the other party in Congress are still resisting the investments our schools need. In the name of accountability, they are still pushing vouchers and block grants that I believe would undermine accountability. And both bills greatly underfund education.

There's an even bigger problem with many of the plans being discussed in this election season, and many of them apparently appealing. But the problem is, even the apparently appealing plans advanced by Republicans are in trouble because of the combined impact of their proposed tax cut and defense spending increases. You know, one of the things—somebody asked me the other day, "Well, Mr. President, what was your major contribution in your economic reform package to this longest expansion in American history?" And you know what my answer was? "The return of arithmetic. We brought arithmetic back to the budget. We replaced supply-side economics with arithmetic." [Laughter] And lo and behold, it worked.

And so when anybody says anything—they're for this, that, or the other thing—you have to say, "Well, how does all this add up? Here's the surplus; it's going to be reduced by X amount, depending on what your tax cut is. Then it's going to be reduced by Y amount, depending on what you require for defense. Now, what are your plans for the retirement of the baby boomers? How will you deal with the fact that Social Security today is slated to run out in 2037, before the end of the baby boomers' life expectancy? What about Medi-

care? What are you going to do with education?" Arithmetic is a very important element in politics and public life. And it is often ignored—you're laughing, but I'm telling the truth, and you know it. [Laughter]

And so here's the problem with some of these education proposals. If you take over \$1 trillion out over 10 years for a tax cut, and you increase defense even more than I have—and I've been a pro-defense Democrat; we've increased defense spending every year I've been President—there simply will not be the money left to fund a lot of these education and other proposals. I think it's wrong to spend about \$100 of the surplus on tax cuts for every dollar you spend on education. I just don't think that is consistent with our national priorities.

A study came out last week showing that the percentage of income the average American family is paying on income taxes is the lowest it's been since 1966. And it is true that income tax for lower income working Americans is now largely negative, because of the impact of the earned-income tax credit. It is true that people in the highest 20 percent are paying higher rates, but because of the way the economy has grown, their after-tax income in real, constant dollars, even with higher rates, is 24 percent higher than it was 12 years ago.

So I support, as I think all of you know, I support a tax cut. But mine is considerably more modest. I want the \$10,000 deduction for college tuition. I want a refundable child care tax credit. I want an increase in the earned-income tax credit. I want families to have a \$3,000 tax credit for long-term care, to care for an elderly or disabled family member—it's becoming a huge problem, and as the aging of America progresses, it will be a bigger and bigger problem.

I want to give people with money, upper income people, financial incentives to increase philanthropy and to invest in the poor areas of America—the new markets of America that have been left behind—and to invest in new technologies that will help us clean the environment and combat global warming.

But I have applied arithmetic to my proposal. And I think it is very important that we think about this, because it would be tragic if, after we're finally beginning to really make some nationally measurable progress in education here, not just in the inputs but in the outputs—and we know so much more about how to do it

than we did when “Nation At Risk” was issued, so much more than we did in 1989 when the national education goals were written in that wonderful all-night session in Charlottesville I’ll never forget. We know so much more today, and we’re able to invest in what works.

But the American people, their wealth, and their welfare will be far more greatly enhanced by making uniform excellence in education—proving that people, without regard to their race, their income, or their cultural or linguistic backgrounds, can learn what they need to know and keep learning for a lifetime—that will do so much more for the American economy, for the strength and coherence and fabric of our national community than a tax cut which cannot be justified and which will either throw us back to the bad old days of deficits or require big cuts in domestic programs, including education, or both. So one of the things that I hope education writers will talk about is old-fashioned arithmetic.

Now, finally, let me just say, I think when all is said and done, there are only about three things worth focusing on. Do you believe that all children can learn or not? Do you believe that it’s more important than ever before, for the quality of an individual’s life, for the shape of a family’s future, for the strength of the Nation? And do you believe we know how to do that now, with more investment and more accountability for higher standards? If the answer to all three of those questions is yes, then I will consider that the work that the Secretary and I have done, even though we haven’t won every battle, will have been more than worth the effort.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the question-and-answer session began, and Kit Lively, president, Education Writers Association, read questions from the audience. The first question, from a journalist with the Los Angeles Times, asked what the President could do to head off a growing backlash against testing and standards.]

The President. Well, one of the things—Dick and I were talking about this on the way in today—one of the things that we thought would happen, if we could actually get some accepted national standards and then a voluntary national test that would measure against that, is that would provide an organizing principle, if you will, which we thought might allow some of

these other tests to be dropped. I think it is absolutely true that in some districts there may be too many tests. And what are they measuring, and what do they mean?

I also think that on all this testing business, every few years you have to have kind of a mid-course review. You have to see where you are and where you’re going. And I think I’ve earned the right to say that, since you know I believe in them. I mean, I’ve got a pretty long record here on this subject.

I think we shouldn’t obscure the major point, which is, it is very difficult to make progress that you can’t measure. There must be some way of measuring our movement. On the other hand, you don’t want our children and our teachers to spend 100 percent of the time teaching to a test that does not encompass all the things our students need to know and our schools need to provide. You don’t want the test to be so easy that the whole thing is a mockery and looks like a bureaucratic fraud. You don’t want it to be so hard that it crowds out all the other endeavors that a school ought to be doing.

But all of that, it seems to me, argues for looking at the number and the types of tests, what you want to measure, and whether you goals are sharply focused. It’s not an argument against testing and accountability. I see no possible way to continue to reform all our schools without some sort of testing and accountability.

Look, if none of us had ever come along, ever—including me—you know, it’s hard to admit this, especially when you can’t run again, but if none of us had ever come along, a lot of the good things that have happened in education would have happened. I’ve been saying for 15 years, every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere.

How many times have you gone to a school and then you’ve written this gripping story about, oh, my goodness, look at this school in this high-crime neighborhood with all these poor kids and all this terrible disadvantage, and the kids have—they live in these little apartments, and they have to go into the bathroom to study at night in the bathtub and read all their books—I mean, how many of those stories have you written? Every one of you have written those stories, right? And look what the kids are doing.

What is the problem in American education? It is not that nobody does this; it is that we

still have not figured out how to make achievement universal. Every one of you has written this story about somebody succeeding against all the odds, about a great teacher, a great principal, a great school. What is the problem? We have not devised a method to make learning occur at a universally high level.

And that's what the voucher people argue. They argue that that's because public schools have a monopoly on revenues and customers. So we sought to break the monopoly without losing the accountability by promoting school choice, charter schools, and other alternatives. But you still have to have standards and measurement.

And let me just say this—I realize I'm talking this question to death, but this is pretty important because it really gets to everything else. If I were to suggest to you that standards and measurement are quite distressing and troubling and I'm worried about the anxiety they cause so I think we'll ease up on them in the military, there would be a riot in the country, right? "Thank you very much, send them back to the training."

And so I do think it's time to review all this. I think there are too many of these tests, and some are too easy; some are too hard; some are too off-beat; some may crowd out other educational missions. But that's why we tried, Dick and I did, to have a set of generally accepted national standards with a voluntary national test to measure them and to have it done by a nonpolitical group and sort of modeling on what the NAEP people do, which I think is quite good, by the way.

And so, anyway, that's my answer. Just because there may be too much or wrong, doesn't mean you don't have to measure. You do have to measure. Might as well not have standards if you're not going to measure whether you're meeting them.

[Ms. Lively read a question from a journalist with *Catalyst Magazine*, asking if the Chicago school system's approach to retention and promotion should be a model for the Nation.]

The President. Read the first part of the question again. I didn't understand.

[Ms. Lively repeated that research showed students retained had not benefited and were more likely to drop out.]

The President. Well, in order to answer that question, I would have to know the answer to something I think is equally important, which is, what happened to the kids that weren't retained because of their performance in summer school? Are they doing better than they were? Are they learning more? Are they more likely to succeed and stay in school?

Keep in mind, in the Chicago system, if you fail, you get retained only if you either don't go to summer school, or you go to summer school and you don't make the grade there. So most of the people—Chicago's summer school is now the sixth biggest school district in America. It's one reason that the juvenile crime rate is way down there. And it's the sixth biggest school district in America.

So I can't answer that question without knowing whether those kids did better and are more likely to stay in school and learn more, because it wouldn't be surprising that kids that are retained get discouraged and drop out. But there was a study a few years ago, and I haven't kept up with the literature as much as I should have since I've been President, which showed that one big reason for dropout after the middle school years was that kids weren't learning. If they weren't learning anything and they were being passed along, they got bored and dropped out, too.

So I don't want to disparage the study, but I don't know if it's right or not. And neither does the person who asked the question, until you follow what happened to the kids that weren't retained because they went to summer school and made the grade, and what are the percentage of those who made the grade as opposed to those who were retained.

[A participant cited studies showing that students in the Chicago system who went to summer school and passed did indeed stay in school, but she pointed out that 10,000 students were retained in the last several years and, despite efforts to help them, became increased risks.]

The President. But let me ask you this. Does it follow that they would have been helped by being promoted, or that it's worth promoting them even if they couldn't be helped, because the social stigma of being retained and dropping out makes them more likely to turn to crime? I mean, I think that's the answer.

I don't believe—I guess, fundamentally, what I'd like to see done is—and you may be right—

let me go back to that. My answer to your question is, I don't know, so I'll start with that.

But you may be right. But what's hard for me to believe is that we can't help these young people. I mean, one of the things that I thought would happen with the Chicago system, sooner or later—and may be happening sooner, rather than later, from what you say about the study—is that we would identify young people who might not measure out to be special ed kids, for example, but who, for some reason, even though they showed up in class and seemed to be trying, just weren't learning, even though the teachers were trying, everybody was trying.

And I think there may be some of those kind of kids in virtually every district, but in a district, a town as big as Chicago, you'd have a larger number. And one of the things that I would like to see is, before the principle is abandoned, I would like to see some new and different efforts made to see if different kind of strategies would help those kids to learn.

One of the reasons I like the potential of this whole computer revolution in the schools—even though I think it can be oversold and there are a lot of computers being unused because either the software is not good or the teachers haven't been trained or whatever—but one of the things that I do believe is that there is quite a bit of evidence that people of more or less equal intelligence may learn in dramatically different ways and that some of the people who seem to be impervious to the best efforts of education, but they would like to learn, may be able to learn in radically different ways. And Chicago may have enough people to identify a class of folks that we ought to make a special national effort to see if there are some other strategies that would help them.

I don't know the answer to that, but I'd be willing to try if they are, if they want to do it, if they want some help from us.

[Ms. Lively read a question asking the President's position on gay youth groups in high schools.]

The President. I think it ought to be decided by the school districts. I don't think the States ought to prohibit them. I think the school districts ought to make a decision based on what the facts are in every district.

Look, I think the real issue here is, a lot of parents, even parents that are fairly open-minded on such matters, are worried that if

you have these groups when children are still impressionable, that somehow they'll be sanctioning or encouraging people to adopt a lifestyle that they may have a choice not to adopt.

On the other hand, there's a lot of evidence that a sexual stigma for gay kids is one of the reasons that they have high suicide rates and other associated social problems. And I think that the facts will tend to be different from place to place, and that's why I think it would be better if the people who are on the ground who care about the kids and who aren't homophobic—that is, they're not interested in bashing them, but they understand there's got to be at some point below which you would not go, probably an age—were able to make these judgments based on the facts. That's my thinking about it.

Ms. Lively. Those are the three questions.

The President. Go ahead.

Ms. Lively. That's all we have.

The President. Oh, that's all? [Laughter] This is the first press group I have ever been with that said, "I'm sorry, we're out of questions." Where were you when I needed you the last several years? [Laughter]

Okay, go ahead.

[Ms. Lively read a question from a journalist with the Savannah Morning News, asking if the President remained in favor of charter schools despite studies showing they were not meeting their original goals and were draining funds from local systems.]

The President. Yes, but what I think the studies show is, some work and some don't. And the idea is that, unlike—when we started them, there were two ideas behind charter schools, let me remind you. There was an upside idea and a downside idea. The upside idea was that if teachers and parents and others organized these charter schools, either to deal with a certain kind of kids or to meet a certain mission or whatever, they would be more likely to succeed.

The downside hope was, if they failed, unlike other schools, the parents and kids could leave immediately and the thing could be shut down—that is, the school district, in return for letting the charter schools be free of a lot of the rules and redtape that other schools would be under, should have the discipline to shut the thing down if it had had enough years to operate to see that it wasn't succeeding. And

I think the evidence is, a lot of them are doing quite well. And the ones who aren't—the thing I'm worried about is that the ones that aren't will become just like other schools that aren't doing so well, and nobody will want to shut them down either.

I mean, the whole purpose of the charter school was to bring the sort of hope—the concept of empowerment of the parents and the students into the public education system, and it would work on the upside. And if it didn't work on the upside, it would at least work on the downside. And that's where I think we need to focus.

But I think that some of them have done very well, and some of them have not done so well. And what we need is to make sure the downside potential is present as well. But yes, I do still favor them, based on the ones I've been in and the kinds of things they've been able to do.

And I don't think it's fair to say they drain resources. If you don't spend any more per kid in a charter school than you do per child in another school, and you've got to have those kids somewhere, I don't think it's fair to say that, especially if you're not—unless you're paying for physical facilities you wouldn't otherwise pay for.

Ms. Lively. I've been told that was our last question. So, thank you. We know you have a busy day, and we appreciate you coming.

The President. Thank you again for your interest. I've enjoyed this very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom North at the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sandra Feldman, president, American Federation of Teachers.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Cynthia A. McKinney in Atlanta April 14, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, first of all, I'm glad to see you. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad to see you in such good spirits. And I want to thank you for being here for Cynthia and thank her for giving me a chance to come here and be with you.

I think we ought to give another hand to our hosts, the Sadris, for letting us come into their beautiful home today. [*Applause*] Beautiful place. I appreciated Governor and Mrs. Barnes and Mayor Campbell for being here. They had to leave. And as Roy and Bill said on the way out, "We've got to go, and besides, we've heard this speech before." [*Laughter*]

That reminds me of something Tina Turner said once. Tina Turner is my favorite political philosopher. [*Laughter*] I went to a concert of hers, and she sang all of these new songs. And at the very end, she started singing "Proud Mary." It was her first hit. And the whole crowd just went nuts, you know, clapping for her. So she didn't start singing; she just waited until they quit clapping. She said, "You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, and it gets

better every time I do it." [*Laughter*] So I thank the rest of you for hanging around.

I want to acknowledge—in the audience we have Mayor Jack Ellis of Macon and Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard of East Point and Representative Tyrone Brooks. Thanks for being here. And my old friend and '92 cochairman, Calvin Smyre; Representative Robert Brown; and Billy McKinney is here, Cynthia's daddy; and Senator Butler, thank you for coming. And there may be other members of the legislature here we've missed. State Representative Vernon Jones—I can read Cynthia's handwriting; she can't read mine. [*Laughter*]

And Dikembe, I want to thank you for coming. He came to the White House once with his whole family. And I went out to meet him. And you know, I'm not a small man. I felt like a total shrimp standing there. [*Laughter*] You know, all these members of the other party, they've been trying for 8 years to humiliate me. If they'd just gotten the Mutombo family standing around—[*laughter*—they could have done it in a day. It would have been no problem.

Let me say to all of you, I am here basically for three reasons. One is, I wanted to thank Cynthia McKinney, in front of her constituents, for the support that she has given to our efforts to make America a better place, with a stronger economy, a stronger social fabric, greater equality and opportunity for people; an America that is truly one America across all racial, religious, and other lines that divide us. And you can see by the crowd today that that's the kind of person she's been. And that's the kind of America I've tried to build, and I thank her for that.

The second reason that I'm here is to thank all of you for the work you do here and the example you set. I was listening as the—I saw Iranian-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Pakistani-Americans, Sikhs introduced. I was glad to see so many members of the Muslim community here. I think that I am the first President ever to consistently give messages on the *Eid* to the Muslim community around the world, to have Muslim Americans come into the White House and meet with us.

I look around the world—and I'll just start—the third reason I came here is to tell you what I think this election this year is about. And I feel free to say it since it's the first time in 25 years I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] And I'm okay about it most days. [Laughter] I'm okay.

But let me begin by saying this. Everybody knows what's going well today, and I won't go back over it except to just briefly say that we not only have the longest economic expansion in our history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, highest homeownership in history, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded; we also have a sense, I think, of optimism and that we can do certain things. And as Cynthia said, we've tried to be a force for peace and freedom around the world.

But since we've got all these folks here, let me say, I think it's very interesting that in this most modern of ages, where we're thrilled that our kids are on the Internet, and they can go to school with people of different cultures and backgrounds, and we're about to decode the mysteries of the human gene—just in the next few weeks, we'll be able to announce the whole gene sequence that's been completed. And after

that happens, it won't be long before we'll be able to block the genetic flaws that cause Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. We'll be able to identify certain kinds of cancers when they're—just a few cells congeal. We may even find out early in the next century what's in those black holes in the universe. It will be the most modern of ages.

No country can be isolated from it. Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users in China. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. Within 2 years, there will be over 100 million, and the country will never be the same again.

I just came back from the Indian subcontinent. I went to Bangladesh and Pakistan and India. And I was in this—and in India, the per capita income is \$450 a year. And I was in this little village—I mean, a little village—you may have seen the pictures on the television of me dancing with the village women, and they were pelting me with flowers. It's better than other things I could be pelted with. [Laughter] I was delighted.

But anyway, let me say, so here I am in this little remote village. And in the sole public building in the village, I met with the city council, 11 men and 4 women, representing 10 different tribes and castes. And I saw the village's computer. And this new mother comes in, to the village computer. And it was in Hindi, although they have these in all the various languages spoken in India. So she calls up the health department's webpage. And she's just had a baby, and she runs it out to the instructions for what the best care for a newborn is for the first 3 months of his life. And then she hits the print button, and they have this fabulous software, and this beautiful program printed right out on a world-class printer. And she took home information as good as you could take home from any obstetrician in Atlanta. So it's wonderful. This is a very modern world.

I went to another city where they give 18 government services on the Internet; nobody buys a driver's license in a revenue office anymore. I told Governor Barnes if he did that here, there would be no term limits and he could stay until he was 95. [Laughter]

So that's the sort of picture we imagine for these children. And it's all modern, it's about science and technology, and we're relating to each other and how interesting it is. Don't you

think it's also interesting that the biggest problems the world faces are rooted in the oldest difficulties of humankind, that we're still basically scared of people that aren't like us?

I mean, I see these Sikhs here, I thank them for coming here. The most heartbreaking thing that happened on my trip to the Indian subcontinent is that about 40 Sikhs were murdered in Kashmir. And I'm sure they were murdered because I was there. Those people lost their lives because I went to India and to Pakistan. And people who don't want their turmoil to be eased used my trip there as a pretext to highlight the difficulties. And somebody, we don't know who, killed 40 perfectly innocent people who, I might add, had never before been targeted in all the conflicts in Kashmir.

In Rwanda—Cynthia talked about Rwanda—Rwanda's not like a lot of other African countries that were formed in 1885 by European powers. It's basically been a coherent country for 500 years, with two dominant tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis—for 500 years. And they fought from now and then, but they basically worked it out to get along. And in 100 days, 800,000 people were killed, almost with no guns.

In the Middle East, we still are seeing these tensions between the Israelis and their neighbors. In the Balkans, a million Islamic Albanians were driven from their homes like cattle, driven from their countries, in a matter of weeks, until we stopped it and turned it around in Kosovo. Even in Northern Ireland, where the people voted overwhelmingly for peace, the leaders are still so in the grip of their problems they can't get along.

Well, we know about India. We know that—I said before, I think the situation—here's an interesting story. The situation in Kashmir is interesting from an American's point of view for the following reason: Indian-Americans and Pakistani-Americans, of the 200 ethnic groups that exist in America today, both rank in the top 10 in per capita income and education. Obviously, if the difficulties over Kashmir could be resolved, people from South Asia would explode. There is literally no limit to the potential of the life that could be had there. But they are sort of kept back from the modern world by this ancient tension, or at least the tension that grew out of the founding of the nations of India and Pakistan.

I say that to make this point only—I'm basically, you know, a very optimistic person. And

I always have been, and I remain so today. But let's take it closer to home. Isn't it interesting that here in Atlanta is the home of more international companies than any other American city, and we're still fighting in the South about whether there ought to be a Confederate flag on our flag? [Laughter] So there's something wrong with this picture here, you know? [Laughter] At least we can put it on a website. [Laughter]

What's the point of all—here's the point of all this: not to get you down but to get you back up, but to remind you that our progress and our good fortune is the product of constant effort, good values, good people, good ideas, hard work. It is not an accident, nor is it inevitable, nor can you depend on it to last forever.

A time like this for any country comes along once in a blue moon. And so the election is not about whether Cynthia McKinney had a good voting record or Bill Clinton was a good President. The real issue is, what are we going to do with this moment?

And you know, I feel very strongly that the American people should be humbled by this good fortune. And I think we should say, we're going to take on the big challenges facing our country. One, we've got to keep the economy going, because if we don't, the wheels will start to run off, and then we'll not be able to think about big things. That's why I want to keep paying the debt down. We can be debt-free for the first time since 1835. I want to do that.

Number two, we ought to bring economic opportunity to people and places that have been left behind in this country. That's why I want to give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America they have to invest around the world. That's why I want to close the digital divide and bring computer opportunities to schools and work places and entrepreneurs in distant rural places, Indian reservations, inner-city neighborhoods.

Number three, we ought to give a world-class education to every one of our children. We know how to do it now, so we don't have an excuse.

Number four, we ought to help people whose parents work to better balance the demands of work and family—equal pay for women and men; improved tax treatment for lower income working people; more health care coverage for children and for their parents if they can't afford it now—we have a program I want to expand;

a long-term care tax credit for people that are caring for their elderly relatives or disabled relatives—a lot of people are doing that now, and it's a terrible burden on them. And we want to keep families together, but we ought to help them do that. We ought to help them balance work and family.

Number five, we ought to make America the safest big country in the world. You know, Georgia and my home State of Arkansas are States with a strong hunting culture. But there's no excuse for not doing a background check every time somebody buys a handgun. There's no excuse. The law we've had has kept half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns, and we got gun crime down 35 percent to a 30-year low in the last 7 years. But we can make America the safest big country in the world if we work at it.

Number six, we ought to prove we can improve our environment and the world's and grow the economy. If we don't do that, we will never get out—50 years from now, the children of the children in this audience will be living on a planet that will be much more difficult to navigate if we do not meet the environmental challenges of our time. And we don't have to mess up the economy to do it.

Number seven, we ought to keep in the lead in science and technology.

Number eight, we ought to do more to be good citizens in the world. I've been trying to pass a bill to buy more products from Africa and our neighbors in the Caribbean Basin. We can afford it in America, and a little bit of effort here does a phenomenal amount of good there. And I want to relieve the debts of the world's poorest nations. I want to head a global effort to develop vaccines for AIDS and malaria and TB. It could save millions of lives.

You know what the number one killer in poor countries still is?

Audience member. I believe it's malaria, no?

The President. No.

Audience member. What is it?

The President. Well, malaria is the second. It's basically problems related to the absence of clean water—still—problems related, including total dehydration, which kills a lot of kids.

I think we ought to do these things. I think we ought to keep trying to help people solve their racial and ethnic and religious problems. I think it is worth it. I also believe we ought to bring China into the world's trading system,

because if we don't, they'll think we're isolating them, and there's a greater likelihood of a war there.

I just finished reading President Woodrow Wilson's private secretary's memoirs of the end of World War I, and how the Congress ran off and left him and they stiffed all of our opponents, and how it made World War II inevitable. Somebody asked me the other day, "What have you learned about foreign policy since you've been President?" And I said, "I've learned it's a whole lot more like life than I thought it was." What do I mean by that? That people everywhere, across all different cultures, are far more likely to respond to the outstretched hand than they are to respond to the clenched fist.

Now, there are some people who do things that I think require us to clench our fist. When Mr. Milosevic did what he did in Bosnia and Kosovo, we clenched our fist. But on the whole, we ought to encourage the positive developments around the world and try to help people get together. I think this is important.

And the last point I want to say is what I started with: If we want to do good around the world, we've got to be good at home. We've got to keep working. You know, we haven't solved all of our problems here. We still have racial prejudice; we still have religious prejudice; we still have people who are shot because of their race or because they're gay or for some other reason. And we have to keep working on this.

If I received a message from God tonight and He said, "You can't finish your term. I'm checking you out tomorrow, and you get one wish. I'm not a genie; you don't get three wishes. You get one"—I would not even wish for continued prosperity. I would wish for us to be truly one community, one Nation, because—because just look around this room here. Look at all the intelligence, the experience, the understanding, the energy in this room, from the youngest to the eldest and all in between. If we can just keep our bearings, if we can keep our spirits, if we can keep centered, there is no limit to what we can do.

And what I want you to understand is, that means that we have to pay very close attention in this election. The last thing I will say to you—you have to pay very close attention. People get in a lot of trouble when times are good because they think there are no consequences to what they do. Sometimes you can get in

more trouble in good times than you can in bad times because you break your attention. You've worked so hard, you've labored, you've worked, and you think, "Gosh, I just want to forget about this now."

And I was just talking to Tyrone Brooks. He was at Selma when I was there, celebrating the 35th anniversary of the march over the Pettus Bridge, and it put me to thinking—I will close with this point—when we celebrate the longest economic expansion in American history in February, I got all my advisers together and I said, "Now, when was the longest economic expansion in history?" When many of you weren't here—it was between 1961 and 1969. You either weren't born or you were in another country. I was here. *[Laughter]*

Now, let me tell you what happened. Let me tell you what happened. In the full bloom of expansion in 1964, I graduated from high school. And yes, we were sort of peripherally involved in Vietnam, and yes, we did have a big civil rights challenge. But unemployment was low; inflation was low; growth was high; productivity was high. Most everybody then thought that our new President, Lyndon Johnson, with the great sympathy the country had after President Kennedy had been killed, would solve the civil rights problems of America in the Congress, and those that wouldn't be solved in the Congress would be solved in the courts. And no one believed Vietnam would tear the country up. And we all thought in the course of time we would win the cold war, and we would always just be prosperous.

Now, 4 years later, I graduated from college in Washington, DC—4 years—2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection because the

country was split down the middle. And within just a few weeks, the longest economic expansion in American history was itself history.

What's the point? Not to be down but to be determined, to realize it makes a difference who is in the Congress, to realize it makes a difference who is the President, to realize it makes a difference what people think the subject of this election is. The subject of this election is, what are we going to do with this magic moment in our history?

I've done the best I could to turn this country around and to get us moving in the right direction. But the best is still out there. That's what I want you to believe. And forget about me being President; as a citizen, I have waited 35 years for my country again to be in the position to build the future of our dreams for our children.

And it is a so much more interesting country now because so many of you are here. And the world is more interesting, and the potential is so great. But whether we seize it depends upon whether we understand what the issue is about, whether we work and vote, and whether people like Cynthia are in the United States Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Saeid and Sudabeh Sadri; Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia and his wife, Marie; Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta; State Representatives Tyrone Brooks, Calvin Smyre, and J. E. (Billy) McKinney; State Senators Robert Brown and Gloria S. Butler; NBA Atlanta Hawks player Dikembe Mutombo; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Statement on Congressional Action on Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

April 14, 2000

The bipartisan agreement reached by the House and Senate on the Africa and Caribbean Basin trade legislation is a major step toward enactment of these historic initiatives. This bill is a win-win proposition for the United States

and our friends in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. It will boost investment, economic growth, and job creation in these countries, while improving the global competitive position of our own textile industry. It will help promote

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economic reform, reduce poverty, and broaden participation in the benefits of the global economy. I congratulate congressional leaders from both parties who worked hard to reach this

agreement. I urge Congress to complete the remaining work on the bill rapidly so that final approval can occur during the first week after its Easter recess.

Statement on Signing Legislation Designating the Joseph Iletto Post Office *April 14, 2000*

Today I signed legislation designating the United States Post Office located at 14701 Peyton Drive in Chino Hills, California, as the "Joseph Iletto Post Office." Joseph Iletto was a Filipino-American postal worker who was tragically murdered last year in a crime of hate. He was a dedicated public servant, killed simply because he was an Asian-American who worked for his country's Government. It is a fitting tribute to the life and memory of Mr. Iletto that we name this Post Office in his honor.

During the last year, we have all been shaken by violent acts like the murder of Joseph Iletto,

acts that strike at the very values that define us as a nation. Now is the time for us to take strong and decisive action to fight hate crimes, and I call on Congress, at long last, to pass strong hate crimes legislation. It is time for us all to raise our voices against intolerance and to build the one America that our hearts tell us we can be.

NOTE: H.R. 3189, approved April 14, was assigned Public Law No. 106-184.

Statement on Russian State Duma Action on the START II Treaty *April 14, 2000*

I am very pleased that the Russian State Duma today approved the START II Treaty—a critical step toward the treaty's entering into force. This action builds on decades of cooperation between the United States and Russia to reduce nuclear arms and clearly advances the interests of both countries. Together with the START I Treaty, it will result in a two-thirds reduction in the strategic nuclear weapons that the Soviet Union and the United States maintained at the height of the cold war. START II will make our people safer and our partnership with a democratic Russia stronger. It will open the door to further significant steps to reduce nuclear arms and the nuclear danger,

a course that is strongly supported by the international community and has strong bipartisan support in the United States.

I congratulate President-elect Putin and his government, members of the State Duma, and Russian citizens who supported this giant step toward a safer future. I look forward to prompt action on the treaty by the Federation Council. Now, we and Russia can and must seize this opportunity to intensify our discussions on both START III and the ABM Treaty, so we can take further concrete steps this year to strengthen the security of the United States, Russia, and indeed the whole world.

Statement on Proposals To Reopen Trade in Elephant Ivory and Whale Products

April 14, 2000

I am deeply concerned that successful efforts by the international community to protect endangered species would be undermined by proposals to reopen trade in elephant ivory and whale products. We will oppose these proposals and urge other nations currently meeting in

Nairobi, Kenya, to maintain current trade restrictions. I am proud of the fact that the United States has been a worldwide leader in the protection of elephants and whales. We will continue our work with international partners to protect these magnificent animals.

Statement on National Youth Service Day

April 14, 2000

This weekend, as we celebrate the 12th annual National Youth Service Day, I want to recognize the millions of young Americans across the country who give to their communities day-in and day-out. They are rebuilding our Nation's schools and neighborhoods and sparking a new spirit of civic engagement. And they know that service is not the work of just a single day; it is the work of a lifetime.

In recent months we've had too many tragic reminders that young people pay the price when bonds of community and responsibility become

frayed. But we should also remember that our children are our greatest resource and that, if we are to build a stronger, safer Nation, we should begin by empowering young people to make a difference. That's why I am so proud of the young citizens who have served in AmeriCorps. And that's why I am so proud of the many contributions that so many of our youth are making on this special day. Through the leadership of young Americans, all of us—whatever our age—can help keep alive our sense of opportunity, responsibility, and community.

Remarks at a Dinner for Representative John Lewis in Atlanta

April 14, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for that wonderful welcome. I want you to know what I've been thinking, sitting over here. I'm sitting here thinking to myself, now that Reverend Lewis has preached—[laughter]—and Sister Battle has sung—[laughter]—there's nothing left for me to do but pass the plate, and that's already been done. The invitation was issued in advance; I'm just preaching to the saved. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you how profoundly grateful I am to be here, to be joined by John and Lillian and John Miles and the whole Lewis family; Governor and Mrs. Barnes; Mayor and Mrs. Campbell; Congressman Bishop; former Congressman Buddy Darden and Lillian. And

I want to thank Brock Peters; he's been a great master of ceremonies. And Reverend Belin also sang us a pretty good prayer, didn't he? [Applause] I thought he was great.

I want to congratulate Ray Strother on that beautiful, beautiful film. He did a wonderful job, and I thank him.

You know, John was up here talking about being 60 years old, and I was thinking about the first time I met him, when I was just a young man back in the seventies, held no office, wanted to get elected to something in my State, and was interested in helping a fellow from Georgia named Carter get elected President. And I remember John talking to me about all these stories we saw in the movie. Twenty-five

years ago, my eyes were big. I thought, one of the reasons I liked politics and one of the reasons I'm a Democrat is I can sit here, a 29-year-old kid, and talk to John Lewis about his life. If anybody had ever told me 25 years later I'd be back here talking about a distinguished 60-year-old Congressman, and I'd be President, I'd have thought they were nuts. [Laughter] But I'm honored to be here.

It's amazing how quickly time passes. I was looking at John Miles Lewis talking about his daddy. Didn't you think he did a good job, by the way? I thought he was great. [Applause] But Lillian and John and John Miles and I were standing up there getting our picture taken. And John was playing his daddy role, and he said, "I don't know about that hair." I said, "John, let's don't act like we're old." I said, "If I was 23 and I could have hair like that, I'd do it in a bird-dog minute." [Laughter] I thought it was great.

That's true. When John Lewis introduced me a few weeks ago in Selma and we were standing at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, he gave a beautiful statement like he did tonight. And then when he introduced me, I said, "John, the only thing you said I'd disagree with is, you said the President didn't have to be in Selma today." Because I did have to be there; because it was my story, too; because what was done at Selma before and after freed me, too.

And what I want to say—I had to be here tonight, too. I have loved John Lewis from the first day I met him. I would feel that way if he had never gone to Congress and certainly if I had never become President. I love Lillian. She and I were over here crying at the gospel singing tonight.

John Lewis and two of his colleagues—then colleagues—Congressman Mike Espy from Mississippi and Bill Jefferson from New Orleans, met with me in 1991 when I wanted to run for President, and they pledged their friendship and support to me when only my mother and my wife thought I could be elected. [Laughter]. And then he went out trying to validate me to these very skeptical northern Democrats. They sort of agreed with President Bush who used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. [Laughter] And I was so dumb, I thought that was a good thing. [Laughter] I was kind of proud of that. And then through all the dark days of the campaign, John was

there, and Georgia was there. So I had to be here tonight for that reason.

I had to be here tonight because without John and the many people in our Congress that he influenced, the prosperity and peace and social progress we enjoy could not have been achieved over these last 7 years. And I had to be here tonight most of all because, just as much today as 40 years ago, John Lewis' life reflects what I think is the central lesson we all have to learn about life, and that is that we find more meaning in compassion than in judgment, and we find more meaning in unity than division.

John has somehow incorporated into himself the spirit that elevated Gandhi and Dr. King, that freed Nelson Mandela of his hate and bitterness in spite of 27 long years in prison. He always says that one of his favorite hymns is "This Little Light of Mine." Well, his little light has certainly shined. And I've tried to make it mine.

And I say that because for all the good that's happened in the last 40 years, we still have a lot of bridges to cross. There are still a lot of people who are just as smart and hard-working as we are who couldn't afford to be here tonight because they haven't participated in our recovery. Then there are a lot of people who are here tonight, but they're serving our food. Their kids deserve a chance to go to college, too. They ought to be paid a decent wage, too. They ought to have access to health care, too.

And for all the bridges we have crossed, even in the last 2 years, there are people in this country who have been shot because they were black or Asian or Jewish, people who have been falsely accused of terrorism because they were Muslims, a young boy stretched out on a rack to die in Wyoming because he was gay. So we've still got a few bridges to cross.

But I close with this thought, so you know why I came here for someone I truly love. People ask me all the time, you know, "Well, what do you think your greatest achievement was? What do you think your biggest disappointment was? If you had one wish for America, what would it be?"

And if I had one wish—God came down to me tonight and said, "It's time to pack it up and go. You can't finish your term. But I'm going to give you one wish. I'm no genie; no three wishes, just one"—I would pray that somehow America could be infected, every single one of us, with the spirit that has animated

John Lewis' life. Because, you know, all of us, we get so puffed up with the importance of what we're doing and our positions. And I finally got so frustrated trying to reach people who were fighting with each other that I—I had a gift that was given to me last year, and I just put it smack dab on the table that you see when the Oval Office is on television, you know. And I'm there meeting with a world leader, and there's two chairs and two couches, and there's a little table in between. On that table, I have a gift, a Moon rock that Neil Armstrong took off the Moon in 1969. He brought it to me for safekeeping—only during the period of my service, I might add. [Laughter] It belongs to you, to NASA.

But it is this vacuum-packed Moon rock, and it is 3.6 billion years old. So when people get to fighting each other and they are just about to call each other names and they are just about to go over the top, and we're sitting there in the Oval Office—including me; I get angry, you know—I call a timeout. And I say, "Here, everybody. See that rock there? It's 3.6 billion years old. Chill out; we're all just passing through here." [Laughter]

Ultimately, the lesson of the civil rights movement was that what freed us is that the people who were oppressed—not that they got legal rights. It's that they got legal rights and we overcame past problems, and then they let it go, and they forgave us, and they were able to go on.

So many problems in the world today are still caused by the fact that we are, A, afraid of those who are different from us. And once we fear people it is easy to dehumanize them, and once you dehumanize them, it is easy to justify hurting them or not helping them when they deserve a hand up. And then it is a short step from there to violence.

The next big problem is that almost all of us at some point in our lives find it impossible to define our importance, our meaning, unless it is with negative reference to another human being or group. And there's not a soul in here who hasn't done that. You make some big mistake, and you say, "Well, at least I'm not them. I'm not like that. I didn't do that. We're not there." And I have spent so much time as your President just trying to get the Democrats and Republicans together to get over years of accumulated frustration and hurts and angers and perceived slights and the deep need that both

of us sometimes have to at least feel we're better than them.

I've had to send young Americans in to risk their lives for the freedom of Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo so that Europe has a chance to be free and at peace and we don't drift back into a world war situation. To try to stop the conflict in Northern Ireland or try to stop the conflicts and make peace in the Middle East or try to help the tribal differences in Africa get sorted out—every one of them is rooted in the fundamental fact that people have a natural tendency to define the pluses in their life in terms of the negative in someone else's.

And all those beautiful things John says about the beloved community, what it basically means is you'd rather hold hands than clench your fist. You don't mind being different from other people. You celebrate it; you enjoy it; you laugh about it; it makes life more interesting. But in the end, you know somehow, when you strip it all away, our common humanity is the most important fact of life on this Earth. Now, that's what John Lewis' life in public service represents to me.

So if I could do one thing for America, I would move us closer to being one America, so we could hold our trembling house down. But to do it we'll have to be more like him. We'll have to forgive all those people that beat us up, at least with words. We'll have to get over all of our—not just our perceived but our real beefs. Everybody here has got a real beef against somebody. Everybody here has been the subject of some unfairness, some piece of bad luck, some people's mean-spiritedness.

When you strip it all away, the thing that makes us want to be here for John tonight is not just that he got his brains beat out, nearly, 35 years ago for all our freedom but that he let it go. He's not mad at anybody. He treats people right, doesn't think he's better than the rest of us. He believes we can get more out of holding hands than clenching fists.

I wanted to come here tonight because America and the world need more of what is in John Lewis' heart. And for that, I am eternally grateful and full of love.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. in the Grand Salon at the Atlanta Airport Hilton and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to soprano

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Kathleen Battle; Representative Lewis' wife, Lillian, and son, John Miles Lewis; Gov. Roy E. Barnes of Georgia and his wife, Marie; Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta and his wife, Sharon; Brock Peters, master of ceremonies; former Representative George (Buddy) Darden and his wife, Lillian;

Rev. Roderick Dwayne Belin, who delivered the invocation; media consultant Raymond D. Strother, who produced and directed a brief film biography of Representative Lewis; and former astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Remarks on Signing the Proclamation Establishing the Giant Sequoia National Monument in Sequoia National Forest, California

April 15, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, and good morning. I think we should all be very grateful for the beautiful day we have. I know it was exciting that it snowed here last night—[laughter]—but I was watching Alexander give his fine remarks, and I was thinking that growing older has some merit, but one thing it doesn't have is the ability to withstand cold better. [Laughter] We took this whole walk, and there he is in his short-sleeve shirt, and he never flinched, he never shivered, he just walked right on. I want to thank Alexander for his remarks and for his example and the work that he has done and the other young people he has exposed to this magnificent grove.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman and Art Gaffrey. Secretary Glickman did a lot of work on this, and he talked about it in advance, and I'll say a few more words about it, but I appreciate it. Art told me he's been here almost 5 years now.

And I want to thank Marta Brown, who is, herself, a remarkably devoted and accomplished public citizen. I wish George were here with us today. I think he's smiling down on us, and I'm glad you could be a part of this. Thank you, Mike Dombeck and Jim Lyons. And I'd also like to thank my main environmental adviser, George Frampton, who runs our Council on Sustainable Development, Environmental Quality, for being here.

I'd like to thank the representatives of the Tule River Tribe who are here, who also cherish these great trees. Thank you for coming.

About 100 years ago, Theodore Roosevelt dedicated America's first national monuments. He said he was doing it because we couldn't improve upon our native landscape. In his words, "The ages have been at work on it, and

man can only mar it. What you can do is keep it for your children and your children's children."

Well, as we have already heard today, these giant sequoias clearly are the work of the ages. They grow taller than the Statue of Liberty, broader than a bus. They are the largest living things on this Earth, so perfectly adapted to their environment that one has never been known to die of old age. And as has already been said, many we have seen today are more than 1,500 years old. They began when America was not even imagined and Europe was in the Dark Ages.

Once these groves flourished all across the American West. Today, they exist only here in the Sierras. Our second national park was created in 1890 to protect them. Yet half the remaining groves lie outside the national park. And although sequoias on Federal lands are currently protected from logging, the environment around them must also be protected for the great trees to grow and reproduce.

That is why we're here today. We're looking forward to the first Earth Day of the 21st century, and I think the best way to celebrate it is to designate the Trail of 100 Giants, more than 30 nearby sequoia groves, and the magnificent forest that surrounds them, the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

These lands will continue to be managed by the Forest Service, as it once again embraces the conservation ethic that inspired its creation 95 years ago. More and more Americans are discovering our national forests, with places to hike, camp, ride horses, enjoy a few hours of quiet contemplation. Years from now, Americans will come here to do all these things, and these

majestic trees will continue, as John Muir said, to “preach God’s forestry fresh from heaven.”

I know there have been strong and sometimes conflicting views about the best way to manage these Federal lands. Secretary Glickman recommended that they be protected after careful analysis and consultation with the residents of the area, State, tribal, and local officials, and Members of Congress. The Forest Service will work with the local community closely to develop a long-term plan. We want to ensure that all of the interests are respected and that we help to bring jobs and opportunity to the area.

This is not about locking lands up; it is about freeing them up for all Americans for all time. We’re here because we recognize that these trees, though they live to be very old and grow very large, like life itself are still fragile. The roots are surprisingly shallow, and the greatest threat to the trees’ life is any disturbance to the tenuous balance between the tree and the ground that anchors it.

Thirty years ago next week, Americans celebrated the first Earth Day because they understood that we, too, have shallow roots on this planet and that our future depends upon balance among all living things. The story since then is a story of American progress to protect and preserve that balance.

Since 1970, we’ve cleaned up many of our worst toxic waste sites and waterways, cut toxic factory emissions almost in half. The American people have made environmental protection part of their daily lives. They have demanded that government and industry act to protect our national treasures.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities that Vice President Gore and I have had over this last 7 years and a few months to act as stewards of our environment. We have adopted the strongest air quality protections ever, improved the safety of our drinking water and food, cleaned up about 3 times as many toxic waste sites as the two previous administrations combined, helped to promote a new generation of fuel-efficient vehicles and vehicles that run on alternative fuels, launched new efforts to fight the sprawl that threatens so many of our quality of life. We’ve helped hundreds of communities to turn dangerous brownfields deserted by industry into safe, productive space. And yes, we have tried to protect a lot of our Nation’s precious treasures.

It seems to me that these last 7 years should finally have put to rest the idea that you can’t have a strong economy and a cleaner, safer, more balanced environment. And I hope we will never have that debate again.

On this Earth Day I would like to emphasize three things: first, obviously, this national monument; second, what more we can do to preserve the most beautiful places in this country for all our children’s futures. We have a lands legacy initiative to protect green spaces, from the most remote mountains to the nearest city park. This year I’ve asked Congress to provide \$1.4 billion to protect those special places, including nearby Dillingwood Grove, the last privately held grove of giant sequoias. I hope we get the money for that, too. But the thing I want all of you to understand is that if this fund passes, most of the money will go to States and communities to help them pursue their own conservation priorities, including communities here in California. It will empower people all across America to protect those things that are most dear to them, close at hand, on a permanent basis.

I’m happy to report that there’s strong bipartisan support for this. We had a great meeting last week at the White House with Republican and Democratic congressional leaders, and I think we’ve got a good chance to build the lands legacy initiative this year.

Second, we need to invest in the future of our environment not just at home but around the world. Tropical forests—where a lot of us would like to be right now—[laughter]—tropical forests are home to more than half the known species on Earth. Yet they’re being lost at the rate—now, think about this; we came here to save these trees—tropical forests, the home of many indigenous peoples as well, are being lost at the rate of 50 acres a minute. This year I have proposed a greening the globe initiative to help developing countries protect their endangered forests and better manage their natural heritage.

And all these efforts to preserve biodiversity are important. But the last point I’d like to make is, they won’t do much good—if I get killed by this falling ice—[laughter]—they won’t do much good unless we band together to meet the greatest environmental challenge of the new century, climate change and global warming.

The 1990’s were the hottest decade on record. Scientists say that the temperature rise is at least partly due to human activity, and that if

unchecked, climate change will result in more storms and floods, more economic disruptions, more permanent flooding of coastal areas, perhaps the entire flooding of island nations, and more threats to unique habitats such as the one in which we are today.

So the last point I want to make is, I hope all of you will help us to build a national consensus to cut down our emissions of greenhouse gases and to work with others around the world to use existing technologies to help them do the same. I urge those in Congress who have opposed our efforts to drop their opposition, to recognize that we now have the technology—and we will soon have much more—to cut emissions while continuing to grow the economy.

For example, we have the technology to reduce by 85 percent the amount of energy it takes to run a refrigerator. We will soon have cars on the street that routinely get more than 60 miles a gallon and new technologies such as fuel cells and biofuels to give us the equivalent of hundreds of miles from every gallon of gasoline. Just by changing the lights in the White House, I cut the power bills \$100,000 a year. [Laughter] And we put in a new heating system, a more fuel efficient roofing system.

If the changes we made in the White House were made in every Federal building, which I'm trying to get done, we would take the equivalent—we would reduce greenhouse gases so much it would be the equivalent of taking 1.7 million cars a year off the road. These things are out there now. They will generate jobs; they will generate economic activity. And it is profoundly important that all of us who think about these things continue to talk to our friends and neighbors until we build a vast national consensus for concerted action.

Now, I've asked Congress for over \$2 billion for this, to fund local, national, and international

efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, to fund clean technologies, to provide tax incentives for those who produce and those who purchase these kinds of products.

Now, before I sign the proclamation, let me just remind you that for over 100 years, beginning with the residents of Visalia, California, Americans have sought to save these giant sequoias. Earth Day brought groups of Americans together on a crusade to save the treasures of our planet.

Today let's remember, even here on the Trail of 100 Giants, the global village presses even closer upon us. We have to look within our communities and beyond our borders for allies to deal with our common environmental challenges. We're doing our part today to make sure that the monarchs will be here after we're long gone, rooted strong in the web of nature that sustains us all.

It has been a great honor for me to be here. I thank all of you who have supported these decisions. I thank you, again, Secretary Glickman. But I ask you, when you walk out of here today, remember that not every person can come to this gorgeous giant grove, but every person can benefit from our continued efforts to improve our environment and sustain our natural heritage. And we still have a very great deal to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. on the Trail of 100 Giants. In his remarks, he referred to Eagle Scout Alexander Reed-Krase, who introduced the President; Arthur L. Gaffrey, forest supervisor, Sequoia National Forest; and Marta Macias Brown, widow of former Representative George E. Brown, Jr. The proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters in Sequoia National Forest April 15, 2000

National Economy

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—inflation is becoming a problem again that's going to screw up the stock market as it did yesterday?

The President. Well, you know, I try never to talk about the movements of the market, but let me just say, I think the fact that oil prices

have come down will make a substantial difference. And whenever we have a strong economic boom, it puts some strain on the housing markets, but we have open markets, so new products will come in and tend to drive inflation down there.

The projected inflation rate for the year is still quite modest. And the projected growth rate for the year is still quite strong. So I think if we stay with our economic policy and the American people productivity continues to increase, as it's going to, then I still think we'll have a very good year. If you look at all the elements of inflation—the fact that oil prices are coming down and that open markets will inevitably lead to a dampening of the prices of the component parts and the housing industry—and that's why the experts say that over the year we'll have very modest inflation. And I think, you know, everybody that invests their money will tend to look at what it's likely to be like over a year.

So all I can do is try to keep the economy strong, and that's what I'll do. And I think the investment climate and markets will take care of themselves. They'll go up; they'll go down. But I think the long-term trends are quite positive.

Giant Sequoia National Monument

Q. [Inaudible]—who say the visit here is politically motivated and say you're trying to build an environmental legacy for yourself and the Vice President?

The President. Well, first of all, I think that when you can't win an argument, sometimes you just attack the person on the other side. [Laughter] The only issue here is whether we're doing the right thing. I have been doing this kind of thing for 7½ years now. I've been working on these issues. What I'm trying to do is to build a legacy for these children. And I think we did the right thing.

And Secretary Glickman worked very hard to preserve all the functions in this area that are going on, except the logging. And I believe there will be a net gain economically here, because we are protecting these trees for life, forever.

That's what I believe, and I just think it's the right thing to do. I've always believed this. I did this sort of thing when I was Governor. It's not something that I woke up last year and decided it would be a nice thing to do. I believe that.

And I think—we don't have to criticize each other's motives. They can disagree with my decision, but I think I did the right thing, and I think the future will prove us out right.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, what did you tell Janet Reno about the Gonzalez case?

The President. Well, we just had a conversation about where it is. We reviewed where the legal case was and what her plans were. I just told her that I strongly supported her efforts and that we clearly had to uphold the rule of law.

Q. Do you want to see this brought to a swift end?

The President. Well, we have to let the court cases be decided. But I think the main thing is—I hope that all the people there who say they came to the United States because we have freedom and the rule of law will observe the rule of law. When this thing finally plays out, in the end, the law has to be obeyed. And that's basically what we talked about.

We talked a little about the details and—she was the prosecutor there for 12 years, so she knows it very well. And she's down there working hard on it, and I think she'll handle it in as sensitive but firm a way as possible. That's basically what we talked about, just what's likely to happen over the next couple of days.

But the main thing—my message is simple: She has to deal with the day-to-day details, but the thing that we've got to do is to make sure that our laws are upheld and enforced. And in the end, I'm quite confident they will be.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 9:40 a.m. on the Trail of 100 Giants. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's Radio Address

April 15, 2000

Good morning. As we prepare next week to mark the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Columbine High School, our thoughts turn to the safety of our communities, schools, and children. All of us—parents, schools, communities, and government—share responsibility to keep our children safe. We've all got to do our part. This morning I want to talk about three steps our administration is taking to support school and community efforts to prevent youth violence.

We know the best approach to the problem of youth violence is a comprehensive one. That means students and parents, teachers and police officers, judges, counselors, and religious leaders all working together. That's why we created the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, to find and fund the best local ideas for preventing youth violence. Today I am announcing \$40 million in new grants for 23 school districts that have come up with innovative and successful strategies to reach out to troubled young people. These districts are bringing school nurses and counselors together to respond to warning signs like depression or bullying. They're improving classroom security and expanding after-school and mentoring programs. From little Arkansas towns to big California cities, they're making a difference in the lives of our children and our communities.

Second, I'm announcing new grants under our COPS in Schools initiative, providing more than \$60 million for police officers to work in schools in more than 220 communities. The vast majority of our schools are safe places for kids to learn. But any violent incident is one too many. This initiative helps to hire and train school resource officers to be a real part of children's daily lives, using the community policing strategies that have made neighborhoods safer all over America. Already it has placed 2,200 officers in more than 1,000 communities across our Nation, where they are heightening school safety as well as coaching sports and acting as mentors and mediators for kids in need.

Third, I'm announcing a new initiative to support counseling programs for elementary schools. The Department of Education has set aside \$20 million to fund local grant proposals,

because we have seen all too clearly that even our youngest children sometimes need our help. When I was Governor of Arkansas, Hillary and I helped our State to become the first State in America to mandate counselors for schools, elementary schools. We want to help all of our elementary schools who are willing to have the same sort of support.

Here at the White House, I've created a Council on Youth Violence to coordinate the work of the Federal agencies. We know the key to all of our success, however, is leadership in the community, at the grassroots. Last year I challenged Americans from community organizations, the media, business, and all walks of life to mobilize against youth violence. The result was the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, working to bring together a cross-section of citizens to keep our children safe.

Just this week in Memphis, the National Campaign kicked off a nationwide initiative to put the resources of business in the service of safer, stronger communities. They'll visit 15 cities and sponsor town meetings and media events, mobilize young people, school officials, business and religious leaders. And in every city, the National Campaign will remind each of us of our responsibility to do all we can to keep America's children safer.

Those of us who are parents have perhaps the greatest responsibility. We need to talk about safety and security in every house in America—beginning in the White House. That's why Hillary and I are sponsoring a White House Conference on Teenagers next month. We'll invite parents and teens, experts and educators to talk through the challenges of raising responsible children and the opportunities we all have to help our young people make the most of their lives.

The great American author and champion of human rights Pearl Buck once said, "If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." In our national struggle against youth violence, we must not fail our children. Our future depends on it.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:20 p.m. on April 14 in the Rayburn Room at the Atlanta Airport Hilton and Towers in Atlanta, GA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 15. The transcript was

made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Beverly Hills, California April 15, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Well, first of all, let me say that this is an easier speech for me to give than the one the Vice President just gave, because I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] So I was thinking, well, what should I say? And I asked Al, I said, "Is there anything special you want me to say?" He said, "Nothing special; just get up there and say, 'Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Gore.'" [Laughter]

I actually—and I will proceed to tell you why I actually think that's not an unrealistic litany there. Let me also say that the—

The Vice President. Note the amendment that I came back to you.

The President. He said, "Oh yeah, put Clinton in there somewhere." [Laughter] Actually, you know, I've gotten so gray, I tried to get Jay Leno to come in and give the speech tonight, but he turned me down. [Laughter]

I wanted to say to you that—I really, our friends over here in the media, they do a good job of covering this Presidential campaign. But they are obsessively interested to find even the slightest difference of opinion between the Vice President and me. And I discovered another one just tonight, when he was up here bragging on "American Beauty." Now, I loved "American Beauty." I love Kevin Spacey. I actually liked "Howard the Duck." [Laughter] And I just, you know, in the spirit of full disclosure, I thought I ought to make it. [Laughter]

I want to thank David and Steven and Jeffrey and Marilyn, Andy, and all the DreamWorks folks and all of you who are here tonight. I talked to Hillary right before I came in here, and she said to tell you all hello. And many of you have helped her, and I thank you, those of you who have done that, for doing so.

I want to thank you for helping me and Al and Tipper before, and in this election. And

I want to be brief, because I know you want to hear Sarah sing, and I do, too. But there are a couple of things that I can say that I think are meaningful.

It seems impossible to me that it's just 2 weeks away from—or 6 weeks away, excuse me—from 8 years ago, from June 2d, 1992, when I won the primary in California and knew I would be the Democratic nominee. And then it's 12 weeks away from the time when Al and Tipper and Hillary and I were in New York, 8 years ago, and we started this long odyssey together, got on a bus and started one of our bus tours.

Today I got up at 5:15 and went into the Sequoia National Forest to make the Grand Sequoia National Monument, to protect the remaining 34 groves of sequoia trees for all time to come. Now, that sort of thing I got to do today because Al's running, and I have more time to do those things. [Laughter] But it's the sort of thing we have done. We have now set aside more land under national monuments, the Clinton/Gore administration has, than anyone. I just loved it. So I want to say, first of all, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve, to make a difference. Because if it hadn't been for our friends in California, and particularly for a lot of people in this room, I am not sure we could have done it.

I thank you for the support you are giving to the Vice President and Tipper tonight and for our party. I'm very grateful for all the leaders, present and past, of the national Democratic Party who are here. And I just want you to think about three or four things real briefly.

First of all, when Al and Tipper and Hillary and I moved to Washington to the White House, to the Vice President's residence, we really did have a different idea about the way the country ought to work. We had a vision

of an America in which every responsible citizen had opportunity without regard to their income or background, in which every law-abiding citizen was part of one American community in a 21st century world growing closer together, not further apart, where America was the central force for peace and freedom and prosperity. That's what we believed we had to do.

And to get there, we thought we needed a unifying and forward-looking set of initiatives. Now, Al talked about that. The record speaks for itself. What I want to say to you is—*notwithstanding* the fact that I'm not running and, therefore, more prone to look backward than forward—that is, after all, what you hired us to do. When you hire a President and a Vice President, you hire them to win for America.

And America is always about tomorrow. And I want you to know that even though I am not on the ballot, in many ways the election of 2000 is more important than the elections of 1992 and 1996. Why do I say that? Because we have worked so hard to turn this country around and get it going in the right direction. And we are now at a point where as a people we could literally make the future of our dreams for our children—the stuff that the Vice President was talking about.

We could finally prove forever we could grow the economy and make the environment better. We could have universal preschool, universal access to college, and 21st century schools in between. We could really help people to balance work and family in ways that are not possible today. We could do more than we could possibly imagine today to make globalization and high technology work for ordinary people, not just the people that are paying to be here tonight but the people that served our meal as well.

And it all turns on this election. And the truth is, this election ought not to be close. And the only reason it is, is that elections are about more than records, qualifications, and issues, and because people sometimes lose their concentration when times are good.

I like the way things are going in this country now, but I'm telling you, things could be a lot better. Things could be a lot better, but only if we build on the platform that we're standing on right now. That's the first thing I ought to say. In the 2000 election, if you like the fact that the country's been turned around, you have to believe that the 2000 election is just as impor-

tant, if not more important, than the two that preceded it.

The second thing I want to say is—the Vice President can't say all the things he ought to say about himself. But in the entire history of the United States, no one who has ever served in that position has had remotely as much positive impact on America, as Vice President, as Al Gore has. Not even close.

And I was thinking about—he talked about all the hard decisions. I can still remember every conversation we ever had at our weekly lunch where he would say, "You know, I don't know how you're going to make these decisions, but I'm quite sure that decisionmaking involves some sort of mental and emotional muscle. It's just like working out. And the more hard decisions you make, the easier they'll get. So you've just got to jump off the board, decide what's right, and do it."

And when we made the decision to take on the budget deficit and we knew we could risk political destruction for it—because everybody in the other party opposed us—he was right there early. We made the decision to take on the gun lobby in a systematic way for the first time in history, to take on the tobacco lobby, to take on the unpopular issues of Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. He was there, always there, always early.

Yesterday the Russian Duma ratified START II, the nuclear arms reduction treaty, which will now enable us both to dramatically reduce our nuclear arsenals, in no small measure because he has managed a major part of our relations with Russia for 8 years now. And we just recently saw the announcement coming out of Detroit that we're going to have cars before you know it making 70 or 80 miles a gallon, running on dual-fuel cells. He has managed our partnership for new generation vehicles for almost 7 years now.

We have the smallest Federal Government in 40 years because he ran our reinventing Government program. I'm going to have this conference on the digital divide, starting in East Palo Alto, Monday. When we became President and Vice President, only about 3 percent of our classrooms were connected to the Internet. Today, over two-thirds are, thanks to the fact that he has led our effort to connect the schools and to give rates that the schools could afford, even the poorer schools.

So we are friends, and I am biased. But what I just gave you are not my opinions but facts. So, number one, it's an important election. Number two, I'm worried because people sometimes lose their concentration when times are good. Number three, he is the most qualified person in my lifetime to seek this job, I believe.

And the final thing I want to tell you is this: There are big differences. You know what they are. But if someone were to ask me to go back over the last 8 years and to look ahead to the next 8 years and say, "Well, what is the most important thing of all?" I would say, the most important thing of all is for us to keep striving to be one America. That's why I have worked so hard to try to help end the racial and religious and ethnic and tribal wars of the world, that the United States has tried to be a force for peace all over the world. That is why we have worked so hard for the hate crimes bill, the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," an end to racism, equal pay for women, all those things—because the American people are really smart. And if they can be free of the demons that bedevil people all over the world, we are going to do just fine.

I was in Atlanta the other night to celebrate John Lewis—Congressman John Lewis' 60th birthday. We were reliving the 35th anniversary of the march at Selma. And I was talking about John and how the most important thing that he did was not just to win the passage of the civil rights laws but to lead a movement to forgive everybody that had oppressed him, and in so doing, to liberate us.

You know, we are all—all of us are guilty from time to time of defining our importance in life with some negative reference to somebody else—"I had a bad day, but at least I'm not them. On my worst day, I would never do that and be like them." Not a person hasn't done that. But at least we've never made a political program of it in our party, and I'm proud of that. And I'm proud of being a Democrat.

So you've got the best qualified person. You heard him go through the issues, and you agree with him on the issues. We've got great people running for the House and Senate, one of whom I have a particular interest in. [Laughter] But you have to believe in the larger issue. You've got the chance to build the future of your dreams for your children and your grandchildren, because of the conditions that exist

in this country today. Therefore, this election is as important, maybe more important than the two that came before it.

And I'll leave you with this story. Al talked about it a little in his remarks. When we celebrated, in February, the longest economic expansion in American history, we got the economic team in. Everybody is patting themselves on the back, you know, and we were all feeling like we were smarter than we probably are. And I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969, when we were young people.

I graduated from high school in 1964. President Kennedy had been killed. The country united behind Lyndon Johnson. Inflation was low; unemployment was low; growth was high; productivity was booming. Optimism was rampant. Lyndon Johnson was clearly going to be reelected. And even though there was a serious civil rights challenge, we—basically, most people I knew felt it would be solved in the Congress and the courts with peaceful demonstrations. Even though we were sort of involved in Vietnam, no one I knew at that time thought it would tear the country to shreds. And everybody was just pretty casual about where we were, and we just took our prosperity for granted, and we thought we could get rid of poverty and everything else without a great deal of effort and concentration.

Four years later I graduated from college in Washington, DC, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was murdered, 2 months after Martin Luther King was murdered, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President again because the country was ripped right down the middle over Vietnam. We had riots in the streets, and within just a few months after the 1968 election, the longest economic expansion in history was history.

I say that not to be a downer, because I am probably the most optimistic person, congenitally, maybe even naively, and more optimistic than I was the day I became President. But I say that to remind you. We dare not break our concentration or relax our commitment just because times are good.

And forget about being President, I say this to you as a citizen: I have waited for 35 years for my country once again to be in the position it was in when I was young, to build the future of our dreams for our children.

That's what this election is about. That's why he should be President. You will never get a chance in your lifetime to vote for someone as well-qualified again. I certainly wasn't when I ran. You will never get a chance in your lifetime to ratify a direction and to accelerate the pace of change that is clearly working.

If you really think about it, you are not ever going to have any clearer choices. But when you think it doesn't matter, when you get tired, when you wish somebody wouldn't call you again between now and November, you remember the story I told you about the last longest economic expansion in American history, and

take a deep breath and bear down, because the best is still ahead of us.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:15 p.m. on the terrace at Historic Greystone Mansion. In his remarks, he referred to "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno; actor Kevin Spacey; founders Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen, and Chief of Corporate Affairs Andy Spahn, DreamWorks SKG Studios; Mr. Katzenberg's wife, Marilyn; and musician Sarah McLachlan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Gore.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Community in East Palo Alto, California April 17, 2000

The President. Good morning. I want to thank Mayor Wilson for making us welcome today. And thank you, Magda Escobar, for all you have done. I also want to recognize some other people who are here with us today. Reverend Jackson, thank you for coming. Carly Fiorina, the president of Hewlett-Packard; and Robert Knowling, the president of Covad, thank you for being here. Rebecca Lobo, thank you for being here. We're glad to see you.

I'd like to also acknowledge the presence in the audience of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo; the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Bill Kennard; and many Members of Congress—Representative Zoe Lofgren, Representative John Conyers, Representative Bill Jefferson, Representative Barbara Lee, Representative Silvestre Reyes, Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Representative Anna Eshoo—I think that's all the Members of Congress who are here.

I'd like to thank Gene Sperling and Maria Echaveste. And I want to recognize especially the man who helped us avoid the Y2K problem, a distinguished Republican Senator from Utah, Bob Bennett. Thank you for coming, Senator Bennett. We're glad to see you.

I'd also like to thank all the civil rights leaders who are here, the high-tech CEO's, the founda-

tion directors. And I'd like to thank Julian Lacey, who is here, for helping us kick off our national call to action for digital opportunity. I know that all of you know Julian. Thank you.

I want to thank AOL for webcasting today's event live. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to one person who is not here who helped us to develop our entire approach to closing the digital divide, Vice President Al Gore. I thank him as well.

Now, I will be brief because I want to get on to the questions. But I want to tell you why we're here. This is a very fortunate time for our country. We have the strongest economy in history. We have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates our country has ever recorded and the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. But we all know there are people and places that have not fully participated in this new economy.

I have been to a lot of those places on my digital divide tour—I mean, my new markets tours—because I see these places as places of opportunity, places of new markets. If we can create new employees, new businesses, new jobs, new opportunities, we can keep the American economy going. This is one of those fortunate times when, by doing the thing that is morally right, we actually help to keep America's economic expansion churning forward. It's going

to take the efforts of government, business, and the community sector to succeed.

This is our third new markets tour. When I leave you, I'm going to northern New Mexico, to the Shiprock Navajo Reservation. And tomorrow I'll be in Chicago, meeting with representatives of every aspect of the high-tech industry in America. I wanted to begin here in East Palo Alto, because even here in Silicon Valley there are many people who could be left behind, and because you're doing so much to make sure you're not left behind. And we ought to be giving a helping hand.

I don't think there is a better place in America to show what can be done to reach out to our children who are at risk of falling behind. We can see that here at Plugged In, at the Silicon Valley Project, at the new Cisco Sun Academy where graduates are virtually assured of good jobs that pay up to \$70,000 a year. In a few minutes, I will announce some other things that corporate leaders here today are prepared to do to help this city on the move, move even faster.

Let me just briefly ask you to remember the history of this community. A hundred and fifty years ago, East Palo Alto got its start as a community called Ravenswood. Ravenswood was a good candidate to become the last stop on the transcontinental railway, something that was very important in the industrial age. Unfortunately, plans changed, the railroad bypassed Ravenswood altogether, and it was a decision that had repercussions for the people who lived in this community for a century or more.

Today, we're in another time of fundamental economic transformation, but we can do it very differently because, unlike the railroads of the industrial age, the trade routes of the information age can run through every city, every town, every community. And in fact, the more communities they run through, the better it works.

No one has to be bypassed this time around. The choice is in our hands. We can use new technology to extend opportunity to more Americans than ever before; we can truly move more people out of poverty more rapidly than ever before; or we can allow access to new technology to heighten economic inequality and sharpen social division.

Again I say, the choice is ours. But I want to reiterate a point I made earlier. The truth is that doing the right thing will accelerate the strength of this powerful economic engine.

Every economist knows that new technologies will continue to drive rapid economic growth only if they continue to spread to all sectors of our economy.

I have made closing this digital divide a big priority. It is a big priority in our budget and a big priority for trying to enlist the energies of our fellow citizens. That's why I issued a national call to action, to enlist the support of businesses, State and local governments, community groups, foundations, schools, and volunteers. Already, more than 400 organizations have signed on to our call.

To reach these broad national goals, all of us are going to have to do our part. In addition to our \$2.25 billion E-rate initiative, which allows us to hook up every school and library in the country to the Internet, including those who can't afford it on their own, and our new \$450 million Technology Literacy Challenge, which helps to provide to poor areas the computers, the software, the teacher training, and the Internet access that's so important, I'm asking Congress for \$100 million for community technology centers like Plugged In, \$150 million to help train all new teachers to use the technology and the Internet in the classroom, and \$2 billion in new tax incentives for computer donations and contributions to our schools, our libraries, and community technology centers.

But the important announcement is the one I want to make today. Corporations in this area have committed over \$100 million to help you do what you do best. Gateway will provide technology training to 75,000 teachers, including every single teacher here in East Palo Alto. Novell will donate \$20 million in software for nonprofit organizations devoted to helping underserved Hispanic organizations. Hewlett-Packard will invest \$15 million in a new digital village initiative to help three underserved communities, starting here in East Palo Alto.

Qualcomm is giving back to the city where it's based, San Diego, with a \$25 million commitment, including \$7 million—this is important—to improve math and science education among all of our young people. PowerUP, a partnership of AOL, Gateway, and several other companies that brings technology to young people in schools and community centers, is going to expand from 19 to 250 sites nationwide. AmeriCorps, a strong partner of PowerUP, will assign 400 of our young volunteers to work at these sites. AOL is going to provide 100,000

accounts for use at these sites, a commitment worth \$26 million every year.

Applied Materials has pledged a million dollars for projects such as a new high-tech job training center for the people of East Palo Alto. And they are going to be in partnership with the city and with Reverend Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, which has an office right around the corner here. I promised Jesse I would promote his job site, too, you see, around the corner.

AT&T is committing \$1.2 million to support the Academy of Information Technology, which is dedicated to helping high school students prepare for high-paying jobs in the high-tech industry. Cisco will invest \$1.4 million to expand its Cisco Network Academy program to 10 more underserved communities. People PC has agreed to donate 300 new multimedia computers to the East Palo Alto Schools.

I want to thank all these corporations and all their leaders for their new commitments, and I want to thank Covad for leading an effort to increase minority participation in the high-tech industry. We are nowhere near where we ought to be on that.

Now, the commitments of governments and corporations are only part of the equation. The rest requires motivation, and that's what I want us all to focus on for the rest of our time here. Frankly, all the computers and software and Internet connections in the world won't do much good if young people don't understand that access to new technology means access to new learning opportunities, new job opportunities, new entrepreneurial opportunities, access to the new economy.

That's why I am very pleased that the Kaiser Family Foundation is going to create a major public service campaign to inspire young people to get on computers and get on-line. The ads will air on NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox, BET, Univision, MTV, the Cartoon Network, and other major channels. They will feature Magic Johnson and Rebecca Lobo, who will highlight new technologies and the fact that they're not only fun, they can open a lot of doors in life. BET.com will also air their own PSA's, encouraging African-Americans to use the Internet and participate. Let's give them all a hand. That's great. [Applause]

Now, let me just say this. I want to thank the people at Plugged In again, Magda and all the others. Places like this can change lives for-

ever. You come in, learn how to design webpages or set up networks or just how to use the Internet as a tool for discovery. That gives you the power to control your future.

I want to show you something. If you haven't done this, I want to urge you all to take a look at the classifieds from yesterday's San Jose Mercury News. There are 10,000 technology-related jobs advertised in this paper. If they could be held by every unemployed or underemployed person in East Palo Alto, this would be a better country today. So whether it's finding a high-tech job or serving as a teacher or just being a more effective parent, every young person needs to know how to use this technology. It will serve you well, no matter what you do.

Now I'd like to begin our discussion by asking Rebecca Lobo a question that I hope will help us to understand what's involved here in getting young people to actually commit themselves to becoming technologically literate.

A lot of people, Rebecca, across the country look up to you because you're tall. [Laughter] And they also look up to you because you're a great basketball player, a great human being, and therefore a great role model. They see the life you have; they'd like to have a career in professional sports. But a lot of kids have to find their stardom somewhere else. There are only so many people who can make it in sports, but everybody can make it in life. So I'd like to know how you would speak to children to try to persuade them how to become technologically literate, why they should master computers and the Internet. What would your message be?

[Rebecca Lobo, a player for the Women's National Basketball Association New York Liberty, said that children should follow their dreams and that access to the Internet offers a way to find paths to success.]

The President. I'd like to—is it on? I'm still technologically challenged, right? [Laughter] I want to ask Reverend Jackson a question. You've been involved in the civil rights revolution all your life. We were just in Selma together. When Dr. King died, he was moving the civil rights revolution to a new stage, the stage of economic opportunity. And you have spent most of the last 30-plus years trying to extend that opportunity to people who have been left out and

left behind. What do you think this new technology means to your prospects of succeeding at the work of the last 30 years?

[Civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson recalled that young America came alive in the civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties to achieve social change. He announced an upcoming Rainbow/PUSH Coalition conference in East Palo Alto to energize youth, parents, and churches to take advantage of technology and to close the digital divide.]

The President. Thank you.

I would like to ask a question of Carly Fiorina. One of the things that bothers me about being President is that I can—I'm a fairly high-energy person, so I can go to a place like East Palo Alto, and we can get everybody together, and we can get all these commitments, and people can follow through on their commitments. But I'm always worried that somehow there will be a gap between this moment and when people's lives really change. And I would like to know what you think it will really take for the information revolution to permeate this community and others like it, to the extent that we really will be able to guarantee equal opportunity to all these kids if they master the fundamentals of the information revolution.

[Carly Fiorina noted the constant war for talent in the high-tech industry and said the need for skilled personnel would continue because it was a growth industry with no end in sight. She said that information technology and the Internet could be the great equalizer and erase barriers of time, distance, and prejudice; however, without those tools, skills, and access, the digital divide would become greater.]

The President. Thank you. Let me just say—I just want to follow up on something. I want you to think about this. We're all sitting here talking about this, with 10,000 job vacancies being advertised in the paper yesterday in this area. If we don't do this now, when are we ever going to get around to it? Do you think we'd be having this meeting if the unemployment rate were 10 percent in America, or 10 percent in California? This is the time we've got to do this.

We're back in Washington today debating legislation about how much—not whether but how much—we have to raise the cap on visas to bring in people from other countries who are

trained in these skills. And I'm pro-immigration. I'm all for this. We've got to do it. We've got to keep these industries going. We've got to do the right thing. But I'm also trying to make sure when we do it, we get more investments to train people here to do those jobs, because you can do it.

And I just want to say something to the local folks here and to the kids who are here. You've got to decide whether you believe intelligence is equally distributed in this world—I do; whether you believe ability is equally distributed—I do. I mean, not for everything; I couldn't play basketball like Rebecca. But everybody can do something, and everybody can learn this.

I just got back from India, a country with a per capita income of \$450 a year. And I was in a poor village where I saw women who were almost illiterate—had never even been given the privilege of going to school—getting on computers, calling up their government's webpage, getting information about how to take care of their newborn babies in remote villages, because they had a computer with a good printer to take the software, give it to them, they could take it home.

This can change the way the world works, and it can save you and your children from having to wait 30 years to move into the mainstream. It can be done in a matter of months or a year. But you have to believe it, and you have to take advantage of it. And if we can't do it where there's 10,000 job vacancies in the paper, we will never get around to doing it.

I would like to ask Bob Knowling to talk a little bit about—to be more specific here. What kind of job opportunities are available for minorities, for example, who may come from poor homes or poor neighborhoods or poor communities, if they get the skills and the training they need? And what do you think is the most important thing they could do and we could do to bridge this gap?

[Robert E. Knowling, Jr., noted that the industry offered a wide variety of job opportunities, but women and people of color often got through the educational process and then did not get the jobs. He said high-tech businesses should stop merely paying lip service to diversity in hiring, and he hoped the next time the President visited, there would be only a few job vacancies remaining.]

The President. Good deal.

President's Use of the Internet

[Magda A. Escobar, executive director, *Plugged In Enterprises*, began the question-and-answer session with the community members in the audience, and a 9-year-old asked how the President used the computer and the Internet.]

The President. Mostly—let me tell you what, you know what I did? At Christmastime I actually ordered Christmas presents with the computer. I confess, I don't use it much for E-mail, but that's for very personal reasons. When I want to talk to my daughter, for example, I get on the phone and call her. If you work for the Government, you don't use E-mail very much unless you want it all in the newspaper. [Laughter]

So I mostly use—and the other thing I do is I try to find new sites. When I hear about something new, I try to get onto it. For example, when I learned that now up to 30,000 people were making a living off eBay—I'm always reluctant to give one company a free commercial here but—and that a lot of them had once been on welfare, I wanted to look at it and figure out, how were these people making a living?

So for me, I'm almost like you, I'm still trying to learn about all this, and I'm so interested in what its possibilities are. But the only thing I get personal benefit out of is shopping, because it's hard for me to move around very much. [Laughter]

Let me say, I also wanted to thank—I forgot to say something—I wanted to thank the Costaño Elementary Choir. They sang before I got here. So let's give them a big hand. Thank you very much. [Applause]

High-Tech Industry and Community Development

[Ms. Escobar noted that America Online was broadcasting the event live on the Internet and questions were being submitted from 17 locations across the country. She read a question about what students could do to attract high-tech industries to their area.]

The President. You should answer that.

[Ms. Fiorina answered that high-tech industries would go where there was skilled labor, where the education system continued to develop skilled labor, where the tax system was encouraging, and where transportation systems enabled growth.]

Reverend Jesse Jackson. Mr. President?

The President. Go ahead, Jesse. Let me just answer that question real quick, though, because this is important. People ask me this all the time.

The truth is, everything Carly said is right. Therefore, if you really want high-tech jobs in your area and you don't have them, you need to examine your school system and then get someone who understands all these factors that she just mentioned, to come into your community and help you develop a specific plan for all the changes you need to make to get it done. This is not something that can be done in a speech; I used to do this for a living when I was a Governor. This is about having a specific plan—what are you going to do; what's the list of people you're going to contact; who's going to do the work?

So if the students who asked me this question are really interested in it, your community needs a plan. And then somebody needs to be charged with carrying it out, and then somebody else needs to be checking on them to make sure they're doing it. It is like every other endeavor: You've got to have a plan, and then you've got to execute it.

[Reverend Jackson reiterated that many pockets in the Nation were fundamentally disconnected and in need of a combination of structural universal access, motivation, and access to capital for entrepreneurship.]

The President. I agree with that.

Any other questions in the audience here? Go ahead.

Future Technology

[A 9-year-old girl asked what technology would be in the future.]

The President. Well, I certainly can't answer that. Who wants to answer that? Bob, you want to answer that question?

[Mr. Knowling suggested that smart cards and smart chips would replace money, and devices for Internet access would become more mobile. He said that globalization would increase, and the Internet revolution would make the Industrial Revolution pale in comparison. Ms. Fiorina added that young people would help figure out the future, and technology would become personalized and nonintrusive.]

The President. I also think what you will see is that—two things—I think all communications, information, and entertainment systems will merge. So people will be carrying around things that are telephones or faxes or televisions, you know, calling up movies, everything else in one little thing they can carry around with them. I think you will have that.

And the other thing I think will happen is there will be a radical alteration in the relationship of energy to work, which will enable us to dramatically improve the protection of the global environment and generate a whole different kind of jobs than we've ever had before. I think those are the two things that will happen over the next 20 years.

There was one other—I promised the lady over here—that young woman, yes, I promised her.

High-Tech Industry Internships

[*The next questioner asked if the President would help the community's youth receive internships in Silicon Valley. Ms. Fiorina interjected that Hewlett-Packard's internship program had been successful for both the company and interns.*]

The President. How old are the interns? When do you start?

Ms. Fiorina. Most of them start at the end of their high school years and in their college years. I don't think we have interns much younger than 15 or 16.

The President. Let me just say this. Maybe one of the things that the mayor could do is to sort of scout the interest in the high schools of the community and then talk to some of the companies about it. I'll bet you could arrange for some intern or intern-like programs for kids in their high school years so at least they could be exposed to these companies and see what it is they need to do. And we could come out with something good here.

Internet Access in Low Income Areas

[*Ms. Escobar read a final question from the Internet about plans to help children from poor neighborhoods get access to the Internet.*]

The President. Well, right now, what we are trying to do is to make sure all the schools are wired. And when we started, only about 3 percent of our schools were, 1993. Now, we're up to 95 percent of the schools in the country

have at least one Internet connection, including 90 percent of the schools in low income areas. Surprisingly enough, some of our schools, believe it or not, can't be wired because they are so dilapidated, which is why I've been trying to get a school construction initiative passed through Congress.

This may be hard for you to believe out here, but there are schools in New York City that are still heated by coal-fired furnaces. In Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. And there are literally some of our poorest schools in our poor neighborhoods that we are physically unable to wire. But apart from them, by the end of this year, we should be at 100 percent of the schools.

Then what I think we need to do is to look at some of the things that have been done, for example, by Lucent and others in Union City, New Jersey, where they are trying to put more computers and Internet connections into the homes of first generation immigrants so that they can—the parents can E-mail the principals and the teachers and learn and actually having—my goal is—it can't be done while I'm still President, but I'm going to keep working on it—my goal is to have the penetration of computers and Internet access in this country to equal the penetration of telephone usage. That's what our goal ought to be. We ought to not quit until we get there.

Ms. Escobar. Mr. President, we actually have time for one last question from the audience.

Audience member. Hello.

The President. No, let this lady go, and then I'll take yours. No, this lady first and then you. Okay, go ahead.

Audience member. Hi, Mr. President. My parents both voted for you. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you very much.

Diversity in Science and Engineering

[*The audience member asked about programs to promote more access to science and engineering for African-American females.*]

The President. Well, I mentioned one of them in my announcement, but I think that beyond what we have talked about here, I think generally there needs to be a greater emphasis among young female students and among minority students on science, engineering, mathematics education. And we actually have some initiatives to invest in that, to do more outreach,

do more recruitment, get more people involved in these programs, to encourage more people to go on to college to major in these programs in the 21st century science and technology initiative that the Congress has. And I think it's about a \$3 billion initiative. I think it has very broad bipartisan support, and I expect it to pass.

But I think we need to continue to just work on recruitment and then make sure that the kids that are interested in it take the courses in high school they need to take to get into the college majors. But I hope—that's one of the things that I was talking about. You know, we don't have enough women or minorities in a lot of these technology fields. But there are a lot of other fields related to science and engineering where we need more. I was talking to a young woman yesterday, who is a classmate of my daughter's at Stanford, about that, in the engineering area.

I think a lot of it, too, is making people believe they can do it. You know, in that sense, there is a parallel to the—you know, a few years ago, we had a lot of talented women basketball players, but they didn't imagine that they could have a pro league that could work. But it does now, and so Rebecca has got a whole different life than she would have had if she had been an all-American college basketball player 20 years ago. She wouldn't have had the life she now has. And that's—someone imagined it, and then they went around putting it together.

And I think it's even easier if we could just get more talent into the science and technology and engineering fields. And I think the main thing is recruitment and then making sure the young women and other people who have been left out actually do the preparatory work they need to get into the majors. I think the companies will recruit them coming out of college if they get there in the first place.

Now, I promised this lady she could ask her question.

President's Visit

[In lieu of a question, the audience member welcomed the President and other dignitaries on behalf of the East Palo Alto community.]

Ms. Escobar. We have received hundreds of E-mails from students across the country. And once the President gets back, I understand he will be responding to them.

The President. Yes, we want to respond to all the E-mails.

Ms. Escobar. Great, wonderful!

The President. Anything else? Let me say to all of you—I'd like to ask you to give a big hand to Senator Bennett and all the Members of the House of Representatives that are here. I thank them for coming. *[Applause]* One of the things I've noticed after 7 years of being President is that the President gets to give the speeches, but if the Congress doesn't appropriate the money, it's just a speech. So I think their interest in being here is very encouraging, indeed.

I want to thank all the chief executive officers of all these companies who are here, because much of the work that will be done and much of the commitment that has been made today comes from them. So give them a hand as well. *[Applause]*

And let me urge you again not to get discouraged, to work on this, and to remember that as big as the challenges seem, there are other people for whom the challenges are greater. I will just give you one example. When we get to the Shiprock Reservation today, we will be at a place where only 20 percent of the residents have telephones. Now, you can't be on the Internet if you don't even have a line. The last Indian reservation I visited, the unemployment rate was 73 percent.

The one thing you have here is physical proximity, and you ought to make the most of it. I'm out there trying to figure out how to help other people overcome physical distance, from Appalachia to the small towns of the Mississippi Delta to these Native American reservations. You've got the proximity. These people showed up here today for you. And now, to some extent, the community, the schools, you've got to make the most of this. They want to be here to help you, and you can do it.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. in the parking lot at Plugged In. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Sharifa Wilson of East Palo Alto, CA; Julian Lacey, manager, Plugged In Enterprises; and Earvin (Magic) Johnson, former National Basketball Association player.

Remarks to the People of the Navajo Nation in Shiprock, New Mexico April 17, 2000

Let me say *ya' at' eeh*—[applause]—William Jefferson Clinton *yinishye*—[applause]—Irish *nishle*. I am profoundly honored to be here within the four sacred mountains, especially on Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day. I want to thank young Myra Jodie. Didn't she do a wonderful job up here? [Applause]

Thank you, President Kelsey Begaye, for your strong leadership. Thank you, Congressman Tom Udall; the vice president, Taylor McKenzie; Chief Justice Robert Yazzie; Speaker Edward Begay; members of the Navajo Tribal Council; Shiprock Council Mayor William Lee; and we have with us today the president of the National Congress of American Indians, Sue Masten—thank you for being here; to all the honored Governors of pueblos and tribal leaders.

And I thank the people who have come with me today: the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Andrew Cuomo; the Interior Deputy Secretary, David Hayes; the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Carl Whillock; and the person most responsible for working with you, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Kevin Gover—I thank him for all he has done; Federal Communications Commission Chairman Bill Kennard and Commissioner Gloria Tristani.

And I'd like to thank the people from the White House who are here, especially Gene Sperling, who put together this digital divide tour, and Lynn Cutler, who is my liaison to Indian country all over the United States. I thank them.

I want to thank four Members of Congress who made a long trip here today to express support for our goal: Senator Robert Bennett, who came from Utah; Representative Bill Jefferson, who came from New Orleans, Louisiana; Silvestre Reyes from El Paso, Texas; and Stephanie Tubbs Jones, who came from Cleveland, Ohio.

I want to thank my friend of more than 20 years now, your former Governor, Bruce King, and his wife, Alice, thank them for being here. Thank you. I want to thank the renowned basketball star Rebecca Lobo, who came with me today. And I thank Reverend Jesse Jackson for coming. I thank all the high-tech leaders who are here.

And there was one young man who meant to come with me today who could not come, a man I admire very much not only for his success but for the way he has handled adversity, Notah Begay. And I think we ought to give him a big hand. [Applause]

I also want to recognize two young women who are here, because they were in the First Lady's gallery at my State of the Union Address, members of the Navajo Nation and former volunteers for AmeriCorps, Christina and Justina Jones. Thank you for being here. I am very proud of them and all the other young Diné people who have served not only the Navajo Nation but our Nation as a whole as AmeriCorps volunteers.

Let me also express my deep gratitude to the Navajo Code Talkers who provided our—[applause]. Thank you, gentlemen. And I want to thank Senator Jeff Bingaman for working to ensure that you receive the national honors you so richly deserve.

All Americans should know of the exploits of the young Navajo men, some as young as 15, who enlisted in the Marine Corps in World War II, helped to develop an ingenious code based on your language, and became the communications link to and from the frontlines of the Allies in the Pacific war. One of our most enduring images of freedom is that of the marines hoisting the American flag over Iwo Jima. Well, there are many American military commanders from that conflict who will tell you that the United States might never have taken Iwo Jima or won countless other battles in the Pacific if it weren't for the bravery, the sacrifice, and the unbreakability of the code of the Navajo Code Talkers.

It is fitting that we begin this day by recalling their achievements. After all, there are few people in America who better embody the power of communication. In fact, if you think about it, the system the Code Talkers used has real similarities to the beginning of the worldwide network we call the Internet. Both systems were developed for sending information quickly, securely, and reliably during times of war. Both had the power to change the course of history. But there is a cruel irony here.

For more than 50 years after the Code Talkers were able to communicate with one another, over great distances in the Pacific, it is still hard to communicate between many parts of the Navajo Nation itself. In much of America, it takes just a modest amount of money and time to get someone on the Internet. But here, an astonishing 37 percent of the households are without electricity, about 70 percent without phone service, more than half without work.

I am here because I believe the new technologies like the Internet and wireless communications can have an enormous positive impact in the Navajo Nation. They can help you to leapfrog over some of the biggest hurdles to develop your economic and human potential. They can make great distances virtually disappear. They can be a vehicle for job growth, for education, for health care, for employment opportunities. They can be the greatest equalizers our society has ever known.

I know the Navajo Nation has already begun to see this potential, as President Begaye said. Here in Shiprock, the closest public library is more than 30 miles away. Yet, thanks to your new PowerUP partnership, children and parents now are able to browse some of the great libraries of the world simply by going to the Boys and Girls Club.

On the western side of the Navajo Nation, rural health clinics are now linked through computers to the finest medical specialists at the University of Arizona. Your new Navajo Able initiative, funded in part by the Department of Education, is providing technologies to help children with disabilities write and communicate on computers. At Diné College, even rural campuses have state-of-the-art computer labs, where students soon will conduct real-time teleconferences with professors all around the globe. But this is just the beginning.

Almost 30 years ago, when I was a young man, still a student with no money and no prospect reasonably of becoming President, for sure—[laughter]—I first drove across New Mexico. I fell in love with the land and the people. I had my first opportunity to buy for my mother and the girlfriend who became my wife some beautiful Navajo jewelry. Now, just imagine if all the remarkable silversmiths and weavers of the Navajo Nation could sell their work not only in local markets but in national and global markets as well. Just imagine if all remote health clinics were connected electronically to major

medical centers. Imagine if Diné could commute to high-tech, high-paying jobs in large cities just by getting on a computer here in Shiprock. Imagine if all your children had access to the same world of knowledge at the same instance as children in the wealthiest communities in America. The potential is staggering, and we have to seize it.

I am here today to pledge that the National Government will do its part in ways that honor your tribal sovereignty. Ever since I have been President, we have worked to try to empower the tribes of our Nation. I will never forget the day in 1994, when I had the chance to welcome leaders of more than 300 American Indian tribes to the White House, the first time this had been done since President James Monroe's administration, in 1822.

You know, when I was just a very young boy, I used to go to the county public library in my hometown in Arkansas. I can remember spending day after day reading histories of Native American tribes and biographies of famous chiefs. I remember once I read in the biography of Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé that incredible statement he made, "From this day, I will fight no more, forever." It was a noble, powerful, brave thing to do.

But as we all know, though many of your ancestors gave up fighting and gave up land and water and mineral rights in exchange for peace, security, health care, and education, the Federal Government did not live up to its end of the deal. That was wrong. And I have worked hard to change it. There is nothing more important to me than getting this government-to-government relationship right, but getting it right in a way that will empower you to lift yourselves and your children to fulfill your potential and your dreams, not a patronizing relationship but an empowering one, not a handout but a hand up, a genuine partnership so that your children can live their dreams.

As Congressman Udall said, I did ask in the State of the Union Address for the largest budget increases in history for new and existing programs to assist tribal nations. That is why I traveled last year to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the home of the Lakota Sioux. That is why I made Indian country an important focus of our new markets initiative.

Let me tell you what that is. I believe the only way to keep this economy growing is to bring economic opportunity to the people and

the places who have been left behind. More businesses, more jobs, more incomes means growth without inflation for the rest of America. People in New York City and Los Angeles and Seattle and Dallas and Atlanta and Miami, they all have a stake in your economic success. And I am here to bring that message to you, and through our friends in the media, to them.

I want to give Americans who have money the same incentives to invest in underdeveloped areas in America we now give them to invest in underdeveloped areas of Latin America or Asia or Africa. I want Americans to look first to people here at home who need work and education, who need technology and opportunity.

And there is no better place to begin than by bridging the digital divide. Our E-rate initiative, to provide discount rates to schools and hospitals and libraries that could not otherwise afford them, an initiative pioneered by our Vice President, Al Gore, and championed by this administration for years, has helped to equip every classroom in the consolidated school district with computers and the wiring to connect to the Internet.

My new budget provides a major new initiative to prepare Native Americans for careers in technical fields. It provides \$2 billion in tax incentives to encourage the private sector to donate computers, sponsor community technology centers available to adults as well as children, and provide technology training for workers; \$150 million to train every single new teacher on how to use this technology effectively in the classroom; and \$100 million to create 1,000 community technology centers all across the country, to serve all the people of the community—the old, the young, those in between, those with disabilities, and those without education, everyone who can benefit from tapping into this new technology.

And I want you to know that I am joined here today by private sector leaders who are part of our national call to action. Hundreds of organizations, including all 32 tribal colleges, have answered this pledge. And I want to highlight just some of the public and private commitments being made to benefit the Navajo Nation and Native Americans all across our country.

First, and very important, our Federal Communications Chairman, Bill Kennard, is proposing to expand the Lifeline program to ensure

that every Native American who needs it will be able to get basic phone service for as little as \$1 a month. In this day and age, when we want every American to have access to the Internet, we must first make sure that every American has access to a phone, so there will be a line to hook into.

Second, Native American Systems, headed by Robert Rutherford, a Choctaw, is committing \$100,000 state-of-the-art satellite communications to the Red Rock Day School, to provide equipment to 30 other BIA schools in other parts of Indian country. Tachyon is providing satellite Internet access to Diné College and the Lake Valley School. Give them a hand. [*Applause*]

Compaq will provide \$500,000 to spur the TechCorps schools partnership, which uses the Internet and TechCorps volunteers to help teachers make the best use of technology in the classroom. Four Navajo Nation schools participated in the pilot of TechCorps schools. Today I'm proud to say that this new commitment will make it available to all Navajo Nation schools and all K-through-12 schools nationwide for Native Americans. Microsoft will provide \$2.75 million in software and technical support for the American Indian Tribal College program, which will directly benefit Diné College. Andersen Consulting has committed \$100,000 to support small business in Indian country, something we need more of. We need access to capital, training, technological support. The capacity to grow small businesses in Indian country is far greater than anything we have realized to date. Healtheon/WebMD will provide valuable Internet sources to the medical professionals at the Indian Health Service facility right here in Shiprock. Let's give all these groups a big hand. [*Applause*]

I began my remarks today by doing my best to introduce myself to you in the proper way, telling you my name and my family's clan, in your language, as best I could. Well, it's true we are from different clans. Your ancestors were here on this continent, here within the four sacred mountains, long before my ancestors even knew of the existence of this continent and this land we call America. But my friends, we are now all part of the same American family. We are all related, and it is time we acted like we were all related.

We have never had a better chance to build the right kind of relationship. We have never

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had a better chance to build new connections between people, between cultures, between nations. The Navajo Code Talkers gave us one of history's most stirring lessons on the power of communications. They showed us in the most concrete way that our cultural diversity in America can be our greatest strength. And that is why we must do everything in our power to allow all Diné to lend their talents and their skills to the great enterprise of building our future together.

Ahe' hee doo hagoane. Thank you, and good-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. at the Boys and Girls Club of Shiprock. In his remarks, he referred to Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation, AZ, who introduced the President; President Kelsey A. Begaye and Vice President Taylor McKenzie of the Navajo Nation; Chief Justice Robert Yazzie, Navajo Nation Supreme Court; Speaker Edward T. Begay, Navajo Nation Council; William Lee, chapter president, Shiprock local government; Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture and Trade Carl S. Whillock, board member, Rural Telephone Bank Agency of the United States; and professional golfer Notah Begay III.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 2000 April 17, 2000

Warm greetings to all those celebrating Passover.

Each year, Jews across America and around the world celebrate this sacred holiday by gathering with family and friends to share a festive ritual meal and to retell the story of Passover.

As children read from the Haggadah, a new generation learns the ancient story of God's liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and of their arduous 40-year journey through the desert. By singing songs, reciting prayers, and sharing food and drink steeped in tradition and symbolism, children learn to appreciate the rich history of the Jewish people, the importance

of religious freedom, and the many blessings God brings to our lives.

This year, as families gather for the seder and once again tell the story of Passover and of the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land, let us all give thanks for God's grace in our lives and for the wonderful blessings of liberty. And let us pray for a future filled with peace, hope, and opportunity for all the children of the world.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a joyous Passover celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Internet Video Conference in Shiprock April 17, 2000

The President. Thank you. That was interesting. You did a good job, and I think your Navajo is better than mine. [*Laughter*]

Participant. I'd like to ask some questions, if I may.

The President. Please do.

Participant. Do you like working with the Internet?

The President. I do. I especially like it when I don't have to think, I can just talk to you. [*Laughter*] I don't even have to click the mouse.

I've got it on you, though, right on your hand and microphone. So ask me a nice question. [*Laughter*]

Internet Access for Police Departments

Participant. Mr. President, our—[*inaudible*]—police department is not connected to the Internet.

The President. Your police department?

Participant. Yes. They do not have 911 services. People die because police get their information late. If they had Internet, they could communicate with other police departments better.

The President. Well, we are trying to get Internet service throughout the Navajo Nation and, indeed, throughout all of Indian country. And I will—when I go back, I'm going to see whether we can do anything to accelerate Internet access, especially for police departments. But I think we ought to have it in as many homes as possible, as well. So we have to get telephone service out to everybody. And then we need to get the Internet connections.

But the law enforcement issue is a separate issue. And I will do what I can to speed it up.

Community and Home Internet Access

Participant. Mr. President, we are very thankful for getting the Internet at our school.

The President. Could you ask the question again? I didn't hear you.

Participant. Mr. President, we are very thankful for getting the Internet at Lake Valley Navajo School. How could you make sure the students keep the Internet for future use?

The President. Future use? You mean after you leave school?

Participant. For more than just a year.

The President. Is that what you mean?

Participant. Yes.

The President. I think the most important thing is to make sure that all the students who have Internet access now will be able to go on to college, if they wish to go on, when they finish school, and will also be able to have access to the Internet in their homes. I think making sure that we have universal telephone service and that people's homes will be able to be connected is the most important thing. The cost of the computers will continue to go down, and the technology will become less and less expensive if the infrastructure is there. So I think that, to me, is the most important thing that we can do, in the Government. And there are a lot of companies that are helping us try to make sure that you will be able to have access to the Internet.

The other thing I think we ought to do is to make sure that every community which needs it has a community center where adults, people of all ages can come in and log on and use

the Internet for whatever they need. And we're trying to set up another 1,000 community computer centers around the country right now.

Participant. Okay. Thank you. [Laughter]

The President. I wish you were in the press corps. They never let me get off that light. That's great. You heard what she said; it was okay. [Laughter]

President's Interest in the Navajo Nation

Participant. Mr. President, what is it about the Navajo Nation that interests you?

The President. Oh, many things. I'm interested in the history. I'm interested in the culture. I'm very interested in the creative arts. And I'm interested in the commitment I see from your leaders and your citizens and your young people to education and to using all this modern technology to try to give Navajo people, especially Navajo young people, the chance to fulfill their abilities and live out their dreams without having to give up their culture, their language, their heritage. It's very impressive to me, and I'm very interested in it. I hope that I'm able to help you. I'm certainly going to try.

Participant. Okay. Thank you. [Laughter]

Internet Access for Schools

The President. Let me ask you a question. What do you think the most important thing about access to the Internet is for young people? Why do you care whether you can use this technology or not?

Participant. To communicate and get more information, research projects.

The President. How many of the students who are there, not just you two but all the others who are in the room with you, raise your hand if you want to go to college. That's good.

One of the most important things about the Internet is it enables us to bring information that's available anywhere in the world to people, no matter remote where they live is. So, to me, one of the best things about this is the possibility it offers to give you a world-class education.

If you could change anything about your education and could get any improvement you wanted, what would you do? What change would you make, if you could do better?

Participant. Better schools, more equipment.

The President. Answer again; I didn't hear you.

Participant. Better schools and more equipment.

The President. More equipment and better schools. Anybody else want to answer that question?

Participant. [Inaudible]

The President. Okay, we got you in focus now. You can answer.

Participant. [Inaudible]

The President. I'm sorry, I couldn't hear. Say it one more time.

Participant. Internet access to all schools.

The President. Internet access to all schools, that's good. Right now, over 90 percent of America's schools have Internet access. And what we're trying to do is to make sure that 100 percent do, including all the Native American schools in the country. And we have gotten the cost of Internet access down low enough so that everyone can afford it now. So all schools should be able to get access within a year or so; we should be almost to 100 percent of the schools.

Would any of you like to ask a question? Yes.

President's Age

Participant. How old are you? [Laughter]

The President. I am very old. [Laughter] I'm 53. How old are you?

Participant. Seven.

The President. I wish I could trade places with you. [Laughter] It's going to be a very exciting life for you.

Any other questions? Yes?

President's Childhood

Participant. What is your favorite childhood memory?

The President. My favorite childhood memory? That's hard; I have a lot of good childhood memories. I think going back to the little town where I was born and talking to all my older relatives, listening to them tell me stories of my family's life, the way they used to live; talk to me about things in my past. I loved that. But I have lots of good memories. I had a wonderful childhood.

President's Visit

Participant. [Inaudible]—what inspired you to—[inaudible].

The President. I think, first of all, I wanted to come to the Navajo Nation, and I wanted

to come someplace that was a long way away from any city, because I wanted to make the point that the Internet can bring us all close together, no matter where we live, anywhere in the world, and can make available information. You've got those encyclopedias back there; you can now get all the encyclopedias, or at least I know one or two of the major ones are completely on the Internet.

And so I wanted to come to a place in America where I knew there was a commitment to education, and here this school manifested that—where I knew that the tribal leaders were committed to giving modern opportunities to the children, and that was a long way away. I also always wanted to see Shiprock. [Laughter] I wanted to see that big rock. But I got to—I took the helicopters that we came in today very, very close in. You can't imagine how wonderful it is to see it from the helicopter. So it was a little indulgence on my part.

Computers and the Navajo Nation

Participant. Why are computers important to the Navajo Nation?

The President. Computers are important to the Navajo Nation because they will guarantee that children who go to schools that don't have a lot of money and, therefore, can't buy a lot of things that other schools can buy, that live where they live in big cities or suburbs—whatever they can buy in terms of information can be given to you directly through computers, so that for the first time in history, a child in a district—no matter how far away it is, no matter how rural it is, no matter how small it is—can have access to the same kind of information anyone else can.

Computers are important to the Navajo Nation because they can connect people who give you health care to very sophisticated medical centers. And if someone here gets a strange, rare disease, you can figure out what to do about it through the medical connections. Computers are important, as you heard from this question here, because if the law enforcement agencies are connected to computers, if someone has an emergency they might have enabled you to save lives that otherwise couldn't be saved.

Computers are important because they can enable people in the Navajo Nation to start jobs and create businesses and earn incomes in a way that wouldn't be possible. For example, look

at all this lovely jewelry our heroine here has on. Now, if you could go to a local travel store—maybe I could do it while I'm here—and buy some of these, with the computer you can sell this jewelry without leaving here. You could stay right here; you could sell this beautiful jewelry in any city in America and in any foreign country in the world that is also on the Internet. So that instead of having—instead of being dependent on the customers that happen to drive by your store, which if you're up here may not be many, you can put—you can get on the Internet; you can make sure people know about your website; you can make sure people can get pictures of all these. They can see it. Then anybody anywhere in America or anywhere else in the world that's on the Internet can be your customer.

Computers are important because they can give you pen pals anyplace in the world. You can write letters and have E-mail back and forth to people in Africa or Australia or South America. You could talk to native peoples in Australia and find out how their experience is different from native peoples in the United States. It could change everything. Basically, they're important because they open the world of information to you in a way nothing else ever has.

Do you have another question?

Women's Basketball

Participant. What's your favorite WNBA team? [*Laughter*]

The President. Rebecca's team. Did you meet Rebecca? Whenever she plays, I cheer. [*Laughter*] Actually, what I'm supposed to say is that I cheer for the hometown team, because we have a team in Washington.

Now, you ask a question, and then we'll go back to the—

President's Birthday

Participant. When is your birthday?

The President. My birthday, is that what you said? My birthday is August the 19th. So this August I'll be 54, and I'll be really old. [*Laughter*]

Okay, do you have a question there, back in Lake Valley?

Next Administration and Native Americans

Participant. Yes, I do. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Good afternoon.

Participant. I'm a student at CIT, which is the Crownpoint Institute of Technology, majoring in accounting. I wanted to ask you a question about the new administration that is going to be coming in. What are you doing—

The President. You ought to be asking—go ahead.

Participant. Okay. What are you doing—the new administration—[*inaudible*]. And how is this going to affect the education of Indians here in the United States?

The President. Well, first, we have supported very strongly a tribal sovereignty relationship that would honor the principle of tribal sovereignty, increase the U.S. Government's investment in education and health care, but would basically be committed to empowering tribal leaders and Native American people all over our country to lift themselves up, and their families, through economic and educational initiatives. And of course, if Vice President Gore is the next President, I think he will continue that policy.

But let me just say this. What I have tried to do is to put this beyond party politics. And I have with me today a Republican Senator, Senator Bennett from Utah, whom I appreciate coming here because he supports the idea of bringing the power of the Internet to tribal peoples throughout America. And what we ought to strive for is a relationship with our tribes so that you can vote in elections like all other Americans do, based on specific issues and whether you like someone better than someone else, or you agree with them on their general economic policy or their general education policy or their general foreign policy.

And the reason I've spent so much time for over 7 years now trying to get this relationship right is because I would like it if it became—my policy became America's policy, and that every leader without regard to party would follow the same path. That's what I really hope will happen, because I think that's what's best for you and what's best for us.

You can only know that as you ask people questions and listen to their answers as the campaign unfolds. I can't make that decision for you, and I shouldn't try.

Participant. Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to ask you first—[*inaudible*]—my great grandfather is—[*inaudible*].

The President. Thank you.

President's Hobbies

Participant. Mr. President, do you have any favorite hobbies?

The President. Favorite hobbies? Yes, I like to read. I like to play golf. I like to play my saxophone, and I like to go to the movies. And I like to listen to music, all kinds of music.

Participant. Okay. Thank you. [Laughter]

The President. I have so many hobbies, sometimes I have to remind myself to work. [Laughter] But usually, the people who work for me don't let me forget that I'm supposed to work. So I also do a little work every day.

Do you all have any other questions, anybody else here?

Universal Internet Access

Participant. How are you going to incorporate—[inaudible].

The President. Well, the first thing you have to do is to make sure that there's universal telephone service. You can use a computer, but you can't be on the Internet unless there are telephones. At least now. Pretty soon I think wireless technology will—but right now we have to have universal telephone service. So that's what we're working on.

We made an announcement today that we would be able to provide telephone service to every household in Indian country for no more than a dollar a month, for basic telephone service. So that's important. So then we have to make sure that the access charges for the Internet—that you can afford to do it. And that's what the so-called E-rate is about. That helps public institutions like libraries and schools. And then it's just a question of getting the equipment in and having access to the software. And that's what all these great companies are doing. There are a lot of companies that are helping. And I'm trying to get Congress to pass a bill to give big tax incentives to companies to basically make Internet access universal.

And I think what our goal ought to be, in America and Shiprock, would be to have Internet access as universal as telephone access. That's really what my objective is. Ultimately, I think that it won't be very long anyway before technology will cure all this because you'll be able to hold something in your hand that will do this, that will give you—that will be the source of the Internet and television and movies and telephone and your own files and everything else. But that's what we've got to do.

The more we can make access to this technology universal, the more we will be able to make equal educational opportunities universal. And then, from there, we will be able to move on to making people's economic opportunity more universal. That's my goal.

Okay, do you have a question? Go ahead.

Native American Youth

Participant. In comparison to the youth of inner cities like Washington, how do you perceive the Native American youth as you visit different reservations?

The President. Well, they have their own challenges. By American standards, city standards, the unemployment rate in Washington is still fairly high, and there is a fairly high rate of poverty. But the unemployment rate is far higher on the reservations, mostly because of physical remoteness. The main difference here is physical remoteness.

And yes, you have a different culture and a native language that is different from theirs. But basically, I find young people to have more in common than you would imagine. Those kids want to learn; they want to have access to the Internet. I've been at schools in Washington, DC, that are just now being hooked up to—and where the number of computers and the number of trained teachers and the number of classrooms in the school building have doubled, and it's still nowhere near what I would like to see.

I think what I would like to see you do is to use this technology and have this kind of conversation as we're having with Lake Valley Elementary, with a school in Washington, DC. And then you could ask them questions, and they could ask you questions, and you could figure out for yourselves how you're different and how you're the same. I think you would like it a lot. And you might be surprised at what you find.

You know, when I gave the speech out here, the young lady who introduced me, who won a computer but then couldn't hook up to the Internet in her home—I don't know if you saw the speech, but she introduced me. When she was introduced, Congressman Udall introduced her and said that her favorite musical group was NSYNC. And I can tell you that you could say that about a significant percentage of the children her age in Washington, DC. So I thought, we're not all that different after all.

What were you going to say?

Internet Access Costs

Participant. I have a question. In the future, will the Navajo Reservation be able to connect to the Internet locally, rather than long-distance?

The President. Anybody here who can answer that? Somebody back there.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman William E. Kennard. What's the question?

Participant. I'd like to know, in the future, will the Navajo Reservation be able to connect to the Internet locally, rather than long-distance?

[*Chairman Kennard stated that the FCC was working with the State to redefine the borders for long-distance calls and thereby make it easier to access the Internet.*]

The President. I'm glad you asked that, because I never thought about it before. Good for you. We'll look into that.

Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

[*A teacher asked the President how he would assist families so they could maintain computer technology at home and still have enough money for essentials.*]

The President. I have two reactions. First of all, I think the basics of life are still, obviously, the most important thing. And one of the things that we have done a lot of work on—Secretary Cuomo is here, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to try to increase the stock of housing in Indian country. I think that is very important.

Now, the second thing is, obviously, to get computers in homes. Right now, we're trying to make them universal in all the schools, in all the classrooms. To get them in all the homes in the short term, we are going to have to have the help of people who will donate them. And if we can make telephone access, monthly telephone access available and affordable, then you will be able to have the computer. And then one of the things we will do is we will create several jobs repairing them for people who live here. It will create all kinds of new businesses.

The answer to the last question you raised is, I will be bitterly disappointed if 50 years from now we have to worry about how to maintain computer technology. First, the stuff that we are putting in now will be obsolete within

5 or 6 years. And I really believe all the lines of communication and all the sources of information are going to merge into a common, user-friendly technology within the next several years, maybe the next few years, that people will then be able to afford and access.

And what I am trying to do is to create an environment here where we can get investment in so that we can start businesses, create jobs, raise incomes, so that within a matter of a few years the income and job opportunity on a place like Shiprock—in a place like Shiprock will be much more like the income and job opportunities in any other place in America.

My whole premise is that the communications revolution is shrinking the meaning, the economic meaning of distance. We know it is shrinking the educational meaning of distance because you've got the Encyclopedia Britannica on the Internet, for example. What we're trying to do is to shrink the economic meaning of distance, so that people can live here or in the Appalachian Mountains or in the remote Ozark Mountains, where I came from, or in little villages they grew up in in the Mississippi Delta, which is the poorest part of America except for the Native American reservations, and still make a living.

So my whole—you've got to understand, my whole goal is to make this irrelevant. I will be deeply disappointed if two Presidents down the road—if a President doesn't come here to celebrate the fact that everybody is in first-class housing, nobody worries about nutrition, unemployment rate is no higher than it is anyplace else in the country, and the children are having a world-class education, and we're all on an Internet connection talking to people in Russia or China or someplace else. I mean, I will be really disappointed if that doesn't happen.

The whole point of this effort is to tell people that the children of Native America are intelligent, and they deserve world-class opportunities, and the adults are able, and they deserve a chance to make a living. That's the whole point of this whole enterprise.

Thank you.

Participant. Thank you.

The President. You guys were great. Thanks.

NOTE: The conference began at 7:09 p.m. in the lobby at Diné College on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Participants included faculty, students,

and guests at the college as well as Internet participants from Lake Valley School, a Bureau of Indian Affairs elementary school remotely located on the reservation about 150 miles southeast of

Shiprock. In his remarks, the President referred to Rebecca Lobo, player, New York Liberty, Women's National Basketball Association.

Remarks to the COMDEX 2000 Spring Conference in Chicago, Illinois *April 18, 2000*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Frederic Rosen, and thank you, Jason Chudnofsky. I am delighted to be here. I want to thank Director Tony Streit and the young people from Street-Level Youth Media who went on my tour with me over in the other part of the McCormick Center to see some of the new wonders of the information technology revolution. I want to thank those who have come with me here today on this last stop of this part of our new markets tour, including several Members of the United States Congress: Jan Schakowsky from Chicago; Stephanie Tubbs Jones from Cleveland; Silvestre Reyes from El Paso, Texas; and Representative Bill Jefferson from New Orleans.

I want to thank Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater; Federal Communications Chair Bill Kennard; Reverend Jesse Jackson; Bob Johnson, the president of Black Entertainment Television; and Gene Sperling and Maria Echaveste, who operate this program for me out of the White House.

I am glad to be the first President to address this conference, but I am quite sure I will not be the last. Information technology has accounted for about 30 percent of this remarkable economic growth we've had, even though people directly working in IT only account for about 8 percent of our employment.

What we have tried to do in Government is to provide the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of this phenomenal new era in human affairs. What you and people like you all across this country have done, have made the most of that—the balanced budget, the Telecommunications Act, doubling our investment in education and training, and dramatically increasing basic research, opening trade to new countries. And it's given us the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment

rate recorded in 40 years, poverty down to a 20-year low, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest overall unemployment in 30 years. That is the good news. And it was brought about primarily by this incredible environment and the gifted people who have made the most of this celebration of ideas and innovation and ingenuity.

But as Mr. Rosen said when he introduced me, what I have been focused on now in the last year-plus of my term as President is the people and places who have been left behind in this phenomenal new economy, and I have for two reasons. One is, I think that all of us would like to see every American who is willing to work for it have a chance to be a part of this astonishing new era of enterprise. I think, just on pure ethical grounds, we all sense that the American values require that everybody be given a fair chance to participate. But secondly, I think it is in our economic interest to do it.

You know, we spend a lot of time in Washington discussing, how in the world can we keep this economic expansion going? It's already the longest economic expansion in history, far longer than any other one that did not include a major war. How long can it go? What will happen? How will it come to an end? Will we really have inflation that will somehow bring an end to this long boom?

Well, it's clear to me that if we want it to continue, we have to do more to find new markets. New markets mean creating new businesses and new employees, as well as new customers. And if you do both, it means you can have growth without inflation. So this idea of closing the digital divide is good social policy. It's good personal ethics. But it's also very, very important for our continued economic expansion as a nation.

So I came here today to ask you to set another trend, to devote more time and technology, more ideas and energy to closing the digital divide, the growing gap between those who have the tools and skills and motivation to succeed in the economy, which you've come here to explore and celebrate and push the frontiers of, and those who do not have those at this time.

Now, over the past year I have been to a lot of these places. I have been to the hills and hollows of Appalachia, to the heart of the Mississippi Delta. I've been to Englewood here in inner-city Chicago and to East Los Angeles. I've been to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the home of the Oglala Sioux. I have tried everywhere to shine the spotlight on the potential, not the problems, of these places.

Yesterday we began our third new markets tour in East Palo Alto, California, right in the heart of Silicon Valley, because I wanted the American people to know that even there, there are a lot of our fellow citizens who are not yet fully participating in the information age.

Yesterday we also went to Shiprock, Navajo country, in the far north of New Mexico, and saw the vast differences, the literal vast distances, literal distances in this case that have to be overcome to build an information infrastructure that all of America is a part of. We visited a community living in the place where their forebears have been for more than 1,000 years. We celebrated the Navajo Code Talkers, who were very instrumental in America winning World War II with our Allies in the Pacific because they developed a unique means of communication. They transferred messages back and forth in Navajo, and the language was so different from any code or any known language that our adversaries in World War II couldn't break it. And it's quite ironic that a people whose major contribution to the modern world was helping us to win World War II based on unique communications now live in a place where 70 percent of them don't even have telephones.

I was introduced by a young woman, a 13-year-old young girl who won a contest—really a bright young woman, and she won this contest, and she won a computer. And she found that she couldn't get on the Internet because she didn't have a telephone line in her home.

Next week we're going to rural North Carolina to discuss the prospects of broadband communications and what it might do to open opportunities in poor, rural, isolated places. And then in a couple of months we will have a part of this digital divide tour devoted solely to the potential that web accessibility offers to disabled Americans to participate more fully in the educational and economic life of the United States.

Now, this is all sobering at one level, but increasingly hopeful to me, because I honestly believe that the new information economy has the potential, at home and around the world, to lift more people out of poverty more quickly than at any previous period in all of human history; and that tapping that potential is actually in our enlightened self-interest.

And that's why I came here today, because I need your help and your support, because now we've come through all these years of this remarkable economic expansion. We have finally seen even income inequality begin to diminish over the last 2½ years, as more and more Americans at the lower end of the income scale begin to fully participate in the economy. We have a very important choice before us. And only with your help can America make the right choice to make sure that no one is left behind; to use these new technologies to widen the circle of opportunity rather than allowing the digital divide to widen the lines of division in education, race, income, and region. I will say again, it's not only morally the right choice. It's not just good social policy; it is imperative, in my judgment, if we're going to keep the economy growing, to find new places where we create not only new customers but new businesses and new employees.

Now, I believe we've got to find the right combination of incentives and initiative to bridge this divide. The distances that exist are, in some cases, as I said, they're physical. They're also educational, and they're clearly economic. But on every one of these new markets trips, we have met people who are eager for opportunity. And like the young people here today who made this tour with me, they demonstrate that ability and drive and dreams are evenly distributed throughout the human race and throughout American society. It is opportunity which is still not evenly distributed.

Everywhere I have been, I find Americans who are not at all interested in charity but very interested in opportunity, not a handout but a

hand up. We can only tap the potential of these new workers, these new business owners, these new learners, if we work together. Over and over again over the last 7 years, I have found, in some of our most important endeavors, the only thing that really works is the right kind of public-private partnership.

I'll just give you one example. We have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years. The welfare rolls have been cut roughly in half since I became President. And part of it is the laws that have been passed, including the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which required people who could work to work, but also invested more money in child care for their children and transportation so they could get to work, and kept their kids in food and medicine while they were making the transition.

But part of it was this remarkable partnership now that numbers over 12,000 businesses, people who committed that they would personally go out and find people, help them move from the welfare rolls, give them the training, give them the support they needed to succeed. And these people alone, just the 12,000 people in our partnership, have hired hundreds of thousands of people from the welfare rolls, many of whom were difficult to place but have succeeded. No Government mandate could have gotten that done. If we hadn't had the public-private partnership, it would not have worked nearly as well as it has.

The Vice President has worked for more than 7, or about 7 years now, in our partnership with the auto companies and the auto workers on the new generation vehicle, and we put a lot of money into it. But we couldn't develop a car in the Government. And yet you see—if you noticed in the last Detroit auto show, they're showing cars that they expect to market in the next year or two, including larger cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon. We have research going on now into the production of biofuels, not just from corn but from agricultural waste products, even from grasses. And if we ever get the conversion level down to about 1 gallon of gasoline for 8 gallons of fuel, biofuel, and then you get in a 70-mile-an-hour gas car, you'll be driving a car that gets over 500 miles a gallon in conventional terms. That will change the energy future of America and the world forever and will prove something I deeply believe, that we can conquer the challenge of global warming and continue to grow not only our

economy but the developing economies of the world.

All of this has to be done in partnership. And that's basically what I propose for closing the digital divide and creating new markets throughout America. What we want to do is to be a catalyst, to provide investment incentives and the kind of framework and tools that will enable people in the private sector to do what is in their interest anyway. We believe that tax incentives and loan guarantees can leverage private sector investment in distressed areas, get capital flowing to people in neighborhoods it might otherwise miss, having basically nothing to do, necessarily, with high technology investment.

Today, if you want to invest in a poor area of Latin America or Asia or Africa, we have a framework set up that could get you a combination of tax breaks and loan guarantees to lower the risk of doing that. Why? Because we think that we have an obligation as Americans to help poor people around the world develop stable lives. We know it promotes democracy; it promotes peace; it promotes environmental cleanup; it undermines the destabilizing forces at work in the world. All I'm trying to do, in terms of the law, is to give Americans who have money to invest the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them today to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia. I think that's the right thing to do.

Last fall the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert, and I came here to Chicago, met with Reverend Jackson and Congressman Bobby Rush and others, and we pledged to work together on a bipartisan initiative to spur investments in new markets. We are making real progress on our end of the deal. The House of Representatives took a very important step last week toward creating the American Private Investment Companies that I've proposed to spur as much as \$1.5 billion in private investment in our hard-pressed communities. Now, I understand Speaker Hastert is going to be with you tomorrow, and I think you will see, if this is part of the discussion, that his commitment is genuine. This should not be a partisan issue.

Every American—Republican, Democrat, independent, Green Party member, whatever—every American has got a vested interest in seeing that every other American has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential.

So this is very, very important. And the main thing that we want to do with this portion of the new markets initiative is to make sure that we can get some investment in areas where people literally are isolated, where we need local, community-based investment because you can't just say, "Well, we'll give them an education. They can hop on the subway or get in their car and drive to a job." But we also have to have a comprehensive approach that gives individuals the ability to bridge the digital divide, to create businesses which are far distant because technology permits them to overcome distances, and to get the education and training they need in the first place to succeed.

Now, what have we done in that? Well, when the Congress adopted the Telecommunications Act a few years ago, we insisted—the Vice President and I did—on something called the E-rate, the power of the Federal Communications Commission to set the E-rate. It is now worth over \$2 billion, and it gives discounts to schools, to libraries, public institutions, so they can afford to be a part of the Internet. And it's had a huge impact.

When I became President, only 3 percent of our classrooms, about 11 percent of our schools, were connected to the Internet. We've been working on this hard, now, for 6 years. Today, over two-thirds of our classrooms and 95 percent of our schools are connected, including 90 percent of very poor schools. And we'll be, by the end of the year, we'll probably be at 100 percent of the schools connected, except for those whose physical facilities are literally in too much disrepair to have a connection.

I know that may be hard for some of you to believe, but it's true. We have cities where the average school building is 65 years of age or more. We have—there are schools in New York City that are still heated by coal-fired furnaces. But by and large, this E-rate has really worked.

We have a \$450 million technology literacy challenge, which is designed to make sure that we try to match contributions from others who put technology into our schools. Our budget offers \$2 billion in new tax incentives to help bridge the digital divide, to get the technology into the schools and into the rural communities, into community computing centers. And things like that can be available to adults as well as children.

We provide \$150 million to train new teachers to use technology in the classroom, so that they aren't repeatedly embarrassed by their students knowing more than they do, and so that they can actually make the most of it; and \$100 million to create more technology centers in 1,000 communities across the country.

Today I can tell you that 214 of these community technology centers will be created this year alone and 136 more will be expanded. These are very important because they are not only available to young people but also to adults who can use such centers after work and themselves acquire these skills. It's very, very important that we recognize that this cannot be solely the province of the school years. We have got to do more to bring adults who have been left on the other side of the digital divide into the economic mainstream. We are going to expand our investment in these centers by about \$86 million from State, local, private, and Federal sources together.

Not far from here, on Chicago's West Side, is one of these centers. I mentioned the young people I met today from there, at Street-Level Youth Media. They spend a lot of their time there. They are here in this audience today. They can access the Internet and a lot more. They can have classes in website design, projects in video production, and, most important, the chance to apply their skills in real work for real wages. Every child in America should have this opportunity, and we are trying to give it to every child in America.

If the budget passes, we will have 1,000 of these neighborhood networks next year. That is double the number we have now in the country. These computer learning centers are the fruit of public-private partnership under the leadership of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. They have already helped residents of some of our poorest neighborhoods move from welfare to work, increase their earnings, even start their own businesses.

One of the things that is totally unappreciated about the nature of the Internet revolution is the extent to which it gives people who are otherwise completely out of the economic mainstream, who could never have access to the kind of up-front capital it would take to start a traditional business and rent a big office space, the chance to actually earn money on the net. The first time I discovered this was when some of my friends at eBay told me that they now have

30,000 people making a living off eBay—not working for the company but making a living buying and selling and trading—and that the profiles indicated to them that a very substantial number of these people had previously been on welfare.

So again I will say, if you believe that there is an equal distribution of intelligence, ability, and dreams throughout the population, and if you have seen in your own lives what this has done for you and for this economy, it seems to me that closing the digital divide is one of the most important things we could do that would have the quickest results in alleviating the kind of poverty which is inexcusable in the kind of economy we're experiencing today.

Let me also say that—I made a joke about it earlier, but I think the idea of having teachers who are really able to make the most of technology in the classroom and teach their students is something that's very important. Everybody I have ever worked with on this in the last several years, all the heads of all the companies that have tried to really help our schools continue to hammer this.

I got a letter from the deans of more than 200 colleges and universities, pledging to join in that effort, holding themselves responsible for results, being willing to test their progress with a tool designed by the CEO Forum on Education and Technology, a forum that includes a lot of the companies that are represented in this auditorium today. But this is a big deal. This is a serious commitment that we haven't had in the past. And I want to thank the Forum on Education and Technology and these 200 deans for what they want to do to train our teachers.

But this is just the start. So here is what I came to do, really. I want to ask you to do the following things. First of all, if you are not already a part of it, I hope that the companies, everyone represented here from the largest to the smallest, would support our national call to action, which I issued 2 weeks ago. Its basic goals are to provide 21st century learning tools for every child in every school and to create digital opportunity for every family and every community.

I have asked for businesses and schools and community groups and volunteers to enlist in the effort. More than 400 organizations have signed on in the first 2 weeks, and they are already doing amazing things. Many of you have

been working at this for some years now, to help in education and in economic development. But if you are not part of this, I hope you will become part of this. I hope you will do more than sign a pledge. I hope you will commit to fulfill it.

I want you all to ask if there is anything you are not doing that you could do to give our schools computers and high-speed connections, to design the educational software our children need to succeed, to make sure our teachers are as comfortable in front of a computer as in front of a chalkboard. Again I say, many companies are leading this effort today, but we need more. The biggest problem in American education and the biggest problem in combating poverty and creating economic opportunity is not that there are no good ideas. Every problem in American education today has been solved by somebody somewhere.

I remember when I started running for President and I was coming to Chicago, there was a woman here from my home State of Arkansas who was principal of a junior high school that was in a neighborhood with the highest murder rate in the State of Illinois. And you had to ask to get into this junior high school. They had 150 mothers and 75 fathers in that school every week. They had a strict no-weapons policy; if you had one, you were history. They had a zero dropout rate. The kids went on to high school and did well, and a phenomenal percentage of them went on to college. And I could give you lots of examples like that.

The problem we have—and in terms of closing the digital divide and education and economics, there are examples everywhere. The problem we have in America with social change is getting things to scale, is reaching a critical mass of people. That's why I came here today. This is a critical mass of the IT community. And you need to reach a critical mass of the at-risk kids and the communities where economic and educational opportunities are needed to close the digital divide.

The second thing I want to ask you to do, so that today's students can become tomorrow's success stories, is to expand internships and to deepen your talent pool. I just received a survey that I read just the day before yesterday indicating that, even making allowances for differences in education, women and minorities are still comparatively underrepresented in most IT occupations. We can do a lot to close the digital

divide just by equalizing the representation once people do have the education and skills they need.

The third thing I would like to ask you to do is to recognize, as I said before, there is a limit to what the Federal Government can do. I intend to set up a framework and to try to provide the necessary tools and to generate as much activity as I can. But we need more partnerships at the local level with the schools, with the local communities, with the local community groups, and with local government. I think you will find that if you are not involved in this kind of work, there is more interest in it than ever before, and people are eager for help.

If we work together, we can empower people with the tools and the training they need to lift themselves out of poverty. If we work together, we can give people the ability to use new technology to start new businesses. If we work together, we can close the digital divide and open digital opportunities.

I am asking you to do this because you can. I am asking you to do this because it's right. And I am asking you to do this because America needs it to have a continually growing economy.

The productivity increases generated by information technology in the IT companies themselves, and then through application throughout the economy, is what has enabled us to continue to grow at 4 percent and to keep inflation down. I am doing my best to open new markets around the world and to keep our markets open, which helps to keep inflation down and to grow. But the best opportunity we have are all those people out there that are dying to be part of what the rest of us may take for granted.

And I can tell you, I have lived longer than most people who do very well in the work that you do. Our country has never had an economy

like this. The last time we had anything close was in the 1960's. It came apart over the competing claims and crises in civil rights and the war in Vietnam and the attempt to finance all that and deal with the problems of the poor. I see a lot of people who are gray-headed like me out there nodding their heads.

And when it happened, when I grew up in it, I thought that economy would last forever. I just took it for granted that we were the most productive economy in the world; we were going to win the cold war; we'd solve the civil rights problems in the courts and the Congress, and everything would be hunky-dory. And then boom, one day it was gone.

And I've waited 35 years, as a citizen, for our country to have the chance to give all our people the future of our dreams for our children. That's the chance we've got now. And I know you're very busy. I know you have a lot of other things to do, but I don't know how many years we'll ever have to wait again until a moment like this comes along.

I can't do it alone. The Federal Government can't do it alone. But if we all do it together, there is nothing we can't do. We will never, ever, ever have a better chance, and, therefore, a more profound responsibility, to close the digital divide.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Arie Crown Theater at the McCormick Place Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Frederic D. Rosen, chairman, Key3Media Group, Inc., who introduced the President; Jason Chudnofsky, president, SOFTBANK COMDEX, Inc.; Tony Streit, administrative director, Street-Level Youth Media; Rev. Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist; and Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation, AZ.

Statement on the Community Reinvestment Act Report

April 19, 2000

Ensuring that all Americans have an opportunity to share in our Nation's economic prosperity has been at the core of my administration's domestic agenda. We have made progress, but there is much more that we can do to

extend the benefits of the vibrant American economy, including our innovative financial markets, to all Americans.

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) is central to that goal. Early in my administration,

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I asked the Federal banking regulators to revise the regulations implementing CRA to focus on the performance of banks and thrifts in serving the credit needs of their local communities. Since 1993, banks and thrifts have pledged to make over \$1 trillion in home mortgage, small business, and community development loans for low and moderate income neighborhoods and borrowers. This report documents that since 1993 banks and thrifts have already made well over \$600 billion of such types of loans. Today, credit is more widely available than ever before for Americans who wish to borrow to buy a house or start a business. Our success in democratizing access to credit under this administration is an historic achievement, but we cannot rest.

The financial modernization legislation that I signed into law last fall allows the integration of banking, insurance, and securities industries. In itself, this modernization should benefit consumers due to enhanced competition and innovative products and services. However, we also took a strong stand on protecting CRA, and we insisted on retaining CRA as a key pillar

in the new banking system. We would not agree with those who attempted to weaken the CRA obligations of banks and thrifts in this process. Our determination resulted in the new requirement that a bank or thrift must have at least a satisfactory CRA rating each and every time it expands into these newly authorized lines of business. This is the first time CRA will be taken into consideration outside traditional bank merger and branch opening activities.

We must remain watchful to ensure that, as we modernize our financial system, it works for all Americans. The Treasury Department's baseline report on CRA will serve as a useful guidepost in assessing how far we have come and what remains to be done. The report will also provide a benchmark against which to assess changes in access to credit and financial services as the industry continues to evolve in the years ahead.

NOTE: The Treasury Department report was entitled "The Community Reinvestment Act After Financial Modernization: A Baseline Report."

Memorandum on International Education Policy

April 19, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: International Education Policy

To continue to compete successfully in the global economy and to maintain our role as a world leader, the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages, and knowledge of other cultures. America's leadership also depends on building ties with those who will guide the political, cultural, and economic development of their countries in the future. A coherent and coordinated international education strategy will help us meet the twin challenges of preparing our citizens for a global environment while continuing to attract and educate future leaders from abroad.

Since World War II, the Federal Government, in partnership with institutions of higher education and other educational organizations, has sponsored programs to help Americans gain the

international experience and skills they will need to meet the challenges of an increasingly interdependent world. During this same period, our colleges and universities have developed an educational system whose reputation attracts students from all over the world. But our work is not done. Today, the defense of U.S. interests, the effective management of global issues, and even an understanding of our Nation's diversity require ever-greater contact with, and understanding of, people and cultures beyond our borders.

We are fortunate to count among our staunchest friends abroad those who have experienced our country and our values through in-depth exposure as students and scholars. The nearly 500,000 international students now studying in the United States at the postsecondary level not only contribute some \$9 billion annually to our economy, but also enrich our communities with their cultures, while developing a

lifelong appreciation for ours. The goodwill these students bear for our country will in the future constitute one of our greatest foreign policy assets.

It is the policy of the Federal Government to support international education. We are committed to:

- encouraging students from other countries to study in the United States;
- promoting study abroad by U.S. students;
- supporting the exchange of teachers, scholars, and citizens at all levels of society;
- enhancing programs at U.S. institutions that build international partnerships and expertise;
- expanding high-quality foreign language learning and in-depth knowledge of other cultures by Americans;
- preparing and supporting teachers in their efforts to interpret other countries and cultures for their students; and
- advancing new technologies that aid the spread of knowledge throughout the world.

The Federal Government cannot accomplish these goals alone. Educational institutions, State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the business community all must contribute to this effort. Together, we must increase and broaden our commitment. Therefore, I direct the heads of executive departments and agencies, working in partnership with the private sector, to take the following actions:

1) The Secretaries of State and Education shall support the efforts of schools and colleges to improve access to high-quality international educational experiences by increasing the number and diversity of students who study and intern abroad, encouraging students and institutions to choose nontraditional study-abroad locations, and helping under-represented U.S. institutions offer and promote study-abroad opportunities for their students.

2) The Secretaries of State and Education, in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, shall identify steps to attract qualified post-secondary students from overseas to the United States, including improving the availability of accurate information overseas about U.S. educational opportunities.

3) The heads of agencies, including the Secretaries of State and Education, and others as appropriate, shall review the effect of U.S. Government actions on the international flow of stu-

dents and scholars as well as on citizen and professional exchanges, and take steps to address unnecessary obstacles, including those involving visa and tax regulations, procedures, and policies.

4) The Secretaries of State and Education shall support the efforts of State and local governments and educational institutions to promote international awareness and skills in the classroom and on campuses. Such efforts include strengthening foreign language learning at all levels, including efforts to achieve bi-literacy, helping teachers acquire the skills needed to understand and interpret other countries and cultures for their students, increasing opportunities for the exchange of faculty, administrators, and students, and assisting educational institutions in other countries to strengthen their teaching of English.

5) The Secretaries of State and Education and the heads of other agencies shall take steps to ensure that international educational exchange programs, including the Fulbright program, are coordinated through the Interagency Working Group on United States Government-Sponsored International Exchange and Training, to maximize existing resources in a nonduplicative way, and to ensure that the exchange programs receive the support they need to fulfill their mission of increased mutual understanding.

6) The Secretary of Education, in cooperation with other agencies, shall continue to support efforts to improve U.S. education by developing comparative information, including benchmarks, on educational performance and practices. The Secretary of Education shall also share U.S. educational expertise with other countries.

7) The Secretaries of State and Education shall strengthen and expand models of international exchange that build lasting cross-national partnerships among educational institutions with common interests and complementary objectives.

8) The Secretary of Education and the heads of other agencies, in partnership with State governments, academic institutions, and the business community, shall strengthen programs that build international expertise in U.S. institutions, with the goal of making international education an integral component of U.S. undergraduate education and, through graduate and professional training and research, enhancing the Nation's capacity to produce the international and

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foreign-language expertise necessary for U.S. global leadership and security.

9) The Secretaries of State and Education, in cooperation with other agencies, the academic community, and the private sector, shall promote wise use of technology internationally, examining the implications of borderless education. The heads of agencies shall take steps to ensure that the opportunities for using technology to expand international education do not result in a widening of the digital divide.

10) The Secretaries of State and Education, in conjunction with other agencies, shall ensure that actions taken in response to this memorandum are fully integrated into the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) framework by means of specific goals, milestones, and measurable results, which shall be

included in all GPRA reporting activities, including strategic plans, performance plans, and program performance reports.

Items 1–10 of this memorandum shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations, consistent with the agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.

The Vice President shall coordinate the U.S. Government's international education strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in carrying out the terms of this memorandum.

This memorandum is a statement of general policy and does not confer a private right of action on any individual or group.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation

April 19, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required under section 601(a) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978, as amended (Public Law 95–242, 22 U.S.C. 3281(a)), I am transmitting a report on the United States Government's efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The report covers activities between January 1, 1998, and December 31, 1998.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the Oklahoma City National Memorial Dedication Ceremony in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

April 19, 2000

Thank you very much, Governor Keating. I wanted to be here today, and I was grateful to be asked. I wanted to thank you and Cathy for all you have done. Thank you, Senator Nickles and members of the congressional delegation. Thank you, Mayor Humphreys, and I thank your predecessor, Mayor Norick. Thank you, Chairman Johnson; thank you, Karen Luke.

I thank all of the Federal leaders who are here today who lost their employees and worked so hard, Attorney General Reno and our Secre-

taries of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation, the leaders of the Office of Personnel Management, the Customs, the ATF, and the Secret Service and many others. I thank Bob Stanton and the Park Service for making sure this place would be well cared for, forever.

I thank that unknown number of people who contributed to the building of this magnificent monument and to the scholarship fund. I thank General Ferrell and all those who are working

and will work here from now on to combat terrorism. I congratulate the young couple who designed this magnificent memorial, and I think we should give them a round of applause. [Applause]

I thank the Oklahoma City Philharmonic Brass and the Memorial Community Choir and Shawntel Smith for their ringing in wonderful music today.

Most of all, I thank the families who lost your loved ones; the survivors and your families; the rescue workers; and the family of Oklahoma for setting an example for America. I can add little now to the words and music, even more to the silence and amazing grace of this memorial. Its empty chairs recall the Mercy Seat of Old Testament Scripture—a place for the children of God to come for renewal and dedication.

So this is a day both for remembrance and for renewal. Hillary and I will never forget being with you at that first memorial service while the rescue teams were still searching. I know the last 5 years have not been easy. I hope you can take some comfort in knowing that, just as I said 5 years ago, America is still with you, and that with this memorial you can know America will never forget.

As the Governor said in alluding to Gettysburg, there are places in our national landscape so scarred by freedom's sacrifice that they shape forever the soul of America—Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Selma. This place is such sacred ground.

I think you should all know that it was on this exact day 225 years ago that the American Revolution began. What a 225 years it has been. The brave Americans we lost here 220 years later were not fighting a war, but they were patriots in service to their fellow citizens, just as much as the police and fire and other public servants are here among us today. And they were children whose promise keeps our old democracy forever young.

Five years ago the cowards who killed them made a choice, a choice to attack this building and the people in it, because they wanted to strike a blow at America's heartland, at the core of our Nation's being. This was an attack on all America and every American.

Five years later we are here because you made a choice, a choice to choose hope and love over despair and hatred. It is easy for us to say today, and even perhaps easy for you

to clap today, but I know that this wise choice was also a very hard one, especially for the families of the victims. I know there are still days when the old anger wells up inside you, still days when tears fill your eyes, when you think your heart will surely break. On those days in the future, I hope you can come here and find solace in the memory of your loved ones, in the honor of your fellow citizens.

I hope you can find the strength to live a full and loving life, free of hatred, which only cripples. I believe your loved ones would want you to have that life. And though you have given too much, you still have so much to give.

The great writer Ralph Ellison, who was a native of this city, once said, "America is woven of many strands . . . our fate is to become one, and yet many." On April 19th, 1995, our many strands became one, one in love and support for you and in our determined opposition to terrorism. You taught us again how much stronger we are when we all stand together in our common humanity to protect life, liberty, and the rule of law for all.

We may never have all the answers for what happened here. But as we continue our journey toward understanding, one truth is clear: What was meant to break has made you stronger.

As I left the White House today, I looked, as I often do, at your tree, the beautiful dogwood Hillary and I planted on the South Lawn 5 years ago for those who were lost here. Five years later that tree stands a little taller; its spring flowers are a little fuller; its roots have dug in a little deeper. But it's still a young tree.

Five years isn't a very long time for trees to grow or for wounds to heal and hearts to mend. But today, like your beautiful dogwood tree on the White House lawn, Oklahoma City clearly is blooming again. For that, all your fellow Americans and, indeed, decent, good people all over the world are grateful to you and grateful to God for the grace that led you on.

In Romans it is said, "The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." May you keep on your armor of light. May you keep your light shining on this place of hope, where memories of the lost and the meaning of America will live forever.

May God bless you, and God bless America.

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NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. on the memorial grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma and his wife, Cathy; Mayor Kirk Humphreys and former Mayor Ronald Norick of Oklahoma City; Robert M. Johnson and Karen Luke, cochairs, Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation; Gen. Donald

F. Ferrell, USAF (Ret.), chairman, board of directors, Oklahoma City National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and Violence; memorial designers Hans-Ekkehard and Torrey Butzer and Sven Berg, Butzer Design Partnership; and Shawntel Smith, Miss America 1996, who sang the national anthem.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Efforts To Achieve Sustainable Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

April 19, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 7 of the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act (Public Law 105–174) (the Levin Amendment), and section 1203 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I transmit herewith a report on progress made toward achieving benchmarks for a sustainable peace process.

In July 1999, I sent the second semiannual report to the Congress under Public Law 105–174, detailing progress towards achieving the 10 benchmarks adopted by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) for evaluating implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords. This report provides

an updated assessment of progress on the benchmarks covering the period from July 1 through December 31, 1999.

In addition to the semiannual reporting requirement of Public Law 105–174, this report fulfills the requirements of section 1203 in connection with my Administration's request for funds for FY 2001.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 20.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

April 20, 2000

The President. Hello, everyone. Let me just briefly say that I am very, very glad to have Chairman Arafat back here at the White House. And I'm looking forward to our talks. We've reached a very serious time in the peace process. He and Prime Minister Barak have set for themselves an ambitious timetable to reach a framework agreement as soon as they can, and then a final agreement by the middle of September. So we're working hard on it, and I think we'll get some things done today.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, a short time ago, Juan Miguel Gonzalez came out and called on the American people to help him urge you and your Attorney General to reunite him with his son. Do you have a message for Juan Miguel Gonzalez? And also, what steps is your administration prepared to take if the boy's Miami relatives won't turn him—

The President. First of all, I think he should be reunited with his son. That is the law. And the main argument of the family in Miami for not doing so has now been removed. I mean,

their main argument was, if we let him go back to his father before the court rules, he might go back to Cuba. The court has now said he shouldn't go back to Cuba. The Justice Department agrees with that, and he has agreed to that.

So there is now no conceivable argument for his not being able to be reunited with his son. And that is what the lawful process has said. The immigration law is clear, and the determination of the INS and a Federal court are clear. So I think he should be united in as prompt and orderly way as possible.

Q. Well, what about the appeals court suggestion that a 6-year-old maybe has some rights to say where he wants to live and apply for asylum on his own behalf?

The President. Well, even if the appeals court were to say that, which would be a rather dramatic departure from the law, then there would have to be some setup at a trial level for determining that. And in the meanwhile, while all this legal process plays out, as a matter of law the INS determined and a Federal court affirmed that the father should have custody.

So, clearly, he should be reunited. And the argument that he might go back to Cuba before this thing can be finally resolved in the courts is no longer there. That's not an argument anymore.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, did you write a letter for former Prime Minister Netanyahu, promising him that Israel would keep its nuclear or mass destruction weapons in case they reach an agreement with the Palestinians?

The President. I don't believe that issue ever came up in connection with an agreement with the Palestinians, with Mr. Netanyahu or any other Israeli Prime Minister. To the best of my memory, it did not.

I think you all know what the issues are between the Israelis and the Palestinians. They are difficult, but I think they can be bridged. If the parties want to do this, we will do everything we can to help them and to minimize the difficulties and the risks involved. There are risks and difficulties involved for Chairman Arafat; there are risks and difficulties involved for Prime Minister Barak, for the Palestinian people, and for the Israeli people. I believe they are not nearly as great as the risks and difficulties of not making a peace agreement, so I hope they will do it. And if they want to do it, I'll do whatever I can to help them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak and former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel.

Statement on the Budget Surplus and Debt Reduction

April 20, 2000

When I came into office, the budget deficit was a record \$290 billion, confidence in the economy was shaky, and unemployment was too high. Seven years of fiscal discipline have turned that situation around, creating an era of record budget surpluses.

Today we received more good news that our economic strategy is working and that the budget surplus is growing. The Treasury Department released Government financial information showing that the comparable budget balance for the first half of this fiscal year improved by more than \$30 billion from the first half of

last year. This keeps us on track to pay down a record \$300 billion of debt over 3 years.

In addition, today, for the third time this year, the Treasury Department is buying back some of our debt. If we maintain our fiscal discipline, we can make America debt-free by 2013 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. This will keep interest rates lower, helping to maintain strong investment and growth while saving money for American families.

Message to the Littleton, Colorado, Community *April 20, 2000*

It is written in Scripture: “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Hillary and I are with you in the spirit of comfort and prayer as you gather to remember those who lost their lives one year ago today.

You do not mourn alone. What happened in Littleton pierced the soul of America. Though a year has passed, time has not dimmed our memory or softened our grief at the loss of so many, whose lives were cut off in the promise of youth. It has not caused us to forget their gallant teacher—a man whose character and values brought so much strength to the school, sports teams, and community he served.

Last year, in the midst of the heartbreak and devastation of the Columbine tragedy, we saw

the American spirit at its best—in the spontaneous outpouring of support for the Littleton community and in the determination to prevent such tragedies in the future. Our hearts have not yet fully healed, but today America stands together as one to keep faith with all those who lost their lives at Columbine—and all those whose lives were forever changed that day. We must continue to honor their memory and your courage by resolving to make America a safer place for all our children.

Hillary and I continue to keep all of you in our thoughts and prayers.

BILL CLINTON

Videotaped Remarks to a National Campaign Against Youth Violence Townhall Meeting *April 21, 2000*

Good evening. I’m so pleased to join you as the National Campaign Against Youth Violence kicks off its City-By-City initiative.

Seven years ago I had the honor to speak at the Church of God in Christ in Memphis. That morning I spoke about the awful toll of youth violence and gun crime in our communities. On that day I said, unless we deal with the ravages of crime and violence, none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go.

Together, we have come a long way in the last 7 years. With our strategy of putting more cops on the beat and getting more guns off the street, overall crime has fallen for the seventh year in a row. The juvenile violent crime arrest rate is the lowest in 10 years. And with 100,000 new community police officers and the Brady law, we’ve kept guns out of the hands of a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers.

But while we’ve made great progress, one act of violence is still one too many. Nearly a year has passed since the awful tragedy at Columbine, and gunfire continues to take the lives

of nearly a dozen young people every single day.

If we’re going to reach our goal of making America the safest big country on Earth, all of us have a responsibility to act. And Congress has to do its part, too, by sending me common-sense gun legislation that mandates child safety locks, closes the gun show loophole, bans the importation of large ammunition clips, and holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns.

Our administration is trying to do its part by strengthening the enforcement of our gun laws, supporting more after-school programs, more mentoring, and more conflict resolution and peer mediation. Last year we helped to launch the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, and we established a new White House Youth Violence Council to coordinate the wide-ranging efforts of the Federal Government.

We’re also working hard to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and that no American is victimized by violence because of his or her race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. That’s why we’ve fought so hard to

pass a strong hate crimes law, to promote diversity, to end discrimination in the work force. We must all recommit ourselves to respecting one another, to seeing our diversity as our greatest strength, and to recognizing the fundamental values that define us as one America.

Ultimately, this effort begins on the ground, at the grassroots. You can reach out to troubled youth. You can help to change a culture that too often glorifies violence and hate. You can talk to your children, teach them to resolve their conflicts peacefully, and raise them with the right values. I'm grateful, because in Memphis, you're doing these things. And there's no mission more important for our Nation.

Your work in Memphis, and the work of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, is a testament to the fundamental goodness of the American spirit. It sets an example I hope cities all across our land will follow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The remarks were videotaped at approximately 7:40 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House on March 28 for broadcast to the meeting in Memphis, TN, on April 14. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Russian State Duma Action on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

April 21, 2000

I am pleased that the Russian State Duma today approved the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). I look forward to prompt action on the CTBT by the Federation Council, which also approved the START II Treaty earlier this week.

More than 150 countries have signed the CTBT so far, agreeing to stop all nuclear explosive testing. Ratification of the CTBT by Russia would mean that 30 of the 44 states whose ratification is required for entry into force have

now approved this historic agreement, including many U.S. friends and allies. Approval of the CTBT by Russia—as well as the recent approvals by Chile, Bangladesh, and Turkey—renews momentum for the international effort to halt the spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament around the world.

I congratulate President-elect Putin and his government, members of the State Duma, and Russian citizens who together worked to achieve this important step toward a safer future.

Message on the Observance of Easter, 2000

April 21, 2000

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Easter.

In this holy season, Christians across America and around the world relive the events of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection, rejoice in His fulfillment of the promise of salvation, and give prayerful thanks for the assurance of God's forgiving love.

As Christians, we have been called to share that forgiveness with others. Across the globe, in places large and small, we have witnessed the tragic consequences of humanity's refusal

to forgive. Ancient feuds, ethnic tensions, old hatreds and prejudices—these have torn apart families, communities, and nations for decades and continue to bring suffering to our world. On this, the first Easter of the new millennium and in the Jubilee Year of Christ's birth, the challenge to each of us is to reflect God's love and forgiveness in all our actions.

Let us strive to see beyond the surface differences that may divide us from one another by discovering the values we share. Let us work

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together to lift the yoke of poverty and oppression that crushes so many lives around the world. Let us recognize that, in Jesus' Resurrection, we see both the promise and the proof of love's capacity to triumph over the forces of misunderstanding, fear, and hatred.

As millions of Americans gather with loved ones to share the joy of this blessed holiday, Hillary and I extend our best wishes to all for a wonderful Easter celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Letter to the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee on Proposed Gun Safety Legislation

April 21, 2000

Dear Chairman Hyde:

As you know, yesterday marked the anniversary of the tragic shootings at Columbine High School—and the date by which I had called on Congress to enact commonsense gun safety legislation. The passing of this deadline is a deep disappointment. When nearly 12 of our nation's children are killed by gunfire every day, we have an urgent responsibility to do all we can to reduce gun violence. That is why I am grateful for your good-faith efforts to seek agreement, despite tremendous pressure on Congress from the gun lobby. I was also glad to see that you joined Representative Conyers last week in urging Chairman Hatch to promptly convene the juvenile justice conference and to move forward at last on this legislation. And I appreciated receiving your most recent proposal to reach a compromise.

I still have serious concerns about aspects of your latest proposal that I fear would create new loopholes for criminals to buy guns. But I am confident that if we can keep working together in good faith, we can reach agreement on a strong, commonsense bill that I can sign into law.

I was especially encouraged by your recent commitment on "Meet the Press" and in your letter to Mr. Conyers to ensure that persons under felony indictments remain subject to full, three-day background checks. It is critical that we make the same effort to stop criminals from buying guns at gun shows that we already make at gun stores.

In order to prevent fraud, protect privacy, and fully enforce the nation's gun laws—goals we both share—I believe we must make National Instant Criminal Background Check System records available for a sufficient period of

time rather than immediately destroying them. However, as a gesture of good faith, I am willing to meet you halfway on this important issue, by requiring records to be destroyed within 90 days, instead of 180 days as provided under current law. With this compromise, we can address your concerns while preserving this significant law enforcement tool. I hope this step will help break the current logjam, and bring your colleagues back to the conference table.

We still have other important issues to resolve. I remain concerned about aspects of your proposal that would: leave open the gun show loophole by letting criminals buy guns at flea markets and by cutting short existing background checks on persons with certain mental health histories and domestic violence restraining orders; undermine the ban on importation of high-capacity ammunition clips; weaken longstanding controls on interstate firearms sales; and fail to require vital record-keeping provisions needed by law enforcement to trace guns sold at gun shows that later turn up in crimes.

Despite these significant outstanding issues, I believe we can reach an agreement. It is my sincere hope that in the coming weeks, we can work together to address our common goal of closing the gun show loophole and ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced without weakening current gun laws in the process. Neither of us is interested in a compromise that would serve only to jeopardize public safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement. I look forward to working with you to pass this commonsense legislation, and I encourage you to continue urging Chairman Hatch to allow the conferees to meet and consider this legislation. As you have stated, our efforts will come to nothing until that happens. Only by allowing an open

and honest debate in conference and by working out our differences can we do right by the American people on this vital issue. We owe it to the families of Littleton, and the thousands

more who lose their lives in gunfire each year in America, to get this done now.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

The President's Radio Address

April 22, 2000

Good morning, and happy Earth Day. I've always thought it appropriate that Earth Day falls in this season of renewal and hope, as millions of Americans celebrate Easter and Passover. As we celebrate the first Earth Day of the 21st century, I want to challenge all of us to renew our commitment to protect and preserve God's precious gift to us, our earthly home.

Last weekend in California I stood beneath a magnificent sequoia tree, more than 1,000 years old, to announce permanent protection for more than 30 giant sequoia groves. And I was grateful for every opportunity the Vice President and I have had to act as stewards of our environment over the last 7 years.

All Americans can be proud of the tremendous progress we've made since the first Earth Day 30 years ago. Our air, water, and land are cleaner, and we've protected millions of acres of America's green places. But today I want to focus on the most critical environmental challenge we face in this new century, global warming.

The 1990's were the hottest decade on record, and the first 3 months of 2000 were the hottest here in 100 years. Scientists say that the temperature rise is at least partly due to human activity, and that if left unchecked, climate change will result in more violent storms, more economic disruptions, and more permanent flooding of coastal areas.

If we value our coastlines, our farm lands, and our vital biodiversity, we must build a national consensus to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases and to help others around the world do the same. Our Government must lead by example.

Today I'm announcing two Federal initiatives that point the way to a cleaner environment and a stronger economy. First, I'm issuing an Executive order requiring that Federal agencies

reduce the amount of petroleum their vehicle fleets use by 20 percent in 5 years. We can do this with technology we already have. For example, the Postal Service has purchased 500 electric trucks and may purchase more than 5,000. Here in Washington, DC, 2,600 Federal and local government vehicles are running on clean natural gas or ethanol. Next month we'll open the first of seven gas stations offering those fuels here, and I'll order every White House vehicle that can use these fuels to make the switch. This Executive order will cut oil consumption by 45 million gallons a year, help stop global warming, and ease pressure on gas prices.

Second, I'm also announcing new incentives to cut pollution and greenhouse gases while we help Federal workers across the country reduce the growing hassle of commuting. All Federal workers now will be able to set aside up to \$65 tax-free every month to pay for public transportation. And in the Washington area, every Federal agency will actually fund some or all of its employees' public transportation costs.

It is clear citizens and businesses across America are building support for a strong response to global warming. But one voice is still missing, the United States Congress. While the science on climate change has grown stronger and the need for American leadership has grown greater, some in Congress have buried their heads even deeper in the sand. I urge them to recognize that reversing global warming will strengthen our economy while safeguarding our future.

In the next 20 years, the international energy market will reach \$5 trillion, and consumers everywhere increasingly will demand clean energy. We're the world leader in those technologies. We should be promoting them, not denying their need. Instead, for the past 7 years, Congress has blocked our initiatives to fight climate change and cut America's fuel bills.

I'm deeply disappointed the Republican budget resolution just adopted fails again to support America's environmental priorities. And again I call on Congress to reverse its opposition and work with us to pass my \$4-billion package of tax credits for energy-efficient homes, cars, and appliances, to invest in clean energy research, and to help us promote clean technology in developing countries. Congress should also end its opposition and help us improve the fuel economy of all our cars and trucks so Americans can have the vehicles they want with the efficiency they deserve.

More than 100 years ago, the great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow reminded us that "nature is a revelation of God." This Earth Day, let us remember that we are only stewards,

in our time, of the Earth God gave us for all time. And let us strengthen our resolve to preserve the beauty and the natural bounty that sustains us and must sustain generations yet to come.

Happy holidays, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:12 p.m. on April 21 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Executive orders of April 21 on leadership in environmental management, Federal fleet and transportation efficiency, and Federal workforce transportation are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Action To Enforce the Elian Gonzalez Custody Decision and an Exchange With Reporters

April 22, 2000

Good morning. As all of you know, this morning 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez was reunited with his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez.

The Department of Justice, under the leadership of Attorney General Reno, went to great lengths to negotiate a voluntary transfer. Even yesterday, the Attorney General worked very hard on this late into the night, showing great restraint, patience, and compassion. When all efforts failed, there was no alternative but to enforce the decision of the INS and a Federal court that Juan Miguel Gonzalez should have custody of his son. The law has been upheld, and that was the right thing to do.

I am well aware that this has been a difficult time for all the parties involved. But let's remember, as I said from the outset, the most important thing was to treat this in a lawful manner according to the established process. This was, in the end, about a little boy who lost his mother and has not seen his father in more than 5 months. I hope, with time and support, Elian and his father will have the opportunity to be a strong family again.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, what was your role, and did you give the go-ahead for the operation?

The President. Well, I talked to the Attorney General extensively, especially in the last several days, and I supported the decisions that were made. I think—we talked last evening last, and then I talked to Mr. Podesta two or three times through the night, and I believe that it was the right thing to do.

She made the decision; she managed this, but I fully support what she did. And it was clear to me from our long conversations that we were in agreement about this. She had a special feeling because she was from Miami, she wanted to resolve this in the most patient way possible to minimize the damage to the people and the community that she loves so much. But she felt strongly, and I felt strongly, that the law had to be upheld and that Elian had to be reunited with his father. And every conceivable alternative was tried for quite a long time.

So I think she did the right thing, and I'm very pleased with the way she handled it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Camp David, MD. In his remarks, he referred to rescued Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez,

who was removed from the house of his Miami relatives by Federal agents and reunited with his father earlier in the morning.

Interview With Leonardo DiCaprio for ABC News' "Planet Earth 2000" March 31, 2000

Climate Change

Mr. DiCaprio. Mr. President, I want to thank you very much for your time. And as you know, I'm neither a politician nor a journalist, but being given the opportunity to sit down with you here and talk about an issue like global warming was an opportunity as a concerned citizen that I couldn't pass up.

So my first question is, global warming is obviously a controversial topic among scientists and politicians. What is your understanding of what the effects of climate change will have on our future if preventative steps aren't taken immediately?

The President. Well, let me, first of all, thank you for your interest in this because I think it's important that we get citizens more involved in it; and secondly say, I don't think it's all that controversial a topic among scientists. There are a few who say that it's not proven, but we know that the hottest years in recorded history, and certainly in the last 600 years, that 9 of the hottest 11 years have occurred in the last decade.

So, the climate is changing, and the globe is warming at an unsustainable rate. And if it is not slowed and ultimately reversed, what will happen is, the polar ice caps will melt more rapidly; sea levels will rise; you will have the danger of flooding in places like the precious Florida Everglades or the sugarcane fields of Louisiana; island nations could literally be buried. The whole climate of the United States, for example, could be changed where you would have more flooding, more heat waves, more storms, more extreme weather events generally.

And then you'll have some public health consequences. For example, we're already seeing in Africa, for example, malaria being found at higher and higher altitudes where it used to be too cool for the mosquitoes.

So there will be a lot of very bad, more dramatic weather events. There will be a shift in the patterns of agricultural production. There will be flooding that will be quite bad, and there will be more public health crises.

Raising Public Awareness

Mr. DiCaprio. While growing up, I always felt that environmental issues were constantly overlooked, and I watched people band together for various causes which seemed to come and go, and it was almost like they were going in and out of style. So how do we take a misunderstood issue like climate change and not only raise awareness but make its prevention an ongoing commitment?

The President. Well, I think we have to make climate change a local and a personal matter in the same way other successful environmental issues are. You know, since I've been here, we've been able to strengthen the quality of our air, strengthen the quality of our water. We've set aside more land for protection and protected forests than virtually any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelts, because they were things people could understand and identify with, and they knew how to advocate for, and they understood the benefits.

So I think we have to bring this down to practical applications and convince people that they can do something about it, number one; and number two, we have to talk about the first question you asked me—what the consequences of not doing anything.

But there's so much we can do. We started a project here at the White House called the Greening of the White House. Just by changing the lighting in this whole building, we lowered our electric bills by \$100,000 a year. Then we put in a different sort of roofing system which kept out more heat and cold. Then we put in a more energy-efficient heating system and

water system. We brought more energy-efficient equipment—copiers, computers—all with the Energy Star label, which is a totally voluntary thing the Department of Energy provides.

Now, these are things that businesses all across America could be doing. They're things that homes all across America could be doing. We've worked with the Home Builders to help build lower cost housing that will cut energy use by 50 percent. There's one housing development built in the Inland Empire out in southern California, east of L.A., for lower income working people where the average utility bills are 65 percent lower than in houses of comparable size in the rest of California—just by putting the most modern, thin solar panels on the roofs, by having sensible insulation, by having energy-efficient lighting, and by taking new windows that let in more light and keep out more heat and cold.

These things are out there now, and I think when people know there's actually something they can do, as well as what the consequences of our not acting and not pushing Congress and other countries to act are, then I think you'll see action.

Energy-Efficiency Incentives

Mr. DiCaprio. Well, my other question pertaining to that is, if there was a profit incentive there, would that make us pay more attention?

The President. Yes, there should be more of a profit incentive. I mean, right now, for example, if you take the most energy-efficient lighting, it costs you more now, up front, but it lasts so much longer, eventually you turn a profit. And this is true in many processes in all the energy fields.

So what I have proposed to the Congress is that we do basically two things. First of all, we give significant tax breaks to consumers to buy energy-efficient products of all kinds, and that we also give tax breaks for people to manufacture and develop them. And then, that we spend more money on research, like the project we've had that the Vice President headed for new generation vehicles, that we work with the auto companies and the autoworkers union to develop more energy-efficient vehicles and to develop alternative forms of fuel, including biofuels, which could dramatically change the whole future with regard to the greenhouse gases we've put into the atmosphere.

So there's a lot more we can do, and we ought to provide tax incentives to the private sector to help us. But what I want to drive home is that right now it is no longer necessary, in order to grow our economy, to put more greenhouse gases which cause global warming into the atmosphere. You don't have to burn more oil and coal to get richer now—not in America, not anywhere else.

International Cooperation

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, in Kyoto, in the 1997 Global Conference on Climate Change, it asked industrialized countries to drastically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. And when we tried to enforce such protocols in developing countries, they came right back to us and said that the U.S. is responsible for a quarter of the greenhouse gases that are going into the atmosphere. How can we not practice what we preach?

The President. Well first, I think we should practice what we preach. And that's why I think it's so important that the Congress pass the budget that I recommended, that would dramatically increase our investment in developing the kinds of technologies and alternative fuels that would cut our greenhouse gas emissions.

But I also believe that we have a big stake in working with other countries to convince them that they, too, can grow without increasing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, no matter how much we cut emissions in the United States, since this is a global problem, unless we also get China and India and the countries that have the big rain forests to work with us, we're going to be in real trouble.

So, for example, when I was in Bangladesh recently, I announced a debt-for-nature swap that we were going to help finance with them. I signed a bill to do the same thing with the South American rain forest last year. In India, we signed an agreement by which they committed that as they continue to grow and need more power, that they'll have more and more coming from natural and renewable sources in the future, so that we can work together, because it is a global problem.

But we should lead the way. And since we have already so much technology, and since, as I've just explained, just with these minor things we cut the power bills here at the White House by \$100,000, and we're going to do it across

the Federal Government—if the Federal Government alone will do what we did at the White House, we'll save \$750 million a year, and it will be the equivalent in terms of greenhouse gases and climate change of taking 1.7 million cars off the road. We should be doing that.

But we should also work with other countries. I tell other countries, the developing countries, "I'm not asking you to give up your growth; I'm not asking you to give jobs up. I'm asking you to pursue a different pattern of energy use, which will give you more growth, more jobs, and a healthier population over the long run." So I think this really is a win-win issue here. This is not the way it used to be 30, 40 years ago. You can grow an economy and use less energy if you do it right.

Raising Public Awareness

Mr. DiCaprio. Why do you think this issue is so constantly overlooked, and why do you think people don't take it seriously enough? And for you, is it as important as something like health care or education?

The President. Oh, yes, over the long run, it's one of the two or three major issues facing the world over the next 30 years. I think it's because it takes a long time for the climate to change in a way that people feel it, and because it seems sort of abstract now. That's why I think it's important that programs like this are aired and people like you, not politicians or scientific experts but citizens, express their concern.

And then it's important that citizens know that it ought to be an issue; it ought to be a voting issue at election time. And I don't say this in a hateful way. It's just that people need to tell the politicians and the candidates they care about this; they want action. But our citizens need to follow the lead of a lot of our religious groups and other civic groups in actually doing things themselves.

Right now, if the American people knew all the options that are available to them and understood the economics, we could do much better. And of course, if my plan were to pass the Congress and we were to give the tax breaks to consumers and manufacturers of these products and technologies, we could do it even faster.

Energy-Efficiency Incentives

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, the major polluters are obviously the big industries, such as the oil companies, who are one of the most powerful lobbies in the world. How do we convince them to change the way they've been doing business for the last century?

The President. Well, for one thing, oil is a depleting resource. And I think that oil companies and coal companies should be given incentives to become energy companies and to promote energy efficiency, so that the oil they have will last longer and provide them a more steady stream of income and so that they can develop other ways of earning money. They should become—they should think of themselves as energy companies, not oil companies.

And if you look at the record, starting with British Petroleum and its leader, some members of the oil industry are beginning to come over to support action on climate change. Some leaders of the auto industry are beginning to come over and support action on climate change. They understand that this is real and that when these gases get up in the atmosphere, it takes at least 50 years for them to dissipate.

So we need to begin now a disciplined effort, which will be good for our economy. I will say again, this is good for the American economy and good for public health. We need to do this, and if we did it from today until the time you're my age, we'd be a much wealthier country, a much healthier country. And with that kind of effort over that length of time, we could head off this crisis.

Mr. DiCaprio. How do we get power companies to replace their coal plants with cleaner technologies? And why don't we make it so expensive for power companies to keep their old coal plants that they have to invest in cleaner fuels?

The President. Well, I think you can do it in two or three ways. I think, first of all, it's important to have very rigorous clean air standards. And I think it's important also to provide them the tax incentives they need to move as quickly as possible to alternative energy sources.

A lot of the most enlightened utilities in America also see conservation itself as an energy source, PG&E in California, for example. But other utilities have understood that our inefficient patterns of using electricity are pressing

them to use more traditional energy and emit more greenhouse gases and warm the climate.

So I think what we should do is to have a system where we finance not only the conversion to alternative energy but also looking at conservation itself as a form of energy. When you save, you do the same amount of work with less energy, and it's like creating more energy in a totally clean way. And I think that we should be financing those things in part with tax breaks from the American Government. And I've pushed for that, and I will continue to do so.

Energy Research

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, you've enacted tax credits for people who want to buy electric and fuel-cell vehicles. What are we doing to encourage oil companies to research alternative fuel technologies like fuel cells?

The President. Well, I want to give tax credits to them, too, to make it easier for them to spend money on that kind of research. And we are doing a lot of the basic research in the Government. The work, for example, we did with the auto companies on developing fuel cells, on developing a dual-fuel electricity and gas engines—

Mr. DiCaprio. A hybrid vehicle.

The President. —hybrid vehicles—the work that we've done to try to help them develop cars that run on electricity, but where the electricity regenerates, the capacity regenerates so they don't have to pull in every 80 miles and juice up the battery again; and a lot of the research we're doing through the Agriculture Department in biofuels—all these things I think are very important. As we do more of that research, the basic research, we then make it more cost effective for the energy companies and for the auto companies to take that basic research and quickly convert it into commercially viable research to develop products.

So I think our research at the national level should increase as well. I think it's very, very important that the Federal Government do that. You know, to get out of the energy context, the Internet basically began as a federally funded research project. So a lot of the things we take for granted today in the private sector began with a heavy investment of basic research from the National Government. And I think we're still at a point where the National Govern-

ment should be doing a lot of this basic research.

I'll just give you one example. If we could—suppose we get cars that will get 70 miles to the gallon, 80 miles to the gallon. And then suppose they can run on clean biofuels that don't have any greenhouse gas emissions, instead of gasoline. Now, what's the problem today? The problem today is it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to produce 8 gallons of ethanol or other biofuel. So the researchers today are working on a chemical breakthrough which would permit you to produce 8 gallons of biofuel with 1 gallon of gasoline. If you did that, if you improve the ratio 8 to 1, and you had a car getting 70 miles to the gallon, it would be like getting 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Then the whole future of the world would be different. I mean, this whole issue would be radically different. And then Americans, simply by buying fuel that would be cost effective, could whip this problem.

And we're on the verge of those kinds of breakthroughs, but we need the energy companies to think of themselves as that, not oil and coal but energy. We need the auto companies to keep supporting the work of combating global warming, not pretending it doesn't exist, and many of them are today. And we need more action from ordinary citizens, smaller businesses, and the Government to promote energy conservation and alternative energy sources.

But again I say, this is not a problem that requires big taxes, big regulation, and slow economic growth. It is no longer necessary—in the information economy, with the dramatic scientific breakthroughs already made, we can grow economies faster by conserving energy rather than burning it up. And that's what people don't yet believe. That's the real big debate out there. If we can get people to really believe that we could have a great future using less energy, not more—traditional energy, I mean—then we'd have the battle half won.

And maybe that will come out of this program. Because there's nothing so dangerous to society than being in the grip of a big idea that isn't true anymore. And it is just no longer true that for America or India or China or Latin America or any other place to grow wealthy, they have to put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by burning up more coal and oil. That's just not true anymore. And so we have to show people that that's not true, and show

them how they can make a difference, and then keep making these products and technologies available so that it becomes easier and easier and easier to do what is not only the right thing environmentally but the right thing for our long-term economic and public health purposes.

Fuel-Efficient Transportation

Mr. DiCaprio. Many people have said in the past that the American dream was to buy a car and live in the suburbs. But it has created massive problems that have made us more reliant on our cars. Since it is so difficult for us to convince people to use mass transportation, how can we promote hybrid vehicles and convince people to give up their SUV's? For instance, if it only costs \$575 a car to make them cleaner, why can't you make it a law, like seat-belts?

The President. Well, I'm not sure that it only costs \$575 to make them cleaner in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. But let me say what I think ought to be done. I think—first of all, I think if these SUV's are going to be sustainable over the long run, they also are going to have to become much more fuel-efficient and be able to run on alternative fuels. And I think the American people would pay a little more if they would do that. And the auto companies for the first time have said now that they want to bring in the SUV's and their other less efficient vehicles into this sort of new energy future that we're trying to build.

Secondly, I think that people will take mass transit more if it works better. I've worked very hard to support more investments in mass transit to make it more convenient and faster, including more high-speed rail. And I still believe that as our urban areas become more and more populated and traffic becomes more congested, quite apart from pollution in the air, if we can have clean, efficient, and fast mass transit, people will begin to take it more and more and more because they can do other things; they're not wasting so much time if they're riding the train.

So I'm hopeful that you will see that. I very much hope that we will continue to develop mass transit alternatives, and I believe they will become much more popular with people, especially in the highly populated areas. But we can't stop the development of fuel efficiency because a lot of our people live in rural areas and drive

a long way to work, and that's not going to change anytime soon.

Environmental Standards

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, Louisiana is the second largest consumer of fossil fuels and the city most at risk for sea level rise. Can't something be done, like in Atlanta, where the Government withheld highway funds, making it the model city for environmental responsibility?

The President. Yes, we can. But under the law, we can only withhold these highway funds if the air pollution of a given metropolitan area is so high and they haven't done anything about it, anything else about it. Then we can withhold the highway funds. They have to come up with an alternative program, which usually involves mass transit or carpooling or some other means to reduce air pollution, and in this case, also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And I'm sorry to say I don't know exactly the answer to your question, but it may be that for other reasons, New Orleans is in full compliance with the Federal laws on air pollution. I'll just have to look and see.

But we've tried to do that in more than one other place, to use the obligation of a city, a big metropolitan area to have clean air to promote the development of alternative energy technologies and alternative travel patterns. And I do think that environmental standards can be used that way. In other words, instead of telling people we're going to shut you down, or imposing big, heavy, complicated regulations, say, "Here's the standard; if you want the money, meet the standard." And then, in Atlanta, they figured out something to do that was very good for the environment, and they got their money.

Citizen Involvement

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, I'm sure you've heard so many reports from scientists and politicians and citizens. What do you think the best course for American citizens is, within the next 20 years, as far as helping the environment is concerned?

The President. Well, the biggest global problem by far on the environment is global warming. The biggest problem in many developing countries right now is safe water. We still have huge numbers of children dying from diarrhea and other related diseases and problems because they don't have safe water. And there are local

air pollution problems that are horrible in various places.

But internationally, the biggest problem is global warming. And I think the most important thing we can do is, every citizen must first understand that he or she can do something about this, and it won't bankrupt them. They should have their homes, their cars, their businesses—everything they do should be oriented toward energy efficiency and alternative energy technologies. And then they should make this one of the issues that has to be discussed by public officials running for office at every level. This has to become not just an issue that we talk about once a year on Earth Day but an issue that is debated along with health care and education and national security and other issues at every election.

You know, I was fortunate when I asked Vice President Gore to join me in 1992 that he had written a book on this, that he was interested in it. He talked to me about it. And so we just, on our own initiative, have done a lot of these things. But we could have had a whole environmental agenda and not dealt with this really very much. And then we had Kyoto, which we strongly supported, the Kyoto Protocol. But this needs to become an issue for every public official. It needs to become a matter of citizen debate.

So I think citizen action, and then citizens as voters turning it into a political issue, in the very finest sense—those are the things that I think need to be done right now and for the next several years to get America on the right track.

Mr. DiCaprio. Do you think we can eventually become a role model?

The President. Absolutely. We should become a role model because, just as we've led the world in information technology with the development of the Internet and digital technology of all kinds, we have the technology here. And there's no excuse for not implementing it comprehensively and quickly in every American community. And there's no excuse for not making it available at an affordable price to every American family.

So if we take this on the way we did the Industrial Revolution, the way we did the information technology revolution, there will be an energy revolution in the 21st century that will save the planet and actually increase health and wealth. That will be one—I predict to you that will be one of the great stories of the 21st century, that there was a dramatic revolution in work caused by a change in the source of energy, in the level of conservation, and in the availability of technologies that just weren't there before.

Mr. DiCaprio. I hope so.

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at approximately 1 p.m. on the Oval Office Patio at the White House for broadcast on the evening of April 22. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 23. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll

April 24, 2000

Thank you very much, and good morning. I'm so glad to see such a wonderful crowd all over the South Lawn, all the way back to the back. I want to also say, as Hillary did, that even though this is our last White House Easter egg roll, and we will miss it very much, we have enjoyed it.

Today Melinda Bates, the Director of our Visitors Office, who's done so much on this over the years, told me that Hillary and I are the

only First Couple ever to do this all 8 years we were here. And I think it's because we had more fun than the children did here.

I just want to thank those of you who have had anything to do with this Easter egg roll. I want to thank especially the 500 volunteers. And I'd like to say that this is the first time we've ever broadcast the Easter egg roll in cyberspace, so there will be more children in

classrooms and homes and libraries across America watching this Easter egg roll today than have attended it in the previous 122 years of the White House Easter egg roll, thanks to the Internet. And we are delighted that that is so, as well.

I want to just reemphasize one thing that Hillary said. This year's activities feature reading, and they feature the theory that it is fun. It's a part of our prescription for learning initiative that the First Lady launched 3 years ago, with the help of Scholastic Books. They bring together health care professionals, librarians, and others to show children how important and fun reading can be.

So I hope you enjoy that, along with the storytelling booths, the egg decorating. There are even some costume characters around here, appearing as some of our greatest Presidents. I hope you recognize them.

Finally, let me say it's time to blow the whistle to start another Easter egg roll. And before I do, I want to thank our master of ceremonies, Bernie Fairbanks, and ask him to come up here. He's right behind me. And I want you to know

something about this man. As nearly as I can figure, he's been here for almost half of the Easter egg rolls. He has joined me every year, but he's been attending the Easter egg roll since Franklin Roosevelt was the President of the United States.

So before I start this, Bernie, I want to give you a special Easter egg roll 2000 whistle with your name on it, for Hillary and me. Thanks for the 8 years we've shared with you. And now that you're once again going to have seniority over us, I want you to think of us when you blow this whistle. Thank you.

So we're going to do this together, right? I want you to do it with me. Now where are they—are they ready over there? Wave your hand if you're ready. All right.

On your mark, get set—

[At this point, the whistle blew, starting the White House Easter egg roll.]

NOTE: The President spoke approximately 10:27 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Michael P. Forbes in New York City

April 24, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first, I want to thank Bill and Nancy for having us in their beautiful apartment. I must say, they've been so wonderful to Hillary and me. I'm going to forgive them because they stripped me of one of my important legacies today. I felt a little awkward standing up here on these beautiful stairs, and now people will never be able to say what one man came up to me and said when I was out in the West recently. He said, "I'll tell you one thing, Bill, they will never say that when you were President, you looked down on the American people." *[Laughter]*

But I actually enjoyed it up there. I could see everyone's face. I was thinking how proud I am to be here and to be here with you.

I want to thank Congressmen Nadler, Towns, and Ackerman for being here. And, Gary, thank you for rounding out the funds race today. That was a—*[laughter]*. Gary Ackerman just went to

India with me. I heard how many people lived in India—over 900 million people. Do you know every third person I met knew who Gary Ackerman was? *[Laughter]* It was very disorienting. It was utterly amazing.

Let me say, these three people have really represented not only New York but the United States very well. And you can be proud of them. Jerry Nadler is everyone's conscience, including mine when he thinks I'm straying too far. Ed Towns was with me in 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. *[Laughter]* So I really like them very, very much.

I want to welcome again Mike and Barbara and Abby—who is going to be a teacher, by the way. She's a senior at the University of Virginia, and she's going to be a teacher. We ought to give her a hand. *[Applause]*

And I want to be brief but fairly pointed here. I believe that Mike Forbes became a Democrat because of his convictions on education, the environment, the Patients' Bill of Rights, campaign finance reform, prescription drugs for seniors, continuing the economic path the country is on, doing more for the poor, and being even more aggressive in education. That's why I think he did it. I don't think it's very complicated.

In a larger sense, I think he did it because we have been able to prove in the last 7 years that our party can be for economic growth and for improving the environment, that we can be pro-business and pro-labor, that we can be pro-work and pro-family. And divisive politics, which have served the other party rather well from election to election, are no way to run a country, particularly a country in a global economy, an increasingly globalized society, where diversity and the power of the mind is becoming more important every day.

What I want to say to you is that there will be an attempt in this election to blur the distinctions between the parties in the hope that the traditional advantage that our friends in the Republican Party have enjoyed among large voting blocks around the country will be there and that they will basically make people sort of feel like it's okay if they win, things are going so well, and there are no consequences.

What I want you to understand is, there are sharp consequences to whether we hold the White House and whether we win the House and whether we pick up seats in the Senate—sharp, dramatic consequences that will make a significant difference in the lives of the American people. And I'll just give you a few, but I think it's important. You need to tell people that if they want to vote for person X or person Y, there are consequences.

Number one, on the economy: Our position is, we ought to keep paying down the debt; save Social Security and Medicare; provide a prescription drug benefit for seniors; make substantial investments in education, health care, and the environment, science and technology; and then we can afford a tax cut, but it's a modest one designed to help people who need help most to educate their kids, to provide child care for them, to provide for health care; and that we ought to give people like those of you in this room who can afford to be here a tax cut if you help us solve some of our biggest

problems. I want to give you the same tax benefits to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas overseas. I want to give you tax incentives to produce or to purchase energy-efficient products that will help us deal with climate change and other things that are investment oriented. We had an investment strategy to get this economy going again, and it worked, and we ought not to abandon it.

Their strategy is to pass a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed before. And they'll do it. You have to assume they're honorable people. [Laughter] People normally mean what they say in elections. There have been a lot of studies done on politicians and—even though I'm proud to say that one said that I had kept a higher percentage of my campaign promises than the last 5 Presidents, even though I made more, in more detail. By and large, people who run for President do what they say they're going to do when they get in. So you have to assume that when they run for President and for Congress, based on a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed—which will certainly take us back to deficits and higher interest rates and slower growth—that they mean it.

And now, the second thing is, there will be enormous consequences for our other objectives. I think we ought to meet the challenge of the aging of America. I'm the oldest baby boomer. And when we retire, all of us, there will only be two people working for every one person retired. And I do not want our retirement to bankrupt our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren.

So we're for taking the interest savings we're getting from paying down the debt, put it in the Social Security Trust Fund, because they can't—we're paying it down because of Social Security taxes—so we take this Social Security Trust Fund out to 2054, beyond the life of the baby boomers. And they're not for it.

We're for a prescription drug program for seniors, to benefit all the seniors that need prescription drugs. Their program primarily benefits the people that are producing the drugs. There are significant differences.

If you look at the children—and Mike and his whole family's passion for education—no matter what they say they're for, they're not going to have the money to invest in education after they pass their tax cut and their defense increases. Somebody asked me the other day what the principal economic reform I brought

to the United States when I became President was, and I said, arithmetic. [Laughter] That was the dramatic new idea in the information age we reintroduced into budgeting, arithmetic; all of a sudden, the numbers added up again. The money won't be there.

We say we ought to give a tax deduction to people for up to \$10,000 for the cost of college tuition. Their leader says that we don't need any more help to help people go to college. I think everybody needs to be able to go to college. We've tried to open the doors of college to all Americans because of the world we're living in. These are significant differences.

On work and family, we favor raising the minimum wage, and they don't. We favor increasing tax relief for child care coverage, and they don't. We favor expanding health care coverage to people who could never afford to come to this fundraiser, but they all work, and they all pay taxes—people between the ages of 55 and 65 who lose their jobs and therefore don't have health insurance and are not old enough for Medicare; low income families who can get their kids insured today, but they can't get insured. We're for that. We think we ought to do that and give them health care coverage, and they don't.

On the environment, I don't even think I need to say anything about that. Ever since the Republicans got the majority in Congress, with a few notable exceptions, like Mr. Forbes, I have waged a relentless battle to try to prevent an assault on our efforts to improve the quality of our air, our water, and our land, and to set aside precious spaces both in the vast unpopulated areas of America and green spaces within our own neighborhoods. I don't think—there may be no issue on which the record is clearer, particularly given the decisions of the Republicans in the nominating process.

Now, these are significant. My belief that we all belong in America and that we've all got to get along as long as we're law abiding—we're for hate crimes legislation and the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and they're against it. I could go on and on. But those are just six things. There will be significant consequences to the American people from the outcome of the elections in the House and the Senate and the Presidential election. You should know what those consequences are.

And you don't have to say a bad word about our opponents to understand that. I don't like

all the politics of personal destruction. Most people who do that do it because they're more interested in power than people. And they think voters are ultimately not very smart, and so if they can make their opponents look bad enough, they can get some votes.

The truth is, this is not about all of us who run for office. And besides that, I'm not running for anything; I'm telling you this as a citizen. But I've worked very hard for over 7 years now to turn this country around, to move us in the right direction, and to pull us together. And I promise you, everything I have learned in my entire public life tells me that these differences are real, that we mean what we say and they mean what they say. Now, they will attempt to paper over all this between now and November, in the hope that basically a satisfied, almost somnambulant electorate will give them the reins of power.

So I want you to leave here—and if they ask you how come you showed up at Mike Forbes' fundraiser, tell them it's because you'd like to see the economy grow. Tell them it's because you want to see more people brought into the mainstream of American life. Tell them it's because you want to see investments made in education and the environment and health care. Tell them it's because you think we ought to go forward together, instead of being divided. These are significant consequences. This is very important.

I know the country was in trouble in '92, and it looks like we're doing great today. But believe me, this election is every bit as important as the elections we had in '92 and '96 because we are going to decide whether to ratify the direction of change we have embraced or abandon it. And there will be substantial consequences, positive or negative, to that decision. If you go out and tell the people that you know in New York and in other States around this country that, we'll be all right. And if you tell the people you know that can vote in Mike Forbes' congressional district, he will be overwhelmingly reelected.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Bill and Nancy Rollnick; and Representative Forbes' wife, Barbara, and their daughter, Abigail.

Apr. 24 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement Commemorating the Deportation and Massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire

April 24, 2000

Today we remember a great tragedy of the 20th century: the deportations and massacres of roughly one and a half million Armenians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. I join Armenians around the world, including the Armenian-American community, in mourning the loss of those innocent lives. I also extend my sympathy to the survivors and their descendants for the hardships they suffered. I call upon all Americans to renew their commitment to build a world where such events are not allowed to happen again. The lesson we must learn from the stark annals of history is that we must forge a more humane future for the peoples of all nations.

Our own society has benefited immeasurably from the contributions of Armenian-Americans. They have enriched every aspect of American life, from science to commerce to the arts. For

the past 8½ years, the Armenian people have been engaged in an historic undertaking to establish democracy and prosperity in the independent Republic of Armenia. Their courage, energy, and resourcefulness inspire the admiration of all Americans, and we are proud to extend our assistance to help realize the dream of a vital and vibrant Armenia. The United States fully supports the efforts of Armenia and its neighbors to make lasting peace with one another and to begin an era of security and cooperation in the Caucasus region. We encourage any and all dialog between citizens of the region that hastens reconciliation and understanding.

On behalf of the American people, I extend my best wishes to all Armenians on this solemn day of remembrance.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City

April 24, 2000

Thank you very much. I think she's about to get the hang of it, don't you? [*Laughter*] Wow!

The Vice President, Tipper, Hillary, Chairman Rendell, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to begin with a heart full of gratitude by saying some thank-yous.

I thank Ed Rendell and Joe Andrew and all the people at the Democratic Party for the work they have done. I thank all of you at these tables who helped to chair this event and did the work so that we could all be here tonight. I want to thank Jon Stewart for making us laugh. I wish he would move to Washington. If we laughed a little more there, we might get twice as much done. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my dear friend Tony Bennett for performing again so beautifully. You know, people always marvel—Tony's a year or two older than I am, and people always marvel at how great an artist he is. And I was telling people earlier tonight, the thing that is so amaz-

ing is that he still has perfect pitch. I lost my perfect pitch 10 years ago. And he has perfect pitch in more ways than one. I'm glad he's here.

I thank the people of New York, the Democratic Party of New York, and my special supporters in this room who have been with me and Al and Hillary and Tipper all these years. I want to thank those of you who are helping Hillary in this Senate campaign. I have no doubt of one thing, that if you elect her, she will be a worthy successor to Robert Kennedy and Pat Moynihan and will make a terrific difference to the people of this State and this Nation. And after I heard her speaking, I have no doubt she's going to win if you stay with her, so I feel good about that. Thank you.

I want to thank Tipper Gore for 8 marvelous years. I was looking at her tonight, thinking to myself—I've watched her raise her children; I've watched her deal with sick members of her family; I've watched her deal with all kinds of pressures and keep laughing. The thing I appreciate

most about her is that she believes that people who are fragile and people who are broken, whether they are homeless or suffering from mental illness, are part of our common humanity and still have something to live for, still have something to give, and ought to be given a better chance. And our country would be a better place if more people felt the way she did. I hope that more people will.

Let me say also that I am profoundly grateful tonight for the chance you gave me to serve. We were talking around our table tonight about—one of the chances that I've had as President is to learn a lot about the Presidencies of people you don't know much about. I thought I knew a lot about American history when I became President, but I've spent a lot of time studying periods of time when most Americans are not—that most Americans aren't too conversant with, the Presidency of Franklin Pierce or Rutherford Hayes—and I tried to do it so that I could see the whole history of this country in a seamless web.

One of the things that strikes me as strange is that some people who have been in this position—even people I very much admire—talk about what a terrible burden it is, and how the White House is the crown jewel of the Federal penal system, and how they can't wait to get out of there, and what a terrible pain it is. Frankly, most of those guys didn't have a tougher time than I've had there—[laughter]—and I don't know what in the heck they're talking about. [Laughter]

One of my friends from home called me a couple of years ago when things weren't going so well for me, and he said, "Just remember, Bill, a couple of runs of bad luck and you'd be home doing \$25 divorces and deeds. Don't feel sorry for yourself. You asked for this job."

And that's the way I feel. Every day has been a joy and an opportunity, and still is, and I thank you for it. But I want you to know, sometimes people say, "Well, what keeps you going?" And tonight we were sitting around our table, and I looked at Bob Rose, and I said, "Isn't this the place where we had that fundraiser in February of '92, right before the New Hampshire primaries, when I was dropping like a rock in the polls, and everybody said I was deader than a doornail?" He said, "Yes, this is it."

So I started telling people around the table, I said, you know, I met a guy here that night walking through the kitchen. This is a true story.

I said, I met a guy there that night walking through the kitchen. He was working here. And he came up to me, and he said, "Governor, Governor," he said, "my boy is in school. He's in the fifth grade. He studies this election, and he studies the candidates and the issues, and he says I should vote for you." And he said, "But I want to ask you a question first. If I do what my boy wants and I vote for you, I want you to help me." He said, "You see, I came here as an immigrant, and in my home country I was very poor, and here I have more money and a better job. But in my home country, I was free." He said, "Here, my boy, he can't go across the street to the park and play unless I go with him, because he'll be in danger. He can't walk down the street to school by himself because he could get hurt." So he said, "If I do what my boy wants and I vote for you, will you make my boy free?"

And as I was telling this story, that man, Dimitri Theofanis, came up to me and embraced me tonight. He doesn't even work here anymore, but he came here tonight to work this banquet, and I want to thank him. His son is now a student at St. John's University in New York City, and he is doing well.

Now, what's the point of all this? When Al Gore and I came to Washington, it was to help people like Dimitri and his son, people who serve these banquets but can't afford the price of the tickets; people who need the minimum wage and access to health care, whose kids ought to be able to go to college and ought to be able to get a good education on the way; people who maybe have been homeless at some point in their lives or stuck on welfare and want jobs.

And after 7 years and a few months, over 21 million of them have jobs that didn't 8 years ago. Over 21 million have taken advantage of family and medical leave. Over 5 million have taken advantage of the HOPE scholarship to go on to college. There are 500,000 people who couldn't get handguns because of the Brady bill, and gun crime in this country down 35 percent since 1993, the homicide rate at a 31-year low; 2 million kids out of poverty; more than 2 million kids with health insurance; students borrowing money through our new loan program, saving \$8 billion, to help them go on and go to college—real stories of real lives of real people. That's what this is all about.

I never, ever—for all the wonderful joy and love of the Presidency and my love of politics, and Lord knows, I have loved it—I always thought that it was wrong to seek power without purpose; that in the end, it was a hollow victory to have it and to exercise it to hurt other people with the painful disappointment in life that they never give you what you want. The only thing that really matters is knowing that people who otherwise wouldn't have done as well have a little better chance because of your endeavors.

And what I want you to know tonight, as I bring the Vice President up here, is that we have worked very hard to turn this country around and to get it going in the right direction. But the theme song of this election year ought to be the first song Tony Bennett sang, "The Best Is Yet To Come," because we are now in a position to take on the big challenges of this country that would have been unthinkable 8 years ago. We can get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835 and give a generation of Americans a chance at a strong economy. We can deal with the challenges of the aging of America, the children of America, and all the things that—I'll leave it to Al to talk about.

But we've got a chance to do that. But you have to understand that this election is every bit as important, if not more important, than the ones in '92 and '96. I want you to know a couple of things about Al Gore that he wouldn't say himself and I'm amazed that so many Americans, even a lot of our supporters, don't know.

First of all, as you might have noticed, we've had to make a few tough decisions over the last 8 years. He was at the fore of the process that produced every difficult decision we ever made, every controversial one, every one that could have wrecked both our careers and kept him from being here tonight as the nominee of our party.

He wanted us to take that tough stand against the deficit in 1993 that required him to break the tie in the United States Senate. He wanted us to become the first administration in history to seriously take on in a systematic way the problems of gun violence in this country and to try to have systematic, sensible measures to protect our children from its dangers. He wanted to be the first administration in history that took on big tobacco to try to give our children their lives back.

He was out there early with me on Kosovo, on Bosnia, on Haiti, on all the tough, controversial foreign policy issues, when all the experts in Washington were saying these were little places unworthy of America's great interests, and besides that, there was lots of downside and no upside—who cares if a lot of innocent people are just dying like flies?

He was there every time, in private, getting no credit, when a difficult decision had to be made. And the Presidency is defined, and the country goes forward, based on the hard decisions. The easy ones anybody can make.

The second thing I want you to know is that he has had more responsibility than any person who ever held this job. And he has performed in an absolutely stunning manner. And I just want to run through—yes, you can clap for that. *[Applause]*

I want to give you a few examples. He led our effort to give America a genuinely competitive and humane telecommunications policy, which meant—what did that mean? You look at all the companies in New York State alone that did not even exist in 1996 when we signed the Telecommunications Act—hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Plus we got the E-rate to guarantee that our schools, our poorest schools and libraries and hospitals would be able to access the Internet.

He led our efforts to hook all of our schools and classrooms up to the Internet. When we started in 1994, under Al's leadership, 3 percent of the classrooms in America were hooked up to the Internet. Today, 65 percent are, 11 percent of the schools. Today, 95 percent of the schools in this country have an Internet connection.

He led our efforts to bring economic opportunity to people and places left behind, in the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities. He led our efforts in the environment, which—things like our partnership for the next generation of vehicles with Detroit, with the automakers and the auto companies, the auto-workers and the auto companies. Now you'll be able to buy cars, decent size cars, actually getting 70, 80 miles a gallon in the next year or two.

He had a big part of our foreign policy when it came to arms control or dealing with Russia or South Africa or the Middle East. He led our efforts to reinvent the Federal Government, which meant, as I think all of you, even our

adversaries would admit, we have been slightly more active than previous Presidents in the last several years, and we did it while shrinking the Government to its smallest size in 40 years—all because of Al Gore's leadership.

But what I want you to know is more important than all that. I had lunch with this guy once a week, before he got something better to do here a few months ago. [Laughter] From the day I took office until the onset of the Presidential campaign, I probably know more about him than anybody but Tipper. I know what he likes and what he can't stand. I know what he loves. I know when he's having a bad day and how he deals with it. And by the way, he knows the same about me.

And all I can tell you is, I feel absolutely comfortable putting the future of my daughter, and the grandchildren I hope she will give us, in his hands. He is the most accomplished and effective Vice President in the history of the country. That is not a matter of dispute; that's a statement of fact. He is the most well-qualified candidate we have had in my lifetime. I wish I'd had half his experience coming into office in '93 that he will bring in, in 2001.

But the most important thing of all is, he understands the future, and he knows how to take us there. There are big challenges out there. We have not done all this work to turn this country around, to fritter away the chance of a lifetime to deal with the big issues. And there are huge differences between our parties and our candidates that will have dramatic, immediate, practical impact on the lives of the American people—not just those of us who

came here tonight but, keep in mind, those of us who served us here tonight.

So for all my gratitude to all of you, for all my gratitude to the American people, for the chance to serve in a job I love, the most important thing is always, for our country, what are we going to do today and tomorrow? All I have done for 7 years and 3 months was to try to get the country I love in the position to build the future of our dreams for our children. Now it's up to you to decide whether we do that.

And believe me, for the rest of the lives of everybody in this audience, I will be very surprised if you ever get a chance to vote for anyone for President again who has done so much, who is such a fine human being, and who so clearly understands the future that is unfolding at such a rapid pace. We owe it—we owe it to ourselves, to the labors of the last 8 years, and more importantly, we owe it to our children and the dreams we have for them, to make sure that the next President of the United States is Al Gore.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:50 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the New York Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; actor Jon Stewart; singer Tony Bennett; investor Bob Rose; and Nick Theofanis, son of Dimitrios Theofanis. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the Vice President, Tipper Gore, and the First Lady.

Remarks on Proposed Hate Crimes Legislation

April 25, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, Amy Klobuchar and all the other law enforcement officials, civil rights leaders who are here; Attorney General Reno, Deputy Attorney General Holder.

Elian Gonzalez

Before I begin my remarks about hate crimes, I'd like to say just a brief word about the reunion of Elian Gonzalez and his father. After

5 months, it was long overdue. Now that they have been safely reunited, I believe it's time for all of us, including the media and those of us in public life, to give this family the space it needs to heal its wounds and strengthen its bonds; to work to lessen the pressure on them as the matter goes forward in the courts.

The thing that really matters now is that little boy and his life and his family. And I think, at least for the next several days, the less we

all say about it and the more time he has to breathe the air of a normal life, the better.

I would like to commend the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General Holder, the law enforcement, and the INS. They had a very, very difficult job to do, with no easy choices. And I am grateful that they were able to safely reunite the young boy with his father.

Thank you.

Hate Crimes Legislation

We have just had a very, very good meeting with people who are on the frontlines of law enforcement in our communities, people with different responsibilities, very different backgrounds, different viewpoints, who have all come to the same conclusion: We need to work together as partners and as a national community to fight crimes fueled by hate, and we need strong Federal hate crimes legislation.

I want to be clear. Most hate crimes are investigated and prosecuted at the State level. We support that. In fact, one of the reasons that I asked Janet Reno to become Attorney General over 7 years ago is that she had been a prosecutor in Miami for a dozen years. And I wanted the Federal Government to have a unified law enforcement policy with State and local authorities all across this country in an unprecedented partnership. I think we have achieved that.

But in some of the most brutal, hate-motivated crimes, Federal officials have been prevented from teaming up with local law enforcement. That has denied communities the resources and the expertise they need. We can draw a line against hate by drawing on each other's experiences. One important way to ensure that hate crimes are punished and justice is done is to make sure we're all able to do our part, and that was the focus of our meeting today.

Probably, you've heard me say many times by now that the great irony of this very modern age is that the biggest stumbling block we face is perhaps the oldest problem in human relations, our fear of those who are different from us. It's not a far leap from that kind of fear into distrust and then to dehumanization and then to violence.

We have seen that in case after case across this land: a man dragged to death in Texas because he was black; a young man stretched across a fence in Wyoming because he was gay;

children shot in Los Angeles because of their faiths; a young Korean-American shot coming out of church by a man who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God, but did believe in white supremacy.

In 1998, the last year for which we have statistics, over 7,700 hate crimes incidents were reported in our Nation, almost one an hour. And it is suspected by the experts that many more go unreported. These are not like other crimes, because these crimes target people simply because of who they are. And because they do, they strike at the heart of who we are as a Nation.

Whenever one of these crimes is committed, it creates a tension and fear that rips at the fabric of community life. This is not a partisan statement, but a simple statement of fact. This is about people who go to work, obey the law, are good citizens and good neighbors, who ought to be able to live their lives in dignity and without fear of abuse or attack, but cannot. That's why we have worked hard to combat such crimes.

Two and a half years ago I convened the first-ever White House Conference on Hate Crimes. Since then we have increased substantially the number of FBI agents working on them. We have successfully prosecuted a number of serious cases, formed local hate crime working groups in the U.S. attorneys' offices around our Nation, worked to help police officers identify the signs of a hate crime. My budget for the coming year includes funding for hate crime training for law enforcement.

But we must do more. You have already heard today, Federal laws punish some crimes committed against people on the basis of race or religion or national origin. But they are hamstrung by needless jurisdictional requirements for existing crimes. Right now Federal prosecutors cannot prosecute even the most heinous crimes unless the victim was voting, serving on a jury, or doing some other Federally protected activity. That defies common sense.

Today I heard about a case involving three skinheads in Lubbock, Texas, who declared a race war in their community, murdered one African-American as he was walking down the street, and injured two others. Local prosecutors and the U.S. Attorney's Office decided together that the case should be tried in Federal court. The skinheads were convicted and are behind bars with no chance of parole. But if the victim

had been inside a friend's house instead of on a public street, that would not have been a hate crime under today's Federal law. That doesn't make sense. It shouldn't matter where the murder was committed; it was still a hate crime. And the resources of the Federal Government were needed.

We also must give Federal prosecutors the ability to prosecute hate crimes committed because of sexual orientation, gender, or disability. These account for a growing number of such crimes. As the community leaders have told us today, this is not about taking anything away from States and communities. It's about making sure all our hometowns have the tools they need to fight hate.

So today I want to announce some new ways to do just that. First, the American Prosecutors Research Institute, the research arm of the National District Attorneys Association, is releasing today a resource guide, the first of its kind, to help prosecutors' offices handle hate crimes investigations and prosecutions. This report was funded by the Justice Department. It highlights model practices around our country, giving guidance on everything from screening cases and investigation to trial preparation to help in preventing the crimes in the first place.

Second, I'm announcing the release of a new guide that highlights promising practices by communities to confront and reduce hate crimes. It spotlights five national models, from California to Maine, for training criminal justice professionals, treating the emotional and practical needs of hate crime victims, and taking creative steps to root out hate from public schools.

Third, and most important, I am renewing my call on Congress to pass a meaningful hate crimes bill. Last year Congress stripped out important hate crimes protections from a bill that had already passed the Senate. I vetoed the bill in part because it did not contain the strong hate crimes provisions we're fighting for.

This year America needs action. No one should be victimized because of how they look, how they worship, or who they are. The one thing I regret today is that all of you, and through our friends in the media who are here, the American people, could not have heard the personal testimony of the two law enforcement officials who came all the way from Wyoming to be with us, about how the searing experience

of Matthew Shepard's murder and their responsibility to investigate it—to get to know his friends, gay and straight alike, and his family, to understand the circumstances of the inhumanity which took his life—how all of that changed their lives. That is really what this is about. We need to provide a law that works. And we need to get beyond the law so that we all work together. It is profoundly important.

Let me say, in a larger sense, this is part of our efforts to make our country a less violent place. I am grateful that crime is at a 25-year low, that homicides are at a 30-year low, that gun crimes have dropped 35 percent in the last 7 years. But as we saw just yesterday at the devastating act of violence at the National Zoo here in our Nation's Capital, where seven young people were shot and wounded in a senseless act, our country still has too much violence and too much crime. I'd like to express my concern and support to the Mayor and the entire community and, obviously, to the victims and their families. But whether it's a random act against children or a crime driven by hate, it should be obvious to all of us that we can do more, and we must do more.

Seven years ago and 3 months now, when I became President, I think there were a lot of people who really wondered whether the crime rate could be brought down in our country, whether we could become less violent. In such an atmosphere, maybe reservations about taking even sensible steps could be justified. But today, we don't have any excuses. We know we can make America a safer place.

But while the crime rate may be at a 25-year low, and gun crimes may be down 35 percent, and the homicide rate may be down to a 30-year low, there's not a single soul in this room or in this entire country who believes that our children are as safe as they ought to be, that people are safe from hate crimes, no matter what their race, their religion, their condition, or their sexual orientation, that we have done all we can to make this the country it ought to be.

So if you believe that everyone counts and that everyone should have a chance to live his or her life, and if you believe we all do better when we work together, then you've got to help us pass this legislation. It's very important, and we don't have a single excuse not to do it.

Thank you very much.

Apr. 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Amy Klobuchar, Hennepin County

attorney, Minnesota; and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Encourage Free and Fair Elections in Peru

April 25, 2000

Today I have signed into law S.J.Res. 43, expressing the sense of the Congress on the importance of free, fair, and democratic elections in Peru. Transparent elections are the foundation of a democratic society.

The people of Peru will go to the polls in the near future for a second and final round to choose their president. I urge that the concerns about the electoral process underscored by the Organization of American States mission to Peru, and by the U.S. Congress in this resolution, be fully addressed in preparations for the second round. The democratic countries of this hemisphere are united in our hope that the election be conducted in a transparent, peaceful, and statesmanlike manner. Democracy is

strengthened when all Peruvians have the opportunity to debate and determine the future of Peru.

The people of the United States look forward to continuing the excellent relationship we have enjoyed with the Peruvian people and their democratically elected leaders and to strengthening the bonds that unite our countries.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 25, 2000.

NOTE: S.J. Res. 43, approved April 25, was assigned Public Law No. 106-186.

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval Legislation on Nuclear Waste Policy

April 25, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 1287, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000."

The overriding goal of the Federal Government's high-level radioactive waste management policy is the establishment of a permanent, geologic repository. This policy not only addresses commercial spent nuclear fuel but also advances our non-proliferation efforts by providing an option for disposal of surplus plutonium from nuclear weapons stockpiles and an alternative to reprocessing. It supports our national defense by allowing continuing operation of our nuclear navy, and it is essential for the cleanup of the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex.

Since 1993, my Administration has been conducting a rigorous world-class scientific and technical program to evaluate the suitability of the Yucca Mountain, Nevada, site for use as a repository. The work being done at Yucca Mountain represents a significant scientific and technical undertaking, and public confidence in this first-of-a-kind effort is essential.

Unfortunately, the bill passed by the Congress will do nothing to advance the scientific program at Yucca Mountain or promote public confidence in the decision of whether or not to recommend the site for a repository in 2001. Instead, this bill could be a step backward in both respects. The bill would limit the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to issue radiation standards that protect human health and the environment and would prohibit

the issuance of EPA's final standards until June 2001. EPA's current intent is to issue final radiation standards this summer so that they will be in place well in advance of the Department of Energy's recommendation in 2001 on the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site.

There is no scientific reason to delay issuance of these final radiation standards beyond the last year of this Administration; in fact, waiting until next year to issue these standards could have the unintended effect of delaying a recommendation on whether or not to go forward with Yucca Mountain. The process for further review of the EPA standards laid out in the bill passed by the Congress would simply create duplicative and unnecessary layers of bureaucracy by requiring additional review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the National Academy of Sciences, even though both have already provided detailed comments to the EPA. This burdensome process would add time, but would do nothing to advance the state of scientific knowledge about the Yucca Mountain site.

Finally, the bill passed by the Congress does little to minimize the potential for continued claims against the Federal Government for damages as a result of the delay in accepting spent fuel from utilities. In particular, the bill does not include authority to take title to spent fuel

at reactor sites, which my Administration believes would have offered a practical near-term solution to address the contractual obligation to utilities and minimize the potential for lengthy and costly proceedings against the Federal Government. Instead, the bill would impose substantial new requirements on the Department of Energy without establishing sufficient funding mechanisms to meet those obligations. In effect, these requirements would create new unfunded liabilities for the Department.

My Administration remains committed to resolving the complex and important issue of nuclear waste disposal in a timely and sensible manner consistent with sound science and protection of public health, safety, and the environment. We have made considerable progress in the scientific evaluation of the Yucca Mountain site and the Department of Energy is close to completing the work needed for a decision. It is critical that we develop the capability to permanently dispose of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste, and I believe we are on a path to do that. Unfortunately, the bill passed by the Congress does not advance these basic goals.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 25, 2000.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation

April 26, 2000

The President Thank you very much. Thank you. I am on my way to North Carolina for another leg of our new markets tour to close the digital divide. But before I leave, I want to say a few words about an important study that Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, and I have just been briefed on regarding the growing cost of prescription drugs and the burden these costs are placing on seniors and on disabled Americans.

The study is from Families USA. It is a careful and compelling piece of work. And I thank Families USA President Ron Pollack for providing it and for being here with us today.

For over a year now, I have been arguing that we as a nation ought to use this historic

moment of strength and prosperity to meet our long-term challenges, especially the challenge of helping all our seniors afford prescription drugs that can lengthen and enrich their lives. More than three in five American seniors today lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage. Today's report shows that the burden on these seniors is getting worse.

According to the report, the price of the prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years now, including this past year. The burden of these rapidly rising prices falls hardest on seniors who lack drug coverage because they don't receive the benefits of price discounts that most insurers negotiate. Indeed, the gap between

drug prices for people with insurance versus those without insurance nearly doubled from 8 to 15 percent between 1996 and 1999. Seniors living on fixed incomes simply can't cope with these kinds of price increases forever. That's why we should take action to help them, and do it now.

In my budget, I propose a comprehensive plan to provide a prescription drug benefit that is optional, affordable, and accessible for all, a plan based on price competition, not price controls; a plan that will boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best prices possible; a plan that is part of an overall effort to strengthen and modernize Medicare so we will never have to ask our children to shoulder our burden when the baby boom generation retires.

I'm gratified to see growing bipartisan support for adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. But earlier this month leaders in the House put forth the outlines of a plan that has as a stated goal, providing access to affordable coverage for all seniors. It's good if we agree on the goal. Unfortunately, the plan they propose won't achieve the goal. Instead, it would subsidize insurance companies to offer prescription-drug-only policies for middle income seniors, for policies the insurance industry itself has already said it will not offer. And because the plan would provide direct premium support only to low income seniors and disabled Americans, it would do nothing for those seniors with modest middle class incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000. Nearly half of all the Medicare beneficiaries who lack prescription drug coverage fall into this category. For them, rising drug prices are eating away at financial independence.

For example, according to this new report, a widow taking medication for diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol who lives on \$16,700 a year must spend about \$2,000 a year, or 14 percent of income, on these drugs. That's not unusual. And for a nation that cares about seniors, it's not acceptable. A person like that should be covered in our initiative.

The majority's plan also is a phantom as long as the leadership insists on moving forward with a budget resolution that would spend every dime of the surplus, and then some, over the next 10 years on tax cuts. If the irresponsible and unrealized—realistic spending cuts this budget calls for don't materialize, the tax cut will make it impossible to pay down the debt. It would

leave nothing left for a prescription drug benefit. Any prescription drug plan that is not adequately financed is not available, in fact, is not affordable to all, and therefore, is not a real plan at all.

The balanced budget I have proposed would provide a voluntary benefit for all seniors, with plenty left over to pay down the debt, lengthen the life of Social Security and Medicare, and increase investments in education, as well as finance a responsible tax cut. It provides a prescription drug benefit that all seniors can afford in a way America can afford.

I'm encouraged by the progress we've made on this issue. Now both parties have come to support the idea of adding voluntary prescription drug benefits to Medicare. Both parties have agreed to the principle that the benefits should be available and affordable to all Americans. There's no reason we can't come to an agreement on the details of how to provide it. Fundamentally, again, as with so many of the things we deal with here in Washington, this should not be a Republican or a Democratic partisan issue. It should be an American issue.

I want to thank Senator Daschle and Representative Gephardt for their support and their leadership on this issue, and I'd like to ask them now to say a few words, beginning with our leader in the House, Mr. Gephardt.

[At this point, Representative Richard A. Gephardt and Senator Thomas A. Daschle made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. Before I close, I would just like to ask all of you to join me in expressing our appreciation to Ron Pollack and Families USA. They've been there on these issues year-in and year-out. I don't think they get as much acknowledgement as they deserve. But this is further evidence that the proposal we have is right for America, from a source that everybody can trust.

Thank you, Ron.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, prior to his departure for Whiteville, NC. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Representative Gephardt and Senator Daschle.

Remarks to the Community in Whiteville, North Carolina April 26, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, I leaned over to Mayor Jones, and I said, "Is it really true that no previous President has ever been to Whiteville or Columbus County?" And she said, "It's true." And I said, "They don't know what they were missing." I'm glad to be here today.

I want to thank Craig Turner for the presentation he made. I want to thank the mayor for welcoming me here; your fine Congressman, Mike McIntyre. And I want to thank the other Members of Congress who are here: Bob Etheridge, Robin Hayes, and especially Representative Eva Clayton, who is the cochair of the congressional rural caucus. I welcome all them.

I want to say an appreciation for all the business leaders who came here and Secretary Rodney Slater and our FCC Commissioner, Bill Kennard, and our Under Secretary of Agriculture, Jill Long-Thompson, and many others who are here. I'd also like to acknowledge that I have a business liaison, Jay Dunn, who's from Wilkes County, North Carolina; I'm glad he's here.

But I want to say a special word on behalf of three people. First, I don't think anybody has ever put this together, but I'm not sure that I would be President if it weren't for North Carolina, even though I never won your electoral votes, for two reasons. One is, 21 years ago, my then-colleague as a Governor, Jim Hunt, gave me the first position of national leadership I ever had in the Democratic Governors' Association. And if it hadn't been for that, I might never have gotten started. And secondly, if it hadn't been for Erskine Bowles, I probably would not have succeeded as President. So I am very grateful to Jim Hunt, who is, I agree, the finest Governor in the United States of America today; and to my friend Erskine Bowles, who could be doing a lot of other things today, who has a touch of gold—everything he touches turns to gold. He could be out making money, but instead he'd rather be here with you in Whiteville making a better future for the children of this county and a better economy for you.

I want to say in plain language why I am here and why I hope all across America people

will see you on television tonight and read about you tomorrow and think about this. I have been honored to be your President for over 7 years. I still marvel at the fact that I was born in a little town of 6,000 in Arkansas, and my mother's people came from a little community of 150, 8 miles from there. Our kinfolks are still there. I keep on my desk in the White House a series of pictures that have my family's history, starting with a picture of my grandfather in Bodcaw, Arkansas, population 150 in 1906. And there are still about 150 people there.

So I think I understand your life. I was amazed, though, I must say, to hear one of your businessmen tell me today that he was selling fertilizer to farmers in Arkansas. Now, when I was Governor, one thing we had plenty of was fertilizer, and some people thought I supplied a lot of it. [*Laughter*]

But I've loved being President, and I've loved working on the economy. And I'm proud of the fact that we've got the longest economic expansion in history and 21 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment in 30 years and the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. I'm proud of that.

But it bothers me that in the face of the longest, strongest creative economic growth in our history, there are people and places who have been left behind. And mostly they are places that are physically isolated. Whether they are small rural towns like Whiteville, remote Indian reservations like the ones I have visited in New Mexico and South Dakota, or remote inner-city neighborhoods, where people with money and investment don't go very much, there are people who are physically isolated.

And I have started in the last 2 years of my Presidency this whole effort to convince the rest of America that you're a very good deal, and we ought to invest in you and your future.

If you follow this on the news at night, you know that there's a big debate about how much longer this economic expansion can go on. And about every week or so, somebody says, "Oh, it can't go on any longer, because there's got to be inflation, and then we'll have high interest rates, and the thing will shut down."

And so I spent a lot of time thinking about how to keep it going, because I kind of like that. I like seeing you do well. And I'd like to see my Vice President get his fair share of credit this year in November. So I think about it.

But what I want you to understand is this. The rest of America has a big stake in your success. Why? Because if the unemployment rate here were 3 percent and everybody that wanted a job had one, and you all had better jobs with growing businesses, what is that? That's growth for the rest of America without inflation—more workers, more business owners, and more consumers—everybody in America. And all those places with 2 percent unemployment, they ought to be pulling for you because you're their meal ticket to the future, to keep this economic growth going.

So what I tried to do is to say to people with money, "Look, I want you to have the same incentives to invest in rural North Carolina, rural Arkansas, the inner cities, the Native American reservations—I want you to have the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you today to invest in poor areas of Latin America or Asia or Africa. Look to America and the new markets here." That's the first part of this.

The second part is this—and that's what we're here about today. You hear all about this digital divide; some of you have a computer, and some don't—and even if you do, maybe you use the Internet with your telephone line, and maybe you don't. But what I want you to understand is that the Internet is the fastest growing means of communication in all human history.

When I became President—listen to this—when I became President 7 years and 3 months ago, there were 50—50—50 sites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are 50 million—in 7 years. And one of these places is this fertilizer business in rural North Carolina where two Arkansas farmers, at least, found their way on the Internet and they said, "This guy will sell me fertilizer cheaper than the guy down the street will. I think I'll order it." This is unheard of.

Let me tell you, I have seen things you would not believe. I've been in little villages in Africa where people have no maps and no schoolbooks, where they can get all the most modern information. I've been in little villages in India, where the income every year is \$450 a year, where women with newborn babies can get the

most modern information about how to care for their children because of the Internet.

And what we're here to tell you is, number one, we believe, in rural North Carolina and in rural America, Internet access ought to be just as likely as telephone access. And number two, you ought to be able to use it in the fastest possible way. And number three, if you can, it'll mean more jobs, more businesses, higher incomes, and more opportunity.

Why is that? We're standing here in front of the railroad station. You know what the railroad brought to the rural South? You know what the highways brought to the rural South? You know what electricity brought to the rural South? What did they do? They helped to make it possible for people to live out here in the country and move back and forth and make a living.

But we never quite caught up in rural America, did we? Why? Because no matter how you cut it, no matter how many roads we had or how many powerlines we had or how many trains ran through our town, we were still a long way away from everybody else, and it took time to get from here to there, wherever "there" was. Isn't that right?

So most people who kept on living in rural America did it because it's a great place to live. It's a nice way to live. President Johnson left Washington, DC, and went home to this little town in Texas where he was from, and they said, "How can you bear to live in this little one-horse town after living in Washington, DC, for 25 years?" And he looked at Walter Cronkite, and he said—I'll never forget this for as long as I live—he said, "I can bear to live here because, here, people know when you're sick, and they care when you die." Now, so we live here. But with all these improvements, you never quite caught up.

Now, here's what I believe, and why I'm spending the last year of my term in the White House trying to build support among Republicans and Democrats for giving these extra incentives to invest in these areas and making sure we close the digital divide and every one of your classrooms and every one of your businesses has access to really high-speed service on the Internet. Because what does the Internet do that the railroads didn't do, that the highways didn't do, that a rural airport didn't do, that electricity didn't do? What does the Internet do? It collapses time and distance.

We have never been able to do that. That's what I want you to think about. You've never been on a computer in your life—I want you to think about that when you leave here. It collapses time and distance. Therefore, for the first time in my lifetime, we have a chance to move more people out of poverty and unemployment and lack of access to businesses more quickly in rural America, isolated inner cities, and Native American reservations than at any time in the history of this country.

And when people see you on television tonight, I want them to think about this town abolishing time and distance because of what Jim Hunt, the telephone companies, and others have done to provide broad-based Internet service to you through this broadband. That's what I want them to think about. I want to thank Bell South and Sprint and GTE and the telephone co-ops for working with Governor Hunt to do this. I want to thank Qualcomm and the other companies that came here today, that show us other ways to get you really good Internet service. But if you never thought about this in your life, I want you to think about it.

I don't care if you don't have a college degree. I don't care if you never finished high school. You need to figure out how these computers work. You need to figure out how to get on the Internet. You need to figure out how it will help you, and if you don't have people here who can help you, you need to figure out how to get somebody to come into this community and run the education programs to teach you how to do this, because this is the future of America.

Now, it's true, it's more expensive in rural areas than in the cities now, and it's not hard to figure out why. They've got more customers and less space, so it's cheaper. So, Governor Hunt's got a plan to overcome that, and we are trying to help. We are making available, through our Rural Utilities Service, loans that will allow rural areas to offer high-speed Internet to help cut the cost.

We've got businesses involved that are helping us do all kinds of things. Qualcomm, one of the companies that is represented by its chairman here today, is going to spend a million dollars to provide wireless high-speed services to 8 underserved rural communities, including those here in North Carolina—including this county—and that's going to make it easier to get; MCI WorldCom, \$2 million to increase

wireless Internet access in 3 rural communities in the South; AT&T, over a million dollars to develop information and technology management training at North Carolina State, North Carolina A&T, and other universities; Red Hat Software, in Durham, North Carolina, providing free training and certification to use the software to employees of 100 hundred different rural small businesses. Every small business in this town ought to take advantage of that and get on the Internet and find your customers, wherever they are. This is a good beginning.

But you just remember this. You've got to be for this, folks. You've got to believe in this. Now, I'm not running for anything; I'm not giving you a campaign speech. [Laughter] I'm telling you, I have now spent more than 20 years trying to bring jobs and opportunity and hope to places like this community. I believe I've learned something about it. I have pleaded and begged with people to invest in places like this community. I have given tax breaks to people to do it. I have built roads, and I have made roads bigger. I have built airports, and I've made them bigger. I've done everything known to man to try to get more jobs into the rural parts of my State and in America, since I've been here.

I can only think of two more things we can do: give people the same incentives to invest in you we give them to invest in poor areas overseas; and make sure the Internet is universally available at affordable prices.

But you remember what I'm telling you. In the whole 20th century, we never caught up. You can't stop change. We're always going to be losing jobs and getting jobs. We all try to save every one we can. But the economy changes, and it's going to change faster. But we can catch up if, for the first time in our history, we can collapse time and distance so that your children have access to every bit of information any children in the richest places in the world have; so that your businesses have access to every potential customer and supplier anyplace in the world; so that you have access to anything you'd ever need to know and learn as soon and as well as anyone else does.

That's what this Internet is. That's why it has gone from 50 to 50 million webpages in just 7 years. And it can be this community's ticket to tomorrow. Every child here is just as smart, just as worthy, just as able as every child in

the richest community in the United States or anyplace else in the world. They deserve that.

So a long time from today, I want you to remember more than that the President finally came to your hometown. [*Laughter*] I want you to remember why we came here: Because of your Governor and Erskine Bowles and these other leaders, we have a chance to collapse time and distance and to give you your chance to live your dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at the Whiteville train depot. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Ann W. Jones of Whiteville; W. Craig Turner, corporate secretary, board of directors, Remote Data Systems; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; former White House Chief of Staff Erskine B. Bowles; Irwin Jacobs, chairman and chief executive officer, Qualcomm, Inc.; and White House Associate Director for Business Outreach Jackson Dunn.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Daisy Bates in Little Rock, Arkansas *April 27, 2000*

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, for those wonderful words and for doing a wonderful job in Washington. Governor, Mayor, Senator Lincoln, Representatives Snyder and Berry and Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor Rockefeller, and Attorney General Pryor and Senator Pryor, we're glad to see you here today. Thank you.

To Larry Ross and all of the committee; and Carlotta, thank you for your words; and Ernie, Minnijean, Jeff, and Elizabeth, thank you for being here. I thank all the people who provided our magnificent music, and I thank Janis and Diane and my longtime friend John Walker for what they had to say about Daisy. And I want to thank the Gaston and Bates families for inviting me here today. I've had a good time. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad I came. And I think Daisy's getting a good kick out of us making such a fuss about her today. [*Laughter*]

On the day of Daisy's funeral, I would like to have been here, but I was in Washington because that was the day long assigned to present the Congressional Gold Medal to her Little Rock Nine. I remember the last time I saw her was here, in 1997, on the day we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the integration of Little Rock Central High. And though her body was weaker and her voice was gone, she was still plainly happy to be there as the Governor and the mayor and I held open the doors for the students who were once kept out by the law, to walk in to the cheers of their fellow citizens—thanks to her.

I think that my old friend Reverend Young said about all that needed to be said about—[*laughter*]—about nearly everything. I am still in one piece, although it's a slightly grayer—[*laughter*]—jagged, more beaten up piece. But Reverend Young, I just figured if all of you were doing better, I could sure get by. And I'm glad to be here with you.

I was trying to think—you know, one thing I'd like to say to you is that there is always a danger when somebody does something that is really great that defines his or her life, that somehow you miss everything else. You know, we could put flowers at the shrine of what Daisy Bates did, at Little Rock Central High School, and for those nine young people, from now until the end of this country, and we never could do enough to say thank you.

But what I'd like to say to you at the end of this very moving and long and inspiring program is that I really liked Daisy Bates. I liked her for who she was. I liked her because she was a brave woman who fought the civil rights battle. But I liked her also because she was a brave woman who kept her spirits up and found joy in life as her body began to fail, who learned to speak through her eyes when her voice would no longer make a sound, and who never lost the ability to laugh.

I never will forget when I was wheeling Daisy through the Civil Rights Memorial at Memphis, when they put up the section on Little Rock Central High School, and they had the wonderful statue to her on one side and a pretty good likeness of Governor Faubus on the other side.

[*Laughter*] So I wheeled Daisy in, you know, and then she was looking at herself, and I said, “You look pretty good, Daisy.” She said, “Yeah.” And I said, “Old Orval looks pretty good, too, doesn’t he?” And she said, “Yeah, he does.” [*Laughter*] She was laughing about it.

She always—she had a dignity that comes from having lived a life well and a peace of mind that comes from faith and strength that allows you to let go of those things that time is going to take away sooner or later from all of us, anyway. But not very many people can do that. A lot of people would have been feeling sorry for themselves, saying, “Well, after I did all this stuff in my life, why doesn’t my body work anymore?”

I liked Daisy Bates not only because of what she did at Little Rock but because of the way she lived right to the end. And when she lost things that are painful for any person to lose, somehow what was left became more pure, more strong, almost like a diamond that was chipped away and formed and shines more brightly. And I am grateful for that.

You know, I’m also grateful for the fact that she overcame the adversities of her childhood. I was glad John Walker said what he did. This was an orphan child who found her way to a great truth. She was, in addition to what the film said about her, the only woman pilot in the Arkansas Civil Air Patrol in World War II and the only woman who spoke on that magnificent day at The Mall in August of 1963 when Martin Luther King gave his “I Have a Dream” speech.

She endured emotional and physical attacks, ostracism, violence, and harassment. Her newspaper was boycotted by local businesses who closed the door of it for three decades, because they wanted neither her nor it to speak the truth to their deaf ears. In spite of it all, maybe because of it all, Daisy Bates continued to fight the good fight.

There’s something else I think is worth saying. When you come to the end of a person’s life and an end of an era, and you look at all these little children here and you look at this beautiful choir back behind us, there is a certain tendency to believe that, oh, this is a great country with a great history, and somehow this was all inevitable it was going to turn out this way. That is not true. That is not true. And I want the young people to know that it is not true.

Daisy Bates did not know she was going to win. But she fought anyway. That’s where the real courage is. If you know you’re going to win in the end, it doesn’t take a lot of courage to fight. And the pain of the wounds is not so great if you know you’re going to win anyway.

Listen to this. She said recently, “When we took on segregation in the Little Rock schools, I don’t think we had any big idea we were going to win it, but they were going to know they had a fight.” [*Laughter*] In the words of a woman she knew and admired, Eleanor Roosevelt, she believed, and I quote, that, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” [*Laughter*] Well, she never gave her consent, and she never gave her consent later when she began to break physically.

During the whole time I was honored to be your Governor here, I was inspired by her confidence and spurred by her conscience. I love what she said about our State, because she loved Arkansas, warts and all. Listen to this. She said, “Arkansas is the home of my birth, my growth, my identity as a woman in this world. It has claimed me from birth, and I have claimed it for life.”

Daisy is now in a place where earthly rewards don’t mean all that much and certainly aren’t needed. But we who are still here, we need our earthly reminders of the values she lived and fought for, the work she did, and the work still to be done. So today, in honor of Daisy Bates, I want to make two announcements.

First, I have asked that her home at 1207 West 28th be approved as a national historic landmark as soon as possible. [*Applause*] Thank you. Second, on behalf of Hillary and myself, I am glad to designate Little Rock Central High School an official project of the White House Millennium Council’s Save America’s Treasures program, to make it eligible for funds that we’re putting out across this country to help to renovate, restore, and enshrine the great places in our history. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I close with this. Little Rock Central High School embodies for me, in these lives of the children behind me and the rich history it has, the motto that Hillary and I had for celebrating this year 2000, that we would honor the past and imagine the future. So that’s the last thing I want to leave with you.

I don’t know if I can remember the Governor’s exact words—you know he’s a better preacher than I am. [*Laughter*] But I thought

it was great when he—I can't remember—he said, "There's some people that, because of face or place, race or grace, think they're better than other people." That was really good; I wish I'd thought of that. [Laughter] Wasn't that good? [Applause] That was really good.

But I will just leave you with this. If you really want to honor Daisy Bates and you want to remember the fire in her eyes, even as she had to sit down instead of stand up, you need to think about the future. Even in this most modern of worlds, where we're imagining how wonderful it will be when every one of our kids is connected to the Internet, and when we're about to unlock the mysteries of the humane genome, and in a few years we'll know what's in those black holes in outer space, the biggest problem we got in this whole world today is the oldest problem of humankind, which we learned about in our own way in Little Rock: People are still scared of people who are different from them.

And when they are—and everybody's scared of something. [Laughter] And some people think that it's scary just getting up every day, and everybody's scared of something. So a lot of people have always thought, throughout all of human history, that the only way they can deal with their fears is to find somebody different from them they can look down on and think, "At least I am not that." And there's not a person in this room hadn't done that—not a one. "I may be bad; at least I'm not a hypocrite." [Laughter] "I may be a thief; at least I'm not cheap." [Laughter] "I may be this; at least I'm not that."

But the biggest demon is in race and religion. All over the world today, it is still eating people alive. So we want to celebrate the modern world and all the wonders it's bringing, and we're being dragged down because we still can't let

go of what every one of us in the room at least should have learned better than to do at Little Rock.

So I ask you to think about that. If God came down to me today and said, "I'm sorry, you've survived a lot, but I'm not going to let you finish your term. You're headed out of here today, and I'll give you one wish. I'm not a genie; you can't have three—one"—[laughter]—I would not wish for continued prosperity. I would not wish for some new weapon system to protect us forever. I would wish that somehow we would find it in our hearts to be one America and to lead the world toward that.

So I say this. If you liked and admired Daisy Bates and you really want to do something to memorialize her, promise yourself you will spend the rest of your life in every way you can bringing us closer to that wonderful idea.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the auditorium at the Robinson Center. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater; Gov. Mike Huckabee and Lt. Gov. Winthrop P. Rockefeller of Arkansas; Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock; State Attorney General Mark Pryor; former Senator David Pryor; Larry Ross, executive director for external affairs, Southwestern Bell Arkansas, and chair, Daisy Bates Memorial Committee; Little Rock Nine members Carlotta Walls Lanier, Ernest Green, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Jefferson Thomas, and Elizabeth Eckford; Rev. Rufus K. Young, pastor, Bethel AME Church; Diane Davis-Charles, State chapter representative, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; civil rights lawyer John Walker; and Special Assistant to the President and Special Advisor for Presidential History Janis Kearney, who formerly ran the newspaper founded by Ms. Bates.

Remarks at the William H. Bowen Law School Dedication Ceremony in Little Rock

April 27, 2000

Thank you very much, Derrick, and thank you for your great speech. Mack, thank you for being here. I must say, when Mack was speaking, he was laying it on so thick, I had to lean

over and pinch Bill to make sure he was still breathing. [Laughter] I said, "Bowen, are you still alive? Is this is a eulogy?" And he said,

“I guess if Mack ever does run for office, I’ll have to support him now.” [Laughter]

Chairman May, Dr. Sugg, Dr. Hathaway, Dean Smith, thank you for your wonderful comments. To all the elected officials and former officials who are here, Secretary Slater, Senator Lambert, General Pryor, Senator Bumpers, Congressman Berry, Mayor Dailey; to Bill and Connie and your wonderful family; and to all of you here who are responsible for this, I want to thank you on behalf of Hillary and myself for naming this law school for Bill Bowen.

I was looking out in this audience today. There are hundreds of people I know by first name in this audience. I counted over 20 people who were members of one or more of my administrations as Governor in some form or another. There are many lawyers here whom I have admired since I was a very young man. But as a person who’s spent most of his life in politics, it’s somehow reassuring to me to know that this law school is being named for a brilliant man who spent the last 30 years trying to avoid practicing law—[laughter]—and seemed to me to have succeeded in an outstanding fashion. [Laughter]

Senator and Mrs. Pryor, it’s nice to see you. I didn’t see you all over there. But I want to say that by the time Bill Bowen agreed basically to make it possible for me to run for President—and I say that in all sincerity. I was profoundly concerned about what would happen if I were to undertake a campaign in 1991, and I wanted to know that the office would continue to operate, and that things would go well, and that if I needed to make a decision or come home, somebody with enough sense to know would tell me and get me on a plane forthwith.

I’d known Bill Bowen for a long time by then. By then, for a better part of two decades, he had been a friend of mine, an adviser, a supporter, and a banker. I remember, I had been attorney general about 2 months when the Arkansas Jaycees named me one of the outstanding young men of the year; I knew I didn’t deserve it, and I found out later that Bill Bowen and Mack McLarty got it done. So I’m still trying to live up to it. And unfortunately, I outgrew the title before I lived up to it. [Laughter]

By the time 1991 rolled around, there was only one thing Bill Bowen hadn’t done for me. He hadn’t actually been a full-time member of our administration. And so I asked him to become the Chief of Staff, as Mack said. He actu-

ally took about an hour to agree, and that’s a long time for Bowen—if you know how he makes decisions. [Laughter] But after all, I was asking him to turn his entire life upside down. But he did it. And he performed in an absolutely superb way.

From the time I set foot outside Arkansas to seek the Presidency, I knew that the State and the statehouse would be in good hands. I never worried about whether decisions would be made in a timely fashion, whether anything that should be done was being done, whether there was some problem that should be brought to my attention that wasn’t. I never worried about any of that.

And so I can honestly say, my friend Bill, if it hadn’t been for you, I could not have done it. And I hope you’re proud of what has happened in America for the last 8 years, because your decision to be a selfless public servant made it all possible, and I thank you for that.

One of the things that bothers me is that people in elected office sometimes get all the credit for what so many people do. So I hope you’ll think about that tonight, Bill. More than 21 million people with new jobs; longest economic expansion in history; today my staff gave me, just before I came up here—today’s economic report shows that in the first quarter of the 21st century, our economy grew at a rate of 5.4 percent. That means for the last year our growth rate has been the highest it’s been in over 15 years, and that’s an astonishing thing.

And I’d also like to tell you that I think my life with you in Arkansas had something to do with the economic policies we put in place up there. Somebody asked me the other day, when we passed the longest economic expansion in history and everybody was celebrating, they said, “Well, what was the major contribution you made to the new economic policy, Mr. President?” And I said, “Arithmetic.” [Laughter] I brought arithmetic to Washington.

And you’re all laughing, but you’re going to be asked to decide this year whether to continue arithmetic or return to some other theory, and I think we now have evidence with both, and I hope that arithmetic will prevail. And I thank you, Bill Bowen, for what you did to make it possible.

I’d also like to thank you, as the President, for your service to America in World War II, for flying the Hellcats and Wildcats, for waging freedom’s fight.

I'd like to thank you, as a former Governor, for always being there for the cause of the education of our children and for the economic development for people and places who were left behind in the 1980's, places like Althemier and Hope.

And I'd like to thank you, too, for being willing to come back and help out this law school, and for the role you all had in deciding to build this building here around the old university building, to make a contribution at once to tomorrow's lawyers and to historic preservation and to the character of the McArthur Park Area, which is so important to me and to so many others in this audience.

You could have done something else with the last couple of years of your life, and no one would have been able to criticize you. You could have decided that after succeeding as a lawyer, a banker, a public servant, and a public citizen, you didn't need to prove that you could succeed as a law school dean. But it is true that of all the people I know, no one embodies the continuing energy and imagination for tomorrow any better than you do. So I wasn't surprised when you agreed not to grow old but to help the young. [Laughter]

I told somebody one time that Bill Bowen made me look absolutely passive—[laughter]—and that I didn't believe anybody could possibly be as aggressive as he was and still be likable—[laughter]—but he managed to do it. And I think today answers the question why. Because

I always had the feeling that whatever he was pushing for was something that was going to be good for everybody else, too. And through a long and rich life, it's always been true.

Thank you, Connie, for your friendship. I thank all the members of the Bowen family for loving him and keeping the rough edges sanded and giving him the anchor that every person needs. But most of all, Bill, I thank you for being my friend, for being a good citizen, for being a good man, and for being a very powerful example.

Ladies and gentlemen, our honoree, Bill Bowen.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. on the lawn at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, future site of the law school. In his remarks, he referred to Derrick Smith, president, Student Bar Association, who introduced the President; former White House Chief of Staff Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty; William H. Bowen, former dean, and Rodney K. Smith, Donaghey dean and professor of law, University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law; J. Thomas May, board of trustees chairman, and Charles E. Hathaway, chancellor, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; B. Alan Sugg, president, University of Arkansas System; State Attorney General Mark Pryor; former Senator Dale Bumpers; Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock; Mr. Bowen's wife, Connie; and former Senator David Pryor and his wife, Barbara.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Nordic Leaders

April 28, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. Let me also say that we are very honored to be a part of the opening of this magnificent exhibition at the Museum of Natural History. I am grateful to the Nordic Council, to all the museums and the nations represented in the exhibit, and especially grateful to the extraordinary assemblage of dignitaries who have joined us today from all the Nordic nations.

There are quite a few competing answers to the question, who discovered America—and by the way, when, and exactly what America was—some would say, is. [Laughter] Now, Italian-

Americans revere Columbus and point out the word "America" comes from the famed map-maker Amerigo Vespucci. Anglo-Americans argue for the primacy of Jamestown and Plymouth as the first colonies in the original United States. Franco-Americans remind us to honor Champlain, Cartier, and La Salle alongside all others. And of course, our Native Americans consider all these people insignificant late-comers.

With the opening of this important exhibit, we expand the debate and learn more about ourselves. The remarkable explorations across

the North Atlantic at the turn of the last millennium constituted a crucial first step. These brave voyages under perilous conditions brought a dawning awareness on both sides of the Atlantic that our world is, in fact, many worlds.

There was something profoundly heroic about their desire and their ability to make the crossing. To go across the Atlantic to Vinland was as earthshaking and expansive an achievement as the most expansive, ambitious space launch today. It is indeed fitting that our first expedition to Mars in 1976 consisted of two spacecraft called Viking 1 and Viking 2.

All Americans should know more about this fascinating early chapter of our history. The Viking voyages are an essential part of the long process by which all of us in our different ways came to be here. The legacy of the Vikings has always been with us, from scattered archaeological evidence to the legends that thrilled poets like Longfellow.

These legends have been nurtured especially by the descendants of the Vikings. I don't suppose I can use the term "Viking-Americans," but I do mean people from Norway and Sweden and Finland and Denmark and Iceland, who showed the same courage when they immigrated here in the modern period to build new worlds for themselves. The settlers of places like New Sweden in Delaware; Oslo, Minnesota; Denmark, Iowa; or Holland, North Dakota, all brought a deep love of democracy and freedom stemming from their own egalitarian traditions. In fact, a new National Geographic cites a case where the Prince of the Franks sent an envoy to parlay with a group of invading Vikings and came back saying, "I found no one to talk with. They said they were all chiefs." [Laughter]

Now our awareness of our Nordic past will go far beyond legends and traditions. This exhibition will deepen our knowledge of the rich

history we share. It will shape our future by strengthening the bonds between Americans and their kin in the Nordic nations.

I am grateful for all that we have done together in the last decade, from our support for the peaceful expansion of democracy and freedom in Central and Eastern Europe to our concerted actions in Bosnia and Kosovo. Europe's future has never looked brighter, thanks in no small measure to your contributions.

When we entered the new millennium a few months ago, it was reassuring to dramatize our progress by portraying the year 1000 as a dark time in human history, a time then dominated by fear and superstition. But this exhibition helps to tell a fuller story: that for all the challenges and superstitions men and women faced 1,000 years ago, they still had the daring and enterprise to look beyond the horizon, to begin to build a world that measured up to their imagination. This is an old lesson that always offers fresh inspiration.

It is amazing to me to look at the Viking ships and imagine that they made it all this way 1,000 years ago. And I am so glad that, with the leaders of all these nations here today, you have clearly decided to make this a tradition. And you're welcome back in the year 3000. [Laughter] We are delighted to have you. Welcome. Thank you.

I'd like to now invite His Majesty, the King of Norway, to come and make a few remarks on behalf of all the Nordic nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to an exhibit at the National Museum of Natural History entitled, "Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga." The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of King Harald V of Norway.

Remarks Announcing a Gun Buyback Initiative

April 28, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, let me say a word of appreciation to you, Chief Ramsey, for your outstanding leadership of this very fine department. Thank you, Mayor Williams, for the energy and direction you have

brought to city hall and to this entire city. Thank you, Eleanor Holmes Norton, for always advocating for Washington, DC. I think no one will ever know how many times you have called me or been to see me in the last 7 years and 3

months to get me to do something else, how many times you have reminded me that I, for my tenure here, and my wife are citizens of Washington, DC. And I have tried to be a good and faithful citizen, and insofar as we have succeeded, it's in no small measure because of you.

Thank you, Congressman Patrick Kennedy, for being here and for your longstanding concern for reducing crime and violence. And I want to thank DC councilmember Sandy Allen. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to our HUD Secretary, Andrew Cuomo, who is here, who has been very, very vigorous in this area. I think no HUD Secretary has ever tried to do as much as he, not only to build and maintain and improve the public housing units of America and to provide more vouchers for people to find their own housing but actually to make that housing safe. And I thank him for that.

I'd like to thank all the members of the DC Police Department who are here for your service, and I'd like to congratulate this class of fine police recruits behind me and thank them for their commitment to the safety of this community.

As Chief Ramsey said, I have tried to be a good partner to law enforcement throughout the country. There are a lot of reasons for that. By the time I got elected President, I'd been involved with law enforcement in one way or another for nearly 20 years. I asked Janet Reno to become Attorney General largely because she'd be the first Attorney General in a long, long time who had actually been a local prosecutor in a fascinating and challenging context, in Dade County in Miami. And we got people together who had been working with local law enforcement officials to write the crime bill in '94 and to pass that Brady bill and to do the other things which have been done. And I hope that it's worked.

Underneath all that, there was something else. I'd actually spent time as a Governor and as a candidate for President looking at places where the crime rate had gone down. And I found, all over America, most people just took it for granted that the crime rate would always go up and that all of you who put on a badge and a uniform every day would always be fighting a losing battle. That's what most people thought back in 1992. And they respected you; they were grateful. They cried when they saw the pictures of the children being shot in the

newspaper, but they basically thought it would go on forever.

I thought it was intolerable. I did not think it was inevitable, and I'd seen enough evidence to know that we could drive the crime rate down.

Now, over the last 7 years, the things we have done together, people in their communities all over the country, have given us the lowest overall crime rate in 25 years, the lowest homicide rate in 30 years, and gun crime alone is down 35 percent since 1993. In Washington, crime is at the lowest level since the early 1970's. Gun crime is half what it was just 5 years ago. And that's a real tribute to the people in the police department and to the people in the community that are working with you.

But as the Mayor said earlier, I don't think there is a soul in America that believes that we're safe enough. And when we remember the Columbine tragedy, when we experience the tragedy of what happened at the zoo here a few days ago, when we pick up the newspaper on any given day, we know that this country can do better.

You know, again I say, in 1992 a lot of people didn't believe that. Now—just look at these numbers—we now know; therefore, we have no excuse for not continuing to do things we know will work, because now we've got the evidence. Yet, 12 young people still die every day from gun violence, about 40 percent of them from accidents and suicide.

Now, as I look ahead—I've asked for a lot of things from this Congress. I've asked them to close the gun show loophole, put child trigger locks on all the guns, to allow us to trace all the guns and bullets used in crimes. I've asked them to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which makes a mockery out of our assault weapons ban. I've asked them to give me funds for another 50,000 police officers to put them in the highest crime neighborhoods. But I've also asked them to give me \$15 million, which is not much in the context of the Federal budget, to support Secretary Cuomo's gun buyback initiative.

Now, I want to talk about this a little bit, and this is not in my notes, but I think we need to make the sale here. Because I can tell you what the people in the media are thinking back there. They're saying, "Gosh, there must be a couple hundred million guns in America. What can you buy in DC with a quarter of

a million bucks? What's 3,000—I'm glad you got 3,000 guns last year in a few days, but what does that mean?"

Well, the first thing I want to say is, all those numbers that float around are misleading. A lot of the weapons are in the hand of law enforcement officials, people in the military, and legitimate, honest hunters and sports people. The number of guns that are floating around on the streets in our cities is massive but not a mountain we can't climb.

And I'm doing my best to get the best data I can, and I'm doing some work on that—I was hoping I would have it ready by today, but I don't—because Eleanor and the Mayor, when I called them after that terrible tragedy at the zoo and asked them what I could do to help, they said, "Well, why don't you help our gun buyback program?" And that's why we're all here today, because we want to move now, while people are thinking about this.

But if you just think about this, every one of you knows if you can produce 3,000 guns in Washington, DC, in a couple of days, and you pay people about \$50—they either get a small amount of cash or some sort of gift certificate, and then the guns are destroyed—can you imagine what would happen if, on a per capita basis, that was done in every community in this country? And if we did it a couple of times a year for the next 2 or 3 years, how much that would drive down all these statistics?

And that's why I wanted to come here today. When I talked to the Mayor, I told him, even though we haven't passed our bill through Congress yet, I'd try to go back and get some money. And he told me what he was going to do. So I told him, and I'll tell you, we're going to give \$100,000 through HUD's program to go with what the city is putting up. That will enable you, in this few days, Chief, instead of getting 3,000 guns, to get more than 7,000 guns this year. You can more than double what you did last year. Every one of the guns taken out of circulation could mean one less crime, one less tragedy, one more child's life saved.

Our Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is also committing today to trace every gun turned in during this buyback period to see if it has been stolen or used in a crime—part of a larger partnership with the DC Police Department to trace the source of every gun used in a crime in this city.

So far, this work we've been doing together has proven extremely effective in shutting down flows of illegal guns coming in here. In one case, officials traced literally dozens of guns, used by gang members and other criminals to commit murder and other crimes here in the District, to a single illegal gun trafficker who originally bought the guns at a gun show in the Midwest where he did not have to undergo a background check. But he is now in jail.

If our budget passes, law enforcement will be able to trace every gun and every bullet used in every gun crime. We'll have more local anticrime efforts like your Operation Cease Fire here. We'll hire more ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on illegal gun traffickers and bad-apple dealers, and more Federal, State, and local prosecutors to help put violent gun criminals where they belong, behind bars.

But I will say again, we also need more prevention. Congress should help us close the gun show loophole, require those safety locks with new handguns, and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Now, if we do all this, are we going to stop every gun crime? Of course not. But my answer to those who say, "Well, if you do all this, it wouldn't have stopped this incident or that incident or the other incident"—if we had listened to that kind of argument back in 1992, we would still have the crime rate going up. We didn't put 100,000 police on our streets because we thought it would solve every crime; we just knew it would prevent some and solve others quicker. We didn't pass the Brady bill because we thought it would stop every person with a criminal or other problem in the background from getting a handgun, but we knew it would stop some. It turned out to stop a half million. How many people are alive today because of that? No one knows, but a lot. We didn't ban assault weapons because we thought it would make all the ones that were already out there vanish, but we knew it would make some difference.

And that's the way we need to look at this buyback program and every single one of these issues. The last 7 years should have proved to you, and to every person wearing a uniform in every community in the United States of America, that if we have smart law enforcement, smart prevention, and committed community involvement, we can drive the crime rate down and save people's lives.

You are in a successful enterprise, and you ought to tell everybody that. Amidst all the tragedy and heartbreak and all the people here wearing uniforms who have suffered the loss of their family members and their partners and others, you should take enormous pride. One of the enormous success stories in the last 7 years—right up there with the stock market exploding and the longest economic expansion in history and 21 million new jobs—is that you proved you could bring the crime rate down. And everyone in America is better off because of it. And what that means is, we have no excuse now not to keep doing what works and to do more of it.

And I'll tell you what my goal is. My goal is not the lowest crime rate in 25 years. I want America to be the safest big country in the entire world. And you can do it if we give you the tools to do it.

So that's what this is about. I want you to go out and prove you can pick up another 7,000 guns. I want you to help me pass this program in Congress. And then I want us to go out and use this buyback program to get local government contributions, State government contributions, private sector contributions.

Look, we can buy millions of guns out there. Just think about it: fifty bucks a pop on the average to get millions of guns off the street. I don't know about you, but based on the evidence, I'd say it's worth it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:06 p.m. at the Maurice T. Turner, Jr., Institute of Police Science. In his remarks, he referred to Chief of Police Charles H. Ramsey and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia.

Statement on the Legal Framework Agreement for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline

April 28, 2000

I am very pleased that today delegations from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey reached agreement on the legal framework for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Last November in Istanbul, I witnessed the signing of initial documents for this framework. Today's achievement completes this work and brings the pipeline project a critical step closer to fruition.

By this action, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey have shown once again their commitment to building regional cooperation, peaceful relations, and better lives for all their people. I congratulate Presidents Aliyev, Shevardnadze, and Demirel, along with all the negotiating teams, for their leadership in moving this project forward.

I look forward to the next phase of this effort, when companies from the United States, West-

ern Europe, and Russia will work with those of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey to transform legal frameworks into commercial reality.

The United States is committed to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline as a key part of our overall approach to Caspian energy development. We want to ensure access to world markets for the countries of the region, while helping diversify sources of energy supply for consumers in the United States and around the globe.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan; President Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia; and President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Imports of Crude Oil *April 28, 2000*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 232(c) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862(c)), I am notifying you that I concur with the findings of the Secretary of Commerce in his report, "The Effect on the National Security of Imports of Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum Products," which determined that imports of crude oil threaten to impair the national security.

Further, I have accepted his recommendation that trade remedies not be imposed but that existing policies to enhance conservation and limit the dependence on foreign oil be contin-

ued. I am taking this action because we have already proposed additional tax credits to promote renewable and efficient sources of energy, new tax incentives to support the domestic petroleum industry, and further investments in energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, as the report suggested.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address *April 29, 2000*

Good morning. Next week, when the full Congress returns from Easter recess, they'll have less than 75 working days left to make this year a year of real progress for the American people. There is no more important critical piece of unfinished business than our need to ensure that every American, young and old, has adequate, affordable health care.

Today I want to again urge the Congress to step up to this challenge by making the passage of a strong Patients' Bill of Rights and the provision of a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit top priorities when they return to Washington.

This critical legislation is long overdue. The more than 190 million Americans who use managed care or other insurance plans have waited too long for a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. They deserve the right to see a specialist, to emergency room care wherever and whenever they need it, and the right to hold health care plans accountable for harmful decisions.

Last year, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, the House passed a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that provides the right protections all Americans need and deserve. It's a bill I would sign. But more than 6 months later, the bill

is still languishing in Congress. Despite their pledge to complete a real bill, the Republican majority has not only delayed action, it's actually considering legislation that would leave tens of millions of Americans without Federal protections.

A right that can't be enforced isn't a right at all, it's just a request. We need a strong bill that protects all Americans and all plans, not one that provides more cover for the special interests than real coverage for American patients.

Congress also has an obligation to strengthen Medicare and modernize it, with a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five older Americans still lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage.

Just this week we saw further evidence of the unacceptable burden the growing cost of prescription drugs places on senior Americans. According to a report by the nonprofit group, Families USA, the price of prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years running, a burden that falls hardest on seniors who lack drug

coverage because they simply don't receive the price discounts most insurers negotiate.

Seniors and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes simply cannot continue to cope with these kinds of price increases. That's why we must take action to help them, not next year or the year after that but this year. My budget includes a comprehensive plan to modernize Medicare and provide for a long overdue prescription drug benefit for all beneficiaries.

I'm pleased there's growing bipartisan support for tackling this challenge. Earlier this month Republican leaders in the House put forth an outline of a plan that offers as a stated goal access to affordable coverage for all older Americans. Unfortunately, their plan falls short of meeting the goal. It would do virtually nothing for seniors with modest middle class incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000 a year. Nearly half of all Medicare beneficiaries who lack prescription drug coverage fall into that category.

It's not too late to give all our seniors real prescription drug coverage this year. We can work together on a plan that's affordable, dependable, and available to all older Americans.

So I say to Congress, when you come back to Washington next week, let's get back to work on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights; let's get back to work on voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefits. The health care of Americans is too important to be sidetracked by partisan politics. The need is urgent, and the time to act is now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:58 p.m. on April 28 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner April 29, 2000

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, President Page, President-elect Dillon, distinguished guests. I am really happy to be here, happy to be reunited at long last with the White House Press Corps. [Laughter] If I may, let me direct your attention to a photograph. [Laughter] Taken just moments ago, it proves beyond a doubt that I am indeed happy to be here. [Laughter]

Now, wait a minute. It seems that my hair in that photo—[laughter]—is a little longer than it is tonight. So maybe I am happy to be here, and maybe I'm not. Feel free to speculate. [Laughter] Admittedly, looks and photos can be deceiving. Now look at this photo. It's a recent one of the Vice President applauding one of my policy initiatives. [Laughter] But look a little closer. Those are not his real hands. [Laughter]

Now this photo. [Laughter] It made all the papers, but I have to tell you something. I am almost certain this is not the real Easter Bunny. [Laughter] The next one is my favorite. I really like it. Let's see the next photo. [Laughter] Isn't it grand? [Laughter] I thought it was too good to be true. But there is one thing beyond dis-

pute tonight. This is really me. I am really here. And the record on that count is clear, in good days and bad, in times of great confidence or great controversy, I have actually shown up here for 8 straight years. Looking back, that was probably a mistake. [Laughter] In just 8 years, I've given you enough material for 20 years. [Laughter]

This is a special night for me for a lot of reasons. Jay Leno is here. Now, no matter how mean he is to me, I just love this guy—[laughter]—because, together, together, we give hope to gray-haired, chunky baby boomers everywhere. [Laughter]

Tonight marks the end of an era—the after-dinner party hosted by Vanity Fair. [Laughter] As you may have heard, it's been canceled. Every year, for 8 years, the Vanity Fair party became more and more and more exclusive. So tonight it has arrived at its inevitable conclusion: This year no one made the guest list. [Laughter] Actually, I hear the Bloomberg party will be even harder to get into than the Vanity Fair party was. But I'm not worried; I'm going with Janet Reno. [Laughter]

Now, the Bloomberg party is also a cast party for the stars of “The West Wing,” who are celebrating the end of their first season. You’ll have to forgive me if I’m not as excited as everyone else is at the thought of a “West Wing” finale party. But I’ve got to give them credit; their first season got a lot better ratings than mine did—[laughter]—not to mention the reviews. The critics just hated my travel office episode—[laughter]—and that David Gergen cameo fell completely flat. [Laughter]

Speaking of real-life drama, I’m so glad that Senator McCain is back tonight. I welcome him, especially. As you all know, he just made a difficult journey back to a place where he endured unspeakable abuse at the hands of his oppressors, the Senate Republican caucus. [Laughter]

I am glad to see that Senator McCain and Governor Bush are talking about healing their rift. Actually, they’re thinking about talking about healing their rift. And you know, I would really like to help them. I mean, I’ve got a lot of experience repairing the breach. I’ve worked with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, I’ve worked with Israelis and Palestinians, with Joe Lockhart and David Westin. [Laughter] But the differences between Bush and McCain may be just too vast. I mean, McCain as Bush’s running mate? Hasn’t the man suffered enough? [Laughter]

George W. Bush has got a brand-spanking-new campaign strategy. He’s moving toward the political center, distancing himself from his own party, stealing ideas from the other party. I’m so glad Dick Morris has finally found work again. [Laughter]

You know, the clock is running down on the Republicans in Congress, too. I feel for them. I do. They’ve only got 7 more months to investigate me. [Laughter] That’s a lot of pressure. So little time, so many unanswered questions. [Laughter] For example, over the last few months I’ve lost 10 pounds. Where did they go? [Laughter] Why haven’t I produced them to the Independent Counsel? How did some of them manage to wind up on Tim Russert? [Laughter]

Now, some of you might think I’ve been busy writing my memoirs. I’m not concerned about my memoirs; I’m concerned about my résumé. Here’s what I’ve got so far. Career objective: To stay President. [Laughter] But being realistic, I would consider an executive position with another country. [Laughter] Of course, I would

prefer to stay within the G–8. [Laughter] I’m working hard on this résumé deal. I’ve been getting a lot of tips on how to write it, mostly from my staff. They really seem to be up on this stuff. [Laughter]

And they tell me I have to use the active voice with a résumé. You know, things like “commanded U.S. Armed Forces”; “ordered air strikes”; “served three terms as President”—everybody embellishes a little—[laughter]—“designed, built, and painted bridge to 21st century”; “supervised Vice President’s invention of the Internet”; “generated, attracted, heightened, and maintained controversy.” [Laughter]

Now, I know lately I haven’t done a very good job at creating controversy, and I’m sorry for that. You all have so much less to report. I guess that’s why you’re covering and commenting on my mood, my quiet, contemplative moments, my feelings during these final months in office. [Laughter]

In that case, you might be interested to know that a film crew has been following me around the White House, documenting my remaining time there. This is a strange time in the life of any administration, but I think this short film will show that I have come to terms with it. Can we see the film?

[At this point, a video was shown.]

The President. You like me. You really like me. [Laughter] Now, you know, I may complain about coming here. But a year from now I’ll have to watch someone else give this speech, and I’ll feel an onset of that rare affliction, unique to former Presidents: AGDD, attention-getting deficit disorder—[laughter]—plus which I’ll really be burned up when Al Gore turns out to be funnier than me. [Laughter]

But let me say to all of you, I have loved these 8 years. You know, I read in the history books how other Presidents say the White House is like a penitentiary, and every motive they have is suspect. Even George Washington complained he was treated like a common thief. And they all say they can’t wait to get away. I don’t know what the heck they’re talking about. [Laughter] I’ve had a wonderful time. It’s been an honor to serve and fun to laugh. I only wish that we’d even laughed more these last 8 years, because power is not the most important thing in life, and it only counts for what you use it.

I thank you for what you do every day, thank you for all the fun times that Hillary and I have had. Keep at it. It's a great country. It deserves our best.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Susan Page, president, and

Arlene Dillon, president-elect, White House Correspondents' Association; "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno; Michael Bloomberg, founder and chief executive officer, Bloomberg News, L.P.; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; David Gergen, editor at large, U.S. News and World Report; David Westin, president, ABC News; Dick Morris, political consultant; and Tim Russert, moderator, "Meet the Press."

Commencement Address at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan April 30, 2000

Thank you very much. I must say I was very moved by Secretary Slater's remarks. But I realize he was lifted to new heights of eloquence by being back at his alma mater. And I also realize he was once again proving the adage of Clinton's third law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [Laughter] They will praise you to the skies, true or false. [Laughter]

I must say, I was afraid, though, Rodney was about to commit—we have been friends for many years—I've never heard him say anything politically incorrect. I've never heard him utter a curse word. I've never heard him betray a character flaw. But I almost heard an ethnic slur today when he said he got me because I look like President Shelton. [Laughter] All gray-haired, middle-aged Scotch-Irish guys look alike, you know. [Laughter]

I'm very proud of Secretary Slater, and you should be, too. And I'm proud of General Coburn and his leadership in the Army, and Gene Conti, who is the Assistant Secretary for Policy at our Transportation Department with Secretary Slater. We have been richly blessed by this university. And President Shelton, I am grateful for your years of service here and for our friendship in our early years in Arkansas, when we both had less gray hair and didn't look so much alike.

I thank Mayor Archer and former Governor and Ambassador Blanchard and Representative Kilpatrick and the other Michigan officials who are here with me today. I thank my longtime friend Jim Comer. I didn't know he was here at EMU this year until I saw him right before

I came in. No American has proven so clearly as Professor Comer that all children can learn if given the right learning environment, and I am very grateful to him.

I thank all the distinguished board of regents and faculty and staff who are here. But most of all, I want to recognize the students and their parents of this, your first graduating class of the 21st century.

On the way in, Rodney was telling me that I would identify with a lot of you. A lot of you are first-generation college graduates. A lot of you had to work your way through school. A lot of you needed help in the form of loans and grants and work-study positions. And every one of you should be very proud of what you have achieved.

I also identify with your class because I may be the only President of the United States who ever studied here. I came here to prepare for my debates in 1992. And like you, I passed, and I thank you very much for the contribution you made to my education and to my years here.

You are graduating into a strong economy, the strongest in our Nation's history. You are also graduating into a time of immense possibility, here in Michigan and throughout the United States and, indeed, throughout the world.

One of my speechwriters wrote me a line that said, "Our economy is soaring higher than Swoop, the eagle." [Laughter] He said you would know what that means. All I know is that I am grateful for the chance that the Vice President and First Lady and our administration

and I have had to work to create opportunity in America and to bring us closer together in one community.

I know that a great deal of this is because we are in the midst of a profound revolution, the most sweeping since the industrial revolution a century ago. Information technology alone now gives us about a third of our growth, though only 8 percent of our work force is directly involved in it. It is bringing growth to every sector of our economy in a way we haven't seen since Henry Ford's first assembly line.

And I wanted to come here today to try to give you, this graduating class, some sense of the world into which you're going. You understand the opportunities, doubtless, better than I. I want you to understand the challenges, too. For economic opportunity is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end, to further liberty, to strengthen the bonds of community, to enable you to build families and have children and enrich your lives.

Before you lies a future of unparalleled possibility. But I want you to understand today that, just as at the dawn of the industrial age 100 years ago, which was symbolized by Michigan, by Mr. Ford's assembly line and the factories of Detroit, there are new challenges presented by this new era to our oldest values of freedom and opportunity and community.

Theodore Roosevelt came to this campus more than 100 years ago, at the beginning of the industrial era, when new rules were required to make sure that the industrial revolution worked for all our people. Without those rules, there would have been a terrible industrial divide between rich and poor, strong and weak. With those rules—with the wage and hour laws, the child labor laws, the antitrust laws, the Federal Reserve, and later the minimum wage, workman's compensation, unemployment insurance, Social Security—with those new rules, we built an opportunity society that produced the greatest middle class in human history, one that became even more successful and more inclusive throughout this last century with the progress of civil rights, women's rights, environmental and worker protection.

I want to say to you today that you are well-equipped for the possibilities of this new era, but we also need new rules for the information age to protect those old values, just as we did for the industrial age. For all the possibilities must be measured also against the challenges

presented by this new era, challenges to our privacy as individuals, to our pledge of equal opportunity for every member of our community, to our stewardship of the environment as citizens of the planet.

From our earliest days, part of what has made America unique has been our dedication to freedom and the clear understanding that real freedom requires a certain space of personal privacy.

Today, as information technology opens new worlds of possibilities, it also challenges privacy in ways we might never have imagined just a few years ago. For example, the same genetic code that offers hope for millions can also be used to deny health insurance. The same technology that links distant places can also be used to track our every move on-line.

In this information age, we can't let new opportunities erode old fundamental rights. We can't let breakthroughs in technology break down walls of privacy. Our response to this challenge will affect the lives of every single member of this graduating class and the lives of your children.

We are working with the Internet industry to raise privacy standards. In the last year alone, the share of commercial websites with privacy policies has risen a lot, and we will do more. But as my wife has said many times, some of these privacy issues presented by information technology are so sensitive they must have the protection of law.

We have taken steps to protect the privacy of children on-line, preventing websites from collecting information from children without a parent's permission. I proposed the first set of national standards to protect the privacy of on-line medical records, to ensure that your personal health information doesn't fall into the wrong hands. You shouldn't have to worry that your employer is looking at the medications you take or the ailments you have.

Today I'd like to ask you to think about the challenge to our financial privacy coming out of the information revolution. We are moving from cash to electronic transactions. A bank is no longer just a bank; it's often linked with an insurance firm, a broker, a travel agency. All this helps to give us added convenience, lower prices, and more choices. But it's also forcing us to redefine financial privacy for the information age and to rewrite the rules that go with it.

There was a time when protecting your financial privacy meant safeguarding your passbook. Today, a financial record isn't just about what you're worth; it can paint a picture of who you are. Every time you write a check, use an ATM, make a purchase with a credit or debit card, there is a record, a record that technology can sort and track—what dish you ordered at a restaurant, what clothes you bought at the mall—that makes it easier for others to mine all of that information for their own profit.

We've taken some historic steps to stop information about your personal spending habits from being shared without your permission. But even today, the law doesn't prevent firms within a financial conglomerate from sharing information with each other. In other words, the life insurance company could share information about your medical history with the bank, without giving you any choice in the matter. The bank could share information from your student loans and your credit cards with its telemarketer or its broker, again without giving you any choice. I believe that is wrong.

Today I present a plan to protect the privacy of Americans' financial records. I challenge Congress to act on it this year. Because your information doesn't belong to just anyone; every consumer and every family deserves choices about how their personal information is shared.

First, before your financial information is shared between two affiliated companies, say, a credit card company and an insurance company, you would get notice, and you could say no.

Second, for the most sensitive type of information, I think there should be an extra level of protection. As more banks and insurance companies merge, lenders could gain access to private medical information and many insurance records. But no one should have to worry that the results of their latest physical exam will be used to deny them a home mortgage or a credit card. Under my plan, you'd get to say no.

Third, we would add that same safeguard to the information that makes up your personal spending identity, such as the list of every purchase you've ever made by check or debt or credit card, everything you buy. Again, that information could be shared only if you say yes.

And finally, to make sure you have control over the comprehensive records that financial institutions may assemble about you, we'll make sure you have access to those records and the

right to correct mistakes in them. We must be able to enjoy the benefits of technology without sacrificing our privacy, to maximize the promise of the information age and still protect our individual liberties.

Our national character also requires new rules for the information age that recognize opportunity for all now means access to technology for all. Just as we closed the industrial divide in the 20th century, we must now close the digital divide in the 21st century.

You know, if you're educated for the information age, who you are and where you are don't matter as much anymore. I have seen that with people in the poorest villages of the world logging onto the Internet and getting an education, getting information once available only in textbooks, learning how to take care of their children, learning how to start new businesses. But if who and where you are don't matter so much, what you know and what you can do matter more than ever. That's why this degree and what you learned here is so important. That's why technology education is so important.

Technology in this new era will either erase lines that divide us or widen them. The Internet and computers make it possible for us to lift more people out of poverty faster than at any time in history, but it will not happen by accident. Many of you have learned this lesson in your own lives.

Todd Pasquale, of the college of arts and sciences, wasn't going to let anything stop him from earning his degree today, not even navigating his wheelchair through the Michigan snows. Thanks to EMU Online, he took his winter courses at home. Now, he plans to give back to the community by working as a counselor to people in prisons, because he could access technology. Let's give him a hand. [*Applause*]

Randy Short went back to school after her husband died, leaving her to raise three sons alone. Today she earns a master's degree with honors in website design. She hopes to start her own business, and she wants to help teach women to use computers. She has already given those women a lesson for all of us about the value of making sure technology education is accessible to every American. Give her a hand. [*Applause*]

Today I ask all of you to join me in reaching out to all the others across America who need these tools to build their future. When Vice

President Gore and I started hooking up schools to the Internet, there were only about 16 percent of our schools who had a connection in 1994; today, 95 percent do. But I was on an Indian reservation in northern New Mexico the other day, introduced by a brilliant young girl of 13 who had just won a computer in a contest, who could not hook it up to the Internet because her home did not have a phone. Seventy percent of the homes on her Navajo reservation did not have a phone. We have to bring telephone service to everybody and then make the Internet as common as telephone usage is in every home, every business, and every school in the United States of America. We owe that to our future.

We must create incentives for American business to invest in people and places in danger of being left behind—left behind in their economies and their education of their children, in information infrastructure and special technologies for people with special needs. That's what our efforts to build bipartisan support for opening America's new markets and closing the digital divide are all about.

The third thing I want to mention is that the revolution in technology and communications means our lives are bound up more than ever with people far away from us with whom we now are in instant contact. Our community of values and interest spans the globe. Events half a world away can have an impact on us here, just as what we do has an impact on people who live thousands of miles from our borders, in ways large and small. I have a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week on the Internet with a man in Australia. Doubtless, there are many stories like that in this room today.

We need a new level of international cooperation and new rules that deal with the most significant challenge of our common humanity, the environmental challenge posed by global warming. Scientists tell us the temperature is now rising 4 degrees a century. To anyone who has lived through a Michigan winter, that might not sound so bad. [*Laughter*] But the scientists also say that a significant degree of this climate change is due to human activity, specifically to putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from the burning of coal and oil. And if it goes unchecked, the consequences will be dramatic. Rising temperatures can melt polar icecaps, which lead to rising oceans that could

swallow thousands of miles of our own coastlines and bury island nations. Changing weather would devastate our farmlands. We would have both more droughts and more violent storms and floods. Hotter weather could both cause more rapid evaporation of inland water systems and a drought which replenishes them less.

Think about the Great Lakes, where water levels are falling faster than ever recorded. They have fallen almost 3 feet in just 2 years. They may fall much more in the next 30. That would be a disaster for industry and for all living things dependent upon the lakes. And that is why I've asked Congress to fund our efforts to find out why the water is falling, to restore the Great Lakes waterways, to improve our stewardship of this vital resource.

Now, for most of the 20th century, economic growth did require burning more fossil fuels—more coal and more oil—which released the greenhouse gases, caused the pollution, and heated the atmosphere. Because of that, many people still believe that we must choose between two vital values, preserving our environment and making our economy grow. Thankfully, in the digital economy, that is simply not true anymore. It is now possible to grow an economy and improve the environment at the same time. New technologies make it possible to reduce harmful emissions as they make the economy more efficient and stronger.

Scientists right here at EMU are making environmentally friendly paints out of soybeans. Michigan, the home of the automobile, is now the home of cutting-edge research into cars and trucks of the 21st century that will get much higher mileage. And soon, vehicles developed here in partnership with the Federal Government will use alternative and biofuels which could get the equivalent of 100 miles or more to a gallon of gasoline.

These technologies are good for the planet and good for the bottom line, but we must embrace them. And I say this very seriously: It takes at least 50 years for greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere to dissipate. The class—this class, graduating today—it is your children and your grandchildren that will feel the harshest effects of our neglect in meeting this challenge. But if you don't do it, your children may not be able to do it for you because of the time delay. And it is no good saying that someone else should do it. We are the

world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases because we're the richest country, but soon China and India will surpass us. We must show them that they can grow even faster by following a different path, but first we must set a good example.

I have implored the Congress to adopt legislation to increase research and development in this area and to give significant tax incentives for people to produce products that emit less greenhouse gases and for people to buy them. It is a big challenge for you. You can have all the computers and all the money in the world, and if we squander God's environment, it won't be worth very much. I urge you to meet this challenge.

Let me say in closing, I am very optimistic about the new century. It will bring us more advances and answer more questions than any period in human history. We'll be able to store all the information in the Halle Library in a device the size of a sugar cube. We'll have microchips that stimulate the spine in such a way that people now paralyzed will be able to stand up and walk. I believe we will even learn what's in the black holes in the universe. But we must not be so dazzled by the bright promise of technology that we lose sight of the funda-

mental lesson. We must bring to bear our basic values on each new development in human history in order to assure that it works for the public good and maintains America's values of liberty and community. That is the noble challenge that you face.

Henry Ford once defined obstacles as those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal. I hope your goal will be a 21st century American community that derives every benefit from technology while holding fast to our oldest values. I hope you will not take your eyes off of it. I hope you will embrace it and work for it. If you do, you will achieve it. And you will live in history's most exciting, prosperous, and humane era. That is what I wish for you.

Congratulations, good luck, and Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to William E. Shelton, president, and James Comer, professor, Eastern Michigan University; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; former Gov. James J. Blanchard of Michigan; and Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the NAACP Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner in Detroit, Michigan April 30, 2000

Thank you. Well—I don't know what to say. [*Laughter*] I will tell you that this magnificent work of African art will be up in our Residence at the White House before I go to bed tonight. I thank you for it.

Reverend Anthony, thank you for an introduction the likes I have never had and never will have again. [*Laughter*] Thank you for spreading the caring arms of this branch of the NAACP from East Grand Boulevard all the way to Africa. [*Laughter*] And thank you for being my true friend.

Thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for honoring Secretary Cuomo. I am delighted that he and his wife, Kerry, are here with me, and he deserves the honor you gave him. You know, he and Secretary Slater make me look good

every day. [*Laughter*] And too often I get the credit when they deserve more. I thank them for being here.

I thank Thurgood Marshall, Jr., for being here; Maria Echaveste, all the people from the White House that prove the truth that we have given you an administration that looks like America. I thank all your elected Representatives who are here for their support and solidarity with the NAACP. Thank you, Governor Engler, Senator Levin, Senator Abraham, Congressman Dingell, Congresswoman Kilpatrick, Congresswoman Stabenow, thank you for running and proving that you believe in democracy. And thank you, thank you, thank you, my friend John Conyers, and thank you for giving him the award that he so richly deserves.

Thank you, Mayor Dennis Archer, and thank you, Trudy, for being Hillary's friend and my friend for so many years. Long before you were a mayor, back when you were a judge and above such things as petty politics, we were friends. [Laughter] I have enjoyed watching the success of Detroit and enjoyed helping on occasion you to contribute to it. I thank you all.

I bring you—I also want to offer my condolences to the family and many friends of Bill Beckham, who passed away last week, who devoted his life to improving the lives of others in this great city. And I bring you greetings from two people who are not here: the First Lady, Hillary, who said she wished she could be here, but she is otherwise occupied in New York tonight; and the Vice President, who is otherwise occupied somewhere in America tonight, who loved being here.

Now, I am told this is the largest sit-down dinner anywhere in the whole world. And I can honestly say, it's the only one I've ever attended that had four head tables—[laughter]—the only one I've ever attended when I didn't shake hands with everyone at the head tables—[laughter]—and I learned tonight that I was the first sitting President ever to attend this great banquet. I will say this: If this encounter gets anything like the press coverage it deserves, I am quite certain I will not be the last President to be at this banquet tonight.

More than anything else, I came tonight to say a simple thank you. Thank you for being my friends; thank you for being there for me in good times and bad; thank you for being there in our journey to help America go forward together.

For more than 90 years now, the NAACP has been America's friend, the conscience of a nation struggling and too often failing to live up to its ideals, challenging always all of us to look into the mirror, to face our faults and right our wrongs. I have proceeded these last 7 years and 3 months with a simple philosophy that I believe is your philosophy: I believe everybody counts, everybody should have a chance, everybody has a role to play, and we all do better when we help each other.

Dr. King once said our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. The NAACP has never been silent about the things that matter, and the life of this organization is just beginning. For all the progress

we have made together, there is still much to do.

I am grateful for your support and the role you and your work have played in the progress we have made together for America. I am grateful that we have the lowest unemployment and welfare rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, the highest homeownership in history, and the longest economic expansion in history. I am grateful for that.

I am grateful that under the Vice President's leadership, we've created empowerment zones in Detroit and many other cities and set up community financial institutions to loan money to people that couldn't get loans otherwise, and done so many other things. I am grateful for that. I am grateful that we have a healing social fabric, that the homicide rate is the lowest in 30 years and gun crime's down 35 percent and adoptions are up 30 percent. I am grateful for all of that. I am grateful that 21 million Americans have taken family and medical leave and that 5 million families have benefited from our HOPE scholarship to help pay for college.

I am grateful that 150,000 young Americans, including at least one I saw here tonight, have served our country in AmeriCorps in their communities. I am grateful that over 90 percent of our children are immunized for the first time from serious childhood diseases, and 95 percent of our schools are hooked up to the Internet, as compared with 16 percent when the Vice President and I set out to hook them all up 6 years ago. I'm grateful for all that.

I'm grateful that, as Wendell said so much more eloquently than I could, we have appointed more minorities and women to more positions in the Government and on the bench than any administration in history by a good long ways. I'm grateful for that.

I am profoundly touched by your prayers, your friendship, and your support. I reminded Secretary Slater when Reverend Anthony was up here preaching—[laughter]—that I went home with him last week to a memorial service for Daisy Bates, the great Arkansas heroine of the civil rights movement who shepherded those nine children through Little Rock Central High School 43 years ago and who just died a few months ago. Daisy's minister, Reverend Rufus Young, who is a gentleman way up in his eighties with a frail walk, with a strong voice,

got up and looked up at me, and he said, “Mr. President, the only reason you’ve survived is that so many of us black folks were praying for you so hard.” [Laughter]

What I hope now is, we will turn our prayers and energies toward tomorrow. For when people gather together, even though it’s important to remember the past, in my wife’s words, it’s even more important to imagine the future. And I guess what I would like to ask you is, in this millennial election season, as a citizen—forget about party, forget about anything else—what do you as a human being believe that America should be doing?

I have waited a long time for my country to be in the position to create the future of our dreams for our children. I watched for a long time America just being paralyzed by these assumptions of what we could not do. When I got elected President, I think most people thought we could never get rid of the deficit, much less run a surplus, but we have. I think most people thought the crime rate would always go up and never go down, but it’s gone down for 7 years in a row now. I think most people thought that people on welfare didn’t really want to work, but that turned out to be wrong. Almost 7 million have moved out of welfare. They were wrong about that.

I think most people thought a lot of things couldn’t get better. And now we don’t have any excuses, because we know when we get together and work together, things can get better. And so what I want to ask you is, what do you propose to do about it?

A great country can make mistakes not only when times are tough but when times are good. I look out here in this sea of faces, and I wonder how many thousand stories there are here tonight—stories of triumph and heroism and struggle against the odds to overcome some racial or economic or other handicap—how many of you have lost a loved one to violence or other tragedies. And now, what I want to say to you is, we know things can be better; what do you propose to do about it?

We have choices to make. I believe that we should keep on going with this economic recovery until we have brought economic opportunity to all those neighborhoods, all those little rural towns, all those Indian reservations, all those people who have still been left behind and don’t know there’s been a recovery because they

haven’t felt it. And we can do it now in a way that we’ve never been able to do before.

I believe we should keep going until all of our children understand how to use computers and can make the most of it. I believe we should keep going until we find a way to guarantee health care rights to all Americans who are willing to work and do the right thing or who need help because they can’t. I believe we should keep going until every American who wants to can go to college.

Let me tell you something else a lot of people don’t know; even a lot of African-Americans don’t know this. Last year, for the first time in history, the percentage of African-Americans graduating from high school equaled the percentage of the white majority children graduating from high school. Now, we ought to keep going until the percentage going on to college equals that and then the percentage graduating. But we have to open the doors of college to everyone. We’ve made a lot of progress, but we’ve got more to do.

And we’ve got more to do in so many other areas. I just want to mention two more before I leave. One is, in this whole business of sharing the bounty of America’s public service. You know, I never thought about this in the way—my appointment of people of color and lots of women to important positions—in the way most people think about it. I always figured we’d do a better job if our Government was more representative of the rest of the people in the country. I always thought we would make better decisions. I always thought empowering people and communities was a positive good. I never thought it was something I was doing for somebody else. I just thought I was trying to make democracy work.

And we made a lot of progress. But I want you to know, there’s one real problem we’ve still got that directly affects Michigan. When it comes to appointing judges, the United States Senate is not doing what it ought to be doing, especially with regard to women and minority appointees.

Hey, I need your help on this. A blue ribbon study found that during the 105th Congress, women and minority judicial nominees took much longer to be considered than white males. It found that minority nominations failed at a much higher rate than the nominations of whites. Last year there was a disgraceful rejection of an African-American State supreme court

judge from Missouri named Ronnie White, solely on the basis of party politics.

I have nominated two people from Michigan to the sixth circuit, and neither one of them have even gotten a hearing so far. Judge Helene White, a highly qualified Michigan appellate judge, has been waiting for a hearing from the Senate Judiciary Committee for 3 years, longer than any other pending nominee.

My other sixth circuit nominee, Kathleen McCree Lewis, the daughter of Wade McCree, is here tonight. She would become the first African-American woman ever to serve on the sixth circuit. I think the Senate ought to give Helene White and Kathleen McCree Lewis hearings. Vote them up or down. Tell the American people how you stand. Let us hear from you. Don't hide behind having no hearing.

I had to work and work and work to get a distinguished Hispanic judge and a female attorney appointed out in California. They made him wait 4 years. Now, why did they do that? Because they didn't want to put him on the court. They just didn't want you to know they didn't want to put him on the court. [Laughter] So if you don't want to do something, but you don't want the people to know you don't want to do something, instead of saying no, you just never get around to it. [Laughter]

Now, we're going to have a new election in November. And we'll have a new President and a new Senate, and I hope a new House, with John as the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. But I want you to know this: I am proud of the fact that my party has never been guilty of delaying nominees to this extent and particularly putting the burden on women and people of color. And it's a shame, and we ought to do something about it. And I hope you'll help me do something about it.

Now, let me just mention one other thing, because we have lots of choices this year. You will have choices about whether to keep on changing in accord with this economic policy and bringing everybody into it while we keep paying down the debt, investing in education, give families tax cuts we can afford, or going back to the economic policy we had before I came in, with even bigger tax cuts that, once I get out of office, would benefit primarily people like me. [Laughter] But we won't have any money for education, and we'll start running deficits again.

We'll have choices about education policy, health policy, environmental policy, a lot of other things. But I want you to think about the things that we choose that really define us as a community. John Conyers talked about one. I'm proud that gun crime is down 35 percent. Anybody that thinks that America is safe enough is free to walk out on my speech right now. But we know we can make America safer, and we know the best way to do it is by preventing crime in the first place. That's why we want to close the gun show loophole and do other things to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. That's why we want more community police on the street. That's why we want more after-school and summer school programs for our kids, to give them something to say yes to.

But when three-quarters of the people in the penitentiary are people of color and they're more likely to be in the penitentiary than they are to go to college, there's something wrong still. I don't think we've done as much as we can. I think we can make America safer and have more of our kids going to college at the same time. But we have a choice to make.

I think we ought to pass the hate crimes legislation. There are still people in this country who are shot, who are abused, who are killed because of their race, their religion, just because they're gay. We've seen it over and over again, tragically. We saw it just this week: five people in a suburb of Pittsburgh shot and killed for no other reason, it appears, than the color of their skin or the way they worship God.

Now, you will hear all kinds of arguments about this hate crime business, but I have studied this. It is simply not true that we do not need national legislation making hate crimes against people, because of race or because of sexual orientation or because of disability or because of religion, a Federal crime. We do.

And I have looked into the eyes of the brother and the sister of that Filipino postal worker that was gunned down in California. I have seen one of those little Jewish children that was wounded, and his family, at that community center in Los Angeles. I have talked to the widow of the African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern who was shot walking in his neighborhood. I have put my arms around the parents of Matthew Shepard, who was stretched out on a rack in Wyoming because he was gay. And I have seen the brother and sister of James

Byrd, who was dragged to death in Texas because he was black.

Now, if we want to be one America and we don't want any politics in it, the easiest way that we can do that is to join hands and unanimously say, "We can argue about a lot of things, but one thing we're never going to argue about again is our common humanity. Here is this hate crimes bill. It is who we are. It is what we stand for. It is what we believe."

You know, we do have a lot of bridges to cross. As long as there are people without economic opportunity and we can give it to them, we ought to do it. As long as there are people who don't have access to world-class education and we can give it to them, we ought to do it. As long as there are working families who can't take care of their children, we ought to do it. As long as there—we ought to give them child care support and access to health care they can afford. We ought to do these things.

There are so many challenges out there, but the main thing I want to tell you is this: If the good Lord came to me tonight when I walked out of this room and said, "Mr. President, now I'm not going to let you serve the end of your term. I'm taking you home tonight, and I'm no genie. I'm not going to give you three wishes, but I will give you one. What do you want?" I would wish for our country to be truly one America.

I would wish for us to be able—you know, I have—you may have heard me tell this story on television, but I'm going to tell it one more time. I have got, on a table in the Oval Office—when you see me there with a world leader, and you see two chairs and two big couches and a table there—right on that table, you look next time—standing on that table in a vacuum-packed glass container is a rock that Neil Armstrong took off the Moon in 1969. That rock is 3.6 billion years old. And when people come in to see me, and they get all riled up, and they get all mad at each other, and they're thinking about little things, and they're all torn up and upset, ever since I've got that, I say, "Wait a minute, look at that rock. You see that rock? That is 3.6 billion years old. Now chill out. We're all just passing through here." [Laughter]

And I say that to remind you that, whether you're President of the United States or somebody serving us this dinner tonight, the most

important things about us are not the differences between me and the people serving you dinner but the things we have in common.

And when life is all said and done, the stories we really will be thinking about in our last moments were who liked us and who loved us and what moved us and the springtimes we remember and the moments of personal drama and courage and meaning that came into our lives. The purpose of public life, the purpose of citizenship, the purpose of the NAACP is to give people a sense of our common humanity and our common cause. You know, Wendell said that I learned that from my grandparents, and that's true. But I learn it every day from all the stories of all the people I see.

You have given me a memory tonight I will never forget. Your support has meant more to me than I can ever say. The people of Detroit and the State of Michigan have been with me through thick and thin. But the only thing that really matters now is, what are you going to do tomorrow? What do you propose to do with this magic moment?

Let me tell you this: The last time we had an economy this good was in the 1960's. We broke the record of the 1960's for economic expansions. There are a lot of young children here who weren't alive back then, but I was. And I graduated from high school in 1964 in the middle of that great economic expansion, low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, everything booming. We thought the civil rights problems would be handled in Congress and the courts. We never dreamed we'd be caught up in Vietnam. We thought we would win the cold war, no sweat. We thought we were on automatic, marching into the future. And what happened? What happened?

Within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after President Johnson, the great civil rights President, couldn't even run for reelection because the country was so divided over Vietnam. And within a few months, the longest economic expansion in history was itself history.

Life is fleeting. Things change. I have been waiting for 35 years, not as President, as an American citizen, for my country to be in the position you're in tonight, to build the future of our dreams for our children. That should

be the mission of the NAACP in this millennial year.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the Cobo Convention Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Wendell Anthony, president, NAACP Detroit Branch; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, and his wife, Trudy.

Statement on the Decision To Stop Degrading Global Positioning System Signals

May 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to announce that the United States will stop the intentional degradation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) signals available to the public beginning at midnight tonight. We call this degradation feature Selective Availability (SA). This will mean that civilian users of GPS will be able to pinpoint locations up to 10 times more accurately than they do now. GPS is a dual-use, satellite-based system that provides accurate location and timing data to users worldwide. My March 1996 Presidential decision directive included in the goals for GPS to: "encourage acceptance and integration of GPS into peaceful civil, commercial, and scientific applications worldwide; and to encourage private sector investment in and use of U.S. GPS technologies and services." To meet these goals, I committed the U.S. to discontinuing the use of SA by 2006, with an annual assessment of its continued use beginning this year.

The decision to discontinue SA is the latest measure in an ongoing effort to make GPS more responsive to civil and commercial users worldwide. Last year Vice President Gore announced our plans to modernize GPS by adding two new civilian signals to enhance the civil and commercial service. This initiative is on track, and the budget further advances modernization by incorporating some of the new features on up to 18 additional satellites that are already awaiting launch or are in production. We will continue to provide all of these capabilities to worldwide users, free of charge.

My decision to discontinue SA was based upon a recommendation by the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Departments of State, Transportation, Commerce, the Director of Central Intelligence, and other executive

branch departments and agencies. They realized that worldwide transportation safety, scientific, and commercial interests could best be served by discontinuation of SA. Along with our commitment to enhance GPS for peaceful applications, my administration is committed to preserving fully the military utility of GPS. The decision to discontinue SA is coupled with our continuing efforts to upgrade the military utility of our systems that use GPS and is supported by threat assessments which conclude that setting SA to zero at this time would have minimal impact on national security. Additionally, we have demonstrated the capability to selectively deny GPS signals on a regional basis when our national security is threatened. This regional approach to denying navigation services is consistent with the 1996 plan to discontinue the degradation of civil and commercial GPS service globally through the SA technique.

Originally developed by the Department of Defense as a military system, GPS has become a global utility. It benefits users around the world in many different applications, including air, road, marine, and rail navigation, telecommunications, emergency response, oil exploration, mining, and many more. Civilian users will realize a dramatic improvement in GPS accuracy with the discontinuation of SA. For example, emergency teams responding to a cry for help can now determine what side of the highway they must respond to, thereby saving precious minutes. This increase in accuracy will allow new GPS applications to emerge and continue to enhance the lives of people around the world.

Statement on Debt Reduction

May 1, 2000

Today the Department of the Treasury is announcing that the United States will pay off \$216 billion of debt this year—the largest debt paydown in American history. This will be the third consecutive year of debt reduction, bringing the 3-year total to \$355 billion.

This important news offers yet more evidence that our strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in people, and opening markets abroad is working. The debt quadrupled in the 12 years before I came into office and was projected to rise still further. As a result of the 1993 and 1997 budgets, and tough choices in each and every year, the debt is now \$2.4 trillion lower than it was projected to be. As a result, interest rates

are lower, leading to stronger investment and growth while saving money for American families.

We should not jeopardize the longest economic expansion in history with risky tax cuts that threaten our fiscal discipline. We should take advantage of this historic opportunity to use the benefits of debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay off the entire national debt by 2013 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. Lifting the burden of debt from our children and grandchildren is one of the most important investments in the future we can make.

Remarks at the Independent Insurance Agents of America National Legislative Conference

May 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very, very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here. And I thank you, President Houston, and I thank your CEO, Paul Equale, whom I see all the time here in Washington pleading your cause. And I thank my old friend George Frazier. I heard that introduction. The truth is that only he and my mother thought I had a chance to be elected President when I ran. [Laughter] But it's nice to have someone like that in your corner.

I came here today, in part, on a sentimental journey. I couldn't hear everything George said, but the first speech I gave outside Arkansas as an elected official was in 1977, when I flew to California to speak for George when he was president of your organization. So, in a real sense, my political career began with George Frazier's presidency and ended with my own. And I am delighted to be here.

I also want to acknowledge and thank another member of this group from Arkansas, my friend Lib Carlisle, who agreed to become chairman of the Democratic Party when I was reelected Governor in 1982. I told him that it would just be about a half-a-day-a-week job. The truth was

he had about a half a day a week left to devote to this job. And I'm surprised as a result of his public service that he could afford the airplane ticket up here. [Laughter] But I am delighted that he and all of you are here.

I also want to say I'm glad I got here for a few minutes of Senator Hatch's speech. Believe it or not, we're good friends. [Laughter] And it's nearly ruined him in the Republican caucus. [Laughter] And so he has to give me a little grief when he shows up. I would say in my own defense that it is true that tax receipts—I heard him talking about the tax burden—it is true that tax receipts as a percentage of national income are up. But the reason is, unemployment is low and incomes have grown so much. The actual percentage of income being paid by middle income families is the lowest it's been in over 35 years. So I think that's worth pointing out.

I also would say, on the education issue—I heard what he said about burden of regulations—the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who was Governor of South Carolina for many years, has cut two-thirds of the regulations and paperwork burdens on local school districts that

existed when we became the new administration in 1993. And in fact, our administration, even though we've had to promulgate some new regulations over the whole Federal Government, has gotten rid of more regulations, some 16,000 pages of them, in every Federal agency than were eliminated in the previous 12 years. And we have the smallest Government since 1960. So I think the record will look pretty good on that score.

But I also want to say I appreciate the fact that Orrin Hatch has worked with me, particularly, to try to encourage the orderly confirmation of judges, when so many people would rather not deal with that issue. I've done my best to take that out of politics, and I think it's important.

I want to thank you for several things. If I could begin, I want to thank you for what you do every day when you're not being politically active. I want to thank you for what you do day-in and day-out to give personal insurance service to people across this country. I want to thank you for the work you're doing to modernize insurance, to build a presence on-line and in E-commerce. And I want to ask you to continue to help to preserve the privacy of your clients in the face of this new technology.

On Sunday I went to Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan, not too far from Detroit, to talk about the promise of the Internet age and the challenges to our privacy, including our financial privacy, that it presents. And I think it's very, very important that we maximize the possibilities of technology without giving up the American people's right to determine what basic information is or is not in the hands of people that they don't know and whom they have not approved to receive the information.

I also want to congratulate you for diversifying this organization, by reaching out to the National African American Insurance Organization and by appointing the first woman to your board. The First Lady, particularly, thought that was a good idea. *[Laughter]*

And I want to thank you for the quality of representation you have here in Washington. We have not always agreed over the last 7 years, but I have always been impressed by the straight talk and the honest, open effort that I have seen from your organization to try to work out difficulties, work out genuine differences. And

when we have worked together, we have done some very good things indeed.

We've worked together to get our economy moving again. When I became President, we had a \$295 billion deficit. It was scheduled to be nearly \$400 billion this year. The debt of the country had quadrupled over the previous 12 years, and I knew there was no easy way to get rid of it. So we passed an economic plan in 1993 that took us about 70 percent of the way there, and then we passed a bipartisan balanced budget in 1997 that had big majorities in both parties in both Houses supporting eliminating the deficit entirely.

We've now run the first back-to-back surpluses in over 40 years, and this year we'll make it three in a row. The United States this year is going to pay off \$216 billion of our national debt. That is the largest debt repayment in American history. This will bring the 3-year total to \$355 billion, and it's further evidence, I believe, that the country ought to have a bipartisan economic strategy of paying off the debt and investing in our people, in education, in science and technology, and in opening new markets at home and abroad.

Four years ago you put yourselves on the line for the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill. I want to thank you for that. Your support has made a difference all across this country, and I am very grateful. Again, we had not only the Democrats, Vice President Gore, and I but substantial Republican support. And we reached agreement, and it made a difference for ordinary Americans. And I'm very grateful.

It seems to me that this year the large question before the American people is, what are we going to do with these good times? What will we make of them? You can probably recall some time in your own life or your own business when you've gotten into a little bit of trouble, not because things were so tough but because things seemed to be going well, and therefore, there were no consequences to breaking your concentration or taking a little time to stop thinking about tomorrow.

And I feel very strongly—and I think I can say this with some credibility since I'm not on the ballot, and most days I'm okay with it—*[laughter]*—but I think I can say, to me, the importance of this election is that America now knows that we can solve problems together. We know we can make real progress. When I became President, if I had said in my Inaugural

Address in 1993, “You know, if you will just stick with me folks, in 7 years we’ll have 3 years of surpluses, and we’ll be in a position to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835,” you would have said, “He seems like a nice young man, but we have a delusional person in the White House.” [Laughter] If I had said, “The crime rate will come down 7 years in a row, and we’ll cut the welfare rolls in half,” you wouldn’t have believed that. If I had said, “We’ll find a way to work with the private sector to improve the quality of our air, water, and land and still have the longest economic expansion in history,” you might not have believed that. So we know now, because of the success our country has had, that if we work together and we set common goals, we can achieve them. The level of skepticism or cynicism that was present in 1992, because of the difficulties that we’ve had for some years, is simply not there anymore. But the question now is, what are we going to do with a truly magic moment of prosperity?

And I won’t repeat the whole State of the Union Address here, but I just want to mention two issues to you. First of all, we have to keep the economy going. It makes so much else possible. I did a police event the other day here in the District of Columbia, and I complimented them on having the lowest murder rate in over 30 years and the lowest crime rate in nearly 30 years, a big decline in gun violence, and all the things they’ve done. We’ve helped them put several hundred police on the street. And on the way out, this police officer said, “Well, thanks for all the nice words, but the economy didn’t hurt.” It’s very important that we do that.

We already have the longest economic expansion in history—by far, the longest without any kind of war involved, but including all the ones which mobilized the country for wartime. So how do we propose to keep this going?

I personally believe it’s very important that we continue to pay down this debt. Why? Because Americans finance a lot of their purchases through personal debt. We finance a lot of new equipment and business expansion through business debt. The personal savings rate in America is too low, and I would like to see it go up, and I would support initiatives in the Congress to try to help it increase. But meanwhile, when we pay down the national debt, it increases the overall savings rate of America; it keeps interest rates down; it makes money more available—

the Government is putting money back into the economy instead of taking money out—and it works as an effective tax cut when you pay the debt down.

The fact that we have gotten rid of the deficit and paid down the debt, according to the latest economic analysis I saw, saves the average homeowner about \$2,000 a year in lower mortgage payments and interest rates being lower than they otherwise would, and a couple hundred dollars a year on car payments and a couple hundred dollars a year on college loan payments. And of course, the availability of capital for business expansion is profoundly important. So I hope in the midst of all this debate this year, you will try to sort through whether, when it’s all said and done, whether the commitments made by various people all add up and we can continue to do that.

Secondly, I think it’s important, when we ask ourselves, how are we going to keep this economy going, that we continue to expand the base of America’s customers. A nation in that sense is not much different than your enterprise. If you want to keep expanding, you’ve got to have somebody buying what you’re selling. We have 4 percent of the world’s population and 22 percent of the world’s income. So it should be obvious. You don’t have to be an Einstein to figure out you’ve got to have more markets all the time in that sort of environment.

In that regard, there are two initiatives before the Congress today that have bipartisan support, and at least one—maybe both, but certainly one—that have bipartisan opposition. The first is the proposal to bring China into the World Trade Organization. That may not be something that you think is of immediate concern to insurance agents, but since you care so much about the economy, it’s very important.

China’s going to get into the World Trade Organization whether we vote to give them normal trading relations every year or not. And the deal we negotiated with them does not give them one bit of increased access to our markets but gives us huge increased access to their markets.

If you saw the deal, you would ask why they signed it. The reason they signed it is, you can’t get into the World Trade Organization unless you’re willing to trade. So they have a more closed economy; they sell a lot of stuff to us; our biggest trade deficit now usually is with them. And they have to open their markets.

And we negotiated a very strong deal that will mean more jobs, more businesses, more investments for America. And from a national security point of view, it would, in my view, be a very, very unwise and precarious move to say that the United States doesn't care whether they're a part of the world community or not. You don't have to agree with another country on everything to say you prefer to trade with them than have an arms face-off with them and constant conflict with them.

So it's in our national security interests, but it's necessary to keep our economy going. There's 1.2 billion people over there, and increasingly, more and more of them will be able to buy what Americans can sell. And as people sell more over there, they'll have more to buy insurance with. It's very important. [Laughter]

The second thing that's important is that we should not forget that there are people and places in this country, many of them served by members of this organization, that have not fully participated in this economic recovery. And to some extent, there are local reasons for that, that have to be dealt with at the State and local level. But there are things we can do here nationally, and there is a substantial bipartisan effort to pass some version of what I have called for 2 years my new markets initiative, to basically go to places like the Mississippi Delta or Appalachia or inner cities or upstate New York or the Native American reservations—to go in there and say, first, we're going to put in the infrastructure of growth.

I was in rural North Carolina the other day, and the Governor and I announced that his telephone companies were going to give broadband access to every rural community in North Carolina, which will enable a lot of businesses that are otherwise physically isolated to do Internet transactions that otherwise would not be available to them.

When I was on the Indian reservation, Shiprock, in northern New Mexico the other day, the Navajo reservation, I learned that 70 percent of the people there did not have telephones. I was introduced by a 13-year-old girl who had won—a brilliant young girl who had won a computer in a contest. And she couldn't log on to the Internet because there wasn't a phone line in her home.

We forget that a lot of our fellow citizens have not participated in this economy. And so we announced there that we were going to be

able to provide basic phone service to those folks for a dollar a month, and we will be able to do a lot more—even though they are long way from most urban areas, we'll be able to do a lot more business for them because of E-commerce, once we get them all hooked up.

But the main thing that we have before the Congress is some way of giving tax incentives for people who have money to invest, to invest in these poor areas in America that are equal to the tax incentives we now give people to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa. I'm all for encouraging investment in developing countries overseas, but we ought to be giving the exact same dollar-impact investment incentives to invest in developing communities here in America. They're the nearest markets we've got, and we ought to do it.

And let me say, finally, on the health care issue, I think it's quite important that we continue our efforts to provide health insurance and coverage and care to people who don't have it. We still have over 40 million Americans without any health insurance. There are still too many children and too many working parents who don't have any. And more and more older Americans and their families are overwhelmed by the costs of long-term care and overwhelmed by their medical costs, especially for prescription drugs.

So I hope this year that in this Congress we'll find a way to extend coverage to more Americans. I hope we can do a better job to make sure that every child who is eligible for coverage receives it. Of the some 10 million children in America who do not have health insurance, public programs now in place—the Children's Health Insurance Program, that's run by the State in all your States, and the Medicaid program, which is administered by them—would cover about half those kids today—today—with programs already in place. And it is very important that we continue to do a better job.

I also believe that we should pass the initiatives in Congress to provide a \$3,000 a year tax credit for long-term care. This is something that I think has broad bipartisan support. More and more families are having to deal with this as we live longer, and it really is a high-class problem in that sense. But it can be a very difficult and expensive one. And again, I think there's bipartisan support for this. I hope it will pass, and I ask for your support.

And finally—I'm sure that Senator Hatch talked about this a little bit, because we're having a dispute about what the best way to do it is—but I think it's important that we add some prescription drug coverage to Medicare this year. And I feel very strongly that we ought to offer a completely voluntary program that's available to any senior who needs it, with the most being done, obviously, for people with the least money. But we're having an argument about exactly how to do it.

I think you ought to know the facts. More than 60 percent of the senior citizens in America today lack access to affordable prescription drugs. If there were no Medicare program and we were all starting again tomorrow, we would never design one today that didn't have prescription drug coverage. Thirty-five years ago, when Medicare was set up, it was for people who had acute problems. It was basically a doctor care, a hospital care program. Today, more and more seniors face chronic problems. Anybody that lives to 65 in this country today has a life expectancy of 82, 83 years. You know more about these tables than I do.

And believe me, if you just take the medical breakthroughs that I think are likely to occur in the next 5 years—sometime in the next few months we'll announce the sequencing of the human genome. We've already identified the defective genes that cause breast cancer, Parkinson's, may lead to Alzheimer's and other things. Before you know it, when young mothers come home with their babies from the hospital, they'll have a genetic map which will say, "Your child has these potential problems and these potential strengths, and if you do the following 10 things, you will cut by 90 percent the chance that your child will get the following conditions." I mean, it's going to be a whole different world out there. And you may have life expectancy go up in the 21st century even more than it went up in the 20th century.

There have been a lot of studies to try to determine how long the human body would last if nothing bad ever happened. And the answer is, about 120 years. That is, if you factor out environmentally caused cancer, accidents, and crime leading to death, and we all had perfect nutrition and took good care of ourselves, our systems, most of us, would still stop functioning somewhere around 120 years. They've done a lot of tests with animals that show that no matter how well you take care of them, someday

they just conk out. [Laughter] But that means that we've got quite a long way to go. I expect George Frazier to live about 120 years. [Laughter] But the rest of us are going to need a little help. [Laughter]

And so I think that will completely change the insurance business. You think about it. It will totally change health and life insurance if the average life expectancy goes up another 8 years. And it's why we also—I agree with one thing Orrin Hatch said—I hope we can avoid politicizing this whole Social Security debate. I think it ought to be discussed, and policy options ought to be taken care of.

One of the things that I've been trying to convince Congress to do is take the interest savings off the debt, since we're paying down the debt because not only—we've cut spending, but you're still paying more in Social Security taxes than we're paying out. So I think we ought to take that portion of debt reduction, so we don't have to pay interest on the debt anymore, that's due to Social Security taxes, and put it in the Trust Fund. And then we could take the Social Security Trust Fund out to 2054. And then we could decide what else to do to try to increase the return, because when all the baby boomers retire, there will be two people working for only one person drawing Social Security. The ratio has normally been 3 or 4 to 1; it's going to go down to 2 to 1. So there are a lot of challenges there.

But the point I want to make is, this whole thing is going to change, and the emphasis, more and more and more, will be on keeping people well in the first place, letting them manage their own care, letting people stay at home, not overwhelming the hospital system and the medical care system. You would never, today, set up a Medicare program without prescription drug coverage.

So basically what we're having a debate about here is at what level to stop the coverage and how best to deliver it. And the only thing I'd like to say about the level, because I think that's very important, is that if you stop at 150 percent of the poverty line, it sounds reasonable, but that means that seniors over \$15,000 in income can't buy any medical coverage. Half of the people who don't have prescription drug coverage today are between the incomes of \$15,000 and \$50,000. And if you're on a fixed income of \$30,000, you may think you're sitting pretty if you're 75 years old. But if you get a \$2,000

a month medical bill because you've got a chronic problem, all of a sudden you don't have much money left. And I'm sure you all know this, so I hope we can find a way this year—I think there's a fair chance we can—to put this issue beyond partisan politics and also to get a program that works.

I also have to tell you that a lot of people in the insurance industry have been very forthright in saying that they think that our proposal is probably more workable. But the reason that the prescription drug people don't like it—the pharmaceutical companies don't like it—is they think that it would cover so many people that we would have too much bargaining power, and we'd get the drugs too cheap. And if you listen to their argument, they think that that might mean that they wouldn't have enough profit margin to continue to develop new drugs. I don't want to paint them as the bad guys here; we're having a genuine argument. But I think that if we are to design—if we design a program that doesn't work, then we wind up with the worst of both worlds. And the insurance industry could be left holding the bag if you're expected to offer policies that are not practical, that won't sell, and if they do sell, won't do what people want. That's why we've actually had quite a lot of really good dialog with people in the insurance industry about that, and I'm very grateful for it.

But I just want to say to you, this is a national problem that deserves a national solution. We should not have a program to cover senior citizens and disabled people's medical benefits that doesn't cover prescription drugs. We need to do this. This is a sort of measure of what we do with good times.

There are lots of issues I could mention, including the education of our children, the continued work to make America a safer country. I don't think we should stop on this crime deal until we have the safest big country in the world. We've still got a lot of work to do. And there are so many other challenges out there. But if we could just think about, here, keeping the economy going, extending its benefits to people in places left behind, and continue to make progress on health care—those are great goals worthy of a nation that is grateful for the success it has enjoyed.

And as I leave office, that's all I really want. I don't want to think that we squandered this enormous opportunity. For the last 7 years, Al

Gore and I and all the people that have worked with us, we've tried so hard just to turn this country around and get it moving in the right direction. And now, as I leave at the end of the year, what I'm thinking of is, how will we deal with the prosperity? It's a great measure of a great nation. And I hope you'll do what you can to make sure we deal with it in an appropriate way.

Now, before I sit down, I want to ask your president to join me. Bill, come up here. We've got a little surprise for George Frazier. George is thinking about retiring after 46 years as an independent agent. I'm against that. I don't know; you know, you're not term-limited. Why quit? [Laughter]

As you heard him say, I've known him all my life, since I was a little boy in Hope, Arkansas. And for all those years, I have known him as a person who always, always cared more about other people than himself and always gave more than he took, whether it was a Little League team that needed a sponsor or a hospital that needed a new wing or a young man starting out in public life who needed advice and friendship. He has been there for a lifetime.

I want to say that he and his wife, Effie, who are here today, are literally two of the finest people I have ever known in my life. And as I said, I had the honor of swearing him in 23 years ago as the president of your organization. And I think it's quite fitting that I started my career with his presidency and ended it with my own. I'm more surprised about mine than his. [Laughter] And I am very grateful to him for what he has been professionally and even more for what he has been as a citizen, as a human being.

So George, Hillary and I love you. And if you will come up here, I want to present to you a beautiful resolution that this organization is giving you for your years of dedication and service.

[At this point, the President presented the resolution to Mr. Frazier.]

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. in the Independence Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Houston, president, Paul A. Equale, chief executive officer, and

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George Frazier, former president, Independent Insurance Agents of America; Lib Carlisle, former chair, Arkansas State Democratic Party; and Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Raising Teenagers and Resourceful Youth

May 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, and good morning. I want to join with Hillary in welcoming you to the White House and thanking all of you for coming. I thank the foundations that have helped us. And thank you, David Hamburg. I still remember when we worked on a report about the developmental needs of young adolescents back in the late eighties, in which we recommended, among other things, that there ought to be community service in all of our schools, something that we're finally getting around to.

I thank all of those who are here. I see so many people out here in this audience who have done so much to help our young people, our teenagers, live better lives. I see one of the founders of the City Year program in Boston. I see a man who has adopted a huge number of children, along with his wife, and personally made sure that they got through their teenage years. There are many, many stories here. I'm grateful to all of you.

I'm very grateful to Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman and our National Service Chairman, Senator Harris Wofford, and Deputy Attorney General Holder and Janice Lachance and all the others who are here from the administration—the Deputy Director of our drug office, Donald Vereen. And thank you, Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones. I thank you all for what you are doing.

I want to thank the panelists and those who will come on afterward. And I think we ought to give one more hand to the families that were in the film, that walked in with Hillary and me. They did a great job. *[Applause]*

You know, we've worked very hard on these family issues for a long time, and Hillary has done so for 30 years. But the way I see this as President, as well as a parent, looking ahead to the kind of America we're trying to build in the new century, when I became President, we had to worry about whether everybody who

wanted or needed a job could get one. And that was very important. And the dignity of work is very important to families. It helps to define the shape of family life in ways that are by and large positive.

I'll never forget once when I was Governor, I had a panel of former welfare recipients that were in the work force, and one of my colleagues asked the lady from my State, said, "Well, what's the best thing about having a job?" And she said, "The best thing about it is, when my boy goes to school and they say, 'What does your mama do for a living,' he can give an answer."

But by the same token, we live in a country that's very good at creating jobs but is not as good at providing family supports, in which people are busier and busier and busier, and in which virtually everybody has some trouble balancing work and family during the period of the child's life. Even parents who are staying at home have trouble doing it.

And it is a problem that is more severe for single parents and people that have more than one job or people that have trouble getting around. It's a problem that's more severe for people that work for very modest incomes. But I don't think I know any parents who are working who have not had some periods in their lives when they worried whether they were letting their kids down because they weren't spending enough time with them or whether there were too many forces out there that were kind of undermining that.

And one of the things that I have learned in ways large and small, over an unfortunately increasingly elderly existence—*[laughter]*—is that everybody has got a story—everybody. And every child has a spark inside. And I believe that everyone has a role to play and ought to be given a chance. And as important as work is—and I say that coming from a family of

workaholics—the most important work that society does is still to raise children. And if that work is done well, the rest of it pretty well takes care of itself.

And so we're here, basically, to do all the things that Hillary said. I think when a tragedy befalls a child or a child is involved in a tragedy, a school shooting or this terrible incident at the Washington zoo, it throws it up in large relief. But I think that one of the things we ought to do in beginning this conference is to take a more balanced view. And I want to be very brief because I want you to have the maximum amount of time with the keynote speaker and with the panelists. But I think it's important that we have a balanced view of what teenage life is like today.

And I asked the Council of Economic Advisers to actually get me a statistical portrait of teenage America. And here is a brief summary. The good news is that the teenagers are far healthier, more prosperous, and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history. The economic rewards of education are at an all-time high. Teens have responded by completing high school and enrolling college at record rates.

Last year, for the first time in the history of the country, the high school graduation of African-Americans and the white majority was almost statistically identical. The dropout rate among Hispanic young people is still too high, but that's largely explained, I think, by the fact that we have still a very large number of Hispanic children in our schools who are first-generation immigrants whose first language is not English, and they come from families that are struggling to make ends meet, and very often they drop out to go to work still. But we're making progress there, as well.

More teenagers than ever before volunteering to serve through community service. Many harmful behaviors are actually on the decline, including youth violence, homicide, suicide, teen pregnancy, and, in the last couple of years, drug use. That's the good news.

The report also highlights some significant challenges. There are still significant opportunity gaps between white students and students of color. Teen smoking, drug use, and pregnancy are still far too high. And despite a marked decline in teen homicide over the past few years, still far too many communities are scarred by gun violence.

Interestingly enough, statistically, the Council of Economic Advisers found that gun-related teen deaths from deliberate acts and from accidents are highly correlated with gun ownership and possession rates. In States with fewer guns in fewer households, there are fewer gun deaths.

Perhaps the most empowering finding in the new report is the extent to which parents have the opportunity to guide their teenagers properly. Sitting down to dinner can have an enormously positive impact. The report found that teenagers who had dinner with—listen to this: The report found that teenagers that had dinner with their parents 5 nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide, and drugs. This holds true for single-parent as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups. Now obviously, if that is not possible, and sometimes it's not possible, then it's really important to find some way to fill that gap. But it's a stunning statistical finding.

For the past 7 years, the First Lady and I have worked with our administration to try to support parents' efforts to raise healthy, hopeful, and responsible children. I'd also like to acknowledge the invaluable efforts of Vice President and Mrs. Gore, who have had—even before he joined me, they were sponsoring a family conference every year in Tennessee to deal with these issues. It's really one of the most astonishing, consistent commitments, I believe, in the country. And they've done a world of good, and I'm very grateful to them.

I'll always be proud that the first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act, a law that now has given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave without losing their jobs. And I remember when I signed it, it had previously been vetoed on the theory that it would hurt the economic growth of the country. If that's what it was designed to do, it's been a very poor failure. *[Laughter]*

What it has done is to prove that it's good economics to balance work and family, that the more parents can succeed at home, the more free they are psychologically to be productive at work. And we ought to do more.

I have asked the Congress to include more firms in the family and medical leave law and to expand the purposes for which people can take family leave. We have also tried to give States the flexibility to use funds in Federal accounts to help to finance paid leave. We've

worked hard on this, and I think it's very important that we recognize that the United States has done a great job at creating jobs, but we still give far less support to the responsibility of balancing work and family than virtually every other industrialized country in the world. And it is very important to do that.

We've also worked hard to turn teenagers away from unhealthy lives toward healthy futures. The rate of drug use has been cut, in part, by the powerful antidrug messages that have been broadcast, and some of you here have helped us with that. We have done our best to engage the tobacco industry in what has been a fairly epic and sometimes frustrating struggle to reduce teen smoking. We made the single largest investment in children's health care since Medicaid was created. And we're working to get more of our kids—and increasingly, I hope, this year, their parents—enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we're working to make our schools safer.

I think that we also need comprehensive strategies to stem violence both in and out of schools. Our program would dramatically expand quality after-school programs. When I started, we had a million dollars for after-school programs; then we went to \$20 million; then we went to \$200 million. This year we've got \$400 million in after-school programs. And I've proposed a billion dollars, and if we pass it, we'll be able to say that every child at least in every troubled neighborhood in the United States of America can be in an after-school program. This is a big deal, and I hope you will support it.

I also want to say a word of thanks to all those who have supported AmeriCorps, including City Year and its other components. We've now had more than 150,000 young people earning money for college while serving in their communities. And we're trying to get more and more people to start earlier, to get high school kids, junior high school kids, involved in community service.

Maryland has become the first State in America to require community service as a condition of a high school diploma. And listen to this: The study found that teens who participate in service projects in their communities are 75 percent less likely to drop out of school, because they're connected in a way that I think is profoundly important.

Hillary talked about the work we're doing with the industry to give parents the tools to

protect their children in the new media age. I do think we need a voluntary system that goes across TV, movies, and video games. If we can find some way to develop that, it would make a lot of sense. There's a lot of information coming at parents. You know, I try to sort it all out when I see it. And I think it would be better if there was—it's almost like you need a dictionary to explain the differences in the TV ratings and movie ratings and the video game ratings. So we have to find some way this can be made more usable.

And today I want to just mention two things that we're trying to do to help parents and their teenagers. First, I'm signing an Executive order to prohibit discrimination against parents in the work force of the Federal Government. Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home. Some of you may have experienced this yourselves. The goal of this order simply says, no glass ceiling for parents. The job they're doing at home is more important, anyway, and if they can do your job, you ought not to stop them.

Second, I am pleased to announce that our National Campaign Against Youth Violence, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and Tobacco-Free Kids, and the National Government have teamed up to produce a comprehensive guide to help parents support their teenagers through this crucial and often difficult developmental period.

Now, I want to introduce our keynote speaker now and say I'm sorry that I can't stay for the rest of the day, but after he speaks, I'll have to leave. But let me say that I want to thank you for coming, again. I want to thank so many of you here for a lifetime of commitment. People ask me all the time, why are we focusing on these things when all the indicators are good and things are going better? This is the time to be thinking about—I will say again—how we can deal with the significant challenges of this country. And anybody that thinks that we've done everything we need to do to help the parents with teenagers hasn't had teenagers and hasn't been around lately.

It seems to me that if we can't deal with these big social issues now, when we're prosperous, when we're doing well, if we can't strengthen the bonds of our community now, when will we ever get around to doing it? That's why we're here.

I want to introduce a person who embodies much of the good that's going on to help parents through having the village do its part, in the First Lady's words, to raise our children. Ben Casey is the president of the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas. He has degrees in psychology and counseling from UCLA and Chapman College. He currently oversees programs—listen to this—145 program centers that serve a quarter of all the families in the greater Dallas region. We've asked him to speak to us today about his extensive experience with teens, the wise new poll which also has some important findings about the way teens and parents view their communication and time together.

And let me just finally say, Mr. Casey, as I bring you up, every minute I have ever spent with young people, as President and before, but especially as President, has reaffirmed to me

how special they are, what enormous potential they have. Even the ones that can't make it really want to and wish they could. And what a profound responsibility we have. And I want to honor you, sir, because you spend every day trying to make sure we don't lose a single one.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to children's advocate David A. Hamburg, president emeritus, Carnegie Corp. of New York. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete. The Executive order of May 2 concerning equal employment opportunity in Federal Government is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Council of the Americas 30th Washington Conference May 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you, Buddy MacKay, for that fine introduction. That introduction was a classic example of Clinton's third law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [*Laughter*] They will always make you look good in good times and bad, whether you deserve it or not.

I want to thank the Ambassadors of Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil, who are here, for their interest and their presence; and all the people in the State Department who work on the Americas. David Rockefeller, I want to thank you for taking the lead 35 years ago now in establishing the Council of the Americas. And I want to thank the Council for its support of our efforts, beginning with NAFTA, alleviating the financial crisis in Latin America, the free trade area of the Americas, and the Caribbean Basin Initiative, as well as our efforts with Colombia.

I want to thank Buddy MacKay for his work as my Special Envoy and especially for the work he's doing now on Capitol Hill as our point person for the Caribbean Basin Initiative. I'd also like to thank my former Chief of Staff and

the first Special Envoy to Latin America, Mack McLarty, for the work he has done. And let me say, the two of them together, I hope, will convince the next President and all future Presidents, without regard to party, that we have made a change in the configuration of the White House which ought to continue. I think that for decades to come, every President should have a Special Envoy to the Americas, because we have a special relationship with the Americas. And I hope those of you in this room of both parties who agree with that will do what you can to see that it happens after next January. I think it's a very, very important thing to do.

Let me say to all of you, especially to you, David, and to all of you who have been involved in this endeavor for a long time, you had the vision to see that North and South, in this increasingly small globe of ours, could come together, and that free trade could be a force for peace as well as prosperity, the basis of our partnership across the whole range of other areas in this hemisphere. You saw that in the middle of the cold war when most people only saw the world divided by East and West here

in the United States. Developments have proved that you were visionary, and we are grateful.

We are also grateful today in the United States for the extraordinary success that our economy has enjoyed and for the ability it has given us to play a positive role in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, for democracy and open markets.

I think it is very important today that we ask ourselves what we propose to do with this prosperity and whether we really understand the role that our engagement in the world and our trade with other nations clearly has played in our prosperity and what responsibilities that imposes upon us in terms of our future.

We have benefited immensely from trade. There is no question that we have the longest economic expansion in history because we got rid of the deficits, and we've run 3 years of surpluses in a row and paying off \$335 billion of our debt, and we've got low interest rates. There is no question that our investment in science and technology, our reform of our telecommunications system, and our continued commitment to education is important. But everyone should understand that our commitment to expanding trade, including not just NAFTA and joining the WTO but 270 other agreements, has helped us not only to find new markets for our products and services but, by keeping our own markets open, has kept inflation down as our economy has grown.

The two most significant things that have allowed the longest economic expansion in history for America to be long has been the enormous increase in productivity because of technology and the fact that we have permitted ourselves to have inflation-free growth because we've kept open markets with a responsible financial policy.

I hear—so many times people talk about trade only in terms of exports, because that sounds good politically, and when you say you're importing a lot, that doesn't sound good politically. But our imports have helped us a lot. They've kept inflation down, and they've made our people's dollars go further. And they've enabled us to keep growing without inflation. And along the way, they've helped our trading partners to lift their own well-being. Our two top trading partners today are our neighbors to the north and to the south. And during most of the last decade, our trade with Latin America grew faster than any other region of the world.

So we have been very fortunate. During the period since NAFTA entered into force, our exports to Canada and Mexico have gone up almost 80 percent. Our employment has skyrocketed. Canadian employment has jumped by more than one million overall, and Mexico's employment has climbed by one million. NAFTA played a major role in this.

It has set the stage for much of what has followed. During the Mexican financial crisis in 1995, we offered a loan package that wasn't too popular at the time. I always laugh about it. When Bob Rubin came to see me about it with Larry Summers, as I remember there was a poll in the paper that day that said by 81 to 15, the American people thought it was a bad idea for us to give financial assistance to Mexico. And I thought to myself, this is what's wrong with polls. If we don't help Mexico, and Mexico and Brazil and Argentina and the rest of Latin America and half the other developing economies of the world go in the tank, and our economy nose-dives, it will be 100 to nothing, people think it's a bad idea that we let the world economy go to pieces. And I am very glad that what we did worked. I think the Mexican Government and the Mexican people deserve a lot of credit for a painful recovery, in which they paid back their loans with interest and ahead of schedule.

Then 3 years later, our hemisphere was hurt by a crisis half a world away in Asia, but I'm glad that we worked to keep our markets open. And I still believe our choice for more trade, not less, contributed to minimizing the impact of the Asian financial crisis and enabling those countries to pull out of that crisis more quickly.

That doesn't mean that the size of our trade deficit is not a source of concern to me; it is. But I'm convinced the only way it will get smaller is when our partners, both to the south and around the world, grow wealthier and stronger, so that they can consume more of their own production and buy more of ours. I think the decision we made for open markets has plainly been the right decision, not simply for the United States economy but for the rest of the world. And I am absolutely confident it's the right decision going forward.

Right now I think we're making very good progress in moving the Caribbean Basin initiative through Congress. It is tied, as all of you know, to the Africa trade bill, which is also, I believe, very, very important to us in terms

of our long-term security interests and very important in terms of our fulfilling our responsibility to Africa. I think there is every likelihood now that that bill will be on my desk for signature by the end of the month. And I think it is high time.

I know I don't need to plug that legislation here, but the nations of the Caribbean have suffered quite a lot economically and have come under enormous pressure to become way-stations for narcotrafficking. And we need to do more for them. I believe this bill is a good bill, much better than it was about to be a few weeks ago. I hope you will all support it, and if you can help me pass it quickly, I'd be grateful.

I also want to affirm that we are still determined to meet the goal we set at the Miami Summit of the Americas in December of 1994, to achieve a free trade agreement by 2005 that will embrace the entire Americas—the world's largest trade zone, 800 million people investing in each other's future, enriching each other's lives, advancing each other's interests.

Negotiators are on schedule to complete and present a draft agreement to the trade ministers next April in Argentina. It will also be presented then to the heads of state at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec. We must stay on track to do this by 2005. The date should not slip, and I am confident we will do so.

I think a lot of people over-read the meaning of the failure of Congress to renew fast-track authority. The truth is, there was a fight largely along partisan lines over the content of that authority and whether the President should be given explicit authority to negotiate trade agreements that included environmental and labor conditions. I thought that fast-track authority was a lousy vehicle on which to wage that fight, even though I was sympathetic with the substance of the argument. I still believe that.

But you should not believe that because the legislation didn't pass over philosophical and partisan differences on that issue, that the United States is any less committed to finishing the free trade area of the Americas, or that because it didn't pass, any agreement we make in the context of the free trade area of the Americas is less likely to pass Congress. That is not true.

And you know that we're having an election this year. You may have noticed that. And there will be a lot of differences between the nomi-

nees and the parties over a lot of issues, but I am very gratified that there is no difference on this. You are going to have an American President committed to a free trade area of the Americas by 2005. And if it doesn't happen, it will not be the fault of the executive branch of the Government of the United States of America. We know this is the right thing to do.

And I just want you to know that. And I will try to find other ways to manifest that before I leave office. And there are some, but the most important one, I think, would be the passage of the CBI-Africa trade bill. But I ask you to—you know, we're having the same argument now with China and the WTO, where there are people who have honest differences over the way the World Trade Organization operates. They think it's too closed, too undemocratic, too private, and I agree with them. But voting against this is a lousy way to litigate that issue.

So parliamentary processes are often uneven and awkward, and many times people in parliaments throughout the world find the only forum they can for the fight they think that needs to be waged. But I think it's very important that you understand that what that fast-track battle was about. It was about the philosophical differences in our country over whether trade agreements should include labor and environmental conditions and whether the President should be given explicit authority to negotiate on that basis. It didn't have anything to do with people not really wanting a free trade area of the Americas.

I don't agree with the fact that it wasn't extended, and I am sympathetic, as all of you know, to the idea that if the world becomes closer knitted, we don't live by bread alone. It's inconceivable to me that we will have a global economy without having more and more of a global society. That will happen in some way, in some form, at some pace. But it shouldn't turn us against trade.

Similarly, it's inconceivable to me that the WTO, as it becomes more important, won't have to become more open and more democratic. But that's not an excuse for sticking it to China after China has made good-faith efforts to open its economy and to give access to the other members of the world trading community.

So I think it's important to understand these debates are going on, but this does not mean

that the United States is not committed to a free trade area of the Americas. It is profoundly important. It is important economically. It is also important politically.

One of the things that I'm very concerned about in Latin America is that, with all the triumph of democracy—34 of 35 leaders democratically elected, people now expecting to choose their leaders and chart their future and shape their destinies—there are too many people and too many places who have still not benefited from the global economy in ways that they can touch and feel. The answer is not to turn back; the answer is to keep going forward to spread the benefits to more people. And we have to continue to push that.

I am afraid democracy itself could be made far more fragile if more and more people grow more and more frustrated about the circumstances of their own lives. And it would be a terrible mistake for the United States ever to send a signal that we have any policy other than full steam ahead, more engagement, more support, more commitment. I think that is very, very important.

We've worked hard to uphold the rule of law in this hemisphere. We upheld that principle in Haiti. Haiti is still desperately poor and wracked with problems and facing new elections. We will do everything we can to help them stay with their democracy. But eventually, real people are going to have to feel real benefit. The answer is not for the United States, with the strongest economy, to withdraw. The answer is to deepen our engagement.

We acted again on the principle of the rule of law and democracy when we stood with the people of Paraguay to preserve democracy there when it was threatened in 1996. We attempted to uphold that policy every time it was threatened: in Ecuador, earlier this year; last month through the Organization of American States, when the countries of the hemisphere, thankfully, voiced strong support for a fair and open electoral process in Peru.

But most important, I think, today we are called upon to stand for democracy under attack in Colombia. Drug trafficking, civil conflict, economic stagnation combine everywhere they exist—and explosively in Colombia—to feed violence, undercut honest enterprise in favor of corruption, and undermine public confidence in democracy. Colombia's drug traffickers directly

threaten America's security, but first they threaten Colombia's future.

In the United States, 90 percent of the cocaine and two-thirds of the heroin seized on our streets comes from or through Colombia. Fifty-two thousand Americans die every year from drugs, about as many as died in the wars in Vietnam and Korea. It costs us more than \$110 billion a year in crime, accidents, property damage, and lost productivity.

But the price to Colombia is even higher. Last year, drug trafficking and civil conflict led to more than 2,500 kidnappings; a murder rate 10 times ours, which is virtually the highest of any country in the advanced world; terrorist activity that is now probably the worst in the world. Thirty-five thousand people have been killed and one million more made homeless in the last decade alone. Drugs fund guerrillas on the left and paramilitaries on the right.

Honest citizens, the vast majority of the people of Colombia, are simply caught in the middle. Eight hundred to nine hundred passports are issued every day—every day—as engineers, architects, and doctors take their families, their wealth, their talent out of Colombia. And yet, thousands upon thousands of courageous Colombians choose to stay and fight, because they love their country, and they want to save their freedom.

President Pastrana came to office with a record of risking his own life to take on drug traffic. He was kidnapped by the Medellin cartel. As mayor of Bogota, he saw them kill three Presidential candidates. Then he became a Presidential candidate—he used to joke that maybe that meant he was certifiably mentally unstable enough to serve—a very brave decision.

Once in office, he worked with experts in Colombia and elsewhere to put together Plan Colombia. It's a comprehensive plan to seek peace, fight drugs, build the economy, and deepen democracy. The plan costs about \$7½ billion. It includes contributions from the Government of Colombia, international financial institutions, and other donors. And I've asked our Congress to give it \$1.6 billion over 2 years. That will be a tenfold increase in our U.S. assistance to promote good government, judicial reform, human rights protection, and economic development. It will also enable Colombia's counterdrug program to inflict serious damage

on the rapidly expanding drug production activity in areas now dominated by guerrillas or paramilitary groups.

We know this approach can succeed. Over the last 5 years working with the Governments of Peru and Bolivia, we have reduced coca cultivation by more than 50 percent in those countries, reduced overall cocaine production in the region by 18 percent. Drug traffickers, driven from their old havens, unfortunately now are consolidating operations in Colombia. But we have an historic opportunity and an historic responsibility to do serious and lasting damage to the international drug trade if Congress approves our package. I am convinced the rest of the world will follow suit. If we show that we are prepared to pay our fair share of this, the rest of the world will help.

We need to help train and equip Colombia's counterdrug battalion, enhance its interdiction efforts, provide intelligence and logistic supports to the counterdrug mission, including force protection. They need this support. We can provide it, and we ought to provide it. We must not stand by and allow a democracy elected by its people, defended with great courage by people who have given their lives, be undermined and overwhelmed by those who literally are willing to tear the country apart for their own agenda.

And make no mistake about it: If the oldest democracy in South America can be torn down, so can others. Every one of you here has a deep and abiding interest in helping to see that the fight for freedom, democracy, and good government in Colombia is successful. I urge Congress to pass this package now. The Colombians waging this campaign are fighting not just for themselves; they are fighting for all of us, all of us in this room and the hundreds of millions of people we represent, and for our children.

As we know, the globalization of our societies is presenting us a lot of new challenges. The issue in Colombia is just the beginning. You will see, more and more, drug cartels, organized criminals, gunrunners, terrorists working together. The Internet will make it easier for them

to do so, just as it makes it easier for you to work together to pursue your legal endeavors. But we have every reason to be optimistic, if we meet our common challenges—our common security challenges, our common environmental challenges, our common educational and health care challenges.

The mission you have championed for 35 years in this Council is closer than ever before to being successful. We have a chance to completely rewrite the future for our children because of the revolution in information, because of the biomedical revolution, because of the material science revolution. All these things together enable us to grow an economy and improve the environment, to expand trade and deepen democracy.

But when we have an opportunity like a free trade area of the Americas, we have to take it. And when we have a challenge, like the challenge in Colombia, we have to meet it.

The United States wants to do its part. It's very much in our interest to do so. We have benefited more than any other country in the world from the last decade, and we need to stand up here and do our part to be good neighbors and to help other people benefit as well.

But we need all your help. We have to win in Colombia. We have to win the fight for the free trade area of the Americas. We have to prove that freedom and free markets go hand-in-hand. That's what you believe, and we're going to be given a chance to prove it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Loy Henderson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to Assistant to the President and Special Envoy to the Americas Kenneth H. (Buddy) MacKay; David Rockefeller, founder, Council of the Americas; Ambassadors Guillermo Gonzalez of Argentina, Luis Alberto Moreno of Colombia, Alfredo Toro of Venezuela, and Rubens Antonio Barbosa of Brazil; former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; and President Andres Pastrana of Colombia.

May 2 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on Signing Legislation Amending Certain Federal Reporting Requirements

May 2, 2000

Today I signed into law S. 1769, a bill to continue a number of existing Federal reports scheduled to expire on May 15 of this year, as well as modify certain reporting requirements related to two of these reports.

New section 2519(2)(b)(iv) of title 18 of the United States Code provides for general reporting by the Department of Justice of law enforcement encounters with encrypted communications in the execution of wiretap orders. In signing S. 1769, I state my understanding that the reporting required by section 2519(2)(b)(iv) is limited to general aggregate data concerning the total number of times law enforcement encountered encryption and the total number of in-

stances in which encryption prevented access to plain text. The reporting requirement of S. 1769 does not require specific case-by-case or order-by-order reporting, which could jeopardize law enforcement sources and methods and provide clear direction to criminals seeking to use encryption to hide their unlawful conduct.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1769, approved May 2, was assigned Public Law No. 106-197.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

May 2, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to sig-

nificant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

Memorandum on the White House Program for the National Moment of Remembrance

May 2, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: White House Program for the National Moment of Remembrance

As Memorial Day approaches, it is time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. Memorial Day represents one day of

national awareness and reverence, honoring those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. While we should honor these heroes every day for the profound contribution they have made to securing our Nation's freedom, we should honor them especially on Memorial Day.

In this time of unprecedented success and prosperity throughout our land, I ask that all Americans come together to recognize how fortunate we are to live in freedom and to observe a universal “National Moment of Remembrance” on each Memorial Day. This memorial observance represents a simple and unifying way to commemorate our history and honor the struggle to protect our freedoms.

Accordingly, I hereby direct all executive departments and agencies, in consultation with the White House Program for the National Moment of Remembrance (Program), to promote a “National Moment of Remembrance” to occur at 3 p.m. (local time) on each Memorial Day.

Recognizing that Memorial Day is a Federal holiday, all executive departments and agencies, in coordination with the Program and to the extent possible and permitted by law, shall promote and provide resources to support a National Moment of Remembrance, including:

- Encouraging individual department and agency personnel, and Americans every-

where, to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day, to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all.

- Recognizing, in conjunction with Memorial Day, department and agency personnel whose family members have made the ultimate sacrifice for this Nation.
- Providing such information and assistance as may be necessary for the Program to carry out its functions.

I have asked the Director of the White House Millennium Council to issue additional guidance, pursuant to this Memorandum, to the heads of executive departments and agencies regarding specific activities and events to commemorate the National Moment of Remembrance.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 3.

Remarks at Audubon Elementary School in Owensboro, Kentucky

May 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. I am delighted to see you all here. I think we should give Karen Cecil another round of applause. She did a great job, didn't she? [Applause] Superintendent Silberman, you might ought to just put her on the road as an advertisement for the district.

I'm delighted to be here with all of you. I want to thank Governor Patton and Judi Patton for, first of all, for many years of friendship and support, and for, Governor, your truly magnificent leadership in this State. I have served—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I have served with over 150 Governors. And since I've been President 8 years, I guess I've known about 100 or so more. So I have some experience in this. He's one of the best I've ever seen, and I thank him very much. Thank you.

I thank your Lieutenant Governor, Steve Henry, for being here. And my longtime friend and also fellow former colleague, John Y. Brown, thank you, Governor, for coming. I'm glad to see you. And Senator Wendell Ford and Jean,

I'm glad to see you. We miss you in Washington. I had to be funny Saturday night; they don't laugh enough since you came home. [Laughter] And we miss you.

I want to thank Attorney General Chandler and Treasurer Miller and Speaker Richards for being here, and the other State legislators who are here. And Mayor Morris, thank you for welcoming me, along with the city council. And I thank the Board of Education for their good work. I want to thank the AmeriCorps volunteers who are here for the work they do in the America Reads program. And thank you, Superintendent Silberman, and thank you, Diane Embry, for the work you do.

I've been in so many schools over the last 20 years, I can be in one for 5 minutes and know whether it's doing well or not. And there are a lot of rules, and you heard some of them today, but one of the things that Diane Embry did not say is that you nearly never have a good school unless you've got a great principal.

And it's obvious that you've got a great principal here.

And I'd like to thank the bands who played. And most of all, I'd like to thank Crystal Davidson for letting me come into her class and read with her students. We read a chapter from "Charlotte's Web," a wonderful book. And Crystal said it was the students' favorite chapter. It's called "The Miracle," and it's about how Charlotte the spider weaves a magic web that says, "some pig." And everybody thinks that it's the pig that's special, not the spider, and as a consequence the pig is not sent off to make bacon. And it's a pretty good story for real life, I think. [Laughter] I may recommend it to the Congress when I get home. [Laughter]

I am told that I'm the first President to come to Owensboro since Harry Truman. He always did have good judgment, Harry. But I have known about Owensboro for a long time, now. The Baptist minister that married Wendell and Jean Ford was my next-door neighbor in 1961. And his daughter graduated from high school with me and became one of my best friends and now is very active in the national adult literacy movement. So there's something in the atmosphere around here that promotes good education. I understand Lieutenant Governor Henry's mother was a 25-year veteran of the school system here in this county. So I'm delighted to be here.

I am on the first stop of a 2-day tour to highlight for the American people the good things that are happening in education in America and the challenges that are before us. I want people all across this country to know that there are places where people, against considerable odds, are bringing educational excellence to all our children. I want people to know this because the great challenge before us is how to get the reforms that worked in Audubon Elementary School into every elementary school in America.

And the first thing that you have to do if you want to achieve that goal is to know what was done and to believe it works. I came to Kentucky to show America how a whole State can identify and turn around its low-performing schools with high standards and accountability, parental involvement, and investments to help the schools and the students and the teachers meet the standards.

After I leave you, I'm going on to Davenport, Iowa, to highlight the importance of having good

school facilities. And this is a big issue, too. The average school building in America is over 40 years old; in many of our cities, the average school building is over 65 years old. We have school buildings in some of our cities that can't be wired for the Internet because the building just can't accommodate it. We have school buildings in New York City still being heated with coal-fired furnaces. We have elementary schools in America with 12 or 13 trailers out back because there are so many kids in the schools. So I'm going to Iowa to try to emphasize that.

And then tomorrow I'm going to St. Paul, Minnesota, to visit the first public charter school in America, which was basically created to give more accountability with less bureaucratic paperwork, and I'm going to talk about that. And then I'm going to Columbus, Ohio, to talk about the importance of teachers and results in the classrooms.

Dick Riley and I have been working on this for over 20 years, since we were young Governors together in 1979. We met in late 1978, when we went to Atlanta—they had a conference to show us how to be Governors. They recognized that there was a difference between winning the election and doing the job. [Laughter] And for over 20 years we've been wrestling with the challenge of how to improve our schools and how especially to give people who live in communities where there are a lot of lower income people the same excellence in education that every American has a right to.

And because he's from South Carolina and I'm from Arkansas, we feel a lot of affinity with Kentucky. I have been here—I came to Kentucky for the first time in 1979. I served with five Kentucky Governors, and I feel like, since Paul has been so close to us these last 7 years, I've served with six. And I wanted to come here because I believe so strongly that we can have the kind of educational excellence we need for every child in the country if people will take the basic things you have done here and do them.

I believe that intelligence is equally distributed throughout the human race, and I think educational opportunity ought to be also equally distributed. And I do want to say just one thing about Dick Riley: I don't think there's any question that even my political opponents would admit that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had.

Governor Patton talked about a decade of commitment to excellence since you passed your landmark reform bill in 1990. But he was on a committee called the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence back in the 1980's, so he's been at this a long time, too. And I guess the first thing I would say to people all across America who are interested in this: This is not a day's work or a weekend's work or a month's work. You've got to make a long-term disciplined commitment to your children. And I thought one of the best things about what Karen Cecil said was how she charted the improvements in this school through the lives of her children. It was personally very moving to me, but it also made the larger point that if you really want excellence in education, you have to be prepared to pay the price of time and really work at it.

Now, here's what Kentucky did—a lot of you know this, but I think it's worth repeating for the audience across the country interested in this. First, in 1990 you set high standards for what all Kentucky children should know. Second, you identified the schools where year after year students didn't learn enough to meet those standards. Third, you held the schools accountable for turning themselves around, with real consequences for the failure to do so, from dismissing principals and teachers to allowing parents to transfer children into higher performing public schools. And fourth, you provided the investment and other supports necessary, which your principal and your parent have identified here today, to turn the schools around, from more teacher training to high quality preschool, after-school, and summer school programs, to the latest educational technology. You have to do all of these things.

The results have been truly extraordinary. You know, because we're all here today with our friends from the media who will put this story out around the country, I want every American who doubts that we can provide excellence in education to listen to these Kentucky numbers. In 1996, Kentucky identified 175 schools needing major improvement. Two years later—in 2 years, 159 of those schools, 91 percent, had improved beyond the goals you set for them.

Audubon Elementary, where we are today, is a particularly dramatic example. Now listen to this; this is what this school did. This school went from 12 percent of your students meeting or exceeding the State standards on writing tests

to 57 percent, from 5 percent meeting or exceeding the State standards in reading to 70 percent—I saw that today—from zero students meeting or exceeding the State standards in science to 64 percent. This school is now the 18th-best performing elementary school in the State, despite the fact that two-thirds of your students qualify for free and reduced-price school lunches. That is truly amazing.

In fact—this is also very interesting—you can say that—I know that people who don't agree with what we're trying to do will say, "Well, so what? You know, they have Einstein for a principal there or something." [Laughter] And you may. But listen to this. In this entire State, 10 of the 20 best performing elementary schools in science—in science—are schools where half the students are eligible for free and reduced-price schools lunches. Don't tell me all children can't learn. They can learn if they have the opportunity and the system and the support.

Income is not destiny. You have proved that all children can learn, and you have also proved that public schools can succeed. Therefore, in my judgment, the answer to excellence for all our children is not to take money away from our schools through vouchers but to combine money with high standards, accountability, and the tools teachers, children, and parents need to succeed. Because all children can learn, and because both the children and the Nation need for all children to learn in the 21st century information economy, I think turning around low-performance schools is one of the great challenges this country faces in the 21st century.

And I want to go off the script here for a couple minutes to tell you, you know, I'm not running for anything this year, so I can say this, I hope, with some credibility. In times of adversity, people tend to pull together and do what has to be done. You had a terrible tornado here in January. I know it was awful for you. We tried to give the support that we were supposed to give at the national level. But I'm sure you were amazed at the community response. I'm sure you were all inspired by it. At times of adversity, we find the best in ourselves.

Sometimes we are most severely tested in good times, when it's easy for our attention to wander, for our concentration to break, for our vision to fade. Now, this country is in the best economic shape it's ever been in, and all the

social indicators are moving in the right direction. And now is the time to ask ourselves, what's really out there for us to do? How are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America when all the baby boomers retire? We don't want to bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids. Therefore, we should lengthen the life of Social Security and make sure Medicare is all right; I think, add a prescription drug benefit.

How are we going to continue to grow the economy at the end of the longest expansion in history? I think we have to sell more of our stuff overseas, but we also have to—as I said in Hazard, Kentucky, last summer—we've got to bring economic opportunity to the places that have been left behind. It's inflation-free economic growth.

How are we going to lift our children out of poverty and give them all a world-class education? Those are three of the biggest challenges this country has.

When we were worried about unemployment, when we were worried about crime never going down, when we were worried about welfare roles exploding, it was hard to think about these big long-term challenges. Well, things are in hand now. We're going in the right direction. This is the best chance anybody in this gym today will ever have in your lifetime to deal with these big challenges.

And so I—that's another reason I'm here today. We can do this. We can give all our kids a world-class education. And if we're not going to do it now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We cannot afford to break our concentration. Now is the time to say, thank you for this good time, to be grateful to God and to our neighbors and to all the good fortune we've had, and then do the right thing by our kids. This is the best time we'll ever have to do this, and so—[*ap- plause*]. Thank you.

I can also tell you, we don't have unlimited time to do it. We've got the biggest school population in our history. It's finally, the last 2 years, been bigger than the baby boom generation. It is far more diverse. The school district just across the river from Washington, DC, in Alexandria, has kids from 180 different racial-ethnic groups, speaking 100 different first languages. And the country will grow more diverse.

Now, in a global society, that's a good thing. Just like you want to have computers way out

in the country, because they're connected to the world, right? This is a good thing, not a bad thing—but only if we have universal excellence in education.

Now, the other thing I'd like to say is, when Dick and I started doing all this—and John Y. was elected the next year—back in the early 1980's and the late seventies, we were struggling to try to figure out what to do. Even when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued in 1983—and a lot of us responded to it; we tried basically to just do what they said. We didn't even have—many States didn't even have basic, adequate graduation requirements for high school.

But we've now had 20 years of serious effort at educational reform. So we not only have good economic times, we have the knowledge that we didn't have even 10 years ago about how to replicate what you have done here. And that's another reason we do not have any excuse for not doing this. We know what works. And what you've done here will work in any community in the country.

Will it have to be modified for the people that live there and the community conditions? Absolutely. But you know, I used to frequently visit an elementary school in Chicago, when the crime rate was really high, in the early nineties, in the neighborhood with the highest murder rate in Illinois. And the principal was an African-American woman from my home State, from the Mississippi Delta. And all the parents were in the school. They had a school dress code. They had no weapons in the school. They never had any violent incidents. They had a zero drop-out rate, and they performed above the State average, just like you are. So we would see this from time to time. We would come across these jewels in the rough. But nobody could really figure out, for a long time, how to make this universal.

We know, now, what the basic things you have done are and how to make them available in every school in the country. We do not have an excuse any longer not to do that. You have to set high standards. You have to have accountability. You have to train and pay decent teachers and principals. You've got to provide the technology, and you have to have the support staff. And you have to have the parental involvement and the community support. And kids have to have the extra help they need to meet the

standards. You shouldn't declare children failures when the system doesn't work. So it's okay to hold the kids accountable, but you've got to give them the help they need to make it.

Now, that works: Invest more, demand more. For 7 years in our administration, the Vice President and I and Secretary Riley and the others, we've worked to give States like Kentucky the tools you need to do the job. When we were cutting spending like crazy to turn deficits into surpluses, we still had nearly doubled the national investment in education and training. We required States to set academic standards, but Secretary Riley got rid of nearly two-thirds of the regulations on States and local school districts, to reduce the unnecessary paperwork and to focus on what was really critical.

And we've also worked to help you reduce class size. I was thrilled that—you know, I didn't think of you as a Clinton teacher, but—[laughter]—I'll take it any day of the week. I think it's wonderful, and I'm honored that you're there.

But when I was in Crystal's class today, and all those kids, every one of those children read to me—every one of them. Now, some of them had a little more trouble than others, partly because of the arcane nature of the book we read and the way they were talking about Desotos and Studebakers and Packards—[laughter]—and not Isuzus and Hondas and other things. But every one of those children was into reading and obviously had received individual attention. Because—I think there were 19 students in that class today, and you can't do that with 40 kids. So this is a big deal.

So we're into our third year now of trying to fund 100,000 new teachers, to help to reduce the class sizes in the early grades so that the young people can learn to read. And I'm also glad that young people like Crystal Davidson want to be teachers and are dedicated to it, because we're going to have a lot teachers retiring in the next few years.

We've also supported the America Reads program. We have these volunteers here from AmeriCorps. There are 1,000 colleges now in America where young people are working in the elementary schools of our country. In addition to that, you have RSVP programs, Retired Senior Volunteers, which I think is a sponsor of the program here in this county, and other groups, church groups, other people all across

this country helping. And I think that's very important.

I said I was going to the charter school in Minnesota. We had one when I became President; there are 1,700 today, and we think we'll have 3,000 when school starts next year. We've really worked on this.

The Vice President fought very hard to get something called the E-rate in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which enables schools like this to hook the classrooms up to the Internet and to get a discount to do so. It's worth about \$2 billion a year, so that the poorest schools in the country can afford, just as the wealthiest schools can, to hook up their classrooms to the Internet.

When we started in '93, there were only 3 percent of our classrooms with Internet connections. Today, nearly 75 percent have. Only 16 percent of the schools had even one connection; today, 95 percent do, including 90 percent in low income areas in America. So this is making a difference, and it's very important.

Now, across the country math and reading scores are rising. Sixty-seven percent of all the high school graduates are now going to college; that's 10 percent more than in 1993. Part of that is because we tried to open the doors of college financially to all Americans with the creation of the HOPE scholarship, which is a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, which makes community college at least virtually free to most families, and another tax credit for junior and senior years and for graduate school. There are 5 million families taking advantage of it already; it's just been in since '98.

And we've expanded the Pell grants; we've created education IRA's; we've cut the cost of the student loans through the Direct Student Loan Program by \$8 billion. Students have saved \$8 billion on the program and lower interest costs on student loans, in just 6 years. And I'm trying to get the Congress this year to allow the cost of college tuition to be tax-deductible up to \$10,000 a year. And if we do that, we do that one last piece, we will really be able to say that we have opened the doors of college to every American family, and everybody will be able to go, and money should not be an obstacle. So we're trying to get this done.

Okay, that's the good news. Now, what's the bad news? The bad news is that you're here, and we're celebrating, but there are still a whole lot of schools in America, hundreds of them,

that fail to give children the education that you give the children here in Audubon. And in this economy, that is bad for them and bad for the rest of us, because we live in an economy in which it's not only what you know that counts, it's what you're capable of learning.

The whole nature of work is being radically revolutionized by information technology. It's accounted for 30 percent of our economic growth in the last 8 years, even though people working directly in information technology are only 8 percent of the work force. But if you work in a bank, if you work in an insurance company—in my part of the country, if you drive a tractor—your life has been changed by the way computers work. And this means that it's not only necessary to be able to know certain things, you've got to have these learning skills that kids get in grade school to keep on learning for a lifetime. It is profoundly important.

And we do need what the Vice President has called a revolution in education. But it's not a revolution to find something that doesn't exist. It's a revolution to take what works here and put it everywhere. That has always been the great challenge of American education. It's just that we weren't sure what it was we wanted to put everywhere. Today, we are.

And again I tell you, there will never be a better time economically to do it, and we don't have any excuse not to do it, because we know what works. After 20 years, we know what works.

Last year, Dick Riley and I sent Congress an educational accountability act that would fundamentally change the way we spend the \$15 billion we give to our schools, not to take it away from our commitment to helping lower income communities and kids but to say, we're going to invest in what we know works, and we're going to stop investing in what we know doesn't work. It would essentially require States that take Federal money to do what you have done in Kentucky, to identify low-performing schools, to develop a strategy for turning them around, based on a set of standards and an accountability mechanism.

It would require the ending of so-called social promotion but, again, not branding the children failures. It would require that only if you also had after-school, summer school, tutoring, the support services necessary for the children to succeed.

And it would empower parents, by encouraging more parental involvement in schools and guaranteeing report cards to the parents on school performance, not just the students' performance, compared to other schools.

It would provide funds to make sure that all teachers are trained in the subjects they teach—which is going to become a huge problem when all these math and science teachers retire in high school, getting people who are actually certified and trained to teach the courses they're supposed to be teaching—and provide more support for school districts for extra training.

I've asked Congress to double our investment in the education accountability fund to help people turn around low-performing schools or shut them down. And I've asked Congress to double our investment in after-school and summer school programs.

The Federal Government, when I became President, was spending nothing on these programs. Then we—I got an appropriation for \$1 million, and then \$2 million, and then \$40 million, and then \$200 million. Then it's \$400 million this year—\$450 million. And I'm trying to get \$1 billion. If we get \$1 billion, we can provide summer school in this country to every student and every poor, low-performing school in the United States of America. That is very, very important.

So to make this strategy work, we've got to have the courage to do what Kentucky is doing, to identify the schools that aren't performing, not where the students are failing, where the schools are failing the students. The grownups have to take responsibility for this. Then we can help to turn them around. Today I am directing—that's a misnomer, because we agreed in advance, Secretary Riley—to begin to provide an annual report, national report on low-performing schools, to tell us for the first time how many of our Nation's public schools are failing, where they're located, what the States are doing to turn them around.

Second, as we press Congress to pass our accountability legislation, we must ensure that the States do what they're supposed to do under existing laws. Therefore, I'm directing the Secretary to send teams to States to make sure they're meeting their responsibilities on low-performance schools, to work with States to apply the kind of successful strategies that have worked here, to identify Federal resources like

these after-school grants which States can use to turn the schools around.

I never cease to be amazed when I go places that there are people that literally don't know we have this money there for them. I'll bet you there are people that need this teacher money that haven't applied for it. And I nearly know there are people that need this after-school money that haven't applied for it, because we have grown this program very fast in response to a clear national need.

These actions will help us to spread the lesson we have learned during these last 7 years. In education, investment without accountability can be a waste of money. But accountability without investment is a waste of effort. Neither will work without the other.

Ten years ago, when things looked pretty grim for public schools, before a lot of these reforms got underway, the late head of the American Federation of Teachers, Al Shanker, who was a great friend of mine and a very vigorous advocate of high standards and accountability, said something to his fellow teachers that I thought was very moving. He said, we have to be willing to tell the American people the bad news about our public schools so that when the schools

begin to turn around and we have good news to report, they will believe us.

Well, today here in Kentucky and in other places across America, there is good news to report. The American people believe that. But they expect us to keep at it until the good news is the real news in every single school in this country.

Thank you. Thank you for what you have done to help make that happen. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Cecil, parent, who introduced the President; Stuart Silberman, superintendent of schools, Daviess County; Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky and his wife, Judi; Lt. Gov. Stephen L. Henry and former Gov. John Y. Brown, Jr., of Kentucky; State Attorney General A. B. Chandler III; State Treasurer Jonathan Miller; Kentucky House of Representatives Speaker Jody Richards; Mayor Waymond Morris of Owensboro; Diane Embry, principal, and Crystal Davidson, teacher, Audubon Elementary School; and former Senator Wendell Ford and his wife, Jean. The Executive order on actions to improve low-performing schools is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on World Press Freedom Day *May 3, 2000*

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, I want to salute journalists in every country who dedicate their lives—and risk their lives—to increase our understanding of the world and to shine a spotlight in support of truth and accountability.

This past year around the world, from Colombia to Chechnya to Sierra Leone, more than 30 journalists were killed, many more were imprisoned, and more than 100 nations still exert forms of harassment that inhibit press freedom. Right now, Governments in Iran and Serbia are

cracking down on journalists, closing news organizations, and trying to block a public dialog that is so essential to human rights and freedom.

As a nation long blessed with liberty, the United States has a responsibility to stand with those who are upholding the values we cherish, to speak up for press freedom, and to speak out against repression, so that journalists can do their jobs without risk or restraint and citizens have the knowledge they need to exercise the power of self-government.

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Statement on the Death of John Cardinal O'Connor May 3, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Cardinal O'Connor. For more than 50 years, he reached out with uncommon fortitude to minister the needs of American Catholics. From his first Philadelphia parish to soldiers on the battlefield, from the carnage of Bosnia to the tragedy of AIDS, he also sought out and served those most in need. His lifelong journey

of faith was our Nation's blessing. From his distinguished career as a Navy chaplain, to his determination to give voice to the poor and marginalized in New York and across America, the courage and firm faith he showed in his final illness inspired us all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and all who loved him.

Remarks at Central High School in Davenport, Iowa May 3, 2000

Hello. I think we should give Barb Hess another hand. She did a good job on her speech. [Applause] And your principal, Mr. Caudle, give him another hand. [Applause] And your great Governor, Governor Tom Vilsack, I'm glad to be here with him. Thank you. I also want to thank the Jazz Band and the Marching Band for playing. You did a great job today. Thank you very much.

I am glad to be here. I want to say I appreciated meeting at least two of your student leaders, Kelly Witt and Ricky Harris—thank them for—[applause]. And I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson, Attorney General Tom Miller, Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge, and the director of education, Ted Stilwell, for joining us today. And Mayor Yerington, thank you for welcoming us back to Davenport. And the other Quad City mayors are here: Mayor Leach of Moline; Mayor Ward of East Moline; and Mayor Mark Schwiebert of Rock Island. I think I pronounced that properly, and if I didn't, he can reprimand me later. [Laughter]

I'd like to thank your superintendent, Jim Blanche, for making us welcome here. And since we're here for construction purposes, to talk about better school buildings, I'm glad to be joined by the president of the Building and Construction Trades Union, Mr. Ed Sullivan. So thank you all for making me feel welcome.

I love this community. I came here in late 1992 on a bus with Hillary and with Al and Tipper Gore right before our election. Then I came back in 1993 after the terrible flood, and

I watched you come back from that. And today I want to talk about another kind of building.

I'm in the process of going around the country for 2 days; we just left Owensboro, Kentucky. And I want to do two things. I want, first of all, to make this trip an opportunity to show America how good the young people of our country are, and how much they are learning in our schools, and how bright their future is. But the second thing I want to do is to point out what challenges are still out there if every young person in America is going to have a world-class education.

And one of the things that we know is that you are not the only group of young people in school facilities that are either overcrowded or too old or both. And if we want learning to occur, we have got to give all of our students the facilities they need.

Now, this is a beautiful old school. It's even older than the high school I went to, which was built in 1917. I've been to the top floor. I've seen the physics lab. I went into a biology class. I went underneath the bleachers here, in the locker room. I saw where you have your meals in the cafeteria, which was built in the '85 extension. And I have been given a briefing by your principal on how you're going to handle the modernization.

But what you need to know is there are people all over this country who are in situations even more severe. In the city of Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. In the city of New York, there are still buildings

heated in the winter with coal-fired furnaces, where people literally shovel coal into them like they did 100 years ago.

We have school buildings so old they can't be hooked up—they cannot be wired to the Internet. The Vice President and I have worked for 6 years to connect every classroom in America to the Internet. When we started, 16 percent of the schools were connected and 3 percent of the classrooms. Today, 95 percent of the schools and almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected. But believe it or not, there are some which literally can't take a connection. And I saw some of your classrooms here today that have severe limits on what can be done in terms of electricity provision.

So what's all this got to do with what we're doing now? Well, when I became President, we could never have thought of doing anything for school construction or school modernization or repairs because we had a big deficit. Today, we're in the midst of our third budget surplus. By the end of this year, we will have paid off \$355 billion of our national debt. And I'm proud of that.

We are in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history. And the big question before the voters this year, and all the adult citizens of America that you young people can have an impact on—and some of you are old enough to vote now—is what are we going to do with our prosperity? So we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest female unemployment in 40 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, so what are we going to do with it?

A lot of times, in free societies, when times are good, people do nothing. They just sort of hang around and enjoy it. That would be a terrible mistake, because we still have challenges. And one of the challenges we have—and every one of you know it's true—education is more important than ever before. It's more important to you, and it's more important to your country.

We live in an information economy where what you know and what you can learn will determine in large measure the shape of your adult lives and the kind of lives you'll be able to give your own children. So one of the things that we have to do with our prosperity is to ask ourselves—let's take an inventory—where are we not giving our young people a world-

class education? Why are we not doing it? And what are we to do about it?

Because if we can't do this now, if we can't make uniform excellence in education a reality in America now, at this time of historic prosperity, we will never get around to it. So we have to do it now.

One of the things that we ought to do is to make sure that we can put all our kids in facilities that are modern enough that they can be hooked up to the Internet, that people can learn, that we can do what we need to do here, not just the science classes, not just the labs but all the classes.

Let me just give you an example. I just talked to Senator Harkin about this before I came in, because he got some money for Iowa to do this; the first Federal money ever to help in school construction he got on the basis of a pilot project for Iowa. And now you heard the Governor say the State's putting money in. But 4 years ago, when we started to talk about this, the Government said it would take \$112 billion to modernize schools for all of our kids. Today, they say it will take \$322 billion.

The engineers of our country, the people charged with building things, a couple of years ago evaluated all of what we call America's infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our railroads, our ports, our airports, our water systems. You know what? They said the worst system in the world that we had, the worst one in our country, was our school buildings, that they are too old and not ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I have been to schools, elementary schools, in Florida—I went to a little town in Jupiter, Florida, and went to one elementary school. There were 12 housetrailer out behind the school, because the kids were so numerous, the school district had grown so much, that they couldn't go in there. Even in this school, where you've got a lot of rooms, you have a lot more students here than the school was built for. And it's one of the things the teachers talked to me about today.

So, why am I here? Because I hope that America will see this problem and this opportunity through you and your school, thanks to our friends in the media, and because I have given the Congress now for one more year my proposal, which basically would say: One of the things we ought to do with our prosperity is to help build or massively overhaul 6,000

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schools, and we ought to give the States enough money to repair another 5,000 schools every single year for the next 5 years. The students of this country and their families deserve it.

Back in 1907 this high school was called, I quote, “a high school for the future.” Back then the population of Davenport was 39,000, about a third of what it is today, and Central High had half the number of students it does now. It was a high school for the future. You have some new renovations planned over the next 2 years, which I hope will make it a high school for the future again. But I want every single school in America to be a school of the future. You need it. You deserve it. And if the Congress will pass my proposal, we will help you get it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:27 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to teacher Barbara Hess, who introduced the President, principal Henry L. Caudle, student body president Kelly L. Witt, and senior class president Frederick L. (Ricky) Harris III, Central High School; Gov. Tom Vilsack and Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson of Iowa; Mayor Philip Yerington of Davenport, IA; Mayor Stanley F. Leach of Moline, IL; Mayor Bill Ward of East Moline, IL; Mayor Mark W. Schwiebert of Rock Island, IL; and Jim Blanche, superintendent, Davenport School District.

Remarks at the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 4, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, after Tom and Milo talked, I don't know that I need to say much of anything. I thank you for what you said and for the example you have set. And I want to say a little more about Milo and this school in a moment. I'd like to thank my friend Bruce Vento for not only doing a superb job in representing the people of his community and, indeed, the people of Minnesota in the United States House of Representatives but also being a wonderful friend and adviser to me these last 7 years and a few months. You should be very proud of Bruce Vento. He's a very, very good man. Thank you.

When Lieutenant Governor Schunk told me that she was going to visit every school district in Minnesota, I was wishing I were the Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota. That sounds like a good job to me. I thank you. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here today. It's good to see you again, and it's good to be back in your community.

There are a number of other people I would like to acknowledge, and doubtless I will miss some, but I'd like to thank Education Commissioner Jax for being here, and Superintendent Harvey, Majority Leader of the Senate Roger Moe. The mayor of Minneapolis I think is here, Sharon Sayles Belton; former Attorney General

Skip Humphrey. I'd like to thank State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge, a longtime friend of mine, and former State Representative Becky Kelso, who were the original cosponsors of the charter school legislation; the Charter Friends National Network director, Jon Schroeder, who drafted the original Federal charter law, which we adopted; the Center for School Change director, Joe Nathan, a longtime personal friend of mine with whom I worked for many years.

And I'd like to acknowledge some people who came on this tour with me, some of whom who have been very active in the charter school movement for a long time: the president of the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, Will Marshall; the president of the New Schools Venture Fund, Kim Smith; the policy director of the National Urban League, Bill Spriggs; and a longtime friend and city council member from New York City, Guillermo Linares. And they're over here to my right. They've come a long way to be with you, to see this first charter school in the United States. So I hope you'll make them—[*applause*].

When I was listening to Milo Cutter and Tom Gonzalez talk first about this school, how it got started, what its mission is, and then hearing Tom talk about his life and how his then-girlfriend and present wife got him into this

school, it reminded me of all the struggles that I have seen the charter school movement go through throughout the United States and re-affirmed my conviction that every effort has been worth it.

There are a lot of people here in this room who have devoted a lot of their lives to trying to help young people in trouble. I was delighted to hear Milo mention Hazel O'Leary's support for this school. She was my first Energy Secretary. And I want to thank, in particular, one person who's made an extraordinary commitment to helping young people lead the lives of their dreams and avoid the lives of their nightmares, my good friend Supreme Court Justice Alan Page, who's out here. Thank you, Alan, for everything you have done.

The idea behind charter schools is that not all kids are the same—they have different needs; they have different environments—but there is a certain common level of education that all kids need, no matter how different they are, and that it would be a good thing to allow schools to be developed which had a clear mission, which could reach out to kids who wanted to be a part of that mission, who could achieve educational excellence for children who otherwise might be left behind or, to use Tom's phrase, might fall through the cracks.

It is true that when I ran for President in 1992, Minnesota had the only public charter school in the country, this one. And so when I went around the country talking about charter schools, most people thought I had landed from another planet, because most people hadn't been here. Most people still haven't been here to this school. But I knew it was an idea that had enormous promise. And some of the people involved in this enterprise had been working with me for years on educational matters when I was the Governor of Arkansas.

I also knew that if Minnesota was doing it, there was a pretty good chance it was a good idea, since the State already had some of the best performing schools in the United States. And I think the State and this community deserve a lot of credit for the general direction of education reform and rising test scores. Minnesota really is about to become Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average. *[Laughter]* And that's good for you. Good for you.

I'm here today because I want all of America to know about you, and through you, to under-

stand what might be done in other communities with the charter school movement, to give all of our children the education they need and the education our country needs for them to have in a 21st century information economy.

This is a good time for us to be doing this. Our economy is in the best shape it's ever been. We have been working for 20 years on school reform; no one can claim anymore they don't know what works. We now have enough evidence that the charter school movement works if it's done right, as it has been done here. And we have the largest and most diverse student body in our history, which means there are more different kinds of people that may learn in different ways and have different personal needs, but they all need—I will say again—a certain high level of educational attainment.

The strategy that clearly works is accountability for high standards, with a lot of personal attention and clear support for the education mission of every school. We've tried to support that now for 7 years. The Vice President and I have supported everything from increasing Head Start to smaller classes in the early grades, to funds to help all of our States and school districts set high standards and systems for implementing accountability for those standards, to opening up the doors of college to more Americans.

Here in St. Paul, our movement to put 100,000 teachers on the streets—in our schools, I mean—has led, I think, to 23 more teachers being hired. And here in this city the average class size in the early grades is 18. If that were true in every place in America, the children would be learning, and all of our third graders would be able to read. More of them would stay in school; fewer of them would drop out; more of them would do well. So I want to congratulate you on making good use of that, as well.

We've also tried to make sure all of our schools were wired to the Internet. We're going to do a little work on the Internet later this morning. When the Vice President and I started and we got the so-called E-rate passed in Congress, which allows lower income schools to get subsidies to be wired and to use the Internet, to access it, there were only 16 percent of the schools and 3 percent of the classrooms connected. Today, 95 percent of the schools and

almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected. And I think by the end of this year, certainly some time next year, we will have every classroom in America, certainly every school, connected, except those that are literally too old and decrepit to be wired. And unfortunately, there are some, and I've been out on another crusade to try to build new school facilities and have the Federal Government help in that regard, too.

But we've come a long way. And yet, we know that there are still schools which aren't performing as they should. Even though test scores are up, even though college-going is up, we know that there are schools which aren't performing. And I wanted to come here today because of what you've done, because you've proved that charter schools were a good idea.

As I said, when I started running for President, there was a grand total of one charter school—you. You were it. Now there are over 1,700 in America. And we have invested almost half a billion dollars since 1994 to help communities start charter schools. That's why there are over 1,700, and I'm proud of that.

And this is actually National Charter School Week, which is nice for me to be here by accident in this week. And I can say that—you know, my goal was to at least fund 3,000 or more by the time I left office. And I believe we are going to meet that goal, and one of the reasons is that you have set such a good example.

Now, what I want to talk about today is how the charter schools work a little—I want to say a little about that. And then I want to answer—if you'll forgive me for doing it, since you don't have this problem—I want to answer some of the critics of the charter school movements who say that not all the schools have worked.

Schools like City Academy, as I said, have the flexibility to reach out to students who may have had trouble in ordinary school experiences. At the same time, very often we see charter schools provide an even greater atmosphere of competition that induces kids to work harder and harder to learn. Studies show that charter schools are at least as racially and economically diverse as the public schools, generally. And here in Minnesota, they're more diverse than average schools.

Surveys show the vast majority of parents with children in our 1,700 charter schools think their children are doing better academically in those

schools than they were in their previous schools. There are long waiting lists to get in most charter schools all across the United States.

Now, does that mean every charter school is a stunning success? No. But I don't think that anyone can cite any endeavor of life where everybody is doing a great job. The idea behind the charter schools was never that they would all be perfect, but that because they were unlike traditional schools—they had to be created with a charter and a mission that had to be fulfilled—if they were not successful in that mission, they could be shut down or changed or the children could go somewhere else, and so that they would be under a lot more—pressure may be the wrong word, but the environment would be very different—that if they didn't work, the kids wouldn't be stuck there forever, that there would always be other options, and that they themselves could be dramatically transformed.

Now, the one problem we have had is that not every State has had the right kind of accountability for the charter schools. Some States have laws that are so loose that no matter whether the charter schools are doing their jobs or not, they just get to stay open, and they become like another bureaucracy. Unfortunately, I think even worse, some States have laws that are so restrictive it's almost impossible to open a charter school in the first place.

So the second point I want to make to the people, especially to the press folks that are traveling with us who have to report this to the country, is that not only has this first charter school in America, City Academy, done great, but Minnesota's law is right. You basically have struck the right balance. You have encouraged the growth of charter schools, but you do hold charter schools responsible for results. That's what every State in the country ought to do.

And I think, indeed, we should build the level of accountability you find here in the charter school system into all the schools in our system. That's what I'm trying to get Congress to do. Bruce and I have been working for a couple of years on an educational accountability act, which basically would invest more money in what we know works and stop investing money in what we know doesn't work—the kind of direction taken not only by the charter schools but by this State in terms of standards, accountability, not having social promotion but not

blaming kids for the failure of the system, permitting after-school, summer school programs, and real support for people like you.

Unfortunately, this week the Congress is—the majority is trying to pass legislation that neither puts more money or more accountability into the system. But I'm still hopeful that we'll be able to pass a good bill that really works before we go home.

Let me finally say that there are some people who criticize charter schools by saying that even though they are public schools, they amount to draining money away from other public schools. That's just not true. You would be in school somewhere. And if you were, whether your school was doing an effective job or not, the tax money would be going there. The charter school movement, if it works, can help to save public education in this country by proving that excellence can be provided to all children from all backgrounds, no matter what experiences they bring to the school in the first place. That's what this whole thing is about.

My goal is to get more money and more people involved in the charter schools movement, to break down the walls of resistance among all the educators to it, and to get community people all over the country more aware of it. Today we are going to release about \$137 million in grants to support new and existing charter schools in 31 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. I am going to ask the Secretary of Education today to develop guidelines for employers and faith-based groups so that they will know how they can be actively involved in supporting the charter school movement.

While charter schools have to be nonsectarian, there is a role, a positive role, that faith-based groups can play. And employers, we find around America, increasingly are willing to provide space and other resources to help charter schools get started. In nearby Rockford, Minnesota, for instance, there is the Skills for Tomorrow School, sponsored jointly by the Teamsters Union and the Business Partnership. Union, corporate, and small business leaders have helped to develop the school. They also provide students with internships and take part

in judging whether they have met their academic graduation requirements to ensure that they have the skills they need to succeed. I think the guidelines I'm calling for today will get more businesses and more faith-based groups involved in the charter school movement.

We have learned now for 7 years that charter schools will work if you have investment and accountability, and if you make them less bureaucratic and more mission oriented. I'm very proud of the fact that in our administration the Secretary of Education has reduced the regulatory burden on local schools and States in administering Federal aid by about two-thirds, while we have doubled the investment in education for our schools.

And I'm very proud of the fact that long ago, even though I wasn't given the privilege of coming to this school, I heard about Milo; I heard about the City Academy; I heard about the charter schools movement. I talked to Joe Nathan; I talked to Ember about it, and a number of other people. And I ran for President in 1992 pledging that if the people voted for me, we would have more of these schools. And over 1,700 schools later, thanks to your example, my commitment, I think, has been fulfilled and American education has been advanced. I only hope that my presence here today will help to get us to 3,000 and will help to get us to the point in America where every school operates like a charter school.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 graduate, who introduced the President, and Milo Cutter, founder and director, City Academy; Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk of Minnesota; Mayor Norm Coleman of St. Paul; Christine Jax, commissioner, Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning; Patricia Harvey, superintendent, St. Paul School District No. 625; Minnesota Senate Minority Leader Roger D. Moe; former Minnesota Attorney General Hubert (Skip) Humphrey III; and Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page. The National Charter Schools Week proclamation of April 28 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Memorandum on Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools May 4, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Education

Subject: Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools

My Administration has taken landmark steps to help State and localities improve educational opportunities for students by providing much needed resources to reduce class size, improve teacher quality, and expand summer school and after-school programs. Last year, for the first time ever, the Federal Government provided funds to States and localities specifically to intervene and assist low-performing schools. This year, our School Improvement Fund will provide \$134 million to States and localities to help them turn around low-performing schools. In addition, through the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Goals 2000, States have developed standards and accountability systems to identify schools that are low performing. Already, we are seeing results from this focus on standards-based reform and greater investment, including a rise in test scores among our most disadvantaged students. Nonetheless, much work remains to be done. In too many communities, predominately low-income communities, there is still a shortage of high-quality educational opportunities available to students.

One of the most heartening educational developments during my Administration is the extraordinary growth of public charter schools. In 1992, just before I took office, there was only one charter school in the country, City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since then, because of strong leadership at the local, State, and Federal level, the number of charter schools has exploded and it is now estimated that there are more than 1,700 charter schools nationwide. The Federal Government has invested almost \$400 million in charter schools since 1994, and advocates of charter schools credit this investment for the remarkable growth of charter schools. The Budget that I sent to the Congress this year will provide \$175 million for charter schools in FY 2001. By next year, the charter school program will have helped nearly 2,400 charter schools since its inception, supporting my Administration's goal of creating 3,000 public charter schools by 2002.

Charter schools are a vital engine of school reform because they promote accountability for results, competition, and choice within the public school system. Unlike vouchers, which do nothing to increase the number of high-quality educational options for students in a community, charter schools allow local community groups, teachers, or parents to open public schools that meet their needs. And, unlike vouchers, charter schools do not drain taxpayer dollars from the public school system and are accountable to the public for results. Because charter schools are truly community-based schools created by local communities to address their own particular needs, it is essential that all institutions in a community understand how they can play a role with regard to charter schools. Every entity that can play a positive role in school reform needs to be engaged in ensuring that children and parents have high-quality public schools and choices among those public schools.

Among the community institutions that can provide important support for the goals of charter schools are local faith-based and business institutions. Both have resources that can support the efforts of charter schools to create high-quality, innovative learning environments that serve all children and help them to meet high standards.

Faith-based and community-based organizations play an important role in feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and educating our children in communities around this Nation. Already many faith- and community-based organizations partner with government at the Federal, State, and local level to help our Nation's families. Under my Administration, faith-based organizations have also become eligible to receive Federal funds in an array of social programs on the same basis as other community-based organizations, consistent with the constitutional line between church and state. For example, States can use their welfare reform funds to contract with faith-based organizations on the same basis as other nongovernment providers to provide services such as job preparation, mentoring, childcare, and other services to help families moving from welfare to work. The 1998 Human Services reauthorization similarly allows

faith-based organizations to provide services under the Community Services Block Grant to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and help low-income families become self-sufficient.

Vice President Gore and I support such efforts and believe we can do even more to increase the valuable partnership role religiously affiliated and community-based organizations can play in addressing some of the most important issues facing our families and communities. My Administration has proposed to increase the involvement of such organizations in education, housing, community-development, criminal and juvenile-justice programs, in breaking the cycle of teen pregnancy, promoting responsible fatherhood, and helping families move from welfare to work. To help support these worthy causes, my Budget will provide tax breaks to encourage all Americans to give to charity.

Schools and faith communities should be reaching out to each other, in ways consistent with the Constitution, to support their common goals for children and families. There are successful partnerships between public schools and faith communities across the Nation in after-school programs, school safety, discipline, and student literacy. These range from mentoring programs jointly run by schools and interfaith groups to statewide summits on the role of faith-based groups in college preparation. In 1995, we sent every school district in the country the guidebook *Religion in the Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*. Last December, building on those principles, I announced a comprehensive set of guidelines to be mailed to every public school in the Nation and to leading religious organizations encouraging greater cooperation, within constitutional limits, between public schools and community groups, including faith-based organizations. The guidelines emphasized both the protection of private religious expression in schools and the prohibitions against coerced student participation in religious expression. These guidelines were the culmination of my Administration's 4-year effort to forge consensus on the role of religion in the schools.

Likewise, business institutions have proven themselves to be valuable partners in helping schools and school districts better prepare students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be part of the 21st century workforce. Over the last 2 decades, businesses have played a leadership role at the local, State, and national

levels in supporting the need for school reform and advancing the standards-based movement. Although school-business partnership can be little more than a donation, there are many examples across the country of businesses that are working actively with schools to help improve the quality of public education. In these partnerships, businesses are working to help bolster school curricula, train teachers, implement technology effectively, offer mentors and tutors to students, and provide lessons in management and leadership. If this Nation's public schools are to offer the kind of high-quality education that prepares students for the world of work and active citizenship, then businesses must play a key role in this process.

Businesses have much to offer the charter movement. Because charter schools are exempt from many regulations governing traditional public schools, they have more freedom to develop innovative educational programs and to partner with business institutions in creative ways. Currently, there are over 100 employer-linked charter schools in operation across the country. These schools vary from those offering very focused career preparation, to those that incorporate modest exposure to jobs, careers, and employers. What they share in common are innovative environments that offer work-based and career-focused educational experiences for students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

But I believe that businesses can do more to work with charter schools to develop stimulating educational environments that prepare our students for the challenges of the workforce in the 21st century. I especially believe that employer-linked charter schools offer a new range of possibilities for those students who are not finding success in our more traditional public schools.

Accordingly, because there is still a great deal of confusion about how different entities can be involved in the charter movement, I direct you to work together with the Department of Justice to develop guidelines to be released prior to the 2000–2001 school year to help faith-based and other community-based and business institutions understand the role they can play in the charter school movement. Public charter schools must be nonsectarian and nondiscriminatory in their admissions and practices. In addition, as with other public schools, a charter school

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should not offer opportunities for the commercial exploitation of its students and/or its mission. However, there are numerous ways that faith-based groups and employers can play a positive role in creating and supporting public charter schools, just as other community organizations do. These guidelines would augment the existing guidelines for public charter schools and the guidelines for religious expression in public schools that I released in December.

Increasing the quality of education in this country for disadvantaged students is a national priority but requires the active involvement of

every affected community. In economically distressed communities, faith-based organizations and business partners can play critically important roles in providing needed support services and job-focused experiences for students who too often lack either. Ensuring that faith-based and business institutions can play a vigorous role in expanding educational opportunities while respecting the separation of church and state and the limitations on commercial involvement in schools is an important step to providing high-quality educational experiences for all children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Webisode Chat With Tracy Smith of Channel One in St. Paul

May 4, 2000

Ms. Smith. So now we're going to go live, to the live webcast. So everyone out there watching us on your computer, thank you so much for joining us. Welcome to everybody. Thank you, City Academy. And thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Tracy. Are we ready to start?

Ms. Smith. We are ready to start.

The President. Well, let me begin by thanking Channel One and the Channel One schools and all those who are taking part in this Presidential Webisode Chat.

This has a rich history, really. Fifty years ago and more, President Roosevelt used the radio to bring democracy into the homes of the American people, with his Fireside Chats. Thirty years later, President Kennedy regularly used televised press conferences to do the same thing. And I think it's quite appropriate to use this newest medium of communication to answer more questions from more students. And I think we ought to get right to it.

All of you know that I'm speaking to you from the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was the Nation's first charter school. I believe in these schools, and I've tried to promote them and want to do more, and that's why I'm here.

The most important thing that we can do today is to reach out and answer questions from the students of America, so let's begin. How do you want to do it, Tracy?

Education and Technology

Ms. Smith. Well, our first question is actually from Amy, who is from City Academy—we do have it in the computer here; it's question number zero—which is: What more can education do to improve people's lives and move them out of poverty?

The President. Well, I think the obvious answer is just to look at the difference in the job prospects and the income prospects of people who have education and people who don't. Education in this economy, where we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years—if you have enough education, you have almost a 100 percent guarantee that you'll have a good job and you can move out of poverty.

But it is, by and large, necessary to do more than graduate from high school. Most people, to have good job prospects, need at least 2 years of college. And I have worked very hard in the last 7 years to open the doors of college to everyone. We've increased the Pell grants. We've made student loans less expensive. And we have given a tax credit worth \$1,500 a year to virtually all Americans for the first 2 years of college. So the most important thing for you to know is, you'll get out of poverty if you have an education, but you need more than high school.

Ms. Smith. All right, great. A tech question, of course, since we're talking to a bunch of techies out there. This is question number 200: Mr. President, my math teacher uses technology

to teach us every day. Do you think this is an important part of learning?

The President. Yes. I don't think it's a substitute for knowing the basics, but it facilitates learning.

And one of the things that we know now—and I bet a lot of you here at City Academy have learned this—one of the things we know now is that people learn in different ways. And sometimes, like in grade school, some kids will be identified wrongly as being slow learners or maybe not very smart when in fact they learn in different ways. We know that some kids learn by repetition, doing basic math on a computer, better. Some kids learn by listening better. Some learn by reading better. So I think that's important.

But the main thing that technology is going to do for education is something entirely different. Look at this. We've already got over 2,000 questions; we're talking to people all over the country here. Because of technology, we can bring what's in any textbook, anyplace in the world, not only to a place like the City Academy in St. Paul; we can bring it to poor villages in Africa, in Latin America, in east Asia. Technology can enable us to bring all the knowledge stored anywhere to anybody who lives anywhere, if they have the computer—the poorest people in the world. And so it is going to be, I think, the most important fact about education for the next 20 or 30 years.

Ms. Smith. I guess the followup question to that is question number 721: Mr. President, how can the Federal Government help provide enough money to have enough computers in school for everyone to be able to have access to a good computer?

The President. Well, let me tell you what we have done. In 1996 we passed something in Congress called the Telecommunications Act. And Vice President Gore led our fight to require in that law something called the E-rate, the education rate, to guarantee that all schools and libraries could afford to log on to the Internet. It's worth over \$2 billion a year in subsidies to schools. That's why 95 percent of our schools are hooked up now to the Internet, connected to the Internet, because they can afford it.

I have also worked very hard to try to get the Government to give all the computers we could to schools and to go out and work with the private sector to get more computers in the schools. Frankly, the big issue now is making

sure that the teachers are well-trained to maximize the potential of the computers and the educational software. You know, most teachers will tell you that in every school, there are always a few kids that know more about all this than the teachers do. So what we've had to do is to go back and re-emphasize training the teachers.

And let me just say one other thing. I believe that the next big move will be to try to make personal computers in the home available to more and more people who can't afford them now, lower income people.

When Tom was up here talking earlier, he said he was born in Mexico. I went to a school district in New Jersey where most of the kids are first-generation immigrants. And the school district, with Bell Atlantic, put computers in the homes of more and more of the parents so they could talk to the principals and the teachers during the day. And it had a dramatic impact on the learning of the kids and on reducing the dropout rate. And the kids, of course, could then use the computers at home as well.

So I think that's the next big frontier. Can we make the use of the computer as universal as the use of the telephone is today? I wish I were going to be around, but I think that's a big frontier the next President should try to cross.

School Violence

Ms. Smith. This is question number 2,173. We are getting a lot of questions today. This is from Lawrence, from Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The President. I've been to this school. This is the town that Hillary and I were married in. I lived there when I went home to Arkansas and taught in the university.

Ms. Smith. All right. He's in the seventh grade, and he wants to know what you plan to do about making students feel safer in today's classrooms.

The President. Well, first of all, I think the only way to make you feel safer is to try to make sure you are safer. But you should know that, in spite of these horrible examples of school violence we've seen—we just celebrated the anniversary of Columbine; we had the terrible incident in Arkansas and Mississippi, Oregon, lots of other places—that, overall, school violence has gone down. And I think the main thing you have to do is to keep guns and weapons out of schools, to try to keep people off

the school grounds that don't belong there, and to have a zero-tolerance policy for guns in the schools and for violence.

Then I think it's also important to have positive ways of dealing with conflict. I think there need to be peer mediation groups in schools. I think students need to have access to counselors and, if they need it, to mental health services. I think that we have to teach young people that there are nonviolent ways that they can resolve their legitimate conflicts, and there are nonviolent ways they have to get their own anger and frustration out.

So I think there's partly a law enforcement strategy to keep guns and knives and other weapons out of the hands of kids at school, to keep people off the school grounds who shouldn't be here. And then I think there has to be a positive human development effort to get people to adopt nonviolent strategies for dealing with their anger, their hurt, and their conflicts.

Education Infrastructure

Ms. Smith. Let's do 201. This is from Elena—I hope I'm saying that right: President Clinton, do you think that the physical condition of a school building has an effect on learning in the classroom?

The President. Yes, I do. If it's bad enough—in two or three ways. First of all, I think if a school is in terrible physical condition, when children go through a school every day, if the roof is leaking and the windows are broken and it's stiflingly hot—I mean, young people are not stupid; they're smart. They say, "Okay, all these politicians and teachers say we're the most important people in the world. If we're the most important people in the world and education is the most important thing in the world, why are they letting me go to school in this wreck of a building where I'm miserable?" That's the first thing.

The second problem is, it's actually harder to teach in difficult physical facilities. I was at a school, actually a very beautiful school, yesterday in Davenport, Iowa. It's 93 years old. And there are rooms in that building where there were no electrical outlets in the walls, and there are all kinds of problems there. It's a magnificent building. They shouldn't tear it down, but they need to modernize it.

And so I do, I think it makes a big difference. That's why for over 2 years now I've been trying

to get Congress to adopt a plan to let the Federal Government help build 6,000 new schools and help repair 5,000 more every year for the next 5 years, because it's a terrible problem. The average school building in Philadelphia is 56 years old—65 years old; in New Orleans, over 60 years old. In New York, there are school buildings that are heated still by coal-fired furnaces.

And also, there are all these overcrowded schools. I went to a little grade school in Florida with 12 housetrailer out behind it to house the kids—12, not one or two. So yes, I think it makes a big difference.

School Uniforms

Ms. Smith. Let's go to—here's one I know you have an opinion about—2,987. This is Brandon: What do you think about school uniforms?

The President. I support them in the early grades. I think—and I'll tell you why. I have been a big supporter of school uniforms—well, I support them for high schools, too, if people want them. But let me just say, we have a lot of evidence that particularly in elementary and junior high schools, school uniforms perform two very valuable functions: They promote discipline, and they promote learning. Why? Because in the early years, school uniforms remove the economic distinctions between kids.

I went to a junior high school out in California, in the third-biggest school district in California, where they have a school uniform policy. And I had an inner-city young boy talking and a young girl who was probably upper middle class. And both of them loved the uniform policy because they said it removed the distinctions between kids, and it removed the pressure to try to show where you were in some economic or social hierarchy by what you were wearing.

But I also can tell you, there is lots and lots of evidence that it reduces conflict and violence and promotes an atmosphere of discipline among younger people. So I think—you know, I really think that having that policy is good. I've seen it all over America. I've done everything I could to promote it. I've been ridiculed and attacked and made fun of for promoting it, but I believe in them. I think they do good. I do.

Ms. Smith. We've done lots of stories on that. I don't think every kid in America agrees with you, but—

The President. I know they don't. [Laughter] You ought to see my mail about it. [Laughter]

Community Service

Ms. Smith. Question number 296. This is from Melinda, from Dublin High School. We don't have where Dublin is.

The President. Ohio, I think, isn't it?

Ms. Smith. Is it Ohio?

The President. I think so.

Ms. Smith. Do you believe that students should be required to do community service as a part of their core curriculum?

The President. Yes. That's the short answer. I do. Maryland is the only State now that requires community service as a requirement. To get a high school diploma in Maryland, at some point you have to do some community service.

You know, I've been a big supporter of community service. I founded the AmeriCorps program, and now 150,000 young people have served their communities and earned some money to go to college through various AmeriCorps projects. We started a program called America Reads. There are now people from 1,000 different colleges going into the grade schools of America, helping make sure all of our third graders can read—and a lot of retired groups, too.

I believe community service is one of the most important things that happens in America to bind us together across the lines that divide us. And in 1987, 13 years ago, I was on a commission on middle schools which recommended that community service be made a part of the curriculum. So I've been a believer of this for a long time.

I would leave it to the schools or the school districts to decide what the young people should do. But I think it does us all good to get out and deal with people who are drastically different from ourselves and who—no matter how bad we think our lives are, there is always somebody with a bigger problem and a bigger need and a bigger challenge. And I just think it's good for people to serve other people in the community. So I would make it a part of the curriculum. I would.

Assistance for Higher Education

Ms. Smith. Okay, this is 3,348, from Mission Junior High, in Texas: What is being done to ensure that economically disadvantaged students

are provided the opportunities for higher education?

The President. Good question. Let me give you all the answers. This has been a big priority of mine. Here's what we've done. Since I've been President, we have increased the number and the amount of the Pell grants, which is the scholarship the Federal Government gives to the poorest students. We have also changed the student loan program, so that it's now cheaper to take out a loan if you get one of the so-called direct loans, issued directly from the Federal Government. The interest rate is lower. And then when you get out of school, if you take a job that has a modest salary, you can limit your repayments to a certain percentage of your income. It's saved, in 5 years, \$8 billion in student loan costs for America's students.

We've raised the number of work-study positions from 700,000 to a million. And we passed the HOPE scholarship. That's the biggest deal. It's a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, and then also for the junior and senior year and for graduate schools you get a tax break. And I'm now trying to get Congress to adopt a law which allows people to deduct up to \$10,000 in college tuition from any tax burdens they have. So I think that will help.

If that passes, I think we can honestly say that income is not a barrier to going to college. Between the scholarships, the loans, the work-study programs, and the HOPE scholarship tax credit, which 5 million families have already used, that's why college-going—67 percent of the high school graduates in America are now going on to college. And I want to get it up as close to 100 as we can get it. So if you have any other ideas in Mission, Texas, let me know. But we've done a lot on this, and I think it's very important.

Incentives for Teachers

Ms. Smith. Question 4,641, this is Mike from Buffalo: What do you think the Federal Government can do to attract quality teachers to inner-city public schools?

The President. Well, we've got a little program we started a couple of years ago—this is a really good question—based on the old health service corps idea where we would pay off people's loans to medical schools if they'd go practice medicine in isolated rural areas or inner city areas. So we have a small program now to say

to young people, “If you’ll go back and teach in an inner-city school where there is a teacher shortage, we’ll pay off your college loans.” And I think that will help. I would like to see that program dramatically expanded.

I think the other thing is, though, we’re going to have to pay these young people more if we want them to do that. In the next few years we could have a real problem with teacher shortage, because we’ve got the largest student body in American history. You finally—all of you are bigger than the baby boom generation I was a part of, for the last 2 years. We have about 2 million teachers slated to retire over the coming 5 to 8 years. And we have a greater need for teachers than ever before because our student bodies are more diverse, in terms of language and background and culture.

So I think the States and the Federal Government are going to have to look at this. I’m trying to put 100,000 more teachers out there now in the early grades. I know the Vice President has said that he believes we ought to have—the Federal Government should help the States and school districts hire 600,000 more over the next 4 years after that. But this is going to be a big issue.

My own view is, the best way to get young people to go into the inner cities, though, is to defray the cost of their own education—say, “If you teach for 2, 3, 4 years, you get this much knocked off”—because I have found that there is a great desire, again, for community service. And there is a lot of interest in doing this if we can make it reasonably attractive.

Home Schooling

Ms. Smith. Question 2,627, this is Brenna, from Lamar: President Clinton, what are your views on parents home schooling their children?

The President. I believe two or three things about home schooling. I’ve had a lot of experience with this, because I was a Governor at a time when this was being debated around America.

I think that States should explicitly acknowledge the option of home schooling, because it’s going to be done anyway. It is done in every State in the country. And therefore, the best thing to do is to get the home schoolers organized, if they’re not organized in your State, deal with them in a respectful way, and say, “Look, there is a good way to do this and a not so good way to do this, but if you’re going

to do this, your children have to prove that they’re learning on a regular basis. And if they don’t prove that they’re learning, then they have to go into a school, either into a parochial or a private school or a public school. But if you’re going to home school your kids, the children have to learn. That’s the public interest there.”

And that’s what we did in Arkansas. The Home School Association strongly supported it, accountability for what their children were learning. There will always be, in any given State, a certain percentage of people, normally a small percentage, for reasons of personal values or educational philosophy, will want to do that. And most of the time they’re very dedicated parents, deeply committed to what they’re doing. And I can tell you this: It’s going to happen regardless, so it’s better to have laws which have standards on it.

From my personal point of view, I never—it wasn’t an option in our family, but if it had been I wouldn’t have done it, because I wanted my daughter to go to school where she would be exposed to all different kinds of people and see how the larger society worked and be a part of it. But I think that we should explicitly make that option available; we should respect the people who choose it; but we ought to say, “If you do it, your children have to demonstrate that they know what they’re supposed to know when they’re supposed to know it.”

Ms. Smith. Just an update, we’ve received more than 10,000 questions so far. Pretty good.

The President. I need to give shorter answers. [Laughter]

Goals of Education

Ms. Smith. Question 4,154, this is Howard from Providence: Do you consider the goal of public education to be to make someone ready for employment, practical, or to make someone a well-rounded, enlightened individual?

The President. Both. That is, I think—when I say ready for employment, if you’re talking about getting through high school, I’ve already said I don’t think that will make most people ready for employment.

We live in a world in which what you know is important, but what you’re capable of learning is even more important, because the stock of knowledge is doubling once every 5 years, more or less. So I think that being able to be a useful member of society is important. But I also think being able to be a good citizen and having a

liberal arts background is important. So I think we should pursue both.

I've never thought of education as purely a utilitarian thing, just something that is a meal ticket. It also makes life more interesting. All these young people here—you know, if you develop the ability to read and to think and to feel comfortable with ideas and emotions and concepts, it makes life more interesting. It makes your own life more fulfilling. So I think education should both prepare you for the world of work and help you live a more fulfilling life and be a better citizen.

Standards Testing

Ms. Smith. Okay, this is question 5,492. This is Eliza from New York: How can the testing system be changed so that teachers are not pressured to the point that they are cheating for the kids? Don't you see it as a flaw in the system more than in the teachers? I guess they're talking about high-stakes standards testing.

The President. Yes, well, here's the problem. First of all, I think that it is almost unavoidable, if you believe, as I do, that there has to be some measure at some point along the way in school of whether young people have actually learned what their diplomas say they have learned. And what I think is important—the way—I can tell you how it can be changed so that the teachers aren't pressured to cheat: You can have one or more second chances.

Ms. Smith. So if you failed the test—

The President. Yes, yes. Let me give you an example. In Chicago, for example, which most people believed a few years ago had the most troubled big-city school system in the country, they adopted a no-social-promotion strategy. And if you didn't pass the exams and make appropriate grades, you couldn't go on. But they gave 100 percent of the people a chance to go to summer school and do well. As a result of that, today, the Chicago summer school is—listen to this—it's the sixth-largest school district in America, just the kids going to summer school. But as a result of that, there aren't very many people who are held back, and that dramatically reduces the tension to cheat.

I think an even better system is to make sure that all the kids who are having trouble, and particularly all the schools that are low performing, have really rich and substantive after-school programs, weekend programs, as well as

summer school programs, so that the tests measure whether the children are learning.

Look, we know nearly—literally right at 100 percent of the people can learn what they need to know to go from grade to grade. You know, this whole business that all children can learn is not just a slogan. So I think it's very important not to blame the children when the system fails them.

So the answer is, to reduce the tension to cheat, is to have a lot of second chances but to make sure that when a young person is told, "You get to go on because you learned something," that the stuff has really been learned.

Education Then and Now

Ms. Smith. We want to squeeze in just one more question, question 249, from Leah in Cybervillage: Mr. President, how would you compare your education in grade school to public education today?

The President. Well, I think first of all, in many ways, it's better today, although one of the things I will say is I was very blessed; I had great teachers. I had—my sixth grade teachers, Kathleen Scher, was typical of the teachers of the early—the first 50, 60 years in this country. She was a lady who—she never married; she lived with her cousin. They were both teachers, and they lived to be 90 years old. And I corresponded with her until she died. She came to see me once a year. We were friends, and she was a great, devoted teacher.

The discrimination against women in the workplace in the first part of this century worked to drive the smartest and most gifted and most dedicated of public servants among women into the classroom. They were teachers and nurses—women—because that's what they could do. And the end of discrimination among women, which has been a great thing for women, has given women lots of other options.

But I had good teachers. So that's the good thing I will say about that. I was very fortunate and blessed. But I went to segregated schools, which I resented at the time. I knew it was wrong, before the civil rights movement. And it's better today that we have a diverse student body, and we're all learning to live together and work together in school.

There were no computers, although we read a lot. And at the time, it was assumed that most people would not go to college, instead

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of that most people would. So in that sense, I think things are better today.

Now, violence was having a fist-fight on the playground. Nobody had a gun. So there was less fear. The only thing you ever had to fear was whether somebody that hated you was going to beat you up. You never had the fear that somebody would pull a knife or a gun. So I'd say those were the differences.

But if you look, on balance, we're better off today than we were when I was in grade school. We just have to deal with today's challenges. There will never be a time that's perfect and without challenges. But we're better off being integrated than segregated. We're better off with the new technology. We're better off with the assumption that we ought to try to prepare every kid and give every child the chance to go to college. That's my view.

Ms. Smith. As you see from the number of questions, we could do this all day, but we're out of time.

The President. These are great questions—I mean, great.

Ms. Smith. Aren't they great? There are so many, one after the other.

The President. I wish that they all had yes/no answers; I'd just run down. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Smith. You know what, they can all E-mail you, right? [*Laughter*] Just kidding.

Well, I want to thank you so much for being here, Mr. President. This was a treat. I want to also thank the distinguished guests that were here, thank City Academy, thank Yahoo! for providing this chat auditorium, and of course, all of the students across the country who logged in and participated in this. Sorry we couldn't get to all of you. Great questions.

The President. Thank you. Great job. Thank you.

NOTE: The question-and-answer session was taped at 10:13 a.m. in gymnasium at the City Academy and was broadcast on-line via the Internet. In his remarks, the President referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 City Academy graduate.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Reforming America's Schools in Columbus, Ohio

May 4, 2000

[*Barbara Blake, principal, Eastgate Elementary School, welcomed participants and outlined improvements in student performance at her school. She then introduced the President, noting that she had requested information on educational reform from him while he was Governor of Arkansas.*]

The President. Thank you very much, Ms. Blake. I guess I should begin by saying I'm certainly glad I answered that letter—[*laughter*—so many years ago. I want to thank you for welcoming me here. And thank you, Mayor Coleman, for your leadership and for welcoming me also. Thank you, Superintendent Rosa Smith; Representative Beatty; City Council President Habash; House Minority Leader Ford. I'd like to thank the leaders of the Columbus and Ohio Education Association, John Grossman and Gary Allen, who are here. And I'd like to thank all of our panelists who are here.

I have been on a tour these last 2 days to highlight the good things that are happening in education in America, to highlight the reforms that make these good things possible, and most important, to highlight the great challenge before the United States today to turn around all low-performing schools and give all of our children a world-class education.

Yesterday morning I was in western Kentucky in the little town of Owensboro, which has had extraordinary success in turning around its lowest performing schools. In 1996, the State identified 175 of them. Just 2 years later, 159—over 90 percent—had improved beyond the goals the State set for them. In the little school I visited, where two-thirds of the children were eligible for free and reduced lunches, in 4 years they had recorded the same sort of improvements that you mentioned here, on a trend line, which proves that income and station in life are not destiny, that all of our children can

learn, that intelligence is equally distributed. And that means the grownups among us have a big responsibility to give every single one of these kids, like those beautiful, bright-eyed kids that I saw in this school—and I just shook hands with every one of them—have a chance to live up to their dreams.

Then after I left Kentucky yesterday, I went to Davenport, Iowa, and I visited a 93-year-old high school finally beginning to get the renovations it needs so that students have the learning environment they need. Some of those school rooms didn't even have electrical outlets in the wall. And believe it or not, it was even hotter in the gym there than it is here today. [Laughter] So I'm just as cool as a cucumber now.

This morning I was in the Nation's first charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is providing an excellent education to students who were not succeeding in other public schools. That was the first charter school in the country, established in 1992. They were basically schools within the public school system set up by teachers and parents and citizens with a specific, definite mission, and schools that can be shut down if they fail in that mission.

There was one in the whole country, that one I visited today, in '72. We've invested \$500 million since then, and there are now 1,700, providing excellence in education to special needs of the people and their communities. And while I was there, I actually had a Website Chat on the Internet with students all across America about the challenges in education. And in a matter of about 20 minutes, they sent me over 10,000 questions. [Laughter] So don't let anybody say the young people of America are not curious. They could ask faster than I could answer.

I really can think of no better place to wrap up my tour than here in Columbus, which has had a long history of educational intervention and innovation and excellence. In 1909, Columbus opened the Nation's very first junior high school. And now, again, you're on the cutting edge of reform and improvement.

I'm here today primarily not to talk but to listen to the panelists here about what you're doing right. But I want to say, for the benefit of the country and through the press who are here, that this community has implemented high academic standards and assessments to see if the students and the schools are meeting those

standards. They've given students help to meet those standards, from after-school programs to smaller classes. Their strategy, which is our strategy in the Clinton-Gore administration, of investing more and demanding more, is working.

Now, you heard our principal talk about the advances. Just in the last 3 years, the test scores have skyrocketed. And the test scores themselves have gone up more than 200 percent but—I don't know if you listened to that—the percentage of students doing an acceptable job—listen to this—in one year—she talked about 2 years ago and last year, not this year—in one year went up almost 500 percent in reading, over 300 percent in math, and 300 percent in science—in one year. All children can learn.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the teachers who I also met outside and to those of you who work to improve the quality of the teacher corps. Listen to this: More than a third of these teachers have a master's degree and over 10 years' experience teaching. I understand your peer assistance and review program is helping both new and veteran teachers to do better by learning from each other, something I very much believe in.

And this is very important: You have cut the attrition rate of first-year teachers by 40 percent. This is terrifically important because we have so many teachers who will be retiring in America in the next few years, and we have the largest number of students in our schools in history. So reducing the attrition rate is a big deal and something you should be very proud of.

While there is still more work to be done here and, indeed, in every school in the country, you have proved that with the right ideas and the right tools, you can do what needs to be done.

Since 1993, our administration has worked hard to make education our number one priority, not just in a speech but in reality. And I must say, I don't know that I have ever been more touched by anything I have ever seen in any school in my life as I was when I looked up—hanging from the ceiling on the corridor when I came down here—and you had put up a history of what our administration had done since January of '93 in education. I was completely blown away. I dare say that outside of Hillary, the Vice President, and Secretary Riley, you now know more about what we have done than anybody else in America. [Laughter]

But let me just briefly review a couple of the things that I think are important. When I came in office, we had a \$295 billion deficit. Interest rates were high. Unemployment was high. We had to get rid of the deficit. We had to keep doing things. We got rid of hundreds of programs. And as we turned a deficit into 3 years of surpluses, now this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt, well on our way to getting America out of debt entirely, for the first time since 1835. We have doubled our investment in education and training. And I think that's very important.

But we also said to people that got Federal aid to education, "If you want this Federal aid, you have to have high standards for what your children should know." We've given the States the resources they need to help schools implement those standards. We've required States to identify their low-performing schools and come up with strategies to turn them around.

We've helped to reduce class size in the early grades with our program, now in its third year, to provide 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the first 3 grades. I'm happy to say that 55 of those teachers are now in Columbus, 2 here at Eastgate. And this community has taken the average class size in grades one through 3 from nearly 25 down to 15. That is, doubtless, one reason you're seeing these big improvements in students' performance, and again I applaud you for that.

When I became President, there was no Federal support for summer school programs. All these studies would show the kids that were having trouble learning forgot a lot of what they did learn over the summer. And then the teachers would have to spend 4, 6, sometimes as many as 8 weeks reviewing what was done the year before, before they could even start on what they were being held responsible to teach in the new year.

We went from a \$1 million program in 1997 to \$20 million in '98, to \$200 million in '99, to \$450 million this year. And my budget asks for a billion dollars. If the Congress will give it to me, we will be able to guarantee summer school opportunities to every student in every low-performing school in the entire United States of America. It is terribly important that we pass this.

What you have done here—I know that 30 fourth graders in this school participate in such programs. I said summer school; I meant after-

school, although the funds can also be used for summer school. I just came from Minneapolis, where a third of all their students are now in summer school programs, in the entire school district. Why? Because they have so many people who are coming from other countries whose first language is not English. They would never even have a chance to not only master the language but learn what they need to learn if summer school weren't made available to them. So the after-school and the summer school programs are important.

We're trying to build or radically overhaul 6,000 schools and to modernize another 5,000 over the next 5 years—5,000 a year. We now—when I became President, we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected to the Internet. Today, we have nearly 75 percent of the classrooms and 95 percent of the schools with at least one Internet connection with the E-rate, which the Vice President pioneered, that gives a \$2 billion subsidy so that poorer schools and poorer communities can afford to have their schools log on to the Internet.

So we're working on it. I have sent Congress an education accountability act that basically seeks to ratify what you're doing. It says: Set high standards; enforce them. End the practice of social promotion, but don't punish the kids for the failures of the system. Give after-school programs; give summer school programs. The kids can learn. We see it here. Have a system that works. And I hope that this will pass this year.

And let me just make two final points. As your principal said, I've been working at this a long time. I've been in a lot of schools, and I never get tired of going into them. I've shaken hands with a lot of kids, and I'll never get tired of shaking hands with them. They make us all perpetually young.

But I can tell you this: There is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1979, when Secretary Riley and I started in education reform. And there is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued and when Hillary and I passed our first sweeping reforms at home in Arkansas.

We know what works. You're seeing what works in this school. What does that mean? It means again that the adults among us no longer

have an excuse not to give these opportunities to every child in America, because now we know what works.

The second thing I'd like to say is, with the strongest economy in our history, the great test the American people face this year in the elections—and those of us who are elected officials—and as citizens is, what is it that we mean to do with this prosperity? If we're not going to do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We're in the best shape economically we've ever been in. We can afford to do it, no matter what anybody says. And I think we ought to get about the business of doing it.

So that's why I came here, why I wanted to hear from all of you. And what the purpose of this panel is, is to sort of fill in the blanks of my remarks here so that we will have a clear sense of how far you've come, how you did it, and what we need to do from here on out.

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to begin by asking your superintendent to speak a little, maybe in a little greater detail than I did in my remarks or even than Principal Blake did in hers, and talk about how did you decide to do what you're doing, and what exactly are you doing to turn around low-performing schools? That's the big issue in the whole country.

And let me just make one other comment. I've been in hundreds of schools in so many States. Nearly every problem you could ever dream of in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. The real problem with American education is we never get our solutions to scale; that is, we don't take what we're doing really right for some people and keep on at it until it's being done for everybody, for all the kids.

And there seems to me to be a real systematic effort here. So that's what I would like for you to talk about, Dr. Smith, in whatever way you want.

[*Rosa A. Smith, superintendent, Columbus Public Schools, described the district's strategy to improve its schools.*]

The President. Yes, give her a hand. [*Applause*] That's great. Let me just emphasize one thing she said because, unless you've heard people say these things a lot, it would be easy to miss. She said that there were three clearly defined goals, and then the second point she

made I think is very important. She said, "We are using a research-based approach." That means—that's a nice way of saying what I said in more crude language, that you don't have to sort of fire a shotgun at this problem anymore. It's not like we don't know what works. There is lots and lots of research available today as a result of the serious efforts of the last 20 years.

And one of the reasons that we have not had the kind of systematic results that we're seeing here around the country is that people don't take the research and really act on it. And it's interesting, because there is hardly any other endeavor of your life that you would ignore that in. If you were starting a business and 15 people had succeeded doing a certain thing and 3 people had failed doing the reverse, you wouldn't say, "Well, I think I'll see if I can't make money doing what the three did. I think I can do it a little better."

So I think that Columbus deserves a lot of credit. I'd like to follow up by asking your principal, Barbara Blake—you've been a principal for a good while. As you pointed out, you wrote me when I was Governor and asked me about some of the things we were doing. Why do you think what you're doing now is working so much better?

[*Ms. Blake attributed the improvement to smaller class size and mentor support for teachers.*]

The President. Just to give you some idea of what she said, I went through those numbers a minute ago, but I can't think of how you could possibly explain a 500 percent increase in the percentage of kids reading at the appropriate level in a year other than more individual attention by someone who is a good teacher and knows how to do it.

And let me say, in this little class I visited in Kentucky yesterday, this elementary school class, all the kids and I took turns reading a chapter from the wonderful book "Charlotte's Web." And I made every child read a couple paragraphs. And some of those paragraphs are pretty tough for kids in the third grade, you know, and they all got through it. In 4 years, they had almost a tenfold increase. And you'll do even better than that, at the rate you started. So I think this is very important. I think the smaller classes really do amount to something.

I'd like to ask Heather Knapp to speak next. She is a teacher at East Linden Elementary,

and she was hired with the help of our class size reduction funds as a first grade teacher. And she teaches a class of 18 first graders, along with a 25-year veteran of the Columbus Public Schools, Karen Johnson. And you, too, have, I understand, a large immigrant population in your school. So I'd like for you to talk a little about what the impact of children whose first language is not English is and the educational process and what you're doing.

[Heather Knapp said that reduced class size enabled teachers to work with students in small groups and on a one-to-one basis and to spend time helping them to assimilate.]

The President. My notes—and they're not always right, but they usually are—my notes say that if you didn't have these class size reduction funds to hire more teachers, that you and your team teacher, Ms. Johnson, would be each teaching, separately, first grade classes with more than 30 students in them. And if that's true, there would be no way in the world you could deal with all these children whose first language is not English.

Ms. Knapp. No.

The President. Yes, that's pretty straightforward. [Laughter]

Ms. Knapp. As a first-year teacher, I believe, no. [Laughter]

The President. I think many Americans have no idea just how diverse these student bodies are now. Like I said, I just came from Minneapolis/St. Paul. We think about that as sort of the capital of Norwegian America. And it still is. But there are children in the Minneapolis/St. Paul school district, combined, with native languages in excess of 100, counting all the people who come from the different African and Southeast Asian peoples who are there. And the same thing is happening all over America.

Now, a lot of these kids, once they're here for about 18 months, if they get good basic grounding, start to do very well indeed. And since we're living in a global economy in an increasingly global society, this is a great advantage for the United States. We should be thrilled by this. This is going to put us in a very good position to do very well when all these children get out of school. Ten years, 20 years, 30 years from now, our country will be the best positioned country in the entire global society if, but only if, we take care of these kids now.

Sometimes people back in Washington ask me why I spend so much time on this. You know, when Barbara introduced me, she said, "the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces" and all that. I think this is a national security issue for America. I think it's an important part of our long-term security. So I want you to keep plugging.

I'd like to ask the president of the Columbus Education Association now to talk a little bit about your teacher development strategies. Everybody who becomes a teacher knows that he or she is not going to become wealthy, but it's important to pay them enough so that they can afford to stay. But it's more than pay. People also want to feel that they're doing their job well. Most people like to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work and believe that what they do is important and know they're doing it well. And that feeling is more important for teachers probably than any other single group in our society.

So I'd like to ask Mr. Grossman to talk a little bit about how this peer assistance review program works and how it contributes to teacher quality.

[John Grossman described how the peer assistance review program provided mentors for support, training, and evaluation of first-year teachers, in partnership with the union, administrators, and Ohio State University.]

The President. Let me just follow up on that a little bit. Again, this is one of those issues—it's very hard—for example, we've got all these folks here who are reporting on this today, and it's very hard to have a blaring headline across the Columbus paper tomorrow, with an exclamation point, "Columbus Committed Only To Use Research-Based Strategies!" or "Peer Review and Assistance the Main Thing!" It doesn't have the edge, like "Clinton Robs a Liquor Store!" or something. [Laughter]

As a result of that, we often overlook what matters most. But let me just tell you this. We forget how much our teachers need support and training and the time and resources to do that. I think a lot of times we just assume that, well, if you went through school and you got good grades in math and you went to an education college and you took those courses, well, obviously you can teach math. We forget, unless we've actually seen how hard they work, how much time it takes for these teachers just to

get through the day, to deal with the children, give them as much individual attention as possible, give the tests, grade the tests, deal with all the other stuff they have to deal with.

I can only tell you, most people believe the United States military is a pretty efficient operation, and we fought an air war in Kosovo and didn't lose a single pilot. But let me tell you, we did lose pilots. They didn't die in that war; they were pilots that die every year in the military training of the country. And we spend a lot of your tax money just training people relentlessly, over and over and over again. We don't assume that some people are smart and some people are dumb and some people can do it and some people can't. We assume in the military that the people we accept and the people we train are capable of doing the mission that they are assigned. We don't even assume that you're either a born leader or not, and if you're not born one, you can't lead. We train people to lead, too, in the military, and they lead. And a lot of people who would never be picked as leaders, the whole time they're born until the time they join the military, wind up performing superbly.

If you look at the best run companies, they invest huge amounts of time and money in developing the capacities of their people. And we have never done this for our teachers in the sort of systematic way that we should, setting aside the time we should, investing the money in it we should. And again, it's a very hard thing for—the mayor can run for election, somebody can run for the school board, or somebody can run for President, and it's the last thing you'll ever see them say, because you can't turn it into a headline with an exclamation or a 30-second television ad. But it matters.

That's why I wanted John to talk about it. It is so important. And it means something to the teachers. It's a way of reaffirming their significance and their capacity to grow in satisfying their own intellectual hunger. Any time you think training doesn't matter for education—suppose I would say to you, "I've got a way to give you a bigger tax cut; we'll cease all training operations in the military, and we'll just take smart people and see how they do." [Laughter] So this is very, very important. And I thank you for that.

Mr. Mayor, tell me, what has the mayor got to do with the schools here? [Laughter] What is it you're trying to do?

Mayor Michael B. Coleman of Columbus. I'm asked that question often, Mr. President. [Laughter]

The President. They ask me, too, all the time. [Laughter]

[*Mayor Coleman discussed the city's efforts to create and fund quality after-school programs.*]

The President. Let me just say, I think that—first, I think you're to be commended, and I assure you that I will be fighting as hard as I can to get the appropriation doubled again. But as I said, in 1997, I got a million dollars out of the Congress to plan for a Federal after-school program. And then we went from \$20 million to \$200 million to \$450 million in 3 years. And we estimate that if we can get up to a billion dollars a year in Federal support for after-school, at least we'll be able to give cities like Columbus enough money to target all the schools where either the performance is the most disappointing or you have the highest percentage of low income kids.

But I think you will want to do more than that, and you'll probably have to make a case to the business community and others that it's a good economic investment for the city. But again I'll say, particularly if you have a lot of immigrant children, it's really important. These kids need as much time as they can to master the language so they can begin to learn all the other things they need to learn. And they just cannot do it in the regular day, in the regular school year.

And I'll do what I can to help you. But I think you deserve it. I think you've made the right decision about what's best for you.

Mayor Coleman. Thank you very much.

The President. I would like to call on a parent now, a stakeholder in this enterprise. Linda Hoetger—is that right? I studied German in college. [Laughter] Linda and her husband, Ray, have four sons, all in the Columbus public school system. Both of them volunteer to work in the school system. And their 9-year-old son at East Columbus Elementary School got a Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to start an after-school program. So I'd just like for her to talk to us about her work in the after-school program at her son's school. How does it work; how did it start; what does she do; what is your view of the role of parents in this?

But I would really like to begin just by thanking you and your husband for your support for the schools and for your willingness to give your time. I'd like for you to talk about what you do.

[*Linda Hoetger described her experiences as a volunteer for the after-school programs, offering students tutoring and standardized test preparation services.*]

The President. Is all the after-school work at the school where you work designed toward helping prepare them for the test or giving them homework assistance? Are there any other kind of things—

[*Ms. Hoetger said the program also offered violence prevention classes.*]

The President. I think this is really important. If I might just say, again, I've talked to a lot of young people in a lot of schools about violence, obviously because of all the very high profile tragedies we've had in our schools.

But I think it's worth pointing out that in spite of those high profile tragedies, gun violence in America is down 35 percent since 1993. And violence in the schools has declined. And I think one of the principle reasons is involving more young people in peer programs and training more young people—young people, like the rest of us—people model the behavior they see, either at home or they learn on television or in some other way. People are not born knowing how to resolve their anger, their frustration, their conflicts in a non-violent way. And if they don't have models, if they have either destructive models or no models at all, you run the risk of having a higher incidence of violence. So I wanted you to talk about this because I also think this is very important.

Again, the more diverse the student body becomes, the more likely there are to be moments when people who won't understand each other because their backgrounds will be so different, their experiences will be so different. And when those moments come, it's very, very important that young people at least have been given a chance to know that there's some other way to resolve their differences—also that they don't have to bury them, because that also becomes a big problem. I mean, a lot of these kids that do really bad things are too far gone when the times they do it, but it's only after years and years and years and years of internalizing things

that, had they not been buried, the children might have been saved.

So I think that you deserve a lot of credit for that, too, and I think that should be a part of every school's effort, and I thank you for it.

I want to now talk to Laura Avalos-Arguedas, who is an AmeriCorps volunteer with the City Year program in Columbus. She was born in Costa Rica and moved to the United States when she was 6 years old. She graduated from Grandview Heights High School in 1998 and began a 2-year volunteer program in City Year, where she tutors four first grade students in reading at the Second Avenue Elementary School. So I'd like for her to talk about that.

And I just want to say, I don't know that I have done anything as President that I'm any more proud of than establish the AmeriCorps program. We've now had over 150,000 young people like Laura spend one or 2 years in this program, working in communities—sometimes in their home communities, sometimes half a nation away—and at the process, earning money for college. In the first 4 years of AmeriCorps, we had more people than we had in the first 20 years of the Peace Corps. And it's just been an amazing thing.

So I'd like for you, Laura, to talk about why did you decide to become a volunteer in the City Year program, and how do you feel about the mentoring you're doing and the relationships you're building with the students? And do you think it's improving their learning?

[*Laura Avalos-Arguedas described her experience with the City Year program and commented on how popular the after-school program was with students.*]

The President. Mr. Mayor, I think if she had 140 kids show up with 7 corps members, she just made the strongest case for your after-school initiative. [*Laughter*]

Mayor Coleman. I think she has.

The President. I think you need to make her witness A in your—

Ms. Avalos-Arguedas. We have to cut down.

[*Mayor Coleman pointed out the growing need for more after-school programs.*]

The President. I want to go now to a product of another program I'm very proud of that I did not start. It existed in the Government when I became President, but we have dramatically

expanded it. It's called the Troops to Teachers program, where people who have served in the military, when they retire or when they leave the military, then move into teaching. And in an environment in which a lot of our kids come from difficult home situations, I think that the Troop to Teachers program has made a big impact in a lot of places.

Eastgate Elementary has a teacher who came out of 20 years in the Air Force, Darrell Bryon. He's here with us today. And I'd like for him to talk a little bit about what made him decide to switch careers. He doesn't look old enough to have been in the Air Force 20 years. I don't know if he was honest about his age when he joined. [Laughter] And he teaches a fourth-fifth grade split class. I'd like for him to talk a little bit about how his previous experience helps him in the classroom.

Mr. Bryon.

[Darrell Bryon explained how his military experience helped to prepare him for the demands of teaching.]

The President. When you told that story about your student sort of talking back to you, I thought to myself, his training in the military has qualified him to be a teacher; his experience as a teacher may have qualified him to be President. [Laughter] So I can really identify with that.

Harry Truman once said that being President was a job in which you spent most of your time trying to talk people into doing things they should do without your having to ask them in the first place. [Laughter] But I thank you for your dedication.

Let me now call on Shirley Goins, who is a teacher in the Monroe Middle School, a sixth-grade teacher. And she has worked as a teacher for 30 years. She's taught at Monroe the last 18. And Monroe recently instituted a school uniform policy which required the children to wear white shirts and blue bottoms, and the parents of the students supported it.

When I started supporting these several years ago, some people derided me as being for a little idea that a President shouldn't be paying attention to, but I was inclined to disagree. And I would like for Shirley to talk a little bit about why her school adopted this policy, and what its effect on discipline and academic achievement and the way the students relate to each other has been.

[Shirley Goins described how the uniform policy helped students to focus on their work, rather than being distracted by frivolous clothing styles.]

The President. That's great. You know, when I started—my wife is the first person who ever talked to me about school uniforms. She's always been for them. She's a fanatic supporter of—now, I guess now that she's a candidate for office, I shouldn't use the word “fanatic.” [Laughter] Subject to being used against her, I suppose. But we talked about it a lot for young kids.

And the first place I went to explore this was Newport Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California. And when the junior high schools adopted it out there, the middle schools, they did it in self-defense, because they had a lot of gangs. So they picked colors to dress in that would protect the kids. All the gangs wore red and blue, so all the uniforms were something other than red and blue. And then all the schools got to pick their own colors and do whatever they wanted.

But I had two children talking to me about it, one young man who came from a difficult circumstance who told me it was the first time he felt safe walking to school in 2 years, and one young woman who was in a much better situation economically, where she said she felt like she had been liberated, that neither she nor her classmates could look down on or feel looked down on as a result of the clothes they wore. They were no longer distracted, and they felt good. They were looking forward to going to high school where they wouldn't have to do it anymore, but they thought it had really calmed the atmosphere in the school and that learning had increased and discipline problems had decreased. I thought it was a very interesting.

Between Hillary and those kids, I've been pretty well sold on it ever since. [Applause] Yes, one person agrees with me in the crowd. [Laughter] Is this a school-by-school option in the Columbus school district?

Ms. Goins. Yes, Mr. President, it is not required. It is a school community decision with parents.

The President. Now, how many schools have uniform policies in this—

Ms. Goins. Mr. President, I cannot answer that question. [Laughter]

The President. Does anybody know? Are there others? But there is more than one?

Ms. Goins. There are others. There are several—many, I would say.

The President. I think, by the way, that's a good decision. I think if you have it district-wide, then you've got to—there you go, good for you, looks great. That looks great. I think you either have to—if it's going to be a district-wide decision, it's got to be handled just the way it would be school by school. It's a very delicate thing. It only works if the parents are for it and if the kids buy into it. Even if they have reservations, they've got to buy into it. So it's better not something that somebody like me decides is the right thing to do.

What we tried to do is to show people how to do it, including how districts have dealt with the families who couldn't afford to buy the uniforms, where they got the money, how they did all that sort of stuff. But I do think it has some merit.

[*Ms. Goins concurred that parents and students needed to agree on the policy.*]

The President. Now, what school do you represent in your uniform?

Student. I represent Columbus—

The President. Good for you. That's a great looking uniform. Thank you. I have been hissed and cheered by students talking about this. [Laughter]

Mayor Coleman. You're only going to be cheered here in Columbus, Mr. President. [Laughter]

The President. Is there anything else anybody would like to say? Is there anybody in the audience wants to ask anybody on the panel a question? Yes, sir?

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering if Al Gore, if he becomes the next President, will be continuing your policies and ideals, because they are excellent.

The President. Yes, he actually—he's been outlining his education program, and I would say that there are a couple of areas, obviously, because he can look ahead 4 years beyond what I can argue for. One of the things that he believes, in addition—he has supported our educational accountability fund that I just explained and all these things I talked about. And he's going to have—he's actually giving a whole speech tomorrow on teacher quality, which I hope you will follow. He's been working very

hard on it and talking to people around the country, educators and others.

In addition to that, in the primary, he came out for a program to add another several hundred thousand teachers, federally funded, to the 100,000 that we've already provided. We're very concerned that over the next decade another 2 million teachers will retire as the number of students continues to swell. And so we think it—you know, I agree—but he came and talked to me about this. He didn't—it was entirely his idea, not mine. But he said, "I think I'm going to go out there and advocate that we take a certain percentage of this surplus and just dedicate it to helping the communities hire teachers." Once we get the 100,000 in there, so we know we can get an average class size of 20 in the early grades, the rest—we're just going to be killing ourselves to get properly qualified teachers in the classroom because people retire.

And so I think you could feel every confidence that he would support the things that have been done, but that he would build on them and do better. That's what I think will happen.

[*A participant said a student had commented that the President would be a tough act to follow.*]

The President. Well, I appreciated his saying that. But the truth is that the country is changing a lot economically, and let me try to put this education issue that we've been talking about here into the larger context.

When I became President in 1992—and the people of Ohio were good enough to vote for me and the Vice President—the big issue was how could we turn the country around. The economy was in a shambles. The crime was exploding. The welfare rates were exploding. Things didn't seem to be working. And so in the last 7 years, I've tried to look to the long-term challenges of the future, but first we had to get the ship of state righted. Things had to be working.

Now, you're not very cynical anymore about whether you can actually make things better. I mean, if you look at—you know, we've gone from a big deficit to a big surplus. We're paying down the debt. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. The welfare rolls have been cut in half. Crime is down to a 25-year

low. Poverty is at a 20-year low; African-American, Hispanic unemployment the lowest ever recorded; female unemployment the lowest in 40 years.

I say that to say, nobody questions whether we have the capacity as a people to improve. Nationwide, reading and math scores are up about a grade level. But in places where there's been a sharp focus on results and on turning around low-performing schools like Columbus, the results are much more dramatic, but they're up. We have—90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time. We've—all the environmental indicators are better.

So the question that the country faces now is a very different question than it faced in 1992. The question we face now is, what is it that we propose to do with this moment of unprecedented prosperity? The question, by the way, also is not whether you're going to change. The world is changing so fast, America will change. It will change just as much in the next 4 years as it has in the previous 4 and the 4 before that. So the question is not whether you're going to change. The question is how you're going to change.

You know, if the Vice President were running for President and he said, "Vote for me; I'll do everything Bill Clinton did," I wouldn't vote for him, because the world's going to be different. That's not—his message is that, "Look, this approach works, so we ought to change by building on it. And here's how I'll build on it. I don't think we ought to abandon the approach in economics and education and health care and welfare reform and all these issues, but we're going to have to change." And my take on this as a citizen, as well as somebody with some experience now in these affairs, is that the way to decide what direction you want to take is to first ask yourself, where would you like to go?

I remember one of the funniest things Yogi Berra used to say is that we may be lost, but we're making good time. [*Laughter*] I mean, you've got to ask yourself, where would you like to go? Now, my opinion is—and again, it's not going to be on my watch, but my opinion is that for the first time in at least 35 years, since we had this kind of economy again—which basically came apart in the Vietnam war and the civil rights crisis and a lot of other problems we had in the country in the 1960's—this is

the first time we've had since then to say, okay, here's where we want to go, and here's what we're going to do to get there.

So my view is, one of our goals ought to be to guarantee that every child in this country will have access to a world-class education; that everybody will be able to afford to go to college if they're otherwise qualified; that poverty among children can be eliminated within through the tax system and other supports; that every working family ought to be able to at least have access to affordable health insurance; that we will deal with the challenges that the aging of America—when the baby boomers retire and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security—we will act now, not then, to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit that's voluntary for the seniors—big challenges.

On the environmental front, we have to tackle this whole issue of global warming. You're all in here fanning yourselves; the truth is that the climate of this Earth is going up at a very difficult rate. Now that may seem like an obscure issue, because Columbus is way inland, but it's not going to be very funny if the polar icecaps keep melting and the oceans rise and the sugarcane fields in Louisiana and the Florida Everglades were buried and the agricultural production of America starts to go north and the whole framework of life here is changed—and people in Africa start getting even more cases of malaria and children dying from dehydration. This is a big issue.

So that's what I gave my State of the Union about. But I think what all you need to decide as citizens is, what do you want for your kids? What do you want for your families? What do you want for your future? Where do you want to go? Then you have to say—8 years ago, I wouldn't have believed that we could write the future of our dreams. But now I know America can work.

So again, it's kind of like school reform. We don't have an excuse anymore for not saying what would we like America to be like when our children are our age, because we know we can make America better now. We don't have an excuse; we know that. So every one of you—I wish you'd go home and take a piece of paper and say, what would I like America to look like in 10 years? And then, how does America

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have to change—not whether, but how—to get there?

That's how you'll know who to vote for. That's how you know what ideas you think work. To ask yourself, where do you want to go? And my earnest plea to the American people this year is to do that, so we can take on these big challenges, because that's what I've been working for. I've been working for the day that when I left office, this country would have both the self-confidence and the capacity to build the future of our dreams for our children. And

we can do it now. That's what I think we ought to be doing.

[Dr. Smith and Mayor Coleman thanked the President for his participation.]

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at Eastgate Elementary School. In his remarks, the President referred to State Representative Joyce Beatty; City Council President Matthew D. Habash; State House Minority Leader Jack Ford; and Gary Allen, vice president, Ohio Education Association.

Statement on Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

May 4, 2000

Today's vote is a key milestone toward enactment of legislation that will launch a new era of cooperation between the United States and our partners in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. This important measure will strengthen our economic partnership with these nations, lower

trade barriers, help developing nations to lift their people out of poverty, and create a more secure world. I congratulate those Members of Congress who have worked hard to reach agreement on this bill. I look forward to signing this historic legislation into law upon final passage.

Message on the Observance of Cinco de Mayo, 2000

May 4, 2000

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

This annual celebration of the Mexican Army's triumph at the Battle of Puebla reminds us all of Mexico's long-standing commitment to the ideals of freedom and self-determination. United by our common convictions, the United States and Mexico have long enjoyed warm ties of friendship and mutual respect, and in recent years, our two nations have worked hard to cultivate this increasingly close partnership. From the arts to business to education to the environment, citizens of the United States and Mexico are gaining a greater understanding and a new appreciation of each other, increasing our prospects for a future of peace and prosperity.

We must continue working to open new bridges of friendship and cooperation. This is a promising time for the Americas, and we have an historic opportunity to build our collective economic strength, improve the well-being of our people, and advance the movement toward democracy of all the nations in our hemisphere. As we celebrate Mexico's valiant fight for independence, let us rededicate ourselves to the principles that inspired the Mexican patriots who fought at Puebla and strive together to forge a brighter future for all our citizens.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan May 5, 2000

The President. Good morning.

Visit of Prime Minister Mori

Q. What are you going to talk about?

The President. Well, we're going to talk about our relationship, which is very, very important to both of us. I'm delighted to have Prime Minister Mori here and anxious to have this chance to visit, and I'm also very much looking forward to going to Okinawa to the G-8 meeting this year. So we have a lot to visit about.

Q. Is this your first meeting?

The President. Yes. It's our first official meeting, yes. We met briefly once before.

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to talk about trade and especially the telecommunication dispute?

The President. We're going to talk about everything, I hope—everything we have time to talk about.

Q. What's your view of the Japanese economy?

The President. I think it's getting better, and we're going to talk about what the future is. We support a strong Japanese economy. I think there are a lot of inherent strengths in the economy, most of all in the people and the level of skill and education and capacity to grow. I believe that they will return to big growth, I hope sooner rather than later.

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to the people of Okinawa?

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, the American economy, is it overheating?

The President. Well, the inflation report yesterday was quite good. And as you know, this morning the unemployment report is wonderful news for the American people, the lowest in over 30 years now. So I'm hopeful, because combined with yesterday's inflation report, the news is good, and we just have to keep on a steady course, keep working.

Okinawa

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to the people of Okinawa when you go there in July? Are you willing to talk with them and explain to them why we need to maintain all those U.S. bases in Okinawa?

The President. I hope I'll have a chance to speak with them, and I want to talk to the Prime Minister about how we should do that. But we tried to be sensitive to the concerns of the people and to be highly respectful. And where mistakes have been made, we've tried to correct them, and we will continue to do that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on the Employment Report and an Exchange With Reporters May 5, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. In a few moments I will depart for a meeting with the Senate Democrats in Pennsylvania, where we will discuss ways to keep our economy strong and our Nation moving in the right direction.

Before I leave, I'd like to share the latest good news about our economy. This morning, we received the news that we have achieved 3.9 percent unemployment. That is the lowest

peacetime unemployment since 1957. That was the year the Dodgers last played ball in Brooklyn.

Most Americans have never lived in a peacetime economy with unemployment as low as it is today—indeed, its lowest rate overall in over 30 years. Over the last 7 years, our Nation has created 21 million new jobs, cut the unemployment rate almost in half.

I just want to make the point again that this is clear evidence that our economic strategy works, fiscal discipline, more investment in education, technology and training, the expansion of markets for American products and services. It's given us the lowest unemployment rate for African-Americans and Hispanics ever recorded, the lowest unemployment rate for women in more than 40 years, strong wage growth among all income groups.

The American people deserve the lion's share of the credit for this historic achievement. But we have a responsibility to stay on the path that got us here, the path of fiscal discipline, debt reduction, expanded trade and increased investments in our future. I hope we will do that. This is a happy day for the people of the United States. Thank you.

National Rifle Association

Q. Mr. President, what did you think of the video done by the NRA some time ago?

The President. The NRA video? I haven't seen it. I thought you were great in mine.

Q. Put that in writing. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, we don't know if your—

The President. No, I really haven't seen it. I'll be glad to comment on it once I see it or know what's in it. But I haven't seen it.

Q. You haven't read about it?

The President. I heard about it, but I haven't—the one where they're—oh, do you mean the film where they say they're going to have an office in the White House? Did they make that video, or was it just video by someone else? I thought they were trying to keep that a secret until after the election.

What I think about it—I don't know that they think that Mr. LaPierre will literally have an office here if President Bush—Governor Bush gets elected President. But I do believe that it's clear, from the record of Governor Bush in Texas and from the statements and from the increased visibility of the role of the NRA in the Republican National Committee, that whatever is done on this issue will only be done with their approval. They will have unprecedented influence here if the American people should decide that that's what they want.

But you know, that's what you have elections for. You can—I can believe that without thinking anything bad about Mr. LaPierre or about Governor Bush. I think they may just really agree that we shouldn't close the gun show loop-

hole or ban the importation of large-scale ammunition clips.

Q. Do you think it's going to be a—

The President. Let me just say—let me remind you, the previous Republican administration was not for the Brady bill, and they weren't for the legislation banning cop-killer bullets. That's just the way they think.

But I think one of the reasons I'm glad the Million Mom March is occurring is that it at least raises the possibility that Americans who disagree, who believe that we can have commonsense gun safety measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children, without having something that they believe is destructive gun control, those people may vote on these issues this year.

But the American people need to understand, this is one of the four or five big choices before them, and they'll just have to decide, and that all the NRA did was to commit the truth. I mean, they told the truth, and what they said was right.

"I Love You" Computer Virus

Q. Mr. President, I don't know if your office has been affected or infected in any way, but what does this "I love you" computer virus say about the world, our society, et cetera, and how maybe even one person can affect it and create chaos?

The President. Well, it says that—first of all, we've been very fortunate; the Government has fared well here. But it says that we've got a lot more work to do to protect all these systems in the private sector, and the Government has to keep working, too. It says that as we become more interconnected, in an open way, that we become—as we reap the benefits of greater interconnectivity, we become more vulnerable to the disruptive forces that would seek to—either for bad design or just to provoke chaos—to take advantage of it, and we just have to keep working on this. But I'm very gratified that the fundamental governmental systems seemed to have been unaffected here, and we just have to keep working on it.

Usama bin Ladin

Q. Mr. President, the State Department, the other day, issued an international report on terrorism. And also, this was the last of your administration, sir, and as Usama bin Ladin is still

at large, so what do you have to say about international terrorism and all the—

The President. You mean about bin Ladin still being at large? Well, we're doing our part to change it. And I hope we'll be successful.

Interest Rates

Q. Mr. President, on the economy, are you afraid the Fed's going to raise the rate in response to the numbers?

The President. Well, I think that these numbers have to be seen in terms of yesterday's numbers. Yesterday's inflation figures were quite encouraging, and I think they show that—core inflation at something like 2.4 percent, and I think the overall inflation rate will come back toward that, now that the oil prices are moderating. So I think that should be quite encouraging, not just to the Fed but to all Americans and to American business—that basically the productivity of the work force, continuing to be fueled by information technology, has en-

abled us to have an amazing amount of growth and low unemployment, at quite modest levels of inflation. And so that's encouraging to me, and I think the facts speak for themselves on that.

Thank you.

Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

Q. What did you think of the Vieques operation?

The President. Well, it went pretty well, I think. They did a good job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House, prior to his departure for Farmington, PA. In his remarks, he referred to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; and Usama bin Ladin, who allegedly sponsored the 1998 bombing attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Statement on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Report May 5, 2000

Today we have further proof of the continued strength of our economy. With the announcement of 3.9 percent unemployment, we have broken the 4 percent barrier for the first time in three decades. Over the last 7 years, our Nation has created 21 million new jobs and cut the unemployment rate nearly in half. This is more than a symbolic milestone in the longest and strongest economic expansion in history. It shows that our strategy of fiscal discipline is working for all Americans. We have the lowest unemployment for African-Americans and His-

panics on record, the lowest unemployment for women in more than 40 years, and strong wage growth among all income groups.

The American people deserve credit for this historic achievement. And they have made it clear that we should stay on the path of fiscal discipline, debt reduction, and targeted investments in our people. We should not adopt risky tax cuts that would derail our hard won prosperity. We have a responsibility to maintain the fiscal discipline that got us here.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process May 5, 2000

I am greatly encouraged that Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern have announced that their intensive talks in Belfast over the past 2 days have made progress, providing a sound basis for restoring the political institutions and achiev-

ing full implementation of the Good Friday accord. I urge the parties and paramilitary organizations to seize this opportunity to realize these goals in order to secure lasting peace for the

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people of Northern Ireland. The United States remains prepared to assist in any way we can.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

Memorandum on Reducing the Risk of *Listeria Monocytogenes*

May 5, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture,
the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Subject: Reducing the Risk of *Listeria Monocytogenes*

Food safety is a vital issue for all Americans. When people across this country sit down to a meal at home or in a restaurant, they expect that the food they eat will be safe. While the U.S. food supply is abundant, the marketplace has evolved from one dominated by minimally processed basic commodities for home preparation to one with an array of highly processed products that are ready-to-eat or require minimal preparation in the home.

To take account of the changes in the way Americans eat and to ensure that America's food supply remains safe, my Administration has made wide-ranging, dramatic improvements in food safety. We have worked successfully to revolutionize our meat and poultry inspection system, instituting scientific testing and pathogen reduction controls to target and reduce dangerous pathogens like *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 and the illnesses they cause. We also have implemented an innovative system of preventative controls for the seafood industry, published industry guidance to improve the safety of fruits and vegetables, and taken steps to prevent unsafe imported foods from reaching American consumers. My Food Safety Initiative is now in its third year of improving food safety surveillance, outbreak response, education, research, and inspection. In 1998, I issued an Executive Order creating the President's Council on Food Safety (Council), which oversees Federal food safety research efforts and is currently developing a comprehensive, national food safety strategic plan. It is under the Council's auspices that my Administration produced last year an Egg Safety Action Plan with the goal of eliminating illnesses from *Salmonella Enteritidis* in eggs. Additionally, we launched a high-tech early warning system called PulseNet that uses DNA-

fingerprinting techniques to help us better detect and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness.

These and other efforts have helped to make meaningful improvements in food safety. But we can do even more. Millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year. With changing patterns of food production and consumption, we must continue to aggressively meet the food safety challenges of the 21st century.

One challenge we must address immediately is that of *Listeria monocytogenes*, which can cause a severe infection called listeriosis. Listeriosis is a significant public health concern, and is especially lethal, resulting in death in about 20 percent of cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 2,518 persons become ill and 504 persons die each year from listeriosis. Pregnant women with listeriosis can pass the infection on to their unborn children, potentially resulting in severe illness or death to the fetus or newborn infant. Others at high risk for severe disease or death are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. Ready-to-eat food products, such as lunch meats, smoked fish, certain types of soft cheeses, and hot dogs, are among the foods most commonly associated with food-related illness from *Listeria*. To address this serious public health problem, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (USDA), is conducting a risk assessment on *Listeria monocytogenes* to determine which foods warrant further preventive measures. This risk assessment will be completed shortly, and I believe we must build on what is already being done to target this deadly organism.

My Administration's goal—articulated in our Healthy People 2010 plan—is to cut the number of illnesses caused by *Listeria* in half by 2010, from 0.5 cases to 0.25 cases per 100,000. To meet and exceed this goal, I hereby direct you,

in cooperation and consultation with the Council and relevant Federal agencies, to report back to me within 120 days on the aggressive steps you will take to significantly reduce the risk of illness and death by *Listeria monocytogenes* ready-to-eat foods. In particular, within this time period, I direct the Secretary of Agriculture to complete proposed regulations that include any appropriate microbiological testing and other industry measures to: 1) prevent cross-contamination in the processing environment; 2) ensure that the processing of ready-to-eat products meets appropriate standards; and 3) ensure that such products are safe throughout their shelf life. In addition, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, within this time frame, to develop an action plan identifying additional steps necessary to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. This plan should include consideration of control measures for at-risk foods and the publication of guidance

for processors, retailers, and food service facilities. Finally, you should consider whether enhanced labeling is necessary to provide additional safeguards for consumers. These actions should be based in science and should establish the foundation for a comprehensive approach that significantly reduces the opportunity for *Listeria* product contamination and *Listeria*-related illnesses to occur. All these actions, taken together, should allow us to achieve our Healthy People Goal by 2005 rather than 2010.

These steps will continue to ensure the safety of America's food supply and will help protect some of the Nation's most vulnerable populations from foodborne illness.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 10:06 a.m. on May 6.

The President's Radio Address May 6, 2000

Good morning. Warm weather has finally taken hold in most of the country, and millions of families are now taking weekend picnics and hosting backyard barbecues. Today I want to speak with you about the foods we serve at these gatherings and how we can make them even safer than they already are.

Our food supply is the most bountiful in the world. And for 7 years now, our administration has been committed to making it the safest in the world. We've improved dramatically the Nation's inspection system for meat, poultry, and seafood. We've added new safeguards to protect families from unsafe imported foods. We've established a sophisticated early warning system that uses DNA fingerprinting techniques to detect and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness. From farm to table, we've made great strides to ensure the safety of our food supply. But outbreaks of food-related illnesses are still far too prevalent. In fact, millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year.

One threat we must address immediately comes from a foodborne pathogen called *Listeria*, which has been the cause of recent recalls

of hot dogs and luncheon meats and several deadly outbreaks of disease. The most famous case emerged a year and a half ago, when *Listeria* killed 21 people and sickened 100 others, all of whom had eaten contaminated meat from a single plant. It was the Nation's most deadly food safety epidemic in 15 years.

Fortunately, *Listeria* is less common than *salmonella*, *E. coli*, and other foodborne bacteria, but unfortunately, it is far more dangerous. A staggering 20 percent of *Listeria* infections result in death. As with other food-borne bacteria, it's rarely healthy adults who come down with *Listeria* infections. Instead, it's the most vulnerable among us: infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and those whose immune systems have been weakened by chemotherapy or AIDS.

While our administration has already taken a number of important steps to reduce the threat of *Listeria*, it's clear we must do more to protect Americans from this deadly pathogen. So today I'm directing the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to prepare an aggressive new strategy to significantly reduce the risk of illness from *Listeria*. As part

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of this strategy, we will propose new regulations to require scientific approaches, such as systematic testing for *Listeria* at food-processing plants, not just random checks. This and other measures will allow us to cut in half the number of *Listeria*-related illnesses over the next 5 years and save well over 1,000 lives.

Today I call on the food industry to work with us as we develop our new *Listeria* strategy. And I call on Congress to help us strengthen food safety across the board. Just this week, unfortunately, the Congress took a major step backward by refusing to fully fund our food safety initiative. In fact, they've now voted to block funding for our new efforts to protect millions of American families from the dangers of *salmonella* poisoning in eggs. We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food.

If we work together, we can make real gains this year. We can increase the number of inspections of domestic and imported foods. We can expand the FDA's authority to turn away imported food that does not meet our high safe-

ty standards. And at long last, we can give the Department of Agriculture the authority to recall bad food and impose civil penalties for repeat violations. After all, the Department has the right to penalize a circus to protect animals from harm; it's about time we gave them the tools they need to protect human beings from harm, too.

Ensuring the safety of our food and the health of our people are among the most important parts of our citizens' basic contract with their Government. For the sake of millions of Americans, especially the most vulnerable among us, it's an obligation we simply must work together to uphold.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:47 p.m. on May 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks on the Northern Ireland Peace Process and an Exchange With Reporters

May 6, 2000

The President. I would just like to make a brief statement about the acceptance by the IRA of the proposals by Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern. This is a very good day for the people of Northern Ireland. It is a truly historic step. For the first time, the IRA is clearly committed to decommissioning and a process to get there. I applaud that. I want to thank the Prime Ministers and Gerry Adams and everyone else who was involved in this. But this is a very good day.

Q. Do you think it will stick?

The President. Well, I do. Of course, the Unionists still have to formally accept it, but this idea of storing the weapons and having the storage site monitored, I think, is a way for both of them to achieve their previously stated objectives, both sides. So it's a very, very good day.

Q. Weren't we at this point once before, sir?

The President. No, we never got this far on the details of the implementation. We always knew, I think, that the sequencing of decommissioning and the full implementation of the accords by both sides and by the British Government would be a problem. And that's really what this last year-plus has been about. For all of us who've worked on it, this is a very happy.

But I really appreciate the work done by Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern and the fact that the IRA has accepted it, and the Sinn Fein has obviously had a role in that. So this is a big step. And they've reached out to the Unionists now. Of course, I hope it will be fully accepted by all parties, and we can get the Government back up and go on.

Opposition to Enrique Moreno Nomination

Q. Why do you think the two Texas Senators—did they reject your nominee because he's Hispanic, Mexican-American?

The President. There are only two conceivable alternatives, I think. That or they just don't want to confirm any judges unless they're rightwing ideologists. I mean, this man had unbelievable academic credentials. He was endorsed by every conceivable professional association. He was consistent with the judges I've appointed for over 7 years now, highly qualified and clearly in the mainstream of the American judiciary.

But you know, they like judges that are more results oriented, and it may be that they just want to use this opportunity to try to seize control of the judiciary again. For them, it's all too often a political arm of the Government. But to do this to a Hispanic judge from Texas, who has made himself into an excellent lawyer and a superbly qualified person is just unconscionable. I mean, it's unbelievable.

If their committee didn't find this man qualified, I'd certainly be interested in knowing what the criteria of their committee is.

Q. But you're not charging that two U.S. Senators are prejudiced against Hispanics, are you?

The President. No, I'm saying that—you have to ask them, and people can draw their own conclusions. They may or may not be. But since he's clearly well-qualified and everybody virtually in the world with an opinion has endorsed

him, if it's not that, it's that they want somebody who's more politically malleable.

As I said, all you have to do is look at the way so many of their judges perform. They're highly results oriented when they appoint judges. I just try to appoint people I thought would be fair and interpret the law and be balanced and represent this country. So it might be politics and ideology. But it's a terrible, terrible day for the Hispanic community and for the idea of fairness in the judiciary.

Q. What's this going to do—[inaudible]—election, Mr. President?

The President. I don't know. I don't have a comment on that. I'd rather—to me this is—I made this appointment; this man was qualified on the merits, superbly qualified. And he's from a State with a huge Hispanic population and a big caseload, and he deserved a hearing, and he deserved to be confirmed. I think it's just disgraceful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Fayetteville, AR. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; and Enrique Moreno, nominee for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Fifth Circuit. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Opposition to the Nomination of Enrique Moreno

May 6, 2000

Senators Gramm and Hutchison announced yesterday that they opposed the confirmation of Enrique Moreno, my nominee for a Texas vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Their claim that he lacks the necessary experience to serve on the fifth circuit is unconscionable. The American Bar Association, which has rated judicial nominees for Republican and Democratic Presidents since the Eisenhower administration, unanimously gave Moreno their highest rating. The son of Mexican-American immigrants and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Moreno was rated one of

the top three trial attorneys in El Paso by State judges.

In rejecting Moreno's candidacy, the Texas Senators have ignored the strong endorsement of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic National Bar Association, and local law enforcement officials. This is not the first time that the Texas Senators have rejected an exceptional Hispanic candidate for this seat, which has been vacant for more than 3 years. Jorge Rangel was forced to withdraw after the Texas Senators refused to allow action on his nomination. By blocking qualified judicial

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nominees, Gramm and Hutchison have exacerbated the vacancy crisis on the fifth circuit. Their unjustifiable opposition to Enrique

Moreno—an exceptionally well-qualified Hispanic judicial nominee—must not be allowed to stand.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

May 6, 2000

I want to join Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern in welcoming the IRA's commitment to initiate a process that will completely and verifiably put arms beyond use and its decision to resume contact with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. This is a significant step toward realizing the full promise of the Good Friday accord. I urge the loyalist paramilitaries to do the same.

I express appreciation to Martti Ahtisaari and Cyril Ramaphosa for their willingness to take part in confidence-building measures involving third party inspection of IRA weapons dumps.

I have great confidence in their ability to contribute to this important task.

These developments offer renewed hope to the people of Northern Ireland that politics will once and for all be pursued through exclusively political means. The United States remains ready to assist this process in any way we can.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland; and former Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa's African National Congress.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Little Rock, Arkansas

May 7, 2000

Thank you very much. Vic, thank you for being here. Marion, thank you for being here. Vic Snyder was one of the bravest people in the Arkansas State Senate when I was Governor. When he ran for Congress, I told Hillary, I said, "I'm afraid he can't get elected. He's got too much guts. He'll say what he thinks about everything." But he got elected, and he got re-elected. And I thank—when Marion Berry ran for Congress after doing a stint in our administration in the Agriculture Department, Dale and David and I really felt that he was entitled to be in Congress, almost as a conciliation prize for having hosted us at the coon supper in Gillette all those years. Anybody who could get us to eat coon for 10 or 15 years in a row should be given a seat in Congress, just as a matter of course. But I thank them so much.

The other night, when I was home a couple of weeks ago—or maybe it was last week—to dedicate the law school here to Bill Bowen and to do the event in honor of our friend Daisy

Bates, Dale and David and I went to dinner alone, just the three of us. And we needed adult supervision. [*Laughter*] If there were a tape of the conversation we had—we relived everything we had ever done together, and amplified it all in an unconscionable way. I don't know when I've had as much fun. And Barbara, you should have been there to give us a little civilizing influence, but we had a good time.

Today mostly is a day for us that is full of sentiment and gratitude. I want to thank you for all you've done for us over the years. I want to thank you for things large and small when I was Governor and for backing us in the two times I ran for President. Yesterday I did have a chance to travel the backroads of Logan and Franklin and Madison and Washington and Benton Counties and to relive my first race for Congress in 1974. We went to Stephanie Streett's wedding in the beautiful chapel in Subiaco. I thought about all my old

friends, including a lot of them, unfortunately, who aren't around anymore.

And Hillary and I both agreed that if we hadn't had to start our careers in public life in a place where you actually had to go see people and listen to them, instead of someplace where you just spent all your time raising funds to run television ads, our lives would have been very different, and I never would have had a chance to be the President.

I also was reminded of the first time I brought Hillary to Arkansas, and I picked her up at the airport here in Little Rock, and instead of going to Hot Springs, I drove her up to River Valley, and then we drove down Highway 7, a fairly indirect way, but I wanted to give her a sense of what I hoped she was getting into.

I'm looking forward to building this library and policy center, and we're going to have big apartment on top of the library. We're finalizing the plans now. I'm trying to keep this library to a reasonable price, somewhere around \$125 million. But I want it to be a world-class building, a place that is beautiful and distinctive for our State, that will capture the imagination of the people, and that will in some way, some small way, try to repay the people of Arkansas for all they have done for me. And we're going to have a nice apartment there, and I'll be there a lot. Even Senator Hillary will be there some, too, when I can work it out.

I want to say a few things that are more comfortable for me to say, I think, than Hillary, before I bring her on. When Senator Moynihan announced that he would not run for the Senate again and the New York Democrats were trying to decide, you know, what they were going to do, they didn't just want to give the Senate seat back to the Republican Party and to Mayor Giuliani, and they knew he would be a very formidable candidate, that it was a seat that had been occupied by Robert Kennedy and then by Pat Moynihan. And all these House Members started calling Hillary. Then they started calling me to lobby Hillary.

And we talked, and I had always hoped she would have a chance to run for office and to serve because I thought she would be so good. But we decided she needed to go up there and just visit people, just the way we did so long ago in all those communities I went through yesterday. Every town of any size, I had been in every store in town more than

once that we went through. And so she did and came back and said, "You know, the stuff I've worked on all my life is really what they need: someone who cares about the education of our children, how families balance work and child-rearing; somebody who knows something about health care; somebody who knows something about bringing economic opportunity to underdeveloped areas." If New York State, upstate—that's exclusive of the suburbs and the city—were a separate State, it would be 49th in job growth in my tenure as President, something that I have tried to help on. And much of what needs to be done there is what we've tried to do in the Delta and other rural areas of our State.

And she had so many people who wanted her to run and wanted her to do it that she really decided that she ought to try. And then I just practically beat her up, time and time again, working on this announcement speech. She said, "I've given a zillion speeches. Why do you keep doing this?" I said, because an election is a job interview, and if you get the job, it helps to have decided in advance what you intend to do when you get there.

And one of the reasons I think that the people here were good enough to elect me Governor five times is I always tried to be the candidate of change. I always tried to lay out what I wanted to do, and I always tried to be doing what I said I would do in the election. And one of the things I'm proudest of, a little known fact, is that in 1995, a Presidential scholar who at that time I had never met said that by '95 I had already kept a higher percentage of my campaign promises than the previous five Presidents. And I'm proud of that.

So she worked on that. And I thought she gave a terrific speech that day, with a wonderful program. And she showed that movie, which has a lot of Arkansas in it, as you saw.

Now, I want to make one general statement before I bring Hillary up here. This is a huge election. This election is just as important as what happened in '92, when this country was in terrible trouble. A lot of people have forgotten how bad it was in '92. And that's not good. It's just as important as it was in '96, when the American people decided to give me another chance to try to finish what I'd set out to do.

But we have worked so—I've tried hard to take good care of this, and Hillary has been involved in so many of the things we have done

together these last 8 years. But so much of the time we spent—Dale and David were saying they were glad they were part of it—all we did was make unpopular decisions in '93 and '94, because we had to do hard things to get this country turned around again. Hillary made fun of me today. She said there was some article talking about that I had real good job ratings, and if they could just take out the first 2 years, they'd be perfectly astronomical. Well, in the first 2 years, I had to do all the hard stuff that made it better the last 6.

And so we got the country turned around. And the unemployment rate last month was 3.9 percent, for the first time in over 30 years, and that's good. The welfare rolls have been cut in half; 90 percent of our kids immunized for the first time, something I know is very important to Dale and Betty Bumpers. Today the statistics were to be released, or have already been released, showing that crime has come down every year, down another 7 percent across the board. Only about three dozen cities in the United States last year, in the whole country, had an increase in the crime rate.

So things are going in the right direction. But the big test for a country is, what do you do when things are going well? What do we propose to do with our prosperity, with the fact that our social problems are lessened, with the fact that we've got the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded? What are we going to do with this?

And in all fairness, one of the reasons that our adversaries in the other party, beginning with the Presidential nominee, are sort of trying to blur all these issues and say, "We care about all those things that Bill Clinton and Al Gore worked on for 8 years," is that they hope that people will forget what it was like in '92. But there are huge decisions before you.

And as sentimental as I feel today, elections are always about tomorrow. And what I wanted to do with all my heart is literally build a bridge for this country to the 21st century, so that when I left office, America would be in a position to build a future of our dreams for our children. To me, that's what this whole thing was about. And I was furious and disappointed in 1991, when I saw our country just paralyzed in Washington, nobody getting anything done, everybody fighting, partisan politics the order of the day—which, unfortunately, there's still too much of there.

And so we set about doing things. But it's important for all of you to focus—if you believe that the results were good, it's not just because you knew me and you saw I gave a good speech and I was a pretty good guy. What we did was—those were the right things to do. You can be as eloquent as you want, and if you advocate the wrong thing, you'll get the wrong result.

That's what—this election for the Senate is a big issue. It really matters who is in the Senate. The Republican Senators from Texas just announced a couple of days ago that they weren't even going to even permit a hearing on an Hispanic judge who was from El Paso, who graduated cum laude from Harvard and Harvard Law School and was endorsed by every single organization with an informed opinion. Why? Because he wasn't ideologically far enough to the right.

This is a big election, and I can tell you who's in the Senate makes a huge difference, for good or ill. And you're going to have to decide, including in Arkansas, whether you want to build on the progress for the last 8 years or reverse the policies. Do you like this economic policy? If you do, you better stick with it and build on it. Do you believe that it's a good thing that the educational attainment is going up, the college-going rate is going up, more people than ever before can afford to send their kids to college? If you do, you've got to build on it, and the same thing with the environment and the same thing with health care and with national security. The other party is honestly opposed to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And if they do what they say they're going to do, there's a real chance we could have a new arms race again in the world, which is the last thing in the wide world we need. We've got enough problems out there with the terrorists and the drugrunners and the organized criminals, without setting off another arms race.

So, you know, I'd like to come home and just make this a perfectly happy thing, but I'm telling you, this is a big decision that the people will take. And this election of 2000 is every bit as important, even though I'm not on the ticket. And a lot of you did a lot for me. You went to New Hampshire. You did all the things in the wide world. What was going on in '92 and '96, that was important. But the 2000 election will determine whether we really like the

direction of the country and we want to continue to change built on that, or whether we say, “Well, we feel so good now, what they say sounds good; I think we’ll go back to their economic policy and their education policy and their health care policy and their environmental policy and their foreign policy.” This is a huge, huge decision.

And that’s why I thought it was a good thing for Hillary to run. Because I’ve been doing this a long time. I don’t think any State ever had two Senators working together that were remotely as good as Dale Bumpers and David Pryor. They were the best team I ever saw. I served with 150 Governors, and I’ve seen another 100 run through the White House since I’ve been there. You know, I realize I am prejudiced in this, but I know a lot about public service and public service efforts. And I have spent the last almost 30 years, now, having conversations with my wife about every conceivable issue.

I watched her when she started the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. I watched her when she ran this education standards program here, when a lot of our kids couldn’t even get science and math courses in their schools. I watched her labor to try to get rid of all the ridiculous Federal barriers to people adopting children, and to try to get us to adopt policies up there that would enable working families

to afford health insurance and deal with a whole lot of other issues.

And in my whole life, I have never known anybody that had a better grasp of the issues, a better ability to organize, a better ability to get people who thought they would never get along to work together, and could get up every day and just keep going, than Hillary—never, not a person.

So, I think the Senate would be a much better place if she were there. I think she would do a superb job for the people of New York. I think she would be great for America. I think you know that, and you will never know how grateful we are that you’re here today. And I hope you’ll make her feel welcome.

Come on up, Hillary.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in Hall A at the New Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representatives Vic Snyder and Marion Berry; former Senator Dale Bumpers and his wife, Betty; former Senator David H. Pryor and his wife, Barbara; William H. Bowen, former dean, University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Enrique Moreno, nominee for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Fifth Circuit. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Report *May 7, 2000*

Today the FBI released new 1999 statistics showing that crime is down for an unprecedented eighth year in a row, continuing the longest decline on record. The decline in crime has reached Americans living in communities of every size and in every region across the country. Data from the 1999 FBI Uniform Crime Report show that overall crime fell 7 percent, with crime down in every category of offense. Violent crime dropped 7 percent, including an 8 percent drop in murder, and property crime fell an additional 7 percent. In 1999 there were over 8,000 fewer murders than in 1992.

This good news confirms that our anticrime strategy—more police officers on the beat, fewer illegal guns and violent criminals on the street—is having a powerful impact. We know we can turn the tide on crime, because we have. But despite this success, we cannot let up on our efforts. Gunfire continues to claim the lives of nearly 12 children every day, and we need to work on every front to reduce gun violence. With Mother’s Day approaching, I will continue to urge the Congress to put the interests of America’s families over those of the gun lobby and pass commonsense gun safety measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together,

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we can make America the safest big country on Earth.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was

embargoed for release until 6:01 p.m. on May 7. It was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Million Mom March Organizers and an Exchange With Reporters

May 8, 2000

The President. Hello, everybody. I just finished a meeting with Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala and Chief of Staff Podesta, and I have met with all these folks, these women and their men supporters who are the organizers of the Million Mom March. They're going to be here and in over 60 other cities on Mother's Day, marching for commonsense gun safety legislation, asking Congress to act, building on the grassroots efforts that have brought success in the petition drive in Colorado and the Legislatures of Maryland, Massachusetts, and California.

And I think what they're doing is profoundly important. We in the administration want to do whatever we can to support them. They are taking a stand for their children. Many of them have lost loved ones. They have lost children. They have lost spouses. And there will be many more just like them who are here.

They want Congress to act on the commonsense gun legislation before it, and of course, they want Congress to go beyond that to licensing, registration. They have not proposed taking away anybody's gun. They have proposed making life a lot safer for the American people and their children. And I think what they're doing is a very noble and good thing. I hope it will prompt Congress to act.

It is unconscionable—it is now over a year after Columbine and over 10 months since they've had a chance to pass this legislation. And I hope their presence here will—and throughout the country—will be successful. I am quite sure they will succeed over the long run if they stay with it, because they represent the heavy majority of the American people, and they have borne a heavy burden in their own lives which they have been willing to put into this effort. And I'm very grateful to them.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. What's stopping Congress from acting? At least pressure from the moms—

The President. Well, we'll see if this makes a difference. I think that the people in the gun lobby have historically been very effective. But I think that if you look at the specifics of the legislation before Congress, there's a huge majority of the American people for it. And I think what all these folks are going to remind them of on Mother's Day is that they're watching, and they want action.

And this is not an issue that can be dealt with in business as usual and buried for the—*[inaudible]*—interest groups. It needs to be resolved, and I hope it will be. And if it does, it will be far more because of them than because of us. The only way we can pass this is if people have to look into the eyes of parents who have lost their loved ones, if they have to look into the eyes of people who have lost their spouses, their brothers, their sisters, and answer, why don't we have this commonsense safety legislation; why is this the only area of our national life where we don't have prevention as our primary strategy?

They won't be able to answer that. You can't talk to these folks that have been talking to us this morning and answer that.

Death of John Cardinal O'Connor

Q. Mr. President, you're going to the funeral of Cardinal O'Connor today. Can you give us some thoughts this morning on his impact on America and religious life, and what his passing might mean for the future?

The President. Well, I'm going because he was a leader of the Catholics and the biggest Catholic diocese in the country and because, in particular, he was a devoted chaplain in the

armed services. And I feel particularly grateful for that. And of course, it will be up to the Church and to the Pope to decide his replacement and what happens after that. But I think he played a very large role in the life of the Church. Even when he was controversial and when he disagreed with me, I liked the fact that he was outspoken, and he stood up for what he believed in.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, the Israeli Foreign Minister said today that the Gaza is so big that it's clear that there's not going to be an interim framework agreement. Are you disappointed by that?

The President. I just disagree with it. I think there will be a framework agreement.

Q. By the deadline, sir?

The President. Well, maybe not by the deadline. But they thought they might trip the deadline a little. But I think we'll get an agreement, an overall agreement by September. And I think they'll get there. There are substantial gaps, but if they want to do it bad enough, they'll do it.

Zimbabwe

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on the situation in Zimbabwe with the farmers and squatters there?

The President. Well, I've got Ambassador Holbrooke over there now working on a lot of the troubles in Africa, including the situation in Zimbabwe, and I hope it can be worked out in a lawful manner. And I think it's quite sad what's going on because it's a very important country, and it's very important to South Africa and South Africa's future, as well as to the future of the people who live in Zimbabwe. And I hope we can get them—we can do something that will encourage them to return to a progressive and stable path. They're working at it.

Sierra Leone

Q. How about Sierra Leone?

The President. We're working now on what can be done to restore the vigor of the U.N.

peacekeeping mission there and make it work. It's very important. I spent a lot of time on that the last 4 or 5 days, and we're working on it.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. You seem very subdued. Do you have a cold?

The President. No. I'm just—if you had been here talking to these people about all their children's lives and all that, you'd feel subdued, too. I mean, I feel very sad that I haven't been able to get this legislation voted on. I think this is a really big deal.

We've gotten—yesterday we got the crime statistics—crime down 8 years in a row, murder at a 30-year low. But it's still one of the most dangerous countries in the world, only because we have stubbornly refused to take prevention seriously when it comes to guns, to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And we've had the crime rate come down 8 years in a row, so we now know we can turn the crime rate around. And the next big barrier to bring it way down and make this a really, really safe country is to take these commonsense preventative measures.

And yes, I am subdued. I'm frustrated, and I'm very sad because I don't want any more kids to die. And I want them to come here on Mother's Day, and I told them before you came in here that if they didn't get tired, they'd win this fight. I've been watching these kinds of issues all my life, and it's like civil rights or something where there's this huge organized resistance. But if they just keep at it, they're going to win. I think they should have won more already, and I'm going to do what I can to help them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs David Levi of Israel; and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard C. Holbrooke. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Courts Budget Request

May 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the District of Columbia Code, as amended, I am transmitting the FY 2001 Budget Request of the District of Columbia Courts.

The District of Columbia Courts have submitted a FY 2001 budget request for \$104.5 million for operating expenses, \$18.3 million for capital improvements to courthouse facilities, and \$41.8 for Defender Services in the District of Columbia Courts. My FY 2001 budget includes recommended funding levels of \$98.0 million for operations, \$5.0 million for capital improvements, and \$38.4 million for Defender

Services. My transmittal of the District of Columbia Courts' budget request does not represent an endorsement of its contents.

This transmittal also includes information on grants and reimbursements forwarded by the Courts in response to the request in Conference Report H. Rept. 106-479.

I look forward to working with the Congress throughout the FY 2001 appropriation process.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 8, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Baron P. Hill in Bethesda, Maryland

May 8, 2000

Thank you. Well, I want to thank, first of all, Joe and Anne, for having us in their beautiful home on this beautiful spring night. And I want to thank Baron's colleagues Charlie Stenholm from Texas and Steny Hoyer from Maryland for coming. They represent, I think, the future of the Democratic Party and where we have to go, and they've proved that you can get elected in places where sometimes we don't get elected. I also want to thank your predecessor, Lee Hamilton, for being here. He's one of the greatest House Members in my lifetime, and I thank him for what he is doing. And I want to thank, in his absence, Senator Bayh.

Evan met me at the door, and he said Susan was out of town, and he had two choices: He could stay and hear me give this speech, or he could go home and tuck his kids in bed. And I said, "You've heard the speech"—*[laughter]*—"and you'll never regret a minute you stay with your children." My daughter is about to be a senior in college, and I can still remember all the nights I tucked her in bed, and she can remember anything she ever did that I missed. *[Laughter]* Even though she can count

them on one hand and have fingers left over, at 20 years old she can still remember. So he went home, as he should have. And since he's not here, I won't be embarrassing him when I tell you that I hope and expect some day I'll be voting for Evan Bayh for President of the United States.

I want to say just a few things, and I won't keep you long. I want to get out and say hello to the people I haven't seen yet. The country is in good shape, and I'm grateful for that. And I'm grateful for the time I've had to serve and the opportunities we've had. And certainly not in my lifetime, and maybe never in the history of America, have we had at the same time such a strong economy with benefits more evenly distributed. We have inequality coming down in the last 2 years for the first time in over 20 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent poverty rate in 46 years.

The crime rate, we just said yesterday, has come down now 8 years in a row. We've got the lowest crime rate in over a quarter century, the lowest murder rate in 30 years. We have

almost—the welfare rolls are about half the size they were when I took office. Things are moving in the right direction. Ninety percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time.

I thank you for the applause you gave when Baron talked about the economy and our role in it. But what I would like to say is—people come up to me all the time and they say, “Well, thank you, and I wish you could run again.” Half the country is probably elated that I can’t, but it’s nice when the people that say it, say it.

But here’s what I want to say to you. A President is important. It’s important to be able to articulate what you believe. It’s important to be able to touch people where they live. It’s important for people to think that the person in the Oval Office cares about them. It’s important that you fight hard for the things you believe in.

But if you don’t believe in the right things, you still won’t get good results. That’s why I’m here tonight. I like Baron Hill. I’ve liked him from the first time I met him. I admire him. But I think that the direction that we took—first our party and then our country, beginning in the ’92 election—is profoundly important. And the major question before the American people this year is, what are we going to do with our good fortune? Yes, the surplus, but generally, what are we going to do with our good fortune?

And normally, the question asked in a campaign determines who wins. That is, what people think the election is about very often determines the outcome of the election. And I believe with all my heart the answer to that question is not that we should indulge ourselves but that we should take on the big challenges and the big opportunities that are still out there. Because most of what I’ve had to do the last 7 years and some odd months is to try to turn the ship of state around and get us going in the right direction and, to use the metaphor I used in the ’96 campaign, build our bridge to the 21st century.

Now the country has a chance that we’ve never had before to literally build the future of our dreams for our children. We almost had it in the 1960’s, and it came apart over the combined impacts of the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam war and the divisions that en-

sued in the country and the collapse of the economic recovery of that decade.

So if the question is, what are we going to do with the good times, and the answer is, take on the big challenges and the big opportunities, then the issue is, how? And I would argue that what we need to do is to continue to change based on what we call the New Democratic philosophy. We believe that you can be pro-business and pro-labor. We believe you can be pro-growth and pro-environment. We believe you can be pro-work and pro-family. We believe you can be pro-trade and pro-labor and human rights.

And I don’t want to give a long speech about that, but I would like to cite two examples because they reflect Baron Hill’s career, brief as it is, already distinguished in Congress. One is this trade issue. I believe that any fair reading of the record would say that I’m the most pro-labor President, at least since Lyndon Johnson. I believe that is fair. But my belief in trade is rooted in two things.

Number one, we’ve got 4 percent of the world’s people and 22 percent of the world’s income, and I don’t think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure out if you want to keep over 20 percent of the world’s income, you’ve got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people. And you have responsibilities to them. You want them to do better, so you have to let them sell stuff to you.

Secondly, I think it’s good for us in other ways. Imports—nobody ever talks about that, but because we’ve had open markets, we’ve been able to grow without inflation. When I was elected President, after the election we had a big economic parley down in Little Rock, and I had a private meeting in the Governor’s Mansion, and I had Democratic economists—that is, they were more progressive; they wanted to believe we could have low unemployment without inflation. So I said, “How low can unemployment get on a sustained basis without inflation?” And the consensus was “Six percent, maybe 5.8; you get below that, you’re going to have inflation.” It was 3.9 last month, with core inflation at 2.4 percent.

Now, if you want growth without inflation, you have to keep your markets open so there is some pressure on keeping the prices down. In a larger sense, because we’re the most prosperous country in the world now, when we trade with others, it helps us to build friends and

allies and promote democracy and stability and keep our kids from ever having to go to war again.

And that's really what this China issue is all about. A lot of you are here because you know that it's a laydown, economically, in the short run, because we don't have to give China any more access to our markets, and they give us lots of access to theirs. We can put up car dealerships there for the first time. We can sell American cars without having to let them manufacture them in China or transfer technology. We have all kinds of agricultural access we never had before.

But in a larger sense, what this is really about to me, having focused on the economy like a laser beam, is national security. Because China is the biggest country in the world, and in somewhere between 30 and 50 years, it'll have the biggest economy, unless India outstrips it, which is conceivable. And when that happens, are we going to have a working relationship with them, or is it going to be a new cold war?

Meanwhile, we want them to grow more open. I don't like the human rights abuses that exist there. But if we say no to them, we'll have no influence on their policies, because they think we're trying to stiff them. They'll get in the World Trade Organization anyway, but the Europeans will get all the trade benefits we negotiated and I fought for a year for. And I think the chances that there will be trouble between China and Taiwan will go up exponentially if the United States says no. I've already had to send carrier groups to the Taiwan Straits once, and I don't want to do it again. I will if I have to, but I don't want to do it again.

If somebody were to ask—people are always asking me, “Now, what have you learned as President. What can you tell somebody else?” The one thing I learned about foreign policy is it's a lot more like real life than I thought it was. I mean, if you hear people talk about it, they always use these complicated words and all that. It's a lot more like real life. Nine times out of 10 you can get more with an outstretched hand than you can with a clenched fist, just like in real life. You never want to let your guard down, but you want to give people a chance to do the right thing, just like real life.

And this is a big issue. And he took a brave position, and I want to be here to support him for it. And a decade from now, if we prevail,

we'll wonder why we had the debate. And if we don't, we'll still be paying the price.

One of the terrible things about public life is that sometimes you have to make tough decisions. I got so tickled; I read an article yesterday saying that I had real good approval ratings, and if it hadn't been for the bad approval ratings I had in '93 and '94, I'd have the highest average approval ratings of any President since they've been taking polls. And I thought, well—I showed it to Hillary, and she said, “Sure, in '93 and '94 we made all the hard decisions that gave us the good approval ratings later.” [*Laughter*]

You know, even in good economic times, life doesn't give you 100 percent easy decisions. So he's taking a tough decision. It's the right decision for America, and I respect it.

The second thing I want to mention is education, because education will be a big subject of debate, as it should be, in this election. And education has now become like God, motherhood, and apple pie; everybody is for it. But we had a strategy, and Baron Hill has come in to support a very important part of that. Our strategy was: Set high standards, have accountability, identify schools that are failing, require them to turn around or shut down, stop social promotion, but don't blame the kids for the failure of the system, give them the help they need to succeed. And he's been especially active in promoting small, effective schools. I just want to tell you just two points about this and why it's so important.

The Republicans, from Governor Bush on down, they're going to say they're for education. And they're going to say a lot of good things. And he'll be able to cite some things that happened in Texas. But here's the problem with their proposal. Their tax cut is so big, and their defense increases are even bigger than the ones I proposed, and if you put those two things with their voucher proposal, there won't be any money left to do what they say they're going to do in education. And somehow we've got to get that out to the American people.

The other point I want to make to you is this. When I became President, one of the things that frustrated me was a lot of people just didn't think things could get better. I mean, if I had run for President and I said, “Now, you vote for me, and sometime in my second term, instead of having a \$300 billion deficit we'll be paying down the debt,” the voters

would have said in '92, "He seems like such a nice young man, but he's slightly deranged. We better send him home." [Laughter] When I leave office, we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt.

So if I said to you, "Crime will go down every year in my administration," you would have said the same thing. If I said, "I'll cut the welfare rolls in half, or we will together," you would have said the same thing. What's the point of this? We now know it can get better.

What I want you to understand is that public education can get better. I've been working on this over 20 years now. And Hillary and I put through this big education reform program in 1983, and we thought we knew what we were doing. But I can tell you that we now know more than we have ever known. And I just want to cite three things that are important to our philosophy, in the education tour I took last week.

I went to St. Paul, Minnesota, to the Nation's first charter school. It's a public school with public funds set up outside the normal bureaucratic rules of a school system so that it can serve a specific population or have a special mission. The first charter school in the country, in St. Paul, was the only one that existed when I started running for President, promoting charter schools, and nobody in America knew what I was talking about.

But I went to that school. There are over 100 kids in this high school. They all showed up. They were all kids that had not done well in other schools. A lot of them had had terrible, terrible problems in their personal lives, the kind of things that most of us would find it difficult to overcome. They're in school. There's no dropout rate. There's no violence in the school. There are no weapons in the school. The kids are learning. An extraordinary percentage of them are going on to college. It is working. And there are now 1,700 of those schools in America today. There are long waiting lists. Some of them have failed. But unlike other schools that have failed, they can be just shut down; you just revoke the charter.

And I'll give you just two other examples. I went to Columbus, Ohio. And Columbus has gotten 55 of our teachers under our 100,000 teachers program to lower class size in the early grades. They took class size from 24 to 15 in the first three grades. And I went to this very

poor neighborhood, to this elementary school where in one year—one year—they went from 10 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 45 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing math at or above grade level to 33 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing science at or above grade level to 30 percent—in one year.

I went to Owensboro, Kentucky, where in 1996 Kentucky was one of the first States to implement the requirement we got the Congress to pass that anybody got Federal aid, the States, had to identify their failing schools. They identified 170. Within 2 years, 91 percent of them weren't failing anymore.

Now today, in this Owensboro school, in 3 years, here's what they did. They went from 12 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 57 percent, 5 percent doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent, 0 percent doing science at or above grade level to 64 percent. They're the 18th best grade school in the State of Kentucky, and two-thirds of the kids are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Of the 20 grade schools in that State that scored highest on the test, 10 of them—10 of them—have kids where at least half of them are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race and income and location are not destiny if you have good schools. That's what we believe. That's the second reason I'm here—because I think if our crowd stays in control of the education policy of this country, we will have further excellence.

And Al Gore has laid out an education plan that will enable us to hire more teachers—and there are going to be 700,000 retiring in the next few years, with the biggest student population we ever had—and have higher standards, and put every kid who needs it in preschool, and every child who needs it will have access to an after-school program and a summer school program.

That is worth fighting an election on. That is the whole history of the country. And what Americans must believe is, just like we got the deficit gone and we're paying down the debt, just like we have got the crime rate down, just like we have got the welfare rolls down, all of our schools can become excellent schools and all of our kids can learn. That's the second reason I'm here, and that's worth fighting this election on. That's what our party ought to be standing for.

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So if somebody asks you why you came, say, because the election ought to be fought out over, what are we going to do with the good times? The answer is, we're going to take on the big challenges. And the way to do it is to keep changing, based on the philosophy that has brought us to this point. And no person in the House of Representatives, in my judgment, better embodies that than Baron Hill.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Anne; Senator Evan Bayh's wife, Susan; former Representative Lee H. Hamilton; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China *May 9, 2000*

Thank you very much, President Ford, President Carter, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Albright, Secretary Baker, Secretary Kissinger, all the distinguished people that the Vice President acknowledged. Many of you did not stand. We have so many distinguished leaders of Congress here. I would be remiss if I didn't thank our former Speaker, Tom Foley, and our former minority leader, Bob Michel, because they helped me pass NAFTA and the WTO, and I'm grateful to both of you. Thank you. We have former House Foreign Relations Chairman Lee Hamilton, former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Chuck Percy.

There's one person in this room I have to introduce. I wish all of you could have been sitting where we were today, and I was scanning this room, realizing that through the lives of the people in this room, the last 50 years of America has unfolded. And we're a better country because of what you have all done, and it's a better world. And it is just profoundly humbling for me to look across this sea of faces who are here. I was so glad the Vice President said what he did about it. But there's one person here I want to recognize because I'm quite sure he is the senior statesman here, and through his life, most of the 20th century unfolded, former Ambassador and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Thank you, sir, for being here. Thank you.

You have already heard what needs to be said about this, so I'm going to try to abbreviate my remarks and focus on what is at issue here. If you look at the terms of this agreement on purely economic grounds, there's no question that Ambassador Barshesky and Mr. Sperling

did a great job. And if the Congress declines to approve this, I will not block China going into the WTO. So what will happen? The Europeans and the Japanese will get the benefits they negotiated under the rules.

If you look at who's against this in America, it is truly ironic to look at who's against this in China. Nobody's really talked about that. Not everybody's for this in China. Who's against it in China? The people that run the state-owned industries and don't want to give up their control; the more conservative elements of the military, who would like to have greater tensions between ourselves and them, and between themselves and the people of Taiwan.

It is truly ironic, when you look at who's against this in China, to see that some of the most progressive people in the United States are basically doing what they want them to do in opposing this agreement. And for me, it is very painful. And I was very proud of the history that President Ford gave us, of the last 50 years, and very proud of what President Carter said about how we feel about labor rights and human rights and the labor movement here in this country.

But the people who are running China are not foolish people. They are highly intelligent. They know the decision they have made. They understand that they are unleashing forces of change which cannot be totally controlled in the system, which, as President Carter says, has dominated in China over the last 21 years since we normalized relations.

Two years ago there were only 2 million Internet users in China. Last year there were

9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. At some point, there will be a critical mass reached, and when that happens, there will be a sea change.

When Martin Lee was here the other day talking to people about this, he said, "You know, I've led the democracy movement in Hong Kong for decades. I've never met Zhu Rongji. I can't even go to China. They won't let me go. But I'll tell you this: If you vote against this, the United States will have no influence on the human rights policies of the Chinese Government."

So why are we having this debate? Because people are anxiety-ridden about the forces of globalization, or they're frustrated over the human rights record of China, or they don't like all the procedures of the WTO. There are lots of things. Every one of you gets up every morning, there's something you don't like. That doesn't mean you should be against this agreement. But that's what has—this agreement has become like flypaper for the accumulated frustrations people have about things in the world that they don't like very much or that are spinning beyond their control or that they feel will have an uncertain result. And that's the world we're living in.

But I will say this: You know, people ask me all the time, now that I've completed about over 90 percent of my term, "Well, what have you learned about this, that, or the other thing? What have you learned about foreign policy?" I've learned it's a lot more like real life than I thought it was when I showed up here. I read all Dr. Kissinger's books, and I was immensely enlightened by them. But what he said today is right. Normally, unless you have to fight with somebody, you do better with an outstretched hand than with a clenched fist. You want to have a strong defense. You want to be ready for the worst, but you've got to try to plan for the best and give people a chance to do the right thing.

President Carter was talking about those 900,000 village elections. I went to some of those villages, and I met with some of those elected leaders. I think it would be a pretty good idea if they ran all of our campaign speeches back when we ran for reelection. [Laughter] Of course, I can say that since I'm not running anymore. [Laughter]

But I just have to say, this is an enormously impressive meeting. But the vote is going to

take place at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, and it's by far the most important national security vote that will be cast this year. It's an American vote. It unites Henry Kissinger and Andy Young and Jesse Ventura—and not at a wrestling match. [Laughter]

I thank you for being here, sir. You didn't have to come today, and I really appreciate it.

But I will say this: We have got to tell people. You know, it doesn't matter what the local political pressure is, and it doesn't matter what your anxiety is. The truth is, if we vote for this, 10 years from now we will wonder why it was a hard fight. And if the Congress votes against it, they will be kicking themselves in the rear 10 years from now, because America will be paying the price. And I believe the price will start to be paid not 10 years from now, not even 10 months from now, but immediately. That's why the President-elect of Taiwan wants us so badly to approve permanent normal trading relations. That's why most of the human rights activists do.

And yes, it's an economic issue, and you all know I'm interested in economics. And it's about as much of an economic laydown as I've ever seen, because what we're giving is China membership in the WTO in return for greater access to their markets, the right to sell things there without having to manufacture things there, the right to sell things there without having a transfer of technology.

It will help us, because then we'll at least have some demonstration of our good-faith commitment to the long-term decision they have made to try to be a more open society abiding by international rules of law. Then we'll at least have a way to continue this dialog and intensify it on religious rights, on political rights, on labor rights, on all human rights issues, on the environment, on missile and other technology proliferation, all these defense issues which have brought the former Chiefs of Staff and the former Defense Secretaries here and the former National Security Advisers here today.

So what I would like to ask all of you to do when you leave here is to pick somebody you know in the Congress and call them and tell them what we're all saying to one another today. Of course we want the voice of this meeting to echo across the country and to embrace the Congress.

I wish it weren't a fight, but it is. And I'd just like to say one thing in closing. If you

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look at the whole sweep of American history, at critical periods, we've always been willing to redefine our responsibilities as a nation: first, in ways that brought us together as a people, in the 19th century and then all the way through the Great Depression and later through the civil rights revolution and the women's rights movement and the environmental movement; and second, in ways that recognized our unique responsibilities first to our neighbors and then to those across the globe as we became more and more blessed.

One of the things I was thinking about in terms of our relationship with China is that President Nixon and President Carter and President Ford and even President Bush, for whose support we're very grateful for, they all faced a different world than we face here today. And frankly, they faced different challenges at home when they were making these tough decisions abroad.

We haven't been in this kind of economic and social shape in America since the early 1960's. If we can't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever be able to do it? Why—what could we possibly be afraid of, based on the capacity of this country to grow its economy and improve its social condition? If we can't meet this kind of a challenge now, we are abandoning the legacy of the last 50 years, when previous Presidents and previous Congresses have done things harder to do than this in economic and social turbulence far greater than we face today.

In fact, I almost think that these good times are some sort of a disability here because they encourage people to lose their focus, to lose their concentration, to sort of drift off and assume that there are no consequences to decisions that are not responsible. There are always consequences.

And this country has never had a better chance to shape the world of the future for our children. We all know it's the right decision. And virtually 100 percent of the people at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue know it's the right decision. We cannot allow our prosperity to lull us into self-indulgence.

We have to use our prosperity to build the 21st century world that many of you fought in World War II for, Senator Mansfield fought in World War I for, that you served in the Government for, that you gave your lives to public service for, that you sustained our standard for freedom throughout the cold war for, that you supported all these other trade-opening measures for.

And if we can't do it with the lowest unemployment in 30 years and 21 million new jobs and the longest expansion in history, we'll never be able to explain it to our children and our grandchildren, and this place will not be nearly as happy a place to be for the next several years. But if we do it, one more time we will say, we kept faith in our time with America's eternal march.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young; Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and former Senator Michael J. Mansfield. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James A. Baker III, former Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter, and Vice President Al Gore.

Statement on Protection of Forest Roadless Areas

May 9, 2000

The plan proposed today by Secretary Glickman to prohibit road building in roadless areas of our national forests is an important step toward my goal of lasting protection for these priceless lands. These pristine areas are some

of the last wild places in America, and I am firmly committed to preserving them for future generations. I commend the Forest Service for its extraordinary effort in developing this proposal and providing the American people with

every opportunity to help shape it. I encourage members of the public and all those with a stake in the future of our national forests to carefully review this proposal and make their voices heard as the Forest Service continues to develop and refine this historic initiative.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Legislation May 9, 2000

I am extremely pleased that today the House passed H.R. 4386, the "Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act," in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Each year thousands of women who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer do not receive the comprehensive coverage they need, despite extraordinary efforts by Federal health programs to provide that care. This legislation, which I was proud to include in this year's budget, will provide States with the option to provide the full Medicaid benefit package without delay to uninsured women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through Federal screening programs.

I also want to commend the Congress for today's strong bipartisan vote in support of the "Long Term Care Security Act." This legislation, which I have long advocated, provides authorization for the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program to offer long-term care insurance to current and retired Federal employees. I hope that the legislation serves as a model for all private employers and encourages them to provide this type of coverage to their employees. While this is an important step, it is only one step. We must also continue to work to pass

a broad range of long-term care initiatives, including a \$3,000 tax credit for people with long-term care needs or their caregivers; new funding for services which support family caregivers of older persons; and efforts to enable States to improve equity in Medicaid eligibility for people in home- and community-based settings.

I am encouraged by the news of Congress acting on these significant policy initiatives. We need to build on these achievements and act now to pass a range of policies of importance to the American people, including the creation of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights and a new voluntary prescription drug benefit option as we take steps to modernize and strengthen the Medicare program. And finally, we must redouble our efforts to expand high quality, affordable coverage for all Americans. I urge the Congress to work towards passing the administration's health coverage proposals that would expand coverage to at least 5 million uninsured Americans and provide health services to millions more by providing new, affordable health insurance options for parents, 19- to 20-year-olds, legal immigrants, workers between jobs, and the near elderly.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority May 9, 2000

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Delegation of Authority for Submission of Report Under Section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65)

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of Amer-

ica, I hereby delegate to the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility of the President to submit annual reports under section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65). You are authorized to re-delegate this responsibility consistent with applicable law.

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You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

NOTE: This memorandum was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Air Force Academy Falcons

May 9, 2000

Thank you. Please be seated. We're delighted to be joined today by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Rudy de Leon, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Shelton. You may have seen in the movie that I sunk his battleship, but so far he's got all his planes. [Laughter] So he's welcome here at the Air Force celebration. General Handy, welcome. And a special word of welcome to the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, Lieutenant General Oelstrom, and to Coach DeBerry and to all the members of the Falcons football team and the other friends of the Air Force who are here today.

We are celebrating something that has never happened before. This is the first time we will award the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the Air Force Academy in the 21st century. [Laughter]

In the last century, by my count, there were four great sports dynasties. From 1947 to 1958, the Yankees won 9 of 12 World Series. I actually saw the last few of those, when we got a television. From 1957 to 1969, the Celtics won 11 of 13 titles in the NBA. From 1964 to 1975, UCLA won the NCAA basketball championship 10 of 12 times. Now the Falcons have won the Commander in Chief's Trophy 9 of the last 11 times.

You know, I try to be completely neutral in these things, but the Army really was hurt that you beat them this year with a better ground game. [Laughter]

I want to say also, Coach DeBerry really knows how to hurt a guy. I said, "You know, you've been here 7 of the 8 years I've been President." He said, "That's right, and I look forward to being here next year. I'm not term-limited." [Laughter] And I'm glad you're not term-limited.

We celebrate today, of course, formally the presentation of the Commander in Chief's Tro-

phy. It is recognition of athletic success. But the truly remarkable thing is that these young men, year-in and year-out, win athletic success while recognizing it is not the most important part of their lives. They are trained academically. They are trained militarily. They are trained to develop good character and good citizenship and to be good people and representatives of the United States of America. And still, year-in and year-out, they play well; they win a lot; they play as a team. And it must be immensely encouraging to every American, as it is to me as Commander in Chief, to know that they will be representing our country as an important part of our national defense in the years ahead.

To all of you who have had anything to do with their success, I thank you. To all of you who teach at the Air Force Academy, who coach, or who otherwise support these young people who have made such an important commitment to excellence and to service, I thank you.

And I want to again say I won't be here next year, but I expect you will be. [Laughter] I hope you will remember that I have been honored to see the Air Force Academy here 7 of these 8 years, that you have earned every appearance. And I hope you will take with you into life the values that brought you to this place today.

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to ask the Superintendent to come up for remarks, and then we'll have the coach say a thing or two.

General, it's good to see you again.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Tad J. Oelstrom, USAF, Superintendent, and Fisher DeBerry, football coach, U.S. Air Force Academy.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Mary L. Landrieu May 9, 2000

I think that young is a relative term. [*Laughter*] I've decided that young is anybody today younger than I am. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, I want to thank Jim and Ann for having us in their beautiful, beautiful home. I love this place. I always love to come here. And I want to thank Mary and Frank and little Connor, who I knew even before he was here. And I want to thank all of you for being here for Mary. A lot of you must feel old, you come—you do all these things over and over again. So I thank you on behalf of Senator Landrieu and Senator Daschle and Senator Lieberman and Senator Breaux and Senator Lincoln and Senator Edwards. And Congressman Jefferson, thank you for being there for us.

I can't help but tell you, we did this great event for China today, where President Ford and President Carter came, and Henry Kissinger came. And he always sounds like God with a German accent. [*Laughter*] Maybe God has a German accent, for all I know. [*Laughter*] And Jim Baker—and they all gave great talks. And we talked, and I looked out there, and I realized that there are all these former Secretaries of State, Secretaries of the Treasury, National Security Advisers, chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House and Senate, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was the most—Trade Ambassadors—the most astonishing group of Americans.

And Gerald Ford got up and started talking about a vote he cast in 1949 for trade with China that was joined in by John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Carl Albert, and Albert Gore, Sr. And I realized that I was there with people that represented the last 50 years of American history. And then I realized there was one person there that represented the whole 20th century, Mike Mansfield, who is 97 or 98 now. Didn't tell the truth about his age when he was 15 and talked his way into the Marines in World War I. And then he came home and studied Asian-Pacific affairs, became a professor at Montana, became a Congressman, a Senator, President Kennedy's Senate majority leader, a post he held for about 14 years, I think, a long

time anyway. Then President Carter appointed him Ambassador to Japan.

And when Mary said I was young, it reminded me of a story. Shortly after I became President, when my mentor, Senator Fulbright, was still alive—he was 87 and Mike Mansfield was 91, and they had lunch together one day. And the next day Senator Fulbright came to see me. He was hitting us all up at the time, and he was still in great shape then. And Mike Mansfield looked at him and said, "Now, Bill, how old are you again?" He said, "I'm 87." And Mansfield said, "Oh, to be 87 again." [*Laughter*] So this youth, you know, it's a relative thing.

I will be very brief. First of all, I first met Mary Landrieu when she was a very young State representative and I was a young Governor, and neither one of us looked our age. And she still looks younger than she is, and I now look more than my age. [*Laughter*] But I thought she was great when I first met her. I always loved her daddy, from the time I worked with President Carter and his administration when I was attorney general in my home State, and I've known her a long time. And I thought when she ran for the Senate that if she could be elected, she would be uncommonly effective. Senator Breaux worked hard for her; Congressman Jefferson did; Mayor Morial of New Orleans did; and I certainly did. And it all worked out pretty well, and she has exceeded even my very high expectations.

I think sometime in the next day or two, the House of Representatives is going to pass a House version of this bill that she and others have been working on for a long time, to create a permanent conservation fund that could literally change the face of hundreds of American communities and give us a permanent conservation legacy in America, the likes of which we have never had before. That's quite an achievement for a first-term Senator. Now, we have to do it, but—[*applause*].

She is also, as you heard, supporting the administration's initiative to get permanent normal trade relations with China. And we had that meeting today, and there's no point in me repeating what Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and all the others said, but I will tell you this:

This is the most important national security vote we will make this year.

A lot of you here agree with this issue because you understand the economics of it. And as I pointed out today, most of the people who are against this are against it out of their frustration or their anxiety about globalization, generally, or their frustration because China keeps doing things they don't like in human rights, or they don't like the way the World Trade Organization operates, or some other reason. It has nothing to do with whether or not this is or is not in our economic interests or our national security interests.

But this is an easy vote for a Democrat to say no to. And that's another reason I'm here, because Mary Landrieu says yes, because it is a significantly important vote. And we will be paying the price for a decade if we fail to adopt this. And we could start paying the price within a matter of months. It is a profoundly important issue to the world that our children and grandchildren will live in. And so I'm here for that reason.

And the third thing I want to say is that Mary and a lot of her colleagues have supported our efforts to raise education standards. One of the things that bothered me when I ran for President was that people, even people who were supporting me, they wanted to vote for change. They thought I had a lot of energy, but a lot of them, frankly, didn't believe we'd make any difference. They had been so disappointed for so long and heard so much political hot air that they didn't think we could make a difference. They didn't think things could be better.

And—welcome, Senator Robb. Thank you for being here. You'll forgive me for being impertinent. If you hadn't given him a contribution, I hope you'll give him one, too. [Laughter] If ever a person deserved to be reelected, he does. And he's going to be, and you might as well help him because he needs your help.

Well, anyway, the thing that bothered me, even in my campaign there were people who thought, "Well, I like old Clinton's ideas, but you know, we can't really turn this deficit around or make much of a difference in the economy or reduce the welfare rolls or"—you know, I heard it all.

And now, you know what's happened. We've gone from deficit to surplus. When I leave office, we will have paid off \$355 billion of the

national debt. And I'm very proud of that. And we'll have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment in over 30 years, but also the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, welfare rolls half the size they were when I took office, and 8 years of declining crime.

Now, what's the point here? We don't have an excuse not to do our best anymore, because we know that our common challenges are like all other problems: They do yield to intelligent effort.

And the reason education is so important—I took this education tour last week, and I don't want to bore you with the whole thing, but I'll just give you three examples. I went to the first charter school in the country, which is a public school set up outside the normal rules and regulations to serve a specific population or to pursue a specific education mission. And if they do well, they can stay in business. And if they're not, they're supposed to have their charter jerked. That's the whole idea, that they're super-accountable.

Now, they haven't all worked well. We've had problems with one or two here. But you should know that when I ran for President, there was one; today there are 1,700. Mary's voted to help me create more. Overall, they've done better than average schools, and they're vastly oversubscribed. People want to get into them.

And I visited this school in St. Paul, Minnesota, where there are over 100 kids who have had terrible problems in their lives, terrible problems in school. They were all in school. None of them were dropping out. There were no violence problems, no drug problems, no nothing. They were showing up every day and learning, and they felt like they had a home. And they were performing at a high level.

I went to Columbus, Ohio, to a school in a very poor neighborhood, where they—in Columbus, they've got 55 of these 100,000 teachers we got out. And we've been attacked by the Republicans. We got attacked by their nominee for President. They say we're trying to micro-manage the school system. The people met me, everybody from the superintendent on down, to thank me for the fact that we were giving them teachers and the money had to go for teachers in the early grades. They've gone from 25 average class size down to 15.

And in this one school, in a very poor neighborhood, in one year they went from 10 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level to 45 percent, 10 percent of the kids doing math at or about grade level to 33 percent, 10 percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level to 30 percent—in one year. And they have two of those teachers.

And then I went to Owensboro, Kentucky. Four years ago the Congress required the States—first we required the States to set up school standards. Then we required the States to identify schools that weren't making it and to come up with a strategy to fix them. Kentucky got out there early. Four years ago, they identified 170 failing schools. Within 2 years, 91 percent were off the failure list.

This school I visited had two-thirds of its children eligible for the free or reduced school lunch program. And they had one of those teachers we required to lower class size in the early grades. Listen to this. In 4 years, here's what they did—two-thirds of the kids on free or reduced lunch. They went from 12 percent to 57 percent reading at or above grade level. They went from 5 percent to 70 percent doing math at or above grade level. They went from 0 to 64 percent doing science at or above grade level. They ranked 18th in the entire State of Kentucky in academic achievement. Ten of the 20 best grade schools in Kentucky now have over half the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race and income are not destiny. And we can also turn the schools around and give everybody excellence in education in this country. And that's another thing that brought me here tonight.

Now, this is the last thing I want to say. You want to know how this Presidential election is going to come out, how these races for the Senate and House are going to come out? It depends upon what people think the election is about. Whatever they decide the question is will determine the answer.

What do you think it's about? If you don't remember anything else I say, you remember

this. I think it should be about, what are we going to do with this moment of promise? I think the answer to the question should be: We're going to meet the big challenges and seize the big opportunities. How are we going to do it? We're going to do it not by doing just what I've done but by changing in the direction we're moving and not taking a U-turn on economic policy, on education policy, on any of these other policies.

So what do you think the election is about? Do you really believe it's about making the most of this moment? What does that mean? It means taking on the big challenges and opportunities. How should we do it? We ought to keep changing in the direction that brought us here.

Now if people believe that, then Al Gore will be elected President. We'll pick up seats in the Senate. We'll win the House back. And within no time at all, the Democrats will be rewarded by the American people for the good governance they have brought. That is really the issue.

But to do it, we have to keep meeting the challenges every day. We can't duck the hard votes, like this China vote. We've got to show up, be counted, and deliver for the American people.

I hope you will share this with people. Somebody asks you why you came here tonight, tell them you love Mary Landrieu, just like I do; you think she's done a great job; but you don't want to see America blow the most terrific opportunity we have had in my lifetime to prove we can build the future of our dreams for our children. And we've got to have people like her to do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts James and Ann Free; Senator Landrieu's husband, Frank Snellings, and their son, Connor; former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James A. Baker III; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Daniel K. Akaka May 9, 2000

The President. Well, thank you very much. Aloha.

Audience members. Aloha!

The President. And to Danny and Millie and all of you, thank you so much for having me here. Senator Daschle, thank you for being here. And I'd like to acknowledge our great friend, a former Member of the House of Representatives, Norm Mineta. Thank you for coming, Norm, and being here with your friends and your extended family.

I want to tell you that I'm here for two reasons tonight, besides the fact that I've never had a bad day in Hawaii. [*Laughter*] And I knew that if I came here tonight, Danny would do as much as he could to simulate Hawaii. You know, I would have music; I'd have a lei; people would say "aloha"; everybody would be relaxed. And by the time I left, no matter what I was worried about, I'd be in a good mood. And sure enough, that's happened.

The second reason I'm here is in behalf of one of the finest people in the United States Senate and one of the most popular people in the entire Congress. Dan Akaka is not only a good Senator, he is a good man. And I have yet to meet the first human being who didn't love him who knew him. And I want to thank him for being my friend.

The third reason I'm here is because he asked me, and I owe him. [*Laughter*]

You know, there was this—you heard, Senator Daschle said all those nice things about my service as President. There was a really funny article—I was reading Hillary this article—you know, when you think you're about to get good press, read it to your spouse, and they'll find a way to bring it down. [*Laughter*] So I said, "Look here, here's this article. It says I have really high job approval ratings. And if it weren't for '93 and '94, they'd be the highest average ratings since people have been taking polls." And Hillary said, "Well, of course. In '93 and '94 you made all the hard decisions that gave you the high job approval ratings in '95 and afterward."

And if you think about it—I said it in a casual way, I'm serious—in 1993, when I presented an economic plan to cut the deficit in half and

to get this country moving again and get interest rates down, we didn't get a single vote from the other party. They all said that it was going to throw the country into recession. And if anybody—anybody—in our party in either House had changed their vote, it would have been defeated. We would not have enjoyed the economic recovery we have had, and I would not have enjoyed the political recovery I enjoyed after 1994.

But the most important thing is, the American people now have the longest economic expansion in history, over 21 million new jobs, unemployment rate under 4 percent for the first time since early 1970. And when I leave office, we will have paid off—paid off—\$355 billion of the national debt in the last 3 years. Now, all because he was there. We lose one vote, and it's history; the whole last 8 years are a totally different story.

It was almost the same when we had to pass the crime bill to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals, put more police officers on the street. You probably saw the report Sunday, crime down 8 years in a row—and the leadership of the other party overwhelmingly negative on the Brady bill, on banning the cop-killer bullets, on the assault weapons ban, on putting 100,000 police on the streets, all of those things. He was there.

And in education, I just want to say, you know, that's a story that is not as well-known: college-going up 10 percent, reading and math scores almost up a full grade level. But in the areas where people have taken seriously the legislation that I proposed 4 years ago, that every State had to identify every school which was not performing well, where the schools were not teaching the children to learn, and come up with strategies to turn them around, we're seeing breathtaking gains.

I just got back from Kentucky. I'll just give you one example. I was in this little town in western Kentucky, where your former colleague Wendell Ford was born and grew up, and he was there to be with me—Owensboro, Kentucky—two-thirds of the children on free and reduced lunches. Nineteen ninety-six we passed—the Democrats did—a requirement that

States identify schools that are failing and come up with strategies to turn them around or shut them down. To stop social promotion, which we didn't require, but we supported, we also have gone from nothing to \$50 million for after-school and summer school programs, to help so we don't brand children failures when the system fails them.

Okay, so I show up in this little town in western Kentucky where the local grade school has just been named the 18th best grade school in the State, and they were a failing school 4 years ago. Now, here's what you need to know: Two-thirds of the kids in that school are eligible for free or reduced school lunches—two-thirds. Of the 20 best elementary schools in Kentucky, 10 of them have over half of their kids eligible for free or reduced school lunch.

Race, ethnicity, income, and location are not destiny if we can give all of our children a world-class education. And the role we played in that would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the supporters I had in our party and the Congress, including Senator Akaka. So I'm proud to be here tonight for him.

Now, last and most important, elections are always about tomorrow, always about the future. So if someone asks you why you came here tonight, besides bragging on Danny Akaka as a human being and talking about what a great record he built, how much you appreciate the fact that he helped me, I hope you will say something like this: This is the first time maybe ever our country has had such a great opportunity because of our economic strength and social progress and our role in creating a more peaceful world, that we've had the opportunity to build the future of our dreams for our children.

The real question in this election is, what are we going to do with all this prosperity? What's the answer to that question? Do you believe that's the question? And if you believe that's the question, what's your answer?

Audience member. Al Gore!

The President. I'm coming to that. [Laughter]

But this is very important. You know, I'm not running for anything, but I know a little something about elections. And normally, the candidate who wins is the product of what the voters believe the election is about. If you ask the right question, it will lead you to the right answer.

So what's this election about? This election is about, what are we going to do with all these good things that have happened in the last 7 years? I think the answer is, what we're going to do—I know what I think it should be. It should be, we're going to take advantage of it to build the future of our dreams. We're going to take our big opportunities. We're going to take our big challenges. We're going to bring economic opportunity to people in places left behind. We're going to give all our kids a world-class education and get rid of child poverty. We're going to do more to help people balance work and family. We're going to prove that you can meet the challenges of the environment and still grow the economy. We're going to deal with the aging of America and save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. We're going to build one America. We're going to pass that hate crimes bill, and we're going to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and we're going to continue to fight against racial and ethnic and religious and other discrimination, until we pull this country together.

That's what I think we ought to do. And we're going to keep the economy going, and we're going to keep going until we get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. These are big things, you know, big things we've never been able to do before.

Now, if you believe that's what this election is about, then the next question is, how are you going to do it? Well, you have two choices. You can continue to change, building on what has brought us to this point, or you can abandon it and go back to the political philosophy that governed before we started in 1993.

And that's what Danny Akaka's race is about. That's what the race for President is all about. Do you want an economic strategy that gives us a tax cut we can afford and still gives us enough money to pay down the debt, save Social Security and Medicare, and invest in the education of our children? I do. But if you prefer, you can have a tax cut and a defense increase and education vouchers that takes us back to deficit spending, doesn't give us money to invest in education, but makes everybody real happy in the short run because they'll be rolling in dough.

Now, we tried it their way. We tried it our way. You have evidence. Now you have to

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choose. Which way are you going to try going forward?

The same thing is true with education. The same thing is true with health care. The same thing is true with the environment.

And so I say to all of you, I'm glad you're here. I'm glad you're helping Dan Akaka. He is as fine a man as I've ever known in public life. And he's always good to me when we play golf together. *[Laughter]* But I'm telling you, this is a big election. I'm not running, but I can tell you it's just every bit as important as the one we made in '92 and the one we made in '96, because this will determine whether the American people are going to embrace what works or say, "Okay, we tried it for 8 years, and it was nice, but I think we'll go back and try something else." And the something else was what they tried before, but it was so long ago, everybody has forgotten.

That is what this is about. This gentleman here said, "You ought to tell people that the slogan of this election ought to be: 'Before You Go Back, Think Back,' " which is better than anything I've thought of. *[Laughter]*

But the reason I want the Vice President to win is because I know what a role he's played in the last 8 years, and I know he understands the future, and he knows how to lead us there.

The reason I think Dan Akaka should be re-elected is, I know how much he loves the ordinary people that he represents and because every single time his country needed him he was there—every time. Not one time did he ever take a dive and walk away when we were trying to build this future.

And so I ask all of you to think about that. I thank you for helping him. And I want you to go out between now and November and tell people why you are doing this. Tell them there may not be another time in our lifetime when we can do this. Tell them there are places and people that are still left behind, including a lot of people in Hawaii because of the Asian financial crisis, who didn't fully participate in this economic recovery. And tell them you want a change, but you'd like to keep moving in the direction that we've enjoyed for the last several years.

One good way you can do that is by making sure that he gets as near to 100 percent of the vote as possible.

Come on up here, Senator Akaka.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Akaka's wife, Mary Mildred (Millie); and former Senator Wendell H. Ford.

Videotaped Remarks to the White House News Photographers' Association May 10, 2000

Good evening. I'm sorry I can't be with you tonight, but I'm glad to join you in this way, as the members of the White House News Photographers' Association celebrate your annual dinner. I extend my congratulations to this evening's award winners.

For a long time now, I've been an admirer of your work, and in more recent years, I've even been a subject of it. From here on the other side of the lens, I want to tell you how much I appreciate your skill and your dedication. Each and every day, you bring the world of Washington into sharper focus for the world outside Washington. Taking on some of the toughest assignments in journalism, you turn them into images that endure, images that help

define our times and the way that we will remember them far into the future.

I want to mention one family that's been making this kind of contribution for half a century now, the McNamees. Wally McNamee was first named Photographer of the Year back when President Eisenhower was in the White House. Along the way, he's been honored more than any member in the history of the association. Wally, congratulations on tonight's award. It really has been a lifetime of achievement.

Of course, one of the greatest honors any parent could ever receive is when a child chooses to follow in his footsteps. Tonight Wally's son, Win, carries on a McNamee family tradition

by taking first place in my favorite category of photography, Presidential.

I want to extend my congratulations to all the photographers and cameramen who are being honored tonight, and make special mention of another very special award winner, Sharon Farmer. My first day on the job was her first day, and I've been honored to have her by my side, literally, ever since. I am lucky to have Sharon as a friend and every bit as lucky to have her as my Director of White House Photography, the first woman and the first African-American ever to hold that post. Sharon Farmer is making history, even as she records it.

Sharon, I thank you. We all know that with or without a camera, you're a straight shooter.

I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. And I'm proud to join your peers tonight in bestowing the recognition you never seek but richly deserve.

Again, congratulations to all tonight's winners and to the association for your fine work and many achievements.

Thank you, and good night.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 6 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on April 25 for the association's dinner on May 6. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 10. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Proposed Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation May 10, 2000

The President Well, good morning. Please be seated. I'm sorry you had to stand up so long, but that's the fastest one group of politicians ever walked through another group. [Laughter] I'm delighted to see you all here. I want to thank Senator Daschle and Senator Gephardt and their colleagues, Secretary Shalala, the Older Women's League,* those who represent the aging/disability consumer, and other health advocates who are here. I want to thank Betty Dzik, who will talk in a moment to explain what this is really all about.

We are here together today to announce the support of the Democratic caucus in the Senate and the House for legislation to provide affordable prescription drug coverage for every older American. For our seniors, prescription drugs are not a luxury; they can mean the difference between life and death, between years of anguish and years of fulfillment. At this time of historic prosperity and strength, there is absolutely no reason that we should force seniors to make a choice between their health and their food or their daily existence.

I am profoundly grateful to Congressman Gephardt and Senator Daschle and their colleagues for developing an approach that the

Democrats can rally behind. In a few moments, I will ask them to share the details of the efforts we will make together. But we all know we can't achieve our efforts without bipartisan support in the Congress. That's why, just as we are trying to do with the Patients' Bill of Rights, we want to reach across the aisle to encourage Republican support, as well.

This can and should be a truly bipartisan effort. But I want to make it clear first why America's seniors and people with disabilities cannot afford to wait any longer for prescription drug coverage.

Today, more than three in five older Americans lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage. The burden is getting worse. According to Families USA, the price of prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years in a row now.

Two groups in particular bear a tremendous burden, rural Americans and women. As Senator Daschle knows so well, people in rural areas are much less likely to secure prescription drug coverage. According to a study released today by the Older Women's League, almost 8 out of 10 women on Medicare use prescription drugs regularly, and most of them pay for these medications out of pocket. In total, women

* White House correction.

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spend 13 percent more than men do for prescription drugs, in spite of the fact that on average, their incomes are 40 percent lower.

America's seniors, men and women, deserve better. No one should be forced to take a bus trip to Canada to get medicines made in the U.S. at a lower price. We desperately need a comprehensive plan to provide a prescription drug benefit that is optional, affordable, accessible to all, based on competition, not price controls, to boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best possible price, and one that addresses the devastating burden of catastrophic coverage.

We will have in our budget, especially with the improved economy, the funds to deal with catastrophic coverage as well, and we absolutely should do that.

The budget I have presented to Congress will continue our efforts to pay down the debt and pay it off by 2013, will be able to provide protection against catastrophic costs, and will provide voluntary prescription drug coverage to all Americans.

Adding the voluntary prescription drug coverage to Medicare is the smart and the right thing to do. I will say this one more time: We would never think of creating Medicare today without it, and it is high time we fixed it.

Now, let me say, without getting into a fight over the legislation that's been proposed, I don't think it's enough to stop at \$15,000 income limit to give help on prescription drugs. Half the people who need the help fall within the income limits of \$15,000 to \$50,000. I don't think we should write a plan that basically is designed to please the people who are selling the drugs instead of the people who are buying the drugs.

And as long as we are trying to make the price competition system work and give bargaining power to seniors, we ought to do this right and cover the people who need it. This is not about winning a political fight. It's about giving people a chance to fight for a good long life.

And I want to introduce now Betty Dizik, someone who knows firsthand the enormous burdens of prescription drugs. She's had to make some very hard choices in order to afford the drugs that she desperately needs, and she is exhibit A for why we are all here today.

Betty, come on up here and tell us your story. Give her a hand. [Applause]

Thank you.

[At this point, Ms. Dizik, Senator Thomas A. Daschle, and Representative Richard A. Gephardt made brief remarks.]

The President. Thanks to Congressman Gephardt's consideration, none of you will have to spend your hard-earned money to buy prescription drugs to treat your cold that you got from being flooded out here. [Laughter] But let me thank you, Betty, thank you, Secretary Shalala, and thank all the Members of Congress. Look at our legislation. We need some Republican support. This is a good bill. It will make a big difference.

Thank you, and bless you all. Get in here before you get wet.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Betty Dizik.

Remarks in Arlington, Virginia, to the National Conference on Building Prosperity in the Delta

May 10, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. Good afternoon, and welcome. Thank you for coming here to meet. I know that we're having a reception over at the White House later this evening; I hope all of you will come, and I look forward to seeing you all there, as well.

I want to begin by thanking Conn Davis for his introduction. He's an impressive young man.

In addition to going to Boys Nation, you might be interested to know that he's a football stand-out and Eagle Scout, and from my point of view, most important, he plays trombone in his school's jazz band. [Laughter]

I also want to thank all the members of our administration who have been part of this. And I can't mention them all, but I especially should

note, of course, Secretary Slater is from the Delta, from Lee County in Arkansas; Bill Ferris, the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, from Mississippi; our FCC Chairman, Bill Kennard; our Office of Personnel Management Director, Janice Lachance, is here. I thank all of them and the others who are helping me with the Delta, as well as all the people on the White House staff who have worked so hard on this, Lynn Cutler, Lisa Kountoupes, and many others.

Governor Musgrove, we're glad to see you here. Thank you for coming, sir. And we appreciate your leadership, and we're glad to see you down there. I thank Mayor Herenton from Memphis. You know, when I was a boy, we used to go over to the Delta, and everybody who lived east of Little Rock would say that they were not from Arkansas. They lived in the State of Delta, and Memphis was its capital. So I'm glad to see you here, sir. Thank you very much.

I want to thank my Arkansas Congressman from the Delta, Marion Berry. I think he's still here. And if any of you had any idea how many hours he and Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln have spent literally haranguing me about the entire Delta, not just Arkansas, you would all supplement their salaries generously. They have been wonderful. I want to thank Marion Berry and Blanche Lincoln for what they have done.

Lieutenant Governor Wood, we're glad to have you here. My old friend Jess White, we've been working on these issues for more than 15 years together. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to a former Delta Congressman, Mike Espy, who's here—I think, plainly, one of the two or three best Agriculture Secretaries this country has ever had. And I really thank you very much for being here.

I won't go into this in great detail today, but I'm going to have in the next few months some further proposals on agriculture, which I think are important. We should not forget the agriculture component of the Delta's future and the fact that, as I warned when it passed, the last farm bill we passed basically is bad for family farmers except when prices are high. When prices are high, everybody's getting along all right. We need to do better in the next farm bill and with agricultural policy to recognize the unique characteristics of the family farm structure that, thank goodness, is still alive in most of the Delta, and we need to do what we can

to preserve it. So I thank you, Mike Espy. And all the farmers that are here, I thank you, and I hope that we will remember that.

Finally, just by way of introduction, I would like to say a special word of appreciation to all of the business leaders who are here, large and small. And if I might, I'd like to say one special word of appreciation to Wayne Leonard and the folks at Entergy. They have been really devoted to this whole idea of our new market strategy and rebuilding the Delta. And I've had I don't know how many people who have told me in the last couple of months that they've had meetings with Wayne or various Entergy executives who have said, "Well, here's what our company's into. Now, let's get past that, and let me talk to you about what I really want to talk to you about, which is rebuilding the Delta."

So, for all of you in the private sector that have that kind of commitment—obviously, most of this will be done with and through you, and I thank you all very, very much.

Those of you whom I have had the privilege to know in Arkansas over the last several decades, some of you all my life—there's my State Senator out there, Bud Canada; thank you for being here—and those of you with whom I worked on the Delta Development Commission or on the Southern Growth Policies Board know that this is more than a political issue to me, even more than a public policy problem. I've been interested in the people and the problems and the promise of the Delta for 40 years.

You know, I loved music when I was a child. I was 15 years old when I first went to New Orleans. I still remember everything I did. The first place I ever went where hamburgers cost more than a dollar; I was horrified. [Laughter] I still remember going to Preservation Hall and sitting there as a 15-year-old boy for 4 or 5 hours, listening to these old guys play music that I would kill to be able to play like. I still remember everything about it. I still remember how the Delta looked and the bends in the river.

And I still remember when I was in college—I used to take several days off when I was in college, either during Christmas or summer vacation, just to drive over to the Delta and wander around—just me, alone. I'd get up on the levee and ride up and down and go into these little old towns along the Delta and talk

to people, just trying to get a sense of the pulse of the place.

And I still remember some of the things that weren't very good, too. I remember the—it was in the Delta that I last saw segregated restrooms marked out. And I remember when we made our campaign comeback in 1982, and I ran for Governor with the help of Rodney Slater and my friend Carroll Willis, who may be here today, two sons of the Delta. We told the people of the Delta we were never coming to a segregated meeting in the Mississippi Delta again, and we were going to have to—it was about more than an election—we were going to turn this region around, and we were going to have to do it together. And a lot of people thought I was nuts. And within 30 days, everybody thought I was a genius.

And we've all been working together over there ever since, with some ups and downs and twists and turns. But I think that I have been privileged to be a part of the last 20 years of the history of the Delta. And I loved the opportunity I had to do this Delta commission, because I got to learn a lot about southern Illinois, for example, which is south of Richmond. A lot of people don't know that. I learned a lot about western Kentucky and southeastern Missouri, where Conn is from, and places that I otherwise might never have been able to become acquainted with.

And I guess, more than anything else, what I want to say is that the pledge we made a decade ago when we issued the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission report is still what we ought to be working on, to make the people of the Delta full partners in America's future. That's why we're here today. The report that I have just been given is, in a way, a rededication to our continuing mission.

I guess what I want you to know more than anything else is, we're making progress, and we now know more than we did when we started about how to do better much more quickly. I want you to know that the Federal Government will do our part, and I will personally work on these issues until the day I leave office, and then after I do, for the rest of my life. This is a big personal issue with me, as I know it is with the Vice President and all of our people in our administration who come from this region.

Now, I want to begin with special thanks on the substance of this to Secretary Slater. We

got 24 agencies together to help Secretary Slater run our Federal task force on the Delta, and we've put together the report that he has just given me. It's given us a chance to look back a decade and to look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the decade ahead.

Since 1990, a great deal has been done. You know that in the Nation, we have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate since January of 1970, over 21 million new jobs. But the policies we put in place I think had a special impact in the Delta, especially the expansion of the earned-income tax credit and the efforts we've made that you heard Conn talk about to bring computers and access to the Internet to our schools and other public facilities throughout the Delta.

Conn's example is pretty instructive. In 1995 his school district in East Prairie had 24 computers. We helped them get 350 more at a 70 percent discount. Now, thanks to the E-rate program that the FCC promulgated, that Vice President Gore did so much to fight for, there's a \$2 billion subsidy that goes out to the poorest school districts across America every year which enables people to make the most of these computers.

In 1994, when we started this program—I'm sure the Vice President went over this—but we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected. This year we have over 95 percent of our schools, including 90 percent of the poorest schools in America, connected to the Internet, and almost three-quarters of our classrooms. And this will make a big difference, both educationally and economically, in the Delta in the years ahead.

Over the last 7 years, we've had over \$2 billion in transportation improvements, from ports to highways to airports; over \$6 billion in job training, welfare-to-work, and youth opportunity initiatives; and again, \$250 million just to connect the schools that were poor in the Delta to the Internet; more than \$10 million in direct investment in the enterprise zones and the empowerment communities, a program, again, which the Vice President has led, which has leveraged 10 times that much from private resources.

I have done what I could to do this in a bipartisan or even a nonpartisan manner. And I know Rodney said the Speaker of the House was coming to the White House tonight, to the reception. If he is there, I want every one of

you to go up and shake his hand and thank him for working with me to pass the new markets legislation in Congress. I'll say more about that in a minute, but I think that is the biggest single thing we could do to help the Delta economy in a quick way. And I will say more about it, but I want you to thank him for that.

Just the tours we have taken in the Delta have already led to more resources in places like Hermitage, Arkansas, at the tomato co-operative, and Clarksdale, Mississippi. And the Private Sector Enterprise Corporation of the Delta has created more than 5,200 jobs and helped support more than 600 local businesses.

Since the 1990 Delta report, more than 10,000 Delta residents got phone service for the first time. It's hard to talk about the Internet if you don't have a telephone line. And lest you get too discouraged, let me tell you what a big problem this still is in other places, in physically remote areas. I was at the Navajo Reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico, which is in northern New Mexico near the Colorado and Utah borders, where the unemployment rate is 58 percent, and the percentage of people without telephones is 70 percent. I was introduced by a young woman like Conn—a little younger than you—a brilliant young girl, a Native American girl, who won a contest and got a beautiful computer. And she couldn't log on to the Internet because she had to take the computer home to a home without a telephone line.

So this is a big deal, the fact that 10,000 more Delta residents have gotten telephone service. The Delta unemployment rate has gone from 7.5 percent when I took office to 5.1 percent in February. In Mississippi, the Delta counties have created jobs at a rate 13 times greater than the national average, which is saying something.

But unemployment is still above the national average. Wages and homeownership are still below the national average. Poverty and infant mortality have gone down but are still too high. And we know that the statistics don't tell the whole story. There are still towns without proper sewage systems and children sick from pollution and malnutrition. There are still millions of Americans seeking to live their dreams without a way to do it in the Delta.

I'm here because it's a big personal issue with me, but I also am here as President because it's in our national interest to do something about this. I've said this over and over again,

but I want you to remember this. One of the most significant debates we have here in Washington—and one of the things, by the way, that as American citizens you'll be called upon to decide in the coming election—is, how we can continue this overall economic expansion? All of us have been there when times got bad in America. And when times got bad in America, they were always worse in the Delta. When the country got hit hard, we always got hit harder.

When I served as Governor during the decade of the eighties, until the year I ran for President there was only one month—one month—in the last 10 years I was Governor when our unemployment rate was at or below the national average. So we know when times are bad, we suffer more.

On the other hand, when times are good—you've followed this in the press; there is a big debate now. Unemployment is at 3.9 percent. Is inflation just around the corner? Should the Federal Reserve raise interest rates more? If they raise interest rates more, will it cramp credit so much that it will kill the expansion? How long can this thing go on? Is this just going to be like a laboratory animal that sooner or later just runs out of steam and keels over?

Well, we had these academic debates up here, and right underneath our noses in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in the inner cities, on the Indian reservations, there are people who could start jobs, start businesses, grow the economy with no inflation whatever. If people are unemployed or underemployed and there are new opportunities out there and you create new workers, new employers, new taxpayers, and new consumers at the same time, there is no inflation in that growth.

So every person in America ought to be interested in the Mississippi Delta. If you're making money on Wall Street today and you'd like to keep on making it and you're worried that either high interest rates or a coming recession would hurt you, you should want the Delta to do well. If you're worried about where you're going to sell your next products in Silicon Valley, you should want the Delta to do well.

This is a huge issue for the Nation because no one knows how to do this. And as I say, that will be a big debate in the elections. Are we now so prosperous we ought to go back and try what we did in 1981 and later and have a great, big tax cut and hope it works? Or should we have a smaller tax cut and keep

paying the debt down and invest in our people? You know what I prefer, but I think that it's important to understand we're going to have this debate in the context of, number one, what should we do with our prosperity, and number two, how do we keep this economy going? And it's already the longest economic expansion in history.

And right there, before the eyes of every American who knows anything about this, is the Delta and every other underdeveloped area in our country. And I'm telling you, there are billions upon billions upon billions of economic growth potential that are totally noninflationary. Because of the problems we've had in the past, it is America's promise for the future, not just yours, that we ought to be developing here.

Now, on the other hand, we know that it won't happen by accident. We have to create networks and opportunities and incentives to get this done. I have asked Congress, as Secretary Slater said, to create a Delta Regional Authority with \$30 million to invest in the region's economic future. I've asked for another \$129 million in targeted assistance for the region. And I thank my Senator, Blanche Lambert Lincoln, and Congressman Marion Berry. They sponsored the regional authority bill in Congress. I thank Senator Bill Frist for his strong bipartisan support. We've got a number of bipartisan cosponsors from across the Delta, and I hope we can bring this authority to life.

And while you're here today, I hope you will ask Senator Cochran and Senator Lott, particularly, to give this thing a shove, because I think they could sort of shove it out there if they wanted to, and we need them.

I'm sure Jess White has already talked about this, but the Appalachian Regional Commission proves that these things do make a difference. They make a difference because they institutionalize concentration on a specific area and its opportunities. And it makes a difference when you've got somebody who is paid to get up every day and think about you and what you can do in an organized, focused way.

We also want to announce today new support for the Delta in three broad areas: attracting new business and economic development, investing in basic infrastructure, and building strong communities.

I know this morning the Vice President presented our new package of \$20 million in Delta economic development initiatives, loans and

grants for small businesses, training, community technology centers, community financial institutions, and tourism. That's an important issue.

Let me emphasize one part of that, the community technology centers. The congressional majority took that out of my budget, and I'm going to try to get it back in. But let me tell you why it counts. The computers are great for Comm. And in the districts where they can take the computers home and the parents can learn to E-mail the teachers, learn to use it, that's great. But most places in the Delta, we have a lot of adults who could benefit from what they could learn just by learning how to use the computers and learning what resources are available to them on the Internet. That's what these community computer centers are all about. They are designed to set up 1,000 more of them and to support the few that are out there now—there's the network out there now in the country—so that all the adults in the low income places in America can go in and learn to use the Internet for their own benefit, both because they develop computer skills and to get the information off of it.

Now, this is a big deal. I'll just give you two examples of the potential, because I want all of you to start thinking about this, and I want you to help me get these community computer centers. I'll just give you two examples. One is an American example, eBay; eBay is a site on the web where you can trade things. You get on, you find out somebody's got something to sell, and you can buy it. If you've got something that you want to sell, somebody else can buy it. There are now 30,000 people making a living on eBay—not working for the company, making a living trading on eBay—and a significant percentage of them are former welfare recipients.

Now, that's an amazing thing. Why? This is a big deal. What does the Internet do that's different, that's important for the Delta? It collapses time and space, the physical isolation that you feel. Conn talked about all the wonders of smalltown life, which I share, but being physically isolated. The Internet can collapse time and space. It can bring any subject to his school. It can bring any piece of information in the Library of Congress. The whole Encyclopedia Britannica's on the net now. And the same thing is true for the economy. So that's one example.

Second example: I was in India recently, as you may remember. I went to one of the poorer

states in India, Rajasthan, to a little village where the village women met me and showed me their dairy cooperative, and the local government people showed me how they were governing. And then they took me to the town's public building, which was an old building, but inside the public building was a brand-spanking-new computer.

And this lady came in with a newborn baby, and she wanted to learn how she could best take care of her child. And there was someone there to assist her, and the program was done in English and Hindi, modified in other languages when they need them, in other parts of the country. And this lady—every piece of information on the Federal and State government that they had already was on the net—everything—it was on their website there.

So she calls up the Health Department website, and she clicks the mouse for “Early Childhood Care,” and a couple of pages come up with great visuals, so that if you're virtually illiterate you can still figure out what it says. She punches the printer; she gets this unbelievable information—spits right out. And this woman, in a country with a per capita income of \$450, takes home with her newborn information just as good as you could get from the best suburban medical center in this area.

Now, this is why we need the community computer centers. And I hope you will help me get them all over the Delta. And I thank the Vice President for the work he's done on that.

We also have some basic infrastructure needs. There are still communities in the Delta that don't have safe drinking water, that don't have adequate sewage systems, that basically have—their basic public health infrastructure is inadequate to support any new industrial investment of any size.

I remember when I first went to the Delta, running for Governor in '78. I'd go in these little old towns, and there was sewage open in the streets. I gave every penny of Federal money I could beg, borrow, or steal to little places that didn't have any political clout, because there was 150 people here and 250 there, to clean it up, and it changed the lives of a lot of these communities. A lot of those places are doing much better 20 years later just because we gave them basic infrastructure.

So today we're going to give \$30 million more to 19 communities like that, to improve the water supply.

This is going to be a big issue for the whole world for the next 50 years, you mark my words—clean water and adequate sewage, things that most of us take for granted—huge issue around the world. Most people believe that AIDS is the biggest public health problem in the world. It is in Africa; 70 percent of the cases are there. Malaria and TB, they're the big problems. But we still have more children every day die in poor places in the world because of dysentery and other problems—diarrhea—directly related to dehydration, because they don't have safe water. So we shouldn't forget that. So I'm making this commitment today to \$30 million more as a symbolic one, but I ask you to continue to support these initiatives as well.

This is about more than bricks and mortar. We also have to make communities strong and healthy. We also want to do more on safety. You know, I said this a couple of days ago when we got the last crime report: With crime now down 8 years in a row, we know we can lower the crime rate, but no one believes we're as safe as we ought to be. And I'm trying to put another 50,000 police officers out there. Today we're going to put some more in Helena and Greenwood, Louisiana, and I hope you will continue to support that.

We're also supporting environmental education and environmentally sound farming, helping more Delta residents to buy and build their own homes, and funding a new public/private partnership to provide regional planning support that much of the Delta has never had.

And let me just say this about the housing issue. Again, we now know things we didn't know 15 years ago. A couple of years ago I went out to California, to the Inland Empire, which is east of L.A. It's the industrial area east of L.A., San Bernardino area. And on the rail line that runs out of L.A., I met with HUD and the Energy Department and the Home Builders at this joint effort to build a low income housing project for low income working people. And the deal they made these folks was: If you'll live here, even if you have to go to Los Angeles to work, we pledge to you that we will build you a home where your power bills will be 40 percent lower, at least, than

they would be in a home of this size anywhere else in California.

And what did they do? They had the basic insulation. They used these new windows that cost a little more money, but they keep out a lot more heat and cold, and they let in a lot more light. And they used light bulbs that cost about twice as much, but they last 3 or 4 times as long and, therefore, they're energy efficient. And they had solar panels that looked just like ordinary tar shingles you put on a roof. You can't tell the difference, except they're slightly wider now. And I can report to you that after a couple of years those working people—a lot of these people were working for \$25,000 a year. Their average fuel bills are 65 percent below the State average for the same square footage in California.

Now, we could build housing like that all over the Delta. It would put people to work building the houses. You would probably get the financing worked out for some of the energy conservation stuff, working with the utilities. It would enable them to manage their power load better, and it's like a huge tax cut. Can you imagine what it would be like if your power bill was two-thirds lower every month? So there are real opportunities here I think you ought to look at for economic development and improving the quality of life.

Now, we want to do more, but I need your help on three things that we're trying to do here. First, the new markets initiative; we're working with the Democrats and the Republicans in the Congress—and the Speaker has taken a big personal interest in this because he's from rural Illinois—and we're trying to take the ideas that some of the Republican House Members have who are interested in this, and ours, and put it together. But when we get all finished, whatever it's called and whatever it looks like, the bottom line is, here's what we're trying to do: We're trying to give people with money in America the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America that they can get today, in terms of tax credits, loan guarantees, and other incentives, to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia or anywhere else. I think it's a very important thing.

And again, I favor the foreign investment incentives. You know, we just passed through the House, and I think we're going to pass today or tomorrow in the Senate, the Africa/Caribbean Basin Initiative. I want to be a good neighbor;

I like this. But we ought to understand that our biggest markets are those that are right here before us. So I need your help in that.

The second thing is, I want you to help us pass this Delta commission legislation. I want you to talk to all the Senators and all the Representatives from all the States from the Delta. This is a totally nonpolitical deal. I don't care whose name goes on it. I don't care what happens. I just want to know that when we're not here anymore and our stewardship is over, that there is an institutional focus where somebody gets up every day and thinks about this region. And I want you to help us pass it.

Last thing I want you to help us do is to pass our educational initiatives that are necessary to turn around these schools. And I want to close with this because it's really important. You know as well as I do, if you want more outside investments, you want people to come in, you've got to be able to prove you've got good schools, that you're educating people that have good skills and that people who come in from the outside, their kids will be in good schools.

So I'm going to close with this story. I just got back from one of my education tours. And I was in Owensboro, Kentucky, which is in western Kentucky; therefore, it's in our region. So—is somebody from over there? [Applause] So I'll tell you this story. Now, in 1989 before I became President, I worked with President Bush and the Bush administration to define these national education goals. And then in 1993 we passed this program called Goals 2000 to help States and school districts meet the goals.

Then, we realized that we needed to do more, so we passed through the Congress in the next couple of years legislation that said all the States had to have standards, and they had to identify schools that were low performing and come up with strategies to turn them around. Now I'm trying to pass legislation that goes further, but let's just focus on that. And what I tried to do is to say that we ought to give States funds to help these low-performing schools work, to train the teachers better, to support the principals. We also ought to end the practice of social promotion, but not call kids failures when the system fails them. So we ought to give every school district that needs it after-school, summer school programs, and all of that. And we've been working on that.

Now, here's my exhibit A for the Delta: western Kentucky, Owensboro. In 1996 Kentucky

said, okay, we're going to identify all our failing schools, and here they are, 170 of them. Within 2 years of just being identified and supported and focused on, 91 percent of those schools were off the list. Now—[applause]—no, no it gets better. So here's Owensboro, exhibit A; two-thirds of the kids in Owensboro are eligible for free or reduced lunches—not your rich, suburban school, right?—two-thirds of the kids. Now, in 4 years since they were identified in this school, this elementary school I was in, as a school that was low performing, here's what has happened.

Four years ago there were 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level; today, 57 percent are. Four years ago there were 5 percent doing math at or above grade level; today, 70 percent are. Four years ago there were zero kids in this school doing science at or above grade level; today, 64 percent are. This school is now the 18th best grade school in Kentucky, even though two-thirds of the kids are at or below—are eligible for school lunches—two-thirds.

Now, here's the other thing. In Kentucky, 10 of the 20 highest performing grade schools—10 of the 20—have half or more of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunches. Race, economics, and location are not destiny if you've got a good education system and you give these kids a chance to learn.

So again I say, I need your help. Ask the Congress to help us with the new markets. Ask the Congress to help us with the Delta commission. Ask the Congress to give enough money to give every school in the country that's not performing well a chance to give their kids summer school and after-school programs, teacher training programs, the things necessary to make these schools work.

I'd give anything if when I had been Governor we knew as much about what to do in the schools, in the economy as we now know. And that's the last point I want to make. When I took office here, even a lot of people that helped me in '92 were not really sure that anything could get better. And if I had told you in 1992, "I want you to vote for me, and I'll get rid of this \$300-billion-a-year deficit, and, oh, by the way, we'll be running surpluses 3

years in a row, and when I leave office we'll pay off \$350 billion of the national debt," you would have said, "You know, he seems like a nice young fellow, but he's slightly deranged. We better send him home." [Laughter]

So we know now, so we don't have an excuse. We know we can make the economy better. We know that we can have schools that are very poor perform at a very high level. We know we can lower the crime rate. We know we can grow the economy and improve the environment. We know we can cut the welfare rolls in half and still support low income people who are working and trying to do right by their kids, if you give them the right child care and transportation and other support they need. It's not like we don't know we can do better now.

And I would argue that when you know you can do better, when you're not just living on hope but you've got evidence, you have a heavier responsibility. So I'm glad you're here. I want you to tell us more of what we can do. I want you to give me every chance you can to do everything I can while I'm in office. I want you to help me pass this legislation.

But when you leave here, more than anything else, I want you to believe we can do this. We can do this. This is not a wing and a prayer. This is not hope. This is evidence. We can do it. It's just a question of whether we're prepared to pay the price of time and effort and organization and passion.

Everybody loves the Delta. It's about time we all did something about it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Arlington Ballroom at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. In his remarks, he referred to student Conn Q. Davis, who introduced the President; Gov. David R. (Ronnie) Musgrove of Mississippi; Mayor Willie W. Herenton of Memphis, TN; Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood of Illinois; Jesse L. White, Jr., Federal cochair, Appalachian Regional Commission; J. Wayne Leonard, chief executive officer, Entergy Corp.; Arkansas State Senator Bud Canada; Carol Willis, director, community service division, Democratic National Committee; and student Myra Jodie, Steamboat Navajo Nation.

Statement on Congressional Action on Appropriations Legislation May 10, 2000

Today both the House and Senate subcommittees passed appropriation bills for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education that fail to invest in the Nation's future and turn back our progress in helping opportunity and prosperity reach all corners of America. During this period of economic prosperity and budget surplus, we should seize the opportunity to improve our Nation's schools, advance the health and well-being of our citizens, and train and protect our workers. Regrettably, misguided priorities and insufficient resources in the bills adopted today have led the Congress in a different direction. Unfortunately, these actions today invest too little in our schools and demand too little from them.

The House bill shortchanges essential initiatives and fails to support our Nation's children and schools. It fails to provide sufficient funding to strengthen accountability and help turn around low-performing schools, reduce class size, increase after-school opportunities, renovate aging and neglected schools, close the digital divide, improve teacher quality, and provide mentoring to help children go to and succeed in college. It hurts unemployed and working Americans by cutting training and other programs that help them find jobs and work in safe environments. The bill fails to make key investments in childcare, preschool, and other important services for poor working families.

The House bill fails to support key health programs by reducing funding for mental health services, family planning services, and substance abuse programs and eliminates funding to improve access to health care for the uninsured. The bill also cut funding needed to ensure nursing home quality and strengthen health benefits administration.

The Senate bill provides more acceptable funding levels for many key programs but does so by bankrupting the Social Services Block Grant, shifting money from children's health insurance, and making other cuts. The bill does not guarantee funding for critical education priorities such as school renovation and reducing class size and underfunds programs to help unemployed workers and youth get job training. The Senate bill also fails to support critical health programs, including funding for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, mental health and substance abuse services, and nursing home quality oversight.

If a bill that fails to address these concerns were to come to me in its current form, I would have to veto it. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that this bill strengthens our Nation's schools and supports and enhances other important national priorities while continuing to honor our commitment to fiscal integrity.

Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein on Signing an Executive Order on Access to HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technologies May 10, 2000

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am pleased to inform you that today I will sign an Executive Order that is intended to help make HIV/AIDS-related drugs and medical technologies more accessible and affordable in beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries. The Executive Order, which is based in large part on your work in connection with the proposed Trade and Development Act of 2000, formalizes U.S. government policy in this area. It also di-

rects other steps to be taken to address the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa, one of the worst health crises the world faces.

As you know, the worldwide HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken a terrible toll in terms of human suffering. Nowhere has the suffering been as great as in Africa, where over 5,500 people per day are dying from AIDS. Approximately 34 million people in sub-Saharan Africa

have been infected and, of those infected, approximately 11.5 million have died. These deaths represent more than 80 percent of the total HIV/AIDS-related deaths worldwide.

To help those countries most affected by HIV/AIDS fight this terrible disease, the Executive Order directs the U.S. Government to refrain from seeking, through negotiation or otherwise, the revocation or revision of any law or policy imposed by a beneficiary sub-Saharan government that promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies. This order will give sub-Saharan governments the flexibility to bring life saving drugs and medical technologies to affected populations. At the same time, the order ensures that fundamental intellectual property rights of U.S. businesses and inventors are protected by requiring sub-Saharan governments to provide adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with World Trade Organization rules. In this way, the order strikes a proper balance between the need to enable sub-Saharan governments to increase access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies and the need to ensure that intellectual property is protected.

I know that you preferred that this policy be included in the Conference Report on the Trade and Development Act of 2000, as did I. However, through this Executive Order, the policy this Administration has pursued with your support will be implemented by the U.S. Government. The Executive Order will encourage beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries to build a better infrastructure to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS as they build better lives for their people. At the same time, the Trade and Development Act of 2000 will strengthen African economies, enhance African democracy, and expand U.S.-African trade. Together, these steps will enable the United States to forge closer ties with our African allies, broaden export opportunities for our workers and businesses, and promote our values around the world.

Thank you for your leadership on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Interview With Diane Rehm of WAMU National Public Radio May 10, 2000

Ms. Rehm. Mr. President, thank you for joining us.

The President. I'm glad to do it.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China/ 2000 Election

Ms. Rehm. It looks as though the normalized trade relations with China isn't likely to go through. Would you agree with that?

The President. I'm not sure yet.

Ms. Rehm. You're still not sure?

The President. We don't have the votes yet. I think we'll get the votes, because I think it's the right thing for the country. But I think it will be—I won't know for a few days yet.

Ms. Rehm. If you do, how might that hurt or help Mr. Gore in his bid for the Presidency?

The President. Well, I think that, on balance, it will help him because he's been a very strong

supporter of this agreement and, generally, of our trade policy. And even though some of the strongest elements of the Democratic Party and some of our best friends are on the other side of this fight, it shows that he's willing to take an independent stand to do what he believes is right. And I think that's very, very important.

I think that's something people will look to. And they might compare that, for example, with Governor Bush's going to Bob Jones University and defending his outreach to Jerry Falwell and the members of the far right in his party, and conclude that—our people, the people that we're disagreeing with are good folks, and we're proud to have them as a part of our party; we want them to. But we need a President who will make an independent judgment from time to time.

Ms. Rehm. So you think it's not going to hurt him?

The President. Yes, I think it's a net plus. I think that—let me just say this—I think the reverse is, it would be a problem for our country. That's the most important thing. I think it would be a big problem for our country if it didn't pass, because it would increase the chance that something bad would happen in that area; it would give aid and comfort to the reactionaries in China; and it would make it possible for people to question whether the Democrats were running away from our global responsibilities.

Right now, that's the burden the Republicans have to bear, because they defeated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They opposed our efforts to lead a global march on ending the testing of nuclear weapons. And I think that was a terrible mistake by them. So it's a problem they'll have to come to grips with. I just don't want to see our party responsible for walking away from another big opportunity and responsibility of the United States.

Million Mom March and Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Rehm. The Million Mom March takes place this Sunday. How do you address the concerns of law-abiding citizens who own guns, who feel that any additional controls would be an infringement on their personal rights, on their second amendment rights?

The President. Well, I just disagree with them. I think that every law-abiding gun owner ought to want to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children and should recognize that no strategy will succeed that doesn't have a lot of prevention.

For example, I don't see why any gun owner could possibly object to closing the gun show loophole and the Brady background check. We now know these background checks have kept 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns. I don't see why any law-abiding gun owner would object to having a photo ID and a license for anybody buying handguns that proves that, A, you've passed the background check and, B, you've passed a safety training course on a gun.

We do that for cars. If you have to get a license to prove you can drive a car and that you're a law-abiding citizen and you have to observe seatbelt laws and speed limits, you don't hear people going around complaining about

“car control.” They don't call it “car control.” They call it sensible public safety.

I just think we need to look at the specifics of every proposal. Does this keep any law-abiding hunter out of the deer woods in deer season? No. Does it keep any law-abiding sport shooter away from his or her activities? No. Does it prevent any law-abiding gun owner who believes that he'll be safer having a gun in their home from having a gun in their home? No.

So if the answers to those questions is no, but it would clearly keep more guns out of the hands of children and criminals, then we ought to be for it, and everybody ought to be for it. That's what I believe.

President's Disappointments in Office

Ms. Rehm. You've had a number of successes during your administration. The economy is up. Unemployment is down. The crime rate is down. What has been your greatest disappointment or failure?

The President. I'm disappointed that we haven't been able to make health care available to all the working families of the country. You know, the very poorest people have health care through the Government Medicaid program. And we have extended health insurance to children of low income working families through the Children's Health Insurance Program, and we're still enrolling more children in that. But I'm very disappointed in that.

And I'm disappointed that the two parties in Congress, once we became financially able to do it when we started running surpluses—we can save Social Security now for the baby boom generation, and as yet they haven't taken me up on even the easiest part of my proposal, which is to dedicate the savings we will get from paying down the debt, because of the Social Security taxes we pay—dedicate those savings from lower interest rates on the debt to the Trust Fund. If we did that, we could take the life of Social Security out to about 2054—just that—which would take it beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers and get this country over a big hump. Now, I think there are further Social Security reforms that should be enacted, but they'll have to await the election and probably a less—hopefully, a less partisan climate.

Relations With Republican Congress

Ms. Rehm. Of course, from the time you first came into office, there's been this animosity between you and the Republicans in Congress, and some of the Democrats as well. What do you think it is that has created this climate of mistrust between you and the Congress?

The President. Well first of all, I disagree that there's very much among the Democrats. I have enjoyed, even in my first 2 years, I got a higher percentage of Democratic support for my programs than Presidents Johnson and Carter did, and Kennedy, as an historical fact. We didn't lose many Democrats. You always lose—some just disagree with you. So they've been quite good to me.

I think what happened is, I had more partisan opposition than at any time in history, and I think there were two causes. I think some Republicans thought that the Democratic majority in Congress had been too hard on their Presidents, and so they thought it was payback time. I think there was some of that.

But the overwhelming reason is that they resented the fact that they didn't have the White House. They thought that they owned the White House, and they thought they had found a formula that would always keep Democrats out of the White House. They would say we couldn't be trusted on the economy and foreign policy and national defense and welfare and crime, and we were going to tax people to death, and all the things they always said. And when it didn't work, I think they were very angry. And they decided that they would oppose me at every turn and in every way. I've had many of them come up to me and tell me that that's what they did.

It was about power. It wasn't about all these things, and it had nothing to do with—oh, some of them may have very strong personal adverse feelings, but they're basically rooted in they thought that they owned the White House. And the people own the White House. I don't own it. The Democrats don't own it, either. But I think that's really what drove it.

And I certainly hope that after this next election that they will moderate their conduct. But we'll just have to see. I don't personally have—you know, I worked with all these people. And I've worked with them, and I think it's important to point out that in spite of all the partisan animosity, we have gotten a great deal done

here. We passed the Balanced Budget Act together. We passed welfare reform together. We passed the bill to put 100,000 teachers in the schools together and a lot of other really big—we passed financial services reform, telecommunications reform. We got a lot done together because, in the end, if we keep working—in the end, to get anything done, we have to work together.

And I'd keep thinking, this is easing off, and we're making improvements. I have a lot of people that I have very good relationships with in the Republican caucus, and I will continue to just try to bring more of them around to the idea that we should all be in the business of governing. We have these elections on a regular basis, and before you know it, we have another one, and before you know it, there's a new crowd in town. And it's a terrible waste of energy to spend all your time in partisan fights.

The thing that I'm most discouraged about right now is that the Senate has been here since January and has only approved 11 of my proposed appointments. I've got over 250 proposed appointments up there. And they can say, "Well, this always happens in an election year." That's simply not true. If you look at—it's true that the appointments process slows down in election years if you have a President of one party and a Senate of another. It slows down. But it doesn't come to a grinding halt like they're doing now. And again, this is about political power. But it's not good for the taxpayers. It's not good for the public interest. And I hope that I'll be able to persuade the Senate to resume fulfilling their constitutional responsibility to act on these appointments. And they ought to vote against them if they don't like them.

Ms. Rehm. There seemed to have been some personal animosity against you, personally, right from the start, before you left Arkansas.

The President. Yes, I think there was. But it was rooted in—there's a new book out by Joe Conason and Gene Lyons called "The Hunting of the President" that explains what it was about. It was, they were afraid I was going to win. And they thought it would upset their automatic hold on the White House and their little formula. Maybe they didn't like me, but I think mostly what they didn't like was the prospect that they wouldn't win the White House forever and ever and ever.

I think it's not too much to say that before the '92 election, they really thought they had found a formula and there would never be another Democratic President, not for a long, long, long time, that maybe a third party would have to come up before they'd ever be challenged. And it made them very angry.

And I kept telling them that politics is about ideas and action. We've got elections all the time; nobody stays around forever. They need to relax and have a good time and go to work. Whenever they did, we got a lot done. We got a lot done together. I enjoyed working with them.

But I think, to me, spending your time on personal animosity is highly counterproductive. Life is too short for that.

Impact of 2000 Election

Ms. Rehm. How and to what extent do you think the character and the goals of the Federal Government might change if either George Bush or Al Gore is elected in November?

The President. Well, I think both the nature and the goals will change. I think if the Vice President—regardless, because the country is changing. And the environment in which our people live and, therefore, in which our Government operates will change.

I think if the Vice President is elected, he will do what he said he would do, which is to stay with the economic policy that has brought us this unprecedented prosperity, but to modernize it. I think he will implement his—keep paying down the debt. He will continue to try to do more for the poor areas of our country and the cities and the rural areas that have been left behind. And I think he will try to save enough money to make sure we protect Social Security and Medicare and reform it for the baby boom generation and to continue to invest in education. So I think that's what he'll do.

If Governor Bush gets elected, I think he'll do what he said he would do. I think it's not necessary to attack these people personally. I mean, most people do what they say they're going to do. And what Governor Bush said he was going to do is have a tax cut much bigger than the one I vetoed before, defense increases bigger than the ones that I proposed, and vouchers for our schools. And I believe if that happens, we'll basically be back to the Reagan-Bush economic philosophy, which is cut the rev-

enues of the Government, even if it means going back to deficits and higher interest rates. And it will mean that we won't have much money left over to invest in education or the environment or health care. That's what they've—but I think you have to just look at what they say they're going to do and ask yourself what the consequences are.

I think if Al Gore gets elected, he'll try to grow the economy and keep cleaning up the environment. I think if Governor Bush gets elected, he will do what he did in Texas. He will let the people who basically are the primary polluters control environmental policy. That's what he did in Texas. He got rid of all the environmental commissioners, appointed someone who represented the chemical industry, someone from the Farm Bureau, and someone who was a political activist. I think—but that's what they—we shouldn't be surprised if people do what they say they'll do.

I think that the next President will get two to four appointments to the Supreme Court. So I think if the Vice President gets elected, he'll continue to appoint diverse judges who are committed to individual liberties and basically in the mainstream of American constitutional history, the way I've tried to do. And I think if Governor Bush gets elected, he'll appoint judges more like the ones appointed by the previous Reagan and Bush administrations. And if they get two to four appointments on the Supreme Court, I think *Roe v. Wade* will be repealed, and a lot of other things that have been a part of the fabric of our constitutional life will be gone. Because—and again, I just think—just look at what these people say they believe, both candidates, what they say they're going to do and assume that they will do it. There's been a lot of studies which show that, by and large, people who get elected President do what they say they're going to do.

Ms. Rehm. What about foreign policy, and the question of how the two might deal differently with issues of foreign policy?

The President. Well, the Vice President has a big advantage in the sense that he has worked on this for not only 8 years as Vice President, where he's had a major role in issues affecting our nuclear security and issues affecting biological and chemical warfare and our relationship with Russia, our relationship with South Africa, our relationship in the Middle East. So he's got a rich, real history here.

Governor Bush, like me when I got elected, is Governor, and he served far less time than I did as Governor. But he would say, I'm sure if he were here, "But my father was President, and I know all these big-time Republicans, and they're all for me. So I can get them all to come and give me good advice." And so I think, again, the best thing to do is to say that on the question of experience and record, I think the Vice President has the better claim there.

But I'm more concerned about the positions that Governor Bush has taken because, again, I think you have to assume these candidates are honorable people and they will do what they say. He's opposed to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and he says that he wants to build a much bigger missile defense system than the evidence warrants right now—it may support it later—no matter what the consequences are to the efforts we're making to reduce the nuclear weapons threat around the world.

So I think that, you know, that gives me some pause. I think that's troublesome, because it could cause the country a lot of trouble in the next 4 or 5 years. And he says—that's where he says he is, and so I assume he—I believe he believes that.

President's Role in the Democratic Party

Ms. Rehm. Mr. President, as your time here in the White House winds down, what role do you see for yourself in the Democratic Party now?

The President. You mean, right now, or in the future? Right now?

Ms. Rehm. Right now.

The President. First of all, I'm trying to help as many of our candidates as possible. I'm trying to help as many of our candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives. I will do whatever I can to help the Vice President in the fall. I will try to make sure that our side has enough funds to compete with the Republicans. They will have more money as they always do, but I think we've got a better message, and so I think if we've got enough money to get our message out, we'll be fine. So I expect to work on all that.

I remember in '98, they outspent us by \$100 million, and we still won seats in the House because we had a good message. We said we were for 100,000 teachers in our schools, and we were for modernizing our school facilities. We were for a Patients' Bill of Rights. We had

a good specific set of things we were for. And we will in the fall.

And so I'm going to do my best to just be a messenger for that and support other people. That's what I'm doing. I'm not a candidate anymore, so I get to go back to being a good citizen and be supportive of other people.

President's Future Plans

Ms. Rehm. And what are you going to do as a good citizen after you leave the White House?

The President. Well, I haven't decided yet. In terms of any income-earning activities I might undertake, I think that it's premature for me to deal with that, because I need to wait as long as I possibly can—certainly until after the election and, if possible, when I leave office, to make final decisions on that.

I intend to write a book. I intend to maintain my activities in areas that I care a lot about around the world, in supporting the peaceful resolution of racial and religious and ethnic conflicts, supporting my initiatives when I'm gone from office to provide economic empowerment to poor people at home and around the world. I'm interested very much in our continuing efforts to meet the challenge of global warming, which I think will dominate a lot of our concerns for the next 20 to 30 years. So those are just three things I want to be involved in. And then I've got to build a library and a museum and a public policy center in Arkansas—

Ms. Rehm. Where are you going to live?

The President. Well, I'm going to live in New York with my wife, and then I'm going to be in Arkansas a few days a week while I'm building the library and museum. We're going to build an apartment there, so that I'll have a place there and a place in New York. So I expect to be back and forth between the two places and then traveling around a little bit.

You know, I'll find something useful to do. I've never—every stage of my life I've always enjoyed. I've had a good time, and I'm not—I love this job. I'd do it forever if I could. But I'm not apprehensive, exactly, about what I'll do when I'm gone. I'll just have to think about it, and I don't want to spend too much time thinking about it while I'm here, because I'm trying to squeeze every last drop out of every minute I've got to be President.

Memorable Aspects of the Presidency

Ms. Rehm. But you know, at the White House Correspondents' dinner, you certainly received a lot of acclaim as a wonderful comedian. I was in the audience, but there certainly seemed to be a little bit of wistfulness in your presentation. What are you going to miss most about being here?

The President. The job. The work. That's what I'll miss most. I'll miss the opportunity every day to push an agenda that I think is good for America and ordinary citizens and the future of this country. I will miss that terribly, because I love this work. I just love it.

I will miss the people. I will miss living in the White House. The people who work here are wonderful, and it's a great place to live. I'll miss working in this beautiful office we're sitting in now. It's the most beautiful place I've ever worked. Because of the shape of the room and the size of the windows, there's always light here, even when it's raining outside. I'll miss Camp David. I'll miss the Marine Band. I'll miss flying on Air Force One. I'll miss a lot of things. But the thing I'll miss more than anything else is the chance to do this work for the American people every day. It is a joy.

I've spent a lot of time since I've been here reading histories of other administrations, both ones that are very well-known and those that aren't. And I'm amazed at how many people, beginning with George Washington, complained about how hard it was to be President and how all their motives were suspect. George Washington said, once he got to be President, people treated him like he was a common criminal. [Laughter]

And of course, in the beginning of the country, the politics was about as rough as it is now. The three periods which have been most partisan were, in the beginning, Jefferson and Adams, and then around the Civil War, and this time we're living through now.

But a lot of people referred to—Harry Truman referred to the White House as a great white prison and all that, you know. And if they were serious, I must say I just disagree with them. I think—and I've had a pretty rough time here, but it's still—it's just part of the costs of doing business. And I think the job is a joy. I mean, it's just a gift to be able to do this kind of work. I've just loved it.

Family Life in the White House

Ms. Rehm. What does 8 years in the White House do to a marriage?

The President. Oh, I think it's been good for ours, because I got to live above the store. You know, until Hillary started running for the Senate, we actually probably had more time together than we did previously. And of course, in the early years our daughter was finishing up junior high school and high school, and we were together at night a lot. You know, we talked about her schoolwork and what was going on in her life, and that was a lot of fun for us. Then, after Chelsea left and went off to college, we were able to go to Camp David more.

This is really quite a wonderful place to live. It's a great place to—there's a swimming pool here, and Hillary and I spent a lot of happy days out there just talking and reading, or on Sunday afternoons up on the Truman balcony. I mean, you can get busy and drift apart, I guess, in any circumstances. But for us, we worked hard before we got here, and we had a lot of things to do, and we've probably had more time together in our time here than at any point in our marriage. And I've enjoyed that immensely. It's been wonderful for us.

Outlook for the Future

Ms. Rehm. Looking ahead, when Chelsea is 50, what kind of a world is she going to see? Is it going to be better or worse than it is today?

The President. I think it will be better. No one can foresee the future, but I believe it will be. I think that it will be a world in which, first of all, the average life expectancy will be bumping 100 years, because of the human genome discoveries and all the things that will happen.

I think the world will be even smaller than it is now and that the ability to collapse time and space through travel and the Internet will be greater. I think that our familiarity with, understanding of different cultures and religions and racial groupings will be greater. And I think we will be a much more polyglot society, and I think we'll be much more comfortable with it.

Ms. Rehm. So you're optimistic.

The President. I'm very optimistic. I think the problems that we will have will be the flip side

of the positive changes. That is, I think that the likelihood is that the security problems over the next 30 years—that's what you asked me about—will be from—we may have a conflict with other nations. I hope we won't. That's one of the reasons I hope this China initiative will pass. I hope we won't, but I think it's virtually certain that there will be kind of a global rough alliance between the terrorists, the gunrunners, the narcotraffickers, the organized criminals. I think it's virtually certain that the technological advances which may allow us to put computers and DNA strands together in a way that are exponentially powerful may make it possible for the bad guys to have very small—I mean, less than the palm of your hand—sized chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. We don't know.

So we're going to have—and I think the enemies of the nation-state, the enemies of the ordered society, under the guise of religious or ideological causes or maybe just making their purses bigger, will probably be a bigger security threat 20 to 30 years from now than other nations will be to America and to others.

I think that we will—unless we're prepared to have a much bleaker future, two big challenges we'll have to take on beyond our borders are global warming, which if we don't deal with it is going to be very serious, and we'll also have to view global public health problems as our own. We've got to roll back the AIDS crisis, and we've got to deal with malaria. We've got to deal with TB in Africa and other places around the world. And we have to keep working until every child in the world has access to clean water. We still lose as many kids from dysentery and diarrhea and just basically poison-polluted water as we do to these diseases every year.

So I think that Americans will be much more in tune to all that and feel much more immediately affected by what goes on in Africa or Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent or other places, than they do today.

President's Faith

Ms. Rehm. I have one last question. What is your concept of God, and how has that belief influenced your Presidency?

The President. Well, I believe in a God who is both a Creator, who created the world, who oversees the world, and who has provided an eternal existence for human beings. I believe in the eternal life of the soul.

And I think that that has helped me a lot. It's given me a lot of perspective. It's given me a lot of ability to withstand the bad times, to believe that I could overcome my own shortcomings, to understand why I had to forgive people that I thought were being unfair to me, just as I asked them to forgive me, and basically to keep my eyes on the bigger things in life and to keep trying to grow personally, even as I was trying to do this job for the American people.

It's very important to me. And I think if you have a concept of the eternity of the human spirit, I think, as the creation of God, I think it makes it a lot easier to live with whatever happens. It keeps your head on straight when things are going well and keeps your back up and your spirits high when things are going poorly.

See that rock there? I always tell people this story. That rock came off the Moon. Neil Armstrong picked that off the Moon in 1969, and he brought it to me last year for the 30th anniversary of the Moon walk. It's a vacuum-packed rock. And it's been carbon dated at 3.6 billion years old. Now, when people come in here and they get real mad at me or they're real upset about something, sometimes I say, "See that rock? It's 3.6 billion years old. We're all just passing through here. Chill out. It's going to be all right." [Laughter]

Presidents need things that help them stay centered and keep perspective. It's very bad to think about yourself very much in this job. I don't mean in quiet moments, in reading, trying to build your personal life; I don't mean that. But I mean, most of the time when people attack you, it's just part of the job. They're supposed to. That's part of the deal.

Presidents need devices, routines, systems, reminders, and friends and family to keep their focus on the American people. Because you're just here for a little while, and if you get all caught up in the things you started asking me about, the personal animosities and the partisan fights and all that, then you basically give a victory to your adversaries by letting them define how you spend your time and how you shape your feelings.

I used to tell the young people here that our job was to do the job we came here to do for the American people. Their job, they thought, was to stop us from doing our job.

They could only win if we helped them by letting them get inside our heads and our hearts. And if we just kind of kept focused on what we came here to do, it was probably going to work out all right. So far it has.

Ms. Rehm. Thank you, Mr. President.
The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on May 10 for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 11. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Jerry Falwell, chancellor, Liberty University.

Remarks on the Observance of National Equal Pay Day May 11, 2000

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

The President. Let me welcome you all here today. And before I acknowledge the Members of Congress and our participants, I need to say just a few words about the terrible fire that has surrounded and engulfed part of Los Alamos, New Mexico. I have been briefed on the situation. The fire is continuing to blaze. The residents have been evacuated. We have taken steps to protect our lab and the assets there. And most important, I just want to give my sympathies to the people who have lost their homes.

Yesterday I declared an emergency for the area, making them eligible for disaster assistance. And today our FEMA Administrator, James Lee Witt; Secretary Richardson; our Forest Service Chief, Mike Dombeck; and the Director of the National Park Service, Bob Stanton, are all there, or will be shortly, to assess the situation and to monitor our efforts.

This is a very, very difficult situation, and I know that the prayers and support of all Americans will be with the people out there.

National Equal Pay Day

I'd like to welcome Senator Harkin, Senator Feinstein, Representative DeLauro, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, Representatives Mink, Woolsey, Moore, Jackson Lee, and Eddie Bernice Johnson—all of whom are here today with Secretary Herman and Martin Baily, the Chair of our Council of Economic Advisers; Janice Lachance; our EEOC Chair, Ida Castro; and all the other people who are here representing working families. In just a few moments, I'll introduce the woman to my left, who will speak after me and is really what this day is all about.

The first Mother's Day of the 21st century is shaping up to be a time of commitment and action led by women in America. On Sunday, mothers from around the Nation will march for safer communities free of gun violence. Today women and men are coming together to uphold core American values of equality, dignity, and justice.

This has been designated Equal Pay Day. It marks the fact that the average woman had to work more than 4 months into this year just to earn what the average man earned last year. But equal pay is about more than dollars and cents. It's about right and wrong, because it's wrong when women still earn about 75 cents for every dollar earned by a man in the same line of work. It's wrong that average female workers have to work an extra 17 weeks to catch up to the wages of average male workers.

It's true, of course, that some of these differences can be explained by education, age, and occupation. But even after adjusting for these factors, there remains a sizable pay gap. As women grow older, the gap grows wider. It is widest for women of color. African-American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men. In other words, they'd have to work all of last year and into July of this year before they earned as much as the average white male earned in 1999. For Hispanic women—listen to this—equal pay day won't come until late October.

Equal pay is about all our mothers and sisters, our wives and daughters. It's about fathers and brothers and sons and husbands. It's a family issue. When women aren't paid equally, the entire family pays the price.

We also know the cost extends far beyond one's work life. If you're making less, you'll get

less Social Security. You'll have less to put aside for retirement. The average woman who's about to retire, if she even gets a pension, can expect about half the pension benefits of the average man who retires.

Now is the time to close the wage gap. You have often heard me ask this question in the context of other national challenges, but if we have the lowest unemployment in over 30 years and the longest economic expansion in history and over 21 million new jobs, with the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years and the lowest female household poverty rate on the record, if we can't solve this problem now, when in the world will we ever get around to it? Now is the time to deal with this.

Wages for women are up, and the pay gap has narrowed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act. But the gap is still far, far too wide, and women and their families are paying a terrible price.

Today I received a report from the Council of Economic Advisers on opportunities for women in the new economy, particularly in information technology fields, jobs such as computer scientists and programmers. Information technology now accounts for about a third of our growth, although only 8 percent of direct employment. But these are high-wage jobs that pay about 80 percent above the national average.

The CEA study shows that overall employment in information technology has grown by more than 80 percent since 1993. That's amazing. Overall employment has nearly doubled since 1983. But fewer than one of three of these high-tech, high-wage jobs are filled by women. Moreover, women are most underrepresented in new economy jobs where the pay is highest. For example, electrical engineering is just 10 percent female today. That is another digital divide.

The report also found that after accounting for education and age and occupation, the pay gap in information technology jobs is, unfortunately, about the same as it is in other occupations. If we're going to make the most of the new economy, we have to close the door on discrimination wherever it exists and open the door for higher opportunities for all women who wish to work and are qualified to do so.

Today I'm announcing a number of steps to do just that. First, our budget for the coming year includes a new \$20 million initiative for the National Science Foundation for grants to universities to remove barriers to career advancement for women scientists and engineers and encourage more women to pursue these fields.

This is especially important because we know the pay gap narrows sharply for women who have higher levels of education. When only one out of 10 engineers is a woman and only 30 percent of those in math and computer science jobs are women, we simply have to do more. It's important for reasons of fairness and justice. It's also important for our leadership in the global economy.

Second, I'm establishing an equal pay task force at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to ensure that our EEOC field staff have the full range of support they need to effectively investigate charges of pay discrimination.

Third, and perhaps most important, again today I renew my call to Congress to send the clear message that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity. The best way to do that is by acting this year. Support legislation to strengthen existing wage discrimination laws. Support our equal pay initiative in next year's budget to provide \$10 million for EEOC efforts to help in wage discrimination and \$17 million for Secretary Herman's efforts to train women in nontraditional jobs, including those in high-tech fields.

Thirty-five years ago, when President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act—now more than 35 years ago—he said, I quote, "It adds to our laws another structure basic to democracy." For over 7 years now, the Vice President and I have tried to build on that basic idea, to include more women in every aspect of our administration's life and to create more opportunities for all Americans, women and men equally. We have not succeeded in closing the pay gap. We need the help of Congress to do it. It is very, very important.

We all say we want to support work and family. We all say we want to open new doors of opportunity. Now's our chance, and we ought to take it.

I'd like to introduce now someone who knows about the equal pay challenge because she has

lived with wage discrimination. She has fought against wage discrimination, and thankfully, she has won. She came here from Baltimore today to tell her story. Ladies and gentlemen, Karen Simmons-Beathea.

[At this point, Ms. Simmons-Beathea, who was the plaintiff in an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission case against the Baltimore Cable Access Corp., made brief remarks, followed by Representatives Rosa L. DeLauro and Eleanor Holmes Norton, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Tom Harkin, and Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman.]

The President. I just wanted to say one final thing; some of the Members have alluded to it. But because of the way we introduced each other, seriatim, I don't think we adequately expressed our appreciation to Karen Simmons-Beathea, who really represents what this is all about, and I think we ought to give her another hand. [Applause]

And I will just leave you with this thought. There are a few issues that we're working on today that, unfortunately, tend to get cast in Washington, DC, in terms of a partisan divide. But out in the country, there isn't one. You know, when I was a young boy, I lived with a working grandfather and a working grandmother. I was raised by a working mother. No-

body has lived in one of these families for any period of time without having at least one encounter with some kind of problem we're talking about. And if it ever happens to you, especially when you are a child, you never get over it.

If you go out and talk to Americans around this country, Republicans and independents and Democrats will all tell you more or less the same thing about this issue. This is not a political or a partisan issue anywhere else. Now, you heard Eleanor Holmes Norton saying if somebody doesn't like our bills or they want to talk about the practical impact, well, we can talk about how to word the language and deal with the practical consequences. But whether we do something or not and whether what we do is meaningful or not is not a political or a partisan issue in America, and it shouldn't be here.

And if all of the people who have ever experienced anything like what Karen talked about today would talk to all of the Members of Congress about it, we would get something done, something meaningful, this year.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The National Equal Pay Day proclamation of May 11 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters Following the National Equal Pay Day Observance

May 11, 2000

[The exchange is joined in progress.]

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

Q. —beyond the usual response which is low interest loans and to actually rebuild the community?

The President. First of all, we're examining all that now. I want to know what the facts are. The Forest Service for a very long time has had these controlled burns, but we have to look in to it to see what the real facts are and what the responsibility of the Government is. And the rule here ought to be the "do right" rule: Whatever the right thing to do is, is exactly what should be done.

Right now we should be focusing on doing everything we can to minimize the damage of the fire and protect the lab assets, deal with the human problems, protect the lab assets. But as we look to rebuild, I think we ought to ascertain the facts and just do what the right thing to do is. That's going to be my policy. And I just don't know about the facts now to be absolutely sure, but as I do, I will be for bending over backwards to do the right thing. That will be my policy.

Elían Gonzalez and Asylum Law

Q. Should Congress put into law whether a 6-year-old boy—or what age a child should be

able to, of his own free will, seek asylum in the United States? Because, of course, it's not in the law right now.

The President. It's not in the law. Well, traditionally, the courts have ruled on these things based on the facts, and there have been certain presumptions about people who were above or below a certain age. And this decision, like others, has been governed by the assumption that a person below a certain age should be spoken for by a parent if the parent is a fit parent. Whether clarifying legislation will be needed, I think no one ever thought so before now. And I think we all ought to just sit and see what the Court of Appeals says and what happens, and that court decision may clarify whether we need legislation or not.

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

Q. Have you now been assured that the laboratory is safe?

Q. Are you going to march on Sunday?

The President. Well, they've taken extraordinary precautions. They've taken extraordinary precautions.

Am I going to what?

Million Mom March

Q. Are you going to march on Sunday?

The President. Well, I'm going to do something to support them. What I want to do is be supportive and do nothing to take away or distract from it. I'm going to do my best to help them. And we have a plan for a way that we—Hillary and I both want to be very supportive, and we will.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Do you believe that will motivate Congress—

The President. I don't know, but it ought to, because that's another one of those issues which is far less partisan out in the country than it is here in Washington. It's like this equal pay issue.

Q. —seeing all those women, all those people down there, will that motivate Congress to get this legislation through?

The President. It might or it might not. It depends upon whether the Members of Congress feel the human impact, which to me is the most powerful thing, and also realize that there are more and more people who care about this issue. It's becoming what I call a voting

issue, because that's the thing that very often motivates Congressmen who feel torn, want to do something, but are afraid to do it because of the political implications. Most of the polls you see on issues don't mean anything to them, because the real issue is whether this issue affects how people vote.

And I think if a couple hundred thousand people show up here and several hundred thousand more at these sites around the country, it ought to send a signal that we want America to be a safe country and commonsense gun measures is a part of the strategy. And that, plus just the human impact of the stories, there's a chance it will break through and help us break this logjam. I hope and pray that it will.

Elian Gonzalez and Asylum Law

Q. Any suggestion—

The President. What?

Q. Any suggestion as to when a child might be of his own free will?

The President. I want to wait. I may want to comment on that later, but I think we should, in all fairness, let the Court of Appeals issue their ruling, see what the state of the law is, and then make some sort of judgment about whether legislation is required.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

Q. Any reaction to the Giuliani news yesterday?

The President. Well, I wish him and his wife and their children well on the health front and on the domestic front. I think that's all there is—all anybody should want. People in public life have challenges and difficulties like people in other kinds of life do.

And I've always had a good personal relationship with Mayor Giuliani. It's not been affected by the fact that I think my wife would be a better Senator. And on this, I think everybody in New York and everybody in America ought to be rooting for the human side of this to work out. We should wish him well in his struggle over his illness. We should wish that family well. We should want the best for their children, and we should want some space for all of them, out of the glare of publicity, to work their family issues out. That's what I want, and I hope he gets it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Mayor Giuliani's wife, Donna Hanover, and their children, Andrew and Caroline. The transcript released by the Office

of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening portion of this exchange. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Conferees on the Patients' Bill of Rights and an Exchange With Reporters

May 11, 2000

Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

The President. First of all, I would like to thank this very impressive array of Senate and House Members for coming, in the midst of quite a busy time up on the Hill, as we try to work out the remaining issues to get a strong Patients' Bill of Rights passed.

I'd like to begin just by expressing my gratitude to most recently the Senate but also to the House for the truly historic Africa/Caribbean Basin trade bill that passed by, I think, 77 votes in the Senate today. And this bill passed with big bipartisan majorities in both Houses. And it's an example of the kind of thing we can do if we work together. And I'm very grateful to the Congress for that and very much looking forward to this bill.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Last October the House passed the Norwood-Dingell bill by a big majority, but the conferees have not been able to agree on a bill which could then be taken back to the Senate and the House. So this meeting is to determine what the issues are, what the prospects are for resolving them, to make it clear to these Members that I will offer anybody in the White House, starting with me, day or night, to try to help resolve this and hopefully to get a bill out.

I think it's fair to say that most of us, maybe all of us, really want a bill, not an issue, not a debate. We'd like to pass a bill. And so I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to thank you all for coming.

Q. What are the prospects for approving it this year?

The President. Well, you should ask us all after the meeting. [*Laughter*]

Security at the State Department

Q. Mr. President, the FBI testified today there are possible intelligence officers operating as accredited reporters at the State Department. Does that concern you, sir?

The President. Does it concern you? I should be asking if it concerns you. [*Laughter*] No, I don't want to make light of this. Of course, the testimony today was the first that I had heard that assertion, and obviously it has to be looked into.

I would have thought that you might have docile intelligence officers masquerading as hostile reporters. [*Laughter*]

Social Security

Q. Mr. President, this morning you told Diane Rehm about some predictions about what you thought George W. Bush might do if he's elected President, in terms of tax cuts, Supreme Court appointments. Do you also think that he would destroy Social Security by privatizing it, as the Vice President has charged?

The President. I don't want to talk about the campaign here. I'm here trying to get something done. I'll be glad to answer—at some appropriate time, I'll tell you what I think ought to be done on Social Security, although I'm pretty well on the record on that. But I don't think this is an appropriate thing for me to discuss right now.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, do you have any concern about comments by Majority Whip DeLay yesterday that he may not be doing quite as well as he had hoped getting Republican votes for the China bill?

The President. No, because I've noticed he's quite effective at getting votes when the time

comes—sometimes when I like it and sometimes when I don't. And I think he wants us to do our part, and I'm doing my best. I think in the end, especially after President Ford and President Carter and all those former administration members came, and after the, I think, very important reports in the press today about the Chinese dissidents favoring this vote, I think we'll get there. We've just got a lot of hard work to do.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Do you have an update on the situation in Northern Ireland, Mr. President? And do you foresee a situation where you would be able to travel over there to celebrate some success?

The President. Well, we're not done yet. There's still a matter to be resolved about what exactly the new police force would be called and how it can be constituted so that both Protestants and Catholics will join the police

force and be a part of the unified police force, and what the political problems this issue present to both sides are.

I think what the IRA did in agreeing to put these weapons beyond use and put them in these cachement areas and allow them to be inspected was a terrific step forward and a great credit to Gerry Adams and Michael McGuinness—Martin McGuinness—and everybody else who worked on it.

But we've got one last issue, and I don't think anybody ought to be celebrating until we resolve the one last issue.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Simm Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year May 11, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by welcoming you to the Rose Garden and saying, I'm grateful that it's not too hot and it's not too cold. Sounds like one of those books we used to read when I was 6 years old—it's just right. [*Laughter*] Actually, we got rained out here yesterday at an event. And we had two events earlier today, and it was quite warm. So this is—you're here at just the right time.

I'd also like to thank the representatives of the Marine Band who played for us today. This is their third event today, and they've done a great job. Thank you very much.

I want to thank Secretary Riley, my friend and coworker for better education for well over 20 years now. Even my adversaries will concede that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had, and I am very grateful to him.

I welcome the other representatives of the Department of Education and the executive director of the Council of Chief State Schools, Gordon Ambach; Scholastic, Inc., senior vice president Ernie Fleishman and all those from Scholastic who are here. And I want to recog-

nize the president of the National Education Association, Bob Chase, who has done a wonderful job representing all the teachers of our country here in Washington, including those in the AFT. And I think they would say the same thing. And we thank you for all the fights that you've waged for us, and with your friends in the AFT, and people who love education everywhere. We've had a good 7 years here, thanks in no small measure to you, sir. And we thank you very much.

We have here 54 or 55 State Teachers of the Year, 36 former National Teachers of the Year, and our present honoree, Marilyn Whirry of California. And I want to say a little more about her in a moment.

President Truman presented the first of these awards here at the White House almost half a century ago. And every year since, Presidents or members of their family have personally handed out this award to recognize not only the awardee and the awardees but, indeed, all of our teachers. On that very first occasion, President Truman said, "Next to one's mother, a teacher has the greatest influence on what kind of a citizen a child grows up to be."

Every day, 5 days a week, 9 months a year, teachers have the future of America in their hands. They teach our children to read, to write, to calculate, to sing, to paint, to play, to listen, to question, to work with others, and to think for themselves. They excite our children's imagination, lift their aspirations, open their hearts, strengthen their values.

I imagine every one of us can recall the names and faces of teachers who influenced us profoundly—indeed, so profoundly that without them we wouldn't be sitting here or standing in the Rose Garden today. We tend to remember the teachers most who challenged us the most; the ones who held us to high standards and convinced us we could achieve; teachers who praised us when they knew we were doing our very best; and who motivated us, sometimes gently and sometimes not so gently, to do even better; teachers who watched with delight the amazement on our faces when we produced work we never imagined we were capable of.

For 35 years now, Dr. Marilyn Whirry has been that kind of teacher, instilling in her students a love of literature. Seniors at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California, vie for spots in her advanced placement English class. Even freshmen and sophomores hope some day to join what are called the "Whirryites," in book-lined Room 19, to discuss Shakespeare and Camus, Toni Morrison and Dostoyevsky.

Her teaching style, I understand, is like a softer, more nurturing version of Professor Kingsfield's in "The Paper Chase." She paces the room posing questions to each student, responding to each answer with still more questions, digging deeper and deeper into the toughest texts until their meanings are revealed. She believes there are no obstacles to learning that cannot be overcome through effort and high standards. And she lives by that belief.

A few years ago, she underwent treatment for cancer, yet almost never missed a day of work. She not only beat the cancer but that year every one of her students passed the AP tests. She's traveled America giving workshops to educators on teaching standards-based reading and writing.

For the last 7 years, she's been Secretary Riley's appointee to the National Assessment Governing Board. I think I should point out that she was first appointed to NAGB by the

previous administration, so admiration for her is bipartisan. [Laughter]

The role of teachers has never been more important to our society and our future than it is today—in a global economy that rewards what we know and what we can learn more than ever, with the largest and most diverse student population in our history, and with 2 million teachers set to retire in the next decade, and already a crying need to lower class sizes and modernize facilities.

Clearly, recruiting and retaining more and better teachers is one of the greatest challenges we face as a nation. And we see unusual efforts now being adopted all across the country. In the State of Mississippi, they just voted to raise teachers' salaries \$10,000. In California, they give big bonuses to people who come into teaching. And you'll see more and more of this as we recognize not only the imperative of having good teachers but also just the sheer challenge of replacing the retiring teachers as the corps of students continues to grow.

One of the things we have to do to meet that challenge is to do more to honor and respect our best teachers, like our honoree. Everyone who becomes a teacher recognizes on the front end that this is not the surest path to wealth. People who do it, in the end, do it and stay at it because they love it, because they find fulfillment in giving, in the spark of learning they see in children's eyes.

The least the rest of us can do is to pay them adequately, train them well, give them the facilities and support they need and the respect that they deserve. And that last intangible element was conclusion number one of the Survey of America's Top Teachers, released just this week by Scholastic, Inc., and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The survey also concluded if we want to recruit more and better teachers and hang on to those we have, we must pay them more.

More and more gifted young people start out teaching, but they don't stay as long as they used to, and that's a big challenge. Thanks to the longest running expansion in American history, most States have substantial budget surpluses now. They have to decide how best to use them. States, like the Nation, this year must decide what to do with this magic moment of prosperity in improving social conditions. If I were a Governor and I had a surplus, I'd give

my teachers the pay they deserved, and I hope more and more States will do that.

We also know that the National Government has a role to play. I have proposed a billion-dollar effort to help recruit, train, and support teachers, to invest more in teachers even as we demand more of them. I'm disappointed yesterday that Congress set in motion a budget that, I believe strongly, invests too little in our schools and expects and demands too little from them, a plan that ignores some of our schools' most pressing needs, from more well-trained teachers to more modern classrooms. We can and must do better, and we will.

Last week I took a school reform tour through four States. It was an amazing experience for me. I went to western Kentucky, and I went to Minnesota. I went to Iowa. I went to Ohio. I could have gone to anyplace, I suppose, and found much the same thing. But it was so moving for me to have a chance to demonstrate to the country, through the good offices of our friends in the media, that all children can learn and our schools are doing better. Test scores are up; many of our lowest performing schools are turning around.

Every teacher here today and every teacher across the country ought to be proud of the progress that is being made. You have proved that all students can learn. Now our task is to ensure that all students do learn, that they all receive the world-class education they need, they deserve, and the rest of us desperately need for them to have. If we continue to build on our progress, I have no doubt that we can fulfill that promise.

Let me just say one other thing about this that's not in the text, but one of the things that troubled me greatly when I became President in January of 1993 is that even a lot of people who voted for me because they believed in what I was saying, didn't really believe we could turn the country around. They didn't really believe we would ever get rid of the deficit. They didn't really believe we would ever reduce the welfare rolls. They didn't really believe that we could make crime come down every year. And even though every single citizen knew some teacher that they just adored, they didn't really believe that on a sweeping national basis, we could improve the performance of our students. And now that we know, that imposes a special responsibility on us.

When I leave office, we're going to have paid off \$355 billion of the Nation's debt. We know we can get the country out of debt and still keep investing in education. We've got the crime rate coming down 8 years in a row; the welfare rolls are half what they were. But a lot of people still don't know that the schools, against increasing challenges, are doing better and better. And I'll just give you one example.

I was in Kentucky, in Owensboro, a little town in western Kentucky, in a school that was one of the 170 schools in 1996 identified as a low-performing school. Within 2 years, 91 percent of the schools were off the list. As of last year, in 4 years, in a school with two-thirds of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunches, the number of children reading at or above grade level had gone from 12 to 57 percent; doing math at or above grade level had gone from 5 to 70 percent; doing science at or above grade level had gone from zero to 64 percent. The school ranked 18th in the State in overall performance, with two-thirds of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. And in Kentucky, 10 of the 20 best performing grade schools have over half the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race, income, and region are not destiny, thanks to teachers and schools. And we need to get that out there.

And that's what you represent to me. You are the living embodiment that you get more from giving than taking in life. And I can't think of anybody who's given more. My only regret today is that I have never been in one of Marilyn Whirry's classes. [Laughter] So maybe we'll get the next best thing as I bring her up here and present her her award.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Teacher of the Year.

[At this point, the President presented the award to Ms. Whirry, who then made brief remarks and gave the President a crystal apple.]

The President. Thank you. Well, thank you. I have all kinds of questions I wanted to ask you, about Dostoyevsky and Camus and— [laughter]

Ms. Whirry. Okay.

The President. —the last novel he wrote that's just been published. What did Toni Morrison mean when she said I was America's first black President? [Laughter] I thought it was a great compliment.

May 11 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Let me tell you, I generally believe Presidents should not receive awards because the job is award enough. But I love this. And every day I have left here, this award will be on my desk in the Oval Office, and I hope you get to see it on television.

Thank you. Bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:28 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Congressional Action on Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

May 11, 2000

I am pleased that Congress has completed action on historic legislation that will boost investment, growth, and opportunity in Africa and the Caribbean Basin, while improving the global competitive position of our own industries. This step reaffirms America's commitment to open trade and strengthens the partnership between the United States and our friends in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. It will encourage these

nations to continue building open economies, bolster their efforts to alleviate poverty, and improve long-term prospects for democracy and stability around the world. I look forward to signing this measure into law and congratulate Members of Congress from both parties who have worked so hard to enact the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" and the Caribbean Basin trade enhancement legislation.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Conservation and Reinvestment Legislation

May 11, 2000

I am very pleased by the overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House today to provide significant new resources to meet America's critical conservation and recreation needs. Today's vote on H.R. 701, the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act," is a historic step toward achieving permanent conservation funding—a goal embodied in the lands legacy initiative I put forward in my budget this year. I applaud Chairman Young, Representative Miller, and others for their leadership on this effort.

We will continue working with Congress to secure protected and permanent conservation funding within the framework of a balanced budget that provides for critical budget and fiscal priorities, and with no burdensome or unnecessary restrictions on Federal authorities that have proven so effective in preserving America's natural heritage. I urge the Senate to move swiftly on this legislation. I am confident that working together we can create a permanent conservation endowment that will be a true gift to future generations.

Statement on the Situation in Sierra Leone

May 11, 2000

U.N. Secretary-General Annan and I agreed this morning that the international community

must intensify international efforts to restore peace in Sierra Leone and to prevent a return

to all-out civil war. The situation there has been grave. But the U.N. is determined to fulfill its mission; African and other nations are willing to act; and we are ready to help them.

I have instructed our military to provide needed assistance to accelerate the deployment of troops to UNAMSIL and informed the U.N. that the United States will help transport reinforcements. A U.S. military transport aircraft is now in Jordan to move ammunition and supplies that are needed immediately for the Jordanian elements in Sierra Leone.

We intend to support the commitment West African nations have made to send additional troops to Sierra Leone to restore peace. A U.S. military team is now in Nigeria to determine

what assistance might be needed from the international community to outfit and transport these forces as quickly as possible.

I welcome the statement West African leaders made on Tuesday at their emergency summit in Abuja, Nigeria, calling for the release of all hostages and pledging to protect democratic institutions in Sierra Leone.

I have asked Rev. Jesse Jackson, my Special Envoy for Democracy in Africa, to return to the region to work with leaders there for a peaceful resolution of this crisis. Reverend Jackson has been actively involved in our diplomatic effort to help the people of Sierra Leone realize their peaceful aspirations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense

May 11, 2000

Dear _____:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense, submitted pursuant to Condition 11(F) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the United States Senate on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives;

John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services.

Remarks in an Interview and Townhall Meeting on ABC's "Good Morning America"

May 12, 2000

[*"Good Morning America" cohosts Charlie Gibson and Diane Sawyer welcomed program participants and described the goals of the Million Mom March against gun violence, scheduled for May 14th in Washington, DC.*]

Charlie Gibson. We are here in the Oval Office with the President, who is joining us this morning. It's nice to have—nice to be here. I shouldn't say nice to have you with us, since

it's your office. Mr. President, good to see you again.

The President. Good to see you.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Gibson. Diane is going to go over with the mothers, and we understand you will join us in there in a few moments. But we'd like to talk a little bit first.

It was a year ago, Mr. President, that we were here with you with the students talking about gun violence. And you talked to me then about the hopes that you had for new gun control legislation. It hasn't happened. What went wrong?

The President. Well, nothing went wrong. We passed legislation in the Senate—Vice President Gore cast the tie-breaking vote—to require child safety locks, to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which would make our assault weapons ban much more effective, and to require background checks when handguns are bought at gun shows and urban flea markets, just as they are now at gun stores.

It passed in the Senate; it didn't pass in the House. And frankly, I think it was because of the intense lobbying effort against it and the longstanding ability of the NRA to influence Congressmen. I think that that was a big part of it.

I think, also, the label "gun control" is not nearly as effective as the specific safety measures. I mean, if I said to you, let's take these seatbelts out of cars and repeal the speed limits and repeal the requirement that drivers get licenses because it's "car control," you might be against it, too. When you talk about the specifics, do they make sense or not, do they work or not, the answer is yes.

Frankly, I still don't understand why anybody would be against these things. And the evidence is clear that it works.

Mr. Gibson. But the Congress is jammed up. I've got here a pile of all the gun legislation that's been proposed in the past year, since we were here before, and none of it has passed. By my count, we have more States rejecting new gun control legislation than have passed it. We have 15 States that have passed prohibitions on cities suing gun manufacturers. That hardly seems like progress.

The President. Well, first of all, I think you have to look at the fact that the States, which our Founding Fathers thought would be the lab-

oratories of democracy, have seen some progress. If you look at what Maryland and California and Massachusetts have done—Maryland particularly is interesting because it is not what you would think of a socially or culturally liberal State, and people from very difficult districts passed some very tough child safety legislation. I think that there has been some movement at the State level.

In Colorado, a conservative Republican Governor proposed closing the gun show loophole, couldn't pass it through the legislature, and they're going to put it on the ballot. It will be interesting to see what the people of Colorado do.

I think that as a practical matter, until the public demonstrates its will on this, there may not be more substantive progress. The people are going to have to decide what they believe the right approach is.

Mr. Gibson. When we were here a year ago, you gave me a rather stern talking-to about the political realities on the issue of gun control. Isn't it fair to say that the political realities right now are that nothing is going to happen for this year, while people wait to see the results of the November election?

The President. I'm not sure. That is one possible outcome. It may be the more likely outcome. But keep in mind, you've still got bills that have passed the House and the Senate. Essentially what's happened is, though, that this is the part about Washington that drives people crazy. We've got a version of this bill that passed the House, a version of this bill that passed the Senate. And the conferees are supposed to get together, both parties, both Houses, come up with a bill and send it to me; I sign it or veto it; and then they override the veto or they don't, if I veto it. That's the way the system is supposed to work.

As a practical matter, what happens is they're just not meeting, and because they don't want to report out a bill that, again, they can't label as "gun control," but it will have specifics, and people either like it or not, and it will either pass or not. That's what's frustrating. It's just been stalled. And I think the fact that what's really important about it is closing a loophole in a background check law that has plainly worked to save lives in America, closing a loophole in an assault weapons ban that the American people overwhelmingly support, and putting in child trigger locks—those are the three main

elements—it's unconscionable that it hasn't been voted out.

Million Mom March

Mr. Gibson. As a practical matter, doesn't this administration have something of a stake in Sunday's march, hoping that some mothers can do politically what Columbine, what a preschool shooting out in California, what a 6-year-old shooting another 6-year-old didn't do, which is to create a gun control lobby as strong as the pro-gun lobby?

The President. Well, I think, as a practical matter, what we really have is hoping that these mothers will create a sense of awareness in America that this is not a debate framed the way the NRA has debated, gun control or not, implying that this is the beginning of a slippery slope to take people's guns away no matter how law abiding they are, and that it's about very specific, very concrete measures of prevention to reduce the likelihood of guns falling into the hands of children and criminals. That's what this is about.

2000 Elections

Mr. Gibson. You have made this very much a priority in this administration. Does it surprise you when you see the latest polls, Gallup poll, just out recently, indicating that a plurality of this country actually thinks that Governor Bush would be stronger on gun control and better equipped to handle the issue than the Vice President?

The President. No, because I think the public doesn't have the information. I don't think there's any—I think if you gave—did the Gallup poll give the public a test about whether—which candidate was for the following specific measures? I think people form general impressions. And the Republicans, keep in mind, until our administration came in, because of their tough rhetoric and their theory that the answer to every crime was just to put more people in jail and keep them there longer, and they talked about it like that, they had the overwhelming advantage on all crime-related issues.

But it's not like there's no evidence here. I mean, crime has come down 7 years in a row—8 years in a row, now. This is the eighth year that crime is coming down. Partly it's due to the improved economy, but partly it's due to the fact that we put 100,000 police on the street, that we passed the Brady bill, that we

passed the assault weapons, that we increased enforcement as well. No one can dispute the evidence.

And so what I think there is, when the campaign really starts in earnest, we need to make sure that voters have all the evidence, and then we'll see what they say.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Gibson. Don't you to some extent make the NRA's case when you say that, though? They say, "Enforce existing laws; you're not doing enough of enforcing existing laws." And yet, you've got murder down 25 percent since '93, gun crime down 35 percent since '92, violent crime overall down 27 percent. That's done with a good economy, better policing, and not necessarily such stronger gun control laws.

The President. That includes the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, a ban on cop-killer bullets. They were against all those things. When we passed the Brady bill—keep in mind, the Brady law, which requires the background checks, was vetoed in the previous administration of President Bush. We passed it again, and I signed it. And what did they say? The same crowd here who is against closing the gun show loophole, what did they say then? Then they said, because they were making a different argument, because they're against all prevention measures, they said then, "Oh, this Brady law won't make any difference because criminals do not buy guns at gun stores; they buy guns at these gun shows or flea markets or out of the back of pickup trucks on streets. It won't make any difference."

Okay, now it's 2000, and since we passed the Brady bill, over 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have been unable to get handguns. There is no question that they used gun stores, and no question that the Brady bill made a difference, and no question it would be even better if all handgun sales were subject to background checks, including the ones at gun shows.

Now, so we're not arguing about that. If it's a prevention measure designed to keep more guns out of the hands of criminals, they're against it. If it's punishment for any kind of gun violation, they're for it. They say that this is the one area of American life where there must be no prevention and where people who own guns must be subject to no reasonable efforts to construct a system of prevention.

This is not gun control in the sense that we're taking people's guns away from them who make the decision that they'd be safer or better off to have guns or that they want to engage in a wide range of lawful activities.

And that's really—they've been working this for a long time, and they're good at it. They just say the same things over and over again. But why were they against this banning cop-killer bullets? Why were they against the Brady bill in the first place? Why were they against the assault weapons ban? What's wrong with banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips? Let's get out of the name calling and labeling and get right down to specifics. Is this going to reduce crime or not in America? Is it going to make Americans safer? I think it is.

Million Mom March

Mr. Gibson. Let's get to the specifics of why the mothers are here to march. If you'd join us across the hall, we've got a number of mothers there anxious to talk to you.

Diane, let me go to you over in the Roosevelt Room.

Diane Sawyer. That's right, Charlie. Sitting in this room, I've noticed a lot of women nodding heads and shaking heads and bursting to ask questions. I'll give you a preview, just one question; what's it going to be?

[At this point, participant Linda Halpin asked why gun safety legislation had been held up in Congress for so long. Following a commercial break, Ms. Sawyer stated that the women assembled in the Roosevelt Room represented many sides of the issue, and some had personal stories of gun violence. Ms. Halpin then explained that her son was shot and killed last Mother's Day, and she asked the President what he could do to prevent such tragedies.]

The President. Well, first of all, the short answer is I'm going to do everything I can. In our country's history, as far as I know, no administration before ours has taken any kind of systematic, aggressive approach to this—except after Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed in 1968, President Johnson tried to do something. He tried to pass—he did pass a very weak background check law, not as strong as he wanted, and he tried to pass licensing. And since then, until we came in and began

with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, no one had done anything.

I have done as many townhall meetings as I could. I have lobbied the Congress as hard as I could. I've also taken a lot of executive action to strengthen the enforcement of the laws and to give us some options we didn't have before. But the truth is, in the United States, we have by far the highest gun death rate of any advanced country in the world and by far the highest accidental gun death rate in the world, because we have taken the position that any sort of sensible prevention measures here should not be passed, we—I say, we, as a people—and I think that's the wrong position.

So I've tried to change what would happen. I thought surely after Columbine we would get some action. The Senate passed, 51–50—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote—I think, a good bill that would aggressively move us forward. But there are things we can do at the executive level without congressional action to continue to increase the effectiveness of the enforcement of the laws we have. And we're doing that.

But we don't have authority to require, for example, background checks on people that buy guns at gun shows or at flea markets. We have an assault weapons ban, but people can import large capacity ammunition clips and then adjust guns here and turn them into assault weapons. We have a few States that require safety locks on guns for kids. That's one thing that not many people talk about, but let me just say, the accidental rate of death from guns of children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the accidental rate in the other countries combined.

So I am doing everything I can do. I am not a dictator. The Congress believes—I'll just tell you the truth—the Congress believes—ask Congresswoman McCarthy; she's paid a pretty high price for this—they believe that if they vote with the NRA, they will not be defeated. They believe if they vote with you, they may be defeated.

This is not complicated. You have to understand, they believe that as long—you know when Charlie Rose asked me about the poll—I mean, Charlie Gibson asked me about the poll—Charlie Rose normally asks me about other things—asked me about the poll in there. You have to understand what they believe. They believe that as long as they can turn it into a gun

control, gun control, gun control debate and stay away from the specifics, they can scare a bunch of guys into thinking that they're going to lose their guns and that more people will vote against them for voting for gun control measures, if it's called that instead of the specifics, than vote for it.

Now look, I know you're heartbroken. I'm doing everything I can. Let me remind you that Mr. LaPierre, the representative of the NRA, said that I wanted people to die so I could make an issue out of this. That's what he said. Now, I can only tell you that I wake up every day thinking about this. I am heartbroken about this. And I am frustrated, because they do well if they can turn this into a gun control battle. We do well when we turn this into a specifics battle.

The thing that the mothers coming here will do, I hope, is to make this a voting issue. But if it's not, they're going to keep winning. And you just have to realize that.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, I want to interrupt you for just a second. We're supposed to take a commercial break here at this point, but we're going to keep going. And we just want to tell our local stations we want to keep going—because you want to follow up, I know.

[*Ms. Halpin said she needed accountability for her son's death and asked again what would the President do on the issue in his remaining days in office.*]

The President. Where are you from?

Ms. Halpin. I'm from New York, sir. Howard Beach.

The President. Well, I'm going to do my best to pass this legislation, and I'm going to do my best to make sure that we're enforcing the existing laws, and I'm going to do my best to find more people like you to tell your stories in the hope that more people in the Congress will be emboldened to do what, I believe, a majority of them think is the right thing to do.

This has been a big issue with me, and I have been very frustrated in my inability to get more done. We did—we got the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban through. I just want to tell you this. This is a very—you just need to know this. We have some people on the other side of this issue today, so I want to compliment them.

I got the first Congress I had to pass the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, and

at least a dozen of them, maybe as many as 20 of them in the House lost their seats because they did that, trying to help people like you—because the NRA beat their brains out, because they went home to their districts and told people they were going to take their guns away. Now, 7 years later, none of them have lost their guns, and we've got a safer America. And so now they're fighting the new list of prevention measures. But you need to know what happened.

I know this hurts you. And I'm telling you, we're—ask Congresswoman McCarthy—we've been up here fighting this for all these years, and it is very, very frustrating.

Ms. Halpin. It still won't bring our children back.

The President. It won't bring your children back. But I'll tell you what will save more children, is if they believe people like you will mobilize other people to change the voting behavior of the American public. That is what will bring—[*applause*]. That's the truth.

I know this sounds so cruel in the face of your human loss. You have to understand how things work here. Look, I'm not running for anything. I'm doing what I think is right. I have taken on these facts; I have done everything I know to do. And you heard what Charlie said, gun violence is down 30 percent, gun crime, since I took office—35 percent. The crime rate is down, actually, now to about a 27-year low. The murder rate is down to a 30-year low.

We are making it better. But this is still way too dangerous a country because we take the position that when it comes to these issues, this is the only area of our national life where we will not have prevention. Now, that's really what—that is the truth. And it breaks my heart, too.

Gun Safety and 2000 Elections

[*Ms. Sawyer cited a newspaper report that Gov. George W. Bush of Texas proposed to distribute free trigger locks if he is elected President. Ms. Sawyer asked if the President would support such a program.*]

The President. It's a good idea, but why is he doing that?

Ms. Halpin. And why now?

The President. No, no, wait—yes, that's good—that's also good. Why now? Because he's running for President. That's okay. That's what

elections are for. People get better ideas all the time. We can't hold people—anybody who wants to join and start doing things should be complimented. So that's fine.

But I think you have to understand what's going on here. There was a report in the newspaper last week that a lobbyist for the NRA said they would have an office in the White House if Governor Bush is elected. And they were, I think, the first or second biggest contributor to the annual Republican Party gala last week. So he wants to move away from that image; he wants people not to think that he won't do anything, that basically the NRA will control policy on this—which they will if he wins. And if he comes out and gives away gun trigger locks, then he doesn't have to explain why we're still importing large capacity ammunition clips and why he doesn't want to close the gun show loophole.

I know you have people here from Texas who believe that their concealed weapons law is very effective. I know that, and we could talk about that if you like. But the truth is that everybody is going to want to look like they're doing something, but the most effective measures are opposed by most of the people in the Republican Party. I wish that weren't true. We do have some support from them, and I thank those who are supporting us.

State Concealed Weapons Laws

[Ms. Sawyer said that representatives of the Second Amendment Sisters, who planned a counter-march to the Million Mom March, were also present. She introduced Texas State Representative Suzanna Gratia Hupp, an advocate of concealed weapons laws. However, there were technical difficulties with the videotape about her which was to be shown.]

Mr. Gibson. Well, Suzanna, where are you? Why don't you give me a basic of what happened in that restaurant.

[Ms. Hupp described the subject of the videotape, an incident in Texas where a man drove his truck through a restaurant window and then shot 23 people.]

The President. I remember that.

[Ms. Hupp said she had stopped her former practice of carrying a concealed weapon illegally out of fear of losing her chiropractic practicing license. She stated that her parents were killed

by the man in the truck and that laws against carrying a concealed weapon had left her defenseless in that situation.]

Mr. Gibson. And you are now in the state-house of Texas?

Ms. Hupp. Yes, sir, I am.

Mr. Gibson. And there is now a concealed weapons law in the State of Texas.

Ms. Hupp. Yes.

The President. Okay. First of all, let's concede something. She might be right about this. That is, on this particular incidence, if there had been someone in that restaurant who knew how to use a gun and was lawfully carrying it, for example, an off-duty police officer or somebody—or in a State with a concealed weapon law, someone who was properly trained and had it, maybe they could have stopped this horrible incident.

There is no law that covers every set of facts. However, what the truth is, in most instances is, is that a lot of people have guns who don't know how to use them. And the accidental death rate in America is—again I will say this—9 times higher than that in the next 25 biggest countries combined. So it's a question of what makes you safest overall.

But my view of the concealed weapons law is, if a State wants to have one, what do people have to prove to carry a concealed weapon? How well have they been trained? How likely are they to avoid doing something crazy, so that they're only used in cases like this?

But the second thing is, whether you've got a concealed weapons law or not should have nothing to do with whether you close the loophole in the background check, whether you ban the large capacity ammunition clips, and whether you require child trigger locks, including those that are built into the guns, assuming they're feasible.

She may be right about this, about this example. But I don't think that example is an argument against our legislation.

Gun Safety Legislation

[Ms. Sawyer noted that the Second Amendment Sisters said there was no evidence of a correlation between increased gun control laws and a decrease in violence, using England as an example.]

The President. Wait, wait a minute—an increase of violence from a very low base.

Ms. Sawyer. From a low base.

The President. From a low base. In America, I will say again—forget about the crimes; just look at the accidental gun rate. In America, the death rate of children under 15 from accidental gun violence is—I will say again—9 times higher than that in the next 24 biggest industrial countries put together.

So we say, in order to avoid inconveniencing people who have firearms or might want to get firearms, we will not have sensible prevention measures, because it scares everybody because we'll call it gun control. Now, that's a decision we've made as a society.

Look, there is no perfect system. The level of violence will depend upon the kind of people you have in your society, the condition of the economy, the way the children are raised, the values of the society, the values of the community, the effectiveness of law enforcement—there are many factors involved here. And there is no perfect system. But there is no question that if we want to become the safest big country on Earth, without impinging on our freedom, we will have to do more in the area of prevention.

National Rifle Association Board Member Susan Howard. Excuse me, could I ask a question, if it's all right?

The President. Sure.

Ms. Sawyer. And we should point out, you are Susan Howard.

Ms. Howard. Yes, I am. I would like to ask this lady—

Ms. Sawyer. Let's tell people, Susan, who you are, those who don't know you. You've seen her in the ads for the NRA.

Ms. Howard. Yes, for the child safety. Was your son killed accidentally with a gun, or was it a crime?

Ms. Halpin. It was a crime.

Ms. Howard. Mr. President, I really have to ask you something. You just made the statement that just sent shivers up and down my spine. You said, let's forget the crimes and—

The President. No—

Ms. Howard. No, no, no, sir, excuse me—

The President. This is the way the NRA operates.

Ms. Howard. No, sir, it's not. No, sir—

The President. All I did is—I don't want to forget the crimes—

Ms. Howard. No, sir, you said, let's forget the crime and talk about the accidents—because there is nobody that—

The President. You know that's not what I meant, to forget the crime, Ms. Howard.

Ms. Howard. But that's what you said, Mr. President. And I guess this is—

The President. Well, what I—I was making the prevention—

Ms. Howard. No, sir, let me finish.

The President. All right.

Ms. Howard. Please, may I finish, because you have a bully pulpit. And I know every single person here in this room, the majority of them, are really for you, and they love you, and they trust you, and they believe you. But we are right now living in a country, sir, where our children—it's not how many gun laws you can continue to pass. It's about my grandchildren; it's about their children; it's about your daughter and whether she ever has any children or not. Bottom line, the issue is about are we ever, ever, ever going to look at the children and say, that's the focus? Because right now what this is all about is the children have been pushed out of the side, they do not exist right now—

Mr. Gibson. Get to the question.

Gun Safety Education

Ms. Howard. No, what I'm saying is, if we—you are the education President, am I correct? Are you the education President? That is what you have built your—

The President. Well, that's what the teachers said yesterday when they all came here.

Ms. Howard. I agree, but I think that's what you built your platform on. What is it about educating children and gun safety that you have a problem with?

The President. Nothing. Now, wait a minute. Charlie, I have to answer this. On many occasions—not one, many occasions—I have complimented, as President, in the face of all the criticism I've gotten from the NRA, on many occasions I have complimented the NRA on the gun safety legislation, efforts they've made, the gun safety education programs. I have talked about what they did when I was Governor. I've also complimented them on some other things they did when I was Governor to reduce violence—but wait a minute, let me finish.

I think the laws should be more vigorously enforced. I have asked for more resources to

do that. Gun enforcement is up since I've been President. But I've asked for resources to do more.

Look, here's my argument. Let me just be very careful here. I do not believe that America has done enough on the prevention side. And I do not believe this problem can be addressed solely by stiffer punishment, by education, and in the case of the Texas, if a State wants to have a concealed weapons law. I believe we must do more to try to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children in the first place. That's all I said. That's my only position.

But I think the NRA, the education programs, the gun safety education programs, are good and would do a lot of good.

Mr. Gibson. Susan, let me address this. Marjorie Hardy is here—

Ms. Sawyer. Marjorie Hardy of Muhlenberg College. She is a psychologist—

Mr. Gibson. —and assistant professor who worked—Marjorie, if I quote you correctly, you worked with your children on education over and over again, correct?

Ms. Hardy. That's correct—

Mr. Gibson. And you used those children as part of an experiment that we did on "20/20."

Ms. Sawyer. —which we did at "20/20." And we also had the Eddie Eagle education program come in. And we were talking with kids about how—what you do when you see a gun in the room, specifically. And they all sat there and nodded, yes, they got it, you get an adult, you don't touch it, you don't touch it—including Marjorie's son, Matthew, who had grown up with nothing but education against guns.

I'm going to roll the clip. And what happened with Marjorie's son was a traditional—or typical with what happened with the other kids as well. And we found that the education, by and large, didn't work with this age kid. Here is Marjorie's son, Matthew.

The President. How old is your son?

Ms. Sawyer. He was age 4 at the time.

[A videotape was shown.]

Ms. Sawyer. And I want to point out, Marjorie, that the kids knew these were not toy guns. You could hear them saying, "This is a real gun," and reacting to the fact that it was a real gun. Anything you want to add?

[*Ms. Hardy asked what evidence the NRA had to prove their Eddie Eagle gun safety education program was effective. Ms. Howard responded that the NRA did not claim to have the only answer to the gun violence problem, but that education was an imperative.*]

Parental Responsibility

Ms. Sawyer. —I engage the President on this issue, if I can, this question of parental responsibility and parental role in general. If I can just move to that. When you talk about everybody being responsible, the question really becomes, are there just too many guns out there for parents to be able to maintain control?

Participants. Yes!

Ms. Sawyer. And what do you do about your neighbors? And I'm going to show you a tape, and then we're going to meet Lori Smith, because this is the story of what happened to her daughter, Shannon.

Let's see if we have the tape.

[*There were technical difficulties with the videotape.*]

Ms. Sawyer. I'm going to go to Lori and let you tell us what happened.

[*Ms. Smith explained that her 14-year-old daughter was talking on the telephone in her backyard last June when a bullet fell from the sky and killed her instantly. Ms. Smith noted people in the Phoenix, AZ, area where she lives often fire guns randomly into the air in celebration or for other reasons.*]

Ms. Sawyer. And random accidental shootings, as we know, take place by the thousands all the time. Mr. President, what about the guns out there?

The President. Well, here's a case—of course, that probably is illegal. And if it isn't, it should be.

Ms. Smith. It was only a misdemeanor two—

The President. Did they ever find out who did it?

[*Ms. Smith said that the shooter was not found, but she fought to elevate the offense to a felony, with great opposition from the NRA. She noted that the law changing the crime to a felony offense was signed April 3.*]

The President. There's a case—let me just say this. First, I'm very sorry about what happened. It's a terrible thing. And I think what you did in the legislature was a good thing. But I think there's a case where people really do need to be sensitized to the fact that bullets that go up will come down. I think there are some of these things where a public campaign to educate people would make a difference. And that's one I think would make a difference.

The larger question for me, going back to this question of whether there are too many guns in the society—I think that sometimes there's a lot of loose talk about this. We ought to talk specifically about what we mean. A lot of these—most of the guns in America are in the hands of hunters and sports people and law enforcement people, are those guns—most of the guns that are in those people's hands, I think, they're safe, and they're going to be properly used.

But there's a huge sort of sea of guns that's out there just kind of flowing around. And that's one of the reasons I think that all the sales have to be checked, there has to be a background check on all the sales; and one of the reasons I support these gun buyback programs that a lot of cities are doing. And we're trying to put more money into it now, as well, because—[inaudible]—are law-abiding citizens, and you've got as many of these loose weapons as you can off the street.

Is your film on now? Are they trying to get it on now?

Ms. Sawyer. No, no, I think we've got you in an echo chamber there for a moment.

We're going to take a break, in fact, Mr. President. And when we come back, we can explore more issues of, do we hold the parents accountable? To what extent? In what ways?

The President. Yes, I think you should. I think you should.

[Following a commercial break, Mr. Gibson asked if representatives on either side of the issue opposed laws enforcing parental responsibility.]

Participant. I have a caveat to it, though.

Mr. Gibson. All right, but basically not opposed. Because I want to get the question to the President. People seem to believe in this bill, and yet it's a law in only 17 States, and in only 3 States is it a felony.

The President. And we couldn't get it in the legislation here. Representative McCarthy just pointed out that that was the one provision in my bill I couldn't get in either the Senate or the House version. So I think maybe—this is something that is encouraging to me, because what you saw on that film with those young children, below a certain age you can't expect an education program to work; you have to keep the guns away from the kids.

I think that's something we could all agree on, we could get done here. That's very important. And I think the adults should be held responsible.

Mr. Gibson. And yet when you proposed it on a national level, neither House or Senate—

The President. In the Kayla Rollins case, there is no question in my mind that if there had been responsible adults in that home, that child would be alive today.

Ms. Sawyer. That is the Michigan case, we should point out, where a 6-year-old boy killed a 6-year-old classmate.

Gun Registration

Mr. Gibson. A question here. Your name?

[Donna Dee-Thomases, organizer of the Million Mom March, said that education was important but that licensing firearms, as one would an automobile, was equally important so that guns used in crimes could be more easily traced.]

Mr. Gibson. Comment on the registration—

The President. I think—let me back up and say, we cannot pass, in this Congress, licensing of handgun owners, which I have proposed. I think when people buy a handgun, they ought to pass a Brady background check, have a gun safety education program, and have a photo ID license, just like when you have a car. That's what I believe.

And the registration of guns, the main virtue of that would be that you could trace them when they were used in a crime. If I steal your car, Charlie, and I drive it down to Maryland and rob a bank, and I leave it in a shopping center parking lot, and it's found, because the registration is on the National Crime Information Center computer system, you can find out within literally 30 seconds after it's found what happened to your car.

But we can't even pass a bill to close the loophole in the Brady law when we know the Brady law has kept 500,000 felons, fugitives, and

stalkers from getting handguns in the first place. So we can't pass that now. But should it be done? Well, of course it should be done.

Gun Safety Locks

[Following a commercial break, Ms. Sawyer asked how many participants opposed gun safety locks.]

Participant. Safety locks, or a law that requires safety locks?

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. How many of you are for mandatory safety locks? And how many of you are for only voluntary? All right, we almost have a consensus issue there. At least safety locks should be on guns, one way or the other.

Mr. Gibson. You have a comment over here.

Lawsuits Against the Gun Industry

[Johnny Mae Robinson from New York stated that her son was killed last year and asked if cities would continue to have the right to sue the gun industry.]

The President. Well, I think we should. And we supported the development of that lawsuit. But there is a move on by the gun manufacturers and their allies to try to get State legislatures to prohibit cities from being able to bring such suits, and their theory is—I'll make their case for them real quick—they say, if a gun is a legal product, it's wrong to be able to sue the person who makes it.

The other side of the argument is, there is—if you look at the way the guns are marketed and sold, a relatively large percentage of guns used in crimes and used illegally are sold by a relatively small number of the gun dealers in America, and there is some evidence that the people who distribute the guns know that and do it anyway. And that's basically the argument behind the lawsuit.

And lawsuits are supposed to find facts, and this is the fact-finding process we're going to find, to see if a change in these policies, again, would make us safer. That's what it's about. Do I think they ought to have the right to bring the suit? I do, and I have supported it, and I've done what I could to protect it.

Trigger Locks

Ms. Sawyer. On that front, Mr. President, I'm going to give the microphone to Lynn Dix, who has a story to tell.

[Ms. Dix said that she was suing a gun manufacturer because her son would still be alive if the gun that killed him had been equipped with an integral trigger lock or load indicator. She concluded that she could not understand opposition to prevention measures.]

The President. I think one of the most troubling things that I've seen in this whole episode is, a lot of the people who are opposed to what I want to do say these things should be voluntary, trigger locks should be voluntary—let me just finish, because I'm where you are on this. So Smith & Wesson comes along and they say, "Okay, we'll put the trigger locks in, and we'll stop dealing with bad dealers, and we'll do other things which we think will help." And they didn't lose a lawsuit to do it; they came in on the front end and said they were going to do it.

And there was the awfulest reaction to them. They were treated like they had betrayed the country, like they had committed treason. And other gun manufacturers and everybody, they gave them a gut shot. It was unbelievable what happened, the reaction to them. And this is something where a free corporation decided they would change their policy in ways that plainly would make America a safer place. And the reward they got was having the other gun manufacturers and some of their allies just try to literally take their heads off. And I think it was wrong. I think what they did was the right thing.

Conclusion

[Noting the President's earlier statement that he thinks about this issue more than any other, Mr. Gibson invited him to summarize the meeting.]

The President. Domestic—yes, because it's the one we have made the least—we have both made the most progress on, but we've got a long way to go. And I think about it also because I grew up in a culture where more people thought like the minority here in this room who are in dissent.

Last weekend I was up in the Ozark Mountains, and I stopped at this little country store in the middle of the Ozarks. The last time I was there, 10 years ago, it was because I was out on a turkey hunt. Most of the people I spent time with were either, if they weren't members of the NRA—when I was hunting, you

know, duck hunting, or whatever—they had favorable opinions. As I said, when I was Governor, I had both good and one horrible experience with the NRA.

But my view of this is, I think we all have to realize we don't—none of us claim that any of our positions are absolute and that we can make a perfect world and nobody will ever get hurt, no bad person will ever get ahold of a gun, nothing wrong will ever happen. The people who are coming here to Washington, including many people in this room who have lost members of their families, understand that not every law they're advocating might have saved the particular life of the particular loved one they lost. Their loss got them interested in this, and they began to ask themselves: How can we make a safer country? How can we save more children like my children? How can we save more loved ones like my loved one?

I think, in fairness, the people who oppose them are good people. They really believe, I think—I don't know if they'll say it, but maybe after I'm gone they will—I think they think we have some—we either are weak on enforcement or we have some dark hidden agenda to take guns away from everybody, including lawful gun owners. And they think that would change America forever for the worse.

I don't have that agenda. I have never proposed any such rule. What I've tried to do, I'll say again, is I think that this area of our national life is an area where—to go back to the very first question I was asked—where I think we should not rest until we think we have done everything we can to prevent bad things from happening in the first place.

Every other area of our national life, we first choose prevention. Then if things go haywire, we punish. This should not be the area where we say, "Because we're worried about people doing something someday that's bad, we're not going to have prevention; we'll just start with punishment. But we'll be for education, but we'll start with punishment." That's my whole take on this.

I think we could do a lot more on prevention, make it a lot safer country, and achieve the objectives of the Million Mom March, which is that all these women that are here, they want fewer stories like theirs. That's my own take on this.

So I just wanted to put this into context. I want you all to talk to each other when I leave. I've talked too much here. I learn more when I listen.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all very much.

Ms. Sawyer. Thanks for letting us stay in the house while you're away. [*Laughter*]

The President. It's your house, not mine. I'm just passing through. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview segment of the program, entitled "GMA Live at the White House: Moms & Guns," began at 7 a.m. in the Oval Office. The townhall meeting segment originated from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Bill F. Owens of Colorado; Representative Carolyn McCarthy; news talk show host Charlie Rose; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Million Mom March Representatives and an Exchange With Reporters in Akron, Ohio

May 12, 2000

The President. Good morning everyone. I have just had the opportunity to meet this fine group of mothers who are leading Ohio's participation in Sunday's Million Mom March for commonsense gun safety laws. I want to thank them for their commitment, their determination, and

their courage. What they are doing is profoundly important.

Like millions of mothers all over America, they are outraged by the senseless acts of gun violence that continue to plague our communities, and they are determined to do something

about it. Every day, nearly a dozen of our children are killed by guns. Twelve families suffer a wound that never heals. What is almost as senseless is the fact that Congress refuses to act on legislation that would prevent many of these shootings.

These moms will be marching in Washington and in more than 60 other cities on Mother's Day to say to Congress, enough is enough. It is unconscionable that over a year after Columbine, over 10 months since they've had a chance to send me meaningful legislation, Congress still refuses to act.

Well, they can ignore my request to move. They can ignore the evidence that commonsense prevention won't cost any law-abiding citizen a gun but will save lives. But this Sunday they will not be able to ignore the fact that the voices of more than a million moms across America will be demanding action.

The great sociologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." The women who are organizing this march are such a group of thoughtful citizens. They understand they have to be in this for the long haul. They understand that they have a lot of work to do.

But the evidence is on their side. The arguments are with them. And the power is on the other side. The whole story of America is the story of bringing down established walls of power in the face of argument and evidence and passionate commitment to liberty and to the dignity of individuals. That's what the Million Mom March represents. I'm honored to be here with them today, and again, I thank them for what they will be doing in Ohio.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the march will have the kind of impact that will break this logjam and get some gun control legislation through this Congress?

The President. The honest answer to that is, I don't know. But I think it will have a seminal impact in the nature of this debate because, for a very long time now, large majorities of the American people have been for commonsense prevention legislation that has nothing to do with infringing on the right to keep arms, to bear arms, to hunt, to sport shoot, to keep weapons in self-defense, but has everything to do with keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Notwithstanding the fact that

lopsided majorities of our people favor these specific measures, they don't pass because of the intensity, power, and wealth of the organized opposition to it.

So I think what these folks are saying is, you know, we want to save more lives. We're not trying to take anything away from what those people legally have who disagree with us. But we don't intend to let them take away our chance for prevention and safety anymore. And that is the beginning of the shift in the balance of forces in our society. That's how change always occurs.

So if they stay at this, they will prevail, because the evidence is on their side, the human element is on their side, and because they're not trying to take anything away from the other people. All they're trying to do is to protect our society from criminal acts and from avoidable accidents.

There are lives at stake. I think they will prevail. I hope they will prevail this year. I hope we will be able to prevail upon the leaders of the conference to meet and work again. But even if they don't win this battle, they'll win over the long run, because they are galvanizing public opinion around specific reforms that will make America a better place and will give a lot of kids their lives.

Smith & Wesson/Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, a \$300,000 grant was given out to Smith & Wesson to do research on smart gun technology. Aren't some folks who see that as a payoff to that company for signing—what do you see as the status of that—

The President. Well, I think first of all, Smith & Wesson did a good thing in making this agreement. And I think it's very—if you look at what they—what did they agree to do? They agreed to attach child safety locks; they agreed to make internal child safety lock mechanisms on their guns as soon as they could do so technologically, which could not be dismantled by the kids; and to work on smart gun technology, which would enable guns to be fired only by the adults who lawfully own them.

They agreed to—this is perhaps most important in the short run—they agreed to change the way they market and distribute their guns to avoid that relatively small number of dealers who sell a very high percentage of the guns that go to people who use them in crimes. Now, I would think that that would have been well-

received by everybody. But instead, the other gun manufacturers and their allies have subjected Smith & Wesson to withering, withering criticism.

But the answer to your question is no. I don't think it'll be seen as a payoff, because it's nowhere near as much money as it will cost them, given the reaction of the rest of the gun industry to what they're trying to do. And we have to have someone who's in the industry help us with this research; just by the nature of it, it has to be done. And I can assure you, there was never any quid pro quo or discussion of it. This all came up later. We need to have some allies in the gun industry who really do believe that prevention is an important part of a safe future for America.

And I hope that Smith & Wesson will keep all the components of the agreement they made. They have certainly paid an enormous price for doing it. I mean, it's truly been breathtaking to see the reaction against them by the other gun manufacturers and their allies.

Yes, sir?

Q. Mr. President, is there room for any compromise in this legislation? And if so, in what area?

The President. Well, let me give you an example of what I—what we've got before the Congress right now. I think we can work out language on the child trigger locks. I would hope that we could get a big majority for banning the import of large capacity ammunition clips. Surely there is not a constituency for that. There has been absolutely no disruption whatever from our banning of assault weapon. But if you let them import these large capacity ammunition clips, then you can modify existing guns here and turn them into assault weapons.

The hangup—and this is interesting to me—the hangup is that the NRA is basically opposed to doing the background checks at gun shows unless they're insta-checks. Now, Ohio is a big State, with a lot of large cities spread across the State, and then an awful lot of small towns and rural areas. Their argument is, a lot of these gun shows are held on the weekend. You know, if somebody comes in and wants to buy a gun, it's a real hassle to wait 3 days for the background checks. Is there a way to work this out?

Well, here's my theory about it. Everybody who clears the insta-check, let them buy the gun. Seventy percent of the people clear the insta-check in a couple of minutes; 90-plus per-

cent within a day, same day as the gun show occurs. But of the less than 10 percent who don't clear it, their rejection rate, because of a problem in their background, principally, a criminal problem, is 20 times higher than the 90 percent of the people that do clear.

So what we've been unwilling to do so far is to say if we don't clear—see, what the NRA position is, if they don't clear in a day, we ought to give that last 9 percent or 8 percent or however many—they ought to be able to take the guns home, even if they don't clear within a day. And my position is, why would we defend a population that's less than 10 percent of the total, that's more than 20 times likely to have committed a crime and be ineligible to get a gun than the rest of the 90 percent?

So it looks to me like we could work an agreement that covers the rest of the 90 percent, and then on the 9 percent, it seems to me it's quite important to do that. And—you know, let me tell you, that would—even that is a compromise from what would be the optimal, and here's why. Suppose a custody order or a stop order is listed in a domestic dispute that's very violent, on a Friday afternoon. It can't possibly be in anybody's computer yet. If you let the insta-check control that, then a lot of people will get cleared—not a lot, but a small number that could be violent—could be cleared anyway.

So our people, representing our position through Mr. Conyers from Michigan, have, I think, made quite a reasonable proposal. And I'm hoping that we'll keep working on it. I think if we just had to work it out in the House, we could probably do it. But right now, the Senate—where, ironically, where we passed a stronger bill—but Senator Hatch and the Senate conferees are essentially refusing to go forward with us on this.

So—I didn't mean to give you too long and detailed an answer, but you need to know that what's so sad about this is I think we could do the child trigger locks; I think we could do the assault weapons ban. And I think—it seems unbelievable to me that we would be hung up here on this background check at the gun shows in a way that affects less than 10 percent of the gun buyers, but they're 20 times more likely to have a problem in their background. It's very important that everybody understand that. If we could just get focused on

that. I can't believe we couldn't figure out a way to work this out.

Now, there's much bigger opposition to what—the larger legislative goals of the Million Mom March, but I think they're absolutely right. As you know, I favor—for example, I think if somebody buys a handgun, they ought to get a license, like a car license. It ought to be a photo ID license. It ought to show that they passed a background check and that they passed a gun safety check, just like you do when you get a car. That's what I think.

So I'd like to see the short-term goals resolved this year, and I want them to keep on pushing, because there is so much we can do. We can make America the safest big country in the world and still have people out there hunting and sport shooting, even having weapons for protection if they thought they needed them in their homes. But we can't do it without more prevention.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of polls which suggest that support for gun restrictions are wavering among men, and they tend to be more sympathetic to—

The President. If you read—let me just say this. First, I agree with that. But I think we've got to put it into some perspective.

If you go back and look at the data from the Pew Research survey, they do show that men, particularly men over 55, have been affected by the claims of the NRA and the advertising that the rights of legitimate gun owners are threatened. But they also show that a majority, a significant majority of the people, still respond that we need further gun control measures.

The real problem is whether you talk in general terms about gun control, or whether you talk in specific terms about closing the gun show loophole, banning large capacity ammunition clips, imposing child trigger locks, or licensing

gun owners. If you give people the specifics, there are still 70 percent of the people with us, maybe more.

But the labeling fears—because it scares people. I said the other day to our staff, I said, this is weird. That's why the people who oppose our position, they always want to talk about more gun control and imply that the rights of hunters and sports people are threatened. And they use that label.

But you know, when we talk about the speed limits on automobiles or people having to get a license to drive their cars or laws that require you to use your seat belts or put in the right kind of baskets, child safety restraint seats—you know, all those things are laws. You want to drive a car, and you want to put your child in the car. They're all laws. Nobody talks about car control. And you have a constitutional right to travel, too, you know. The Supreme Court says you've got a constitutional right to travel. No one says car control is threatening our constitutional right to travel.

So I think that what we should do is, instead of having these label wars, we should calm down, lower the rhetoric, and say, what is it that we have proposed? What is it that they are advocating? Would it make us safer? Would it prevent more crimes and more accidental deaths and injuries? Does it infringe the Constitution?

My answer is, look at the facts of what they're advocating. Would it make us a safer country? Absolutely. Would it infringe the Constitution? Absolutely not. Therefore, we ought to do it. I think if we just calm this down and look at the facts, we'll prevail.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. outside the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility.

Opening Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion in Akron on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 12, 2000

Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank Congressman Sawyer for inviting me here today, and I thank all of you for joining us. I know

we have people here who have a lot of different views on this China issue, but I think that's important. I think this is a big part of what

makes our democracy work is that we sit and try to talk through these things.

I've got a few notes here that are specific to Ohio, so I'd like to just go over them. Obviously, I've spent a lot of time on this trade agreement with China, which was negotiated in order to let them in the World Trade Organization. And in order for us to benefit from its provisions, we have to grant them normal trading status on a permanent basis. For the last 20 years, ever since the formal opening of China in 1979, we've been doing it on an annual basis. So this—I want to make sure we understand, the decision before Congress is whether to go from an annual review of their trade relationships with us, to give them permanent normal trading status—that is, the same status that virtually every other country in the world enjoys.

Now, it's important to recognize that whatever you think the long-term consequences are, the short-term consequences are all running in our favor, because today we have a very large trade deficit with China, and they have very large tariffs and other barriers to our doing business with them. What this does is, they take down a lot of their barriers to trade and investment with America in return for membership in the World Trade Organization, which puts them in the global trading system and requires them to follow certain rules and gives us some way to appeal if they don't follow those rules. But what they get is membership in the club. What they give us are membership dues. That's the way you have to look at this. And the access, on purely economic terms, is, I think, quite impressive.

Today, Ohio is the leading State in machinery exports. Two-thirds of the industrial workers in this State have jobs that benefit in whole or part from exports. In the last 5 years—or from '93 to '98—Akron's exports to China have more than doubled. Over the same period, Ohio's exports to China also more than doubled. And this involves almost every sector of the Ohio economy. It's over \$350 million now.

So if this passes—Secretary Glickman can talk about it later as well—there will be huge new markets for agriculture, new markets for automobiles, new markets for high-tech equipment, new markets for telecommunications equipment. We will be able for the first time, for example, to sell cars there or sell auto parts there without either having to put a manufacturing plant in China or transfer manufacturing technology.

That's never been possible before. And the tariffs will drop on average in some of these areas, say, from 25 percent to 10 percent over a period of just a few years. So it's a big—it's in every way an economic winner.

In addition to that, you should know that last April, a year ago, we had most of this, but not all this agreement. And I consulted with, among others, the AFL-CIO and other people who were concerned about whether the economics work out fairly, and they asked me to go back and get some new provisions about our trade relations, so that if China dumped a lot of products into our market in a certain area, which threatened a lot of jobs, we could take immediate and quick action. I did that; that's why we didn't get this agreement last April.

I went back—China has now agreed to give us the right, for more than a decade, to move against them on a bilateral basis if there's trade injury in America. And the standard of proof we have to make is lower than the standard of proof we have to make under our laws for every other country in the world. And they agreed to this. They agreed to allow us to bring action against them if there's severe dislocation of our markets under a standard of proof lower than we have for any other country in the world, which is what I was asked to do, and we got that, against surges of imports and dumping and things like that.

So I think it is a good deal economically. But I have to tell you, I think it's more important for our national security. Why? Because if we let China in the WTO, they will be inside the world trading system. They will have a strong interest in working with other people and cooperating with other people. They will have a strong disincentive not to have trouble with Taiwan, even though there's a lot of tension between the two of them, as all of you have heard. And I think we'll be able to continue to work with them and relate to them and make progress on a whole range of other fronts.

I think it's quite interesting that most, not all, but most of the human rights activists in China, most of the democracy activists in China are for this agreement. There was a big article on the cover of one of our—I think the Washington Post, yesterday on the front page, where they'd gone and actually interviewed dissidents in China who were severely alienated from the Government, and everybody they interviewed

said, "Please do this. If you don't do this, America won't have any influence over the Chinese. You'll never be able to help us. We'll never be able to move forward. We'll be isolated; we'll be more repressed."

Martin Lee, the long-time democracy advocate in Hong Kong—who can't even go to China, has never met the Premier of China, for example, Zhu Rongji—in America last week said, "You have to do this. If you don't vote for this, you have no influence. You can't help me. Nothing will happen. And the chances of something bad happening in China will be much greater." The President-elect of Taiwan, who has previously advocated independence from China, wants us to vote for this.

Now, there are people in China who don't want this to pass. The most militant elements in the military, the most traditional elements, the people who control the state-owned industries, they don't want this to pass because they know if they open up China, their control will be undermined. And in one of the great ironies of this whole trade debate, I've never—it's an unusual thing to see that some of the most progressive people in our country are taking a position that is supported by only the most regressive people in their country. Because they know that isolation helps them to maintain control and the status quo.

I honestly believe this is by far the most important national security vote we will take this year. I think if we pass it, it will strengthen and stabilize our position in Asia and reduce the likelihood of conflict, even war, there for a decade. I think if we don't pass it, it will increase the chances that something bad will happen.

That's not a threat, and goodness knows if I didn't prevail, I would pray that I was wrong. I can only tell you that I've been doing this a long time. I believe I know what I'm talking about, and I think that it's very, very important.

And so, for whatever it's worth, that's why we're here. And Tom was good enough to get this panel together so we could just have a conversation. That's what this is about, and I want to hear from you. And I'm sure after this is over, all our friends in the media will want to hear what you said to me. *[Laughter]* And you feel free to tell them. But I think we ought to start now and have that conversation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in a classroom at the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan.

Remarks to the Community in Shakopee, Minnesota

May 12, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all let me say I thank you all for coming out today. And I'm glad the weather made it easier on us.

I want to thank Terry and Kitty and Gene Hauer for welcoming us to their farm. I think we ought to give them a big hand; we have invaded them—*[applause]*. We managed to find enough unplanted space that I don't think we're taking their income away, but we certainly have invaded them today.

Dallas, thank you for your introduction and for your example. Secretary Glickman, thank you very much for the work you're doing, not only on this issue but on so many others to help the farmers of America. And I want to echo what you said about David Minge. He's a won-

derful person. I've loved working with him these years I've been President. He is a straight shooter—although he never tells me any of those Norwegian jokes he's always telling Glickman—*[laughter]*—so I expect to get my quota before I leave.

But you should know that he is an extraordinarily attentive Representative for you. I don't even know how many times he's mentioned some specific thing of importance to the people of this district and the people of Minnesota. But if everybody worked on me as hard as he has the last 7 years, I wouldn't get anything else done, because he really does a good job for you.

I want to acknowledge in the audience today the presence of your Lieutenant Governor, Mae Schunk; the attorney general, Mike Hatch; Treasurer Carol Johnson; your State agriculture commissioner, Gene Hugoson—I think that’s the right pronunciation—and the mayor of Shakopee, Jon Brekke, and his wife and beautiful daughter came out to the airport and met me. And I have here, somewhere, a beautiful crayon drawing she made for me—[laughter]—which I’m going to take back to the White House and save as a memory of coming here. It was really beautiful.

I want to thank Bob Bergland, also, as Dan Glickman did. And I understand the former Governor of North Dakota, Alan Olson, is here. Welcome. I thank you for coming over.

But I want to say a special word of appreciation to a man who’s been my friend for 25 years and one of my favorite people in the whole world: our former Vice President, your former Senator, and my former Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale. Thank you for being here. Thank you so much. I spent most of my early life listening to him speak. I’m just trying to get even now. [Laughter]

I also want you to know that I brought with me two representatives of American agriculture today when I came in on Air Force One, Scott Shearer with Farmland Industries, Nick Giordano of the National Pork Producers, and Susan Keith of the National Corn Growers, and they’re out there working to help us. I thank them.

I want to also say to the people who are here from New Ulm, I’m sorry that I couldn’t come out to your community. I hope you’ll give me a raincheck. What really happened was—you know, politicians always give you some sidwinding excuse. Well, I’ll tell you what happened. What really happened is, I’ve got to go back to work in Washington tonight, and I have to get back there an hour and a half earlier than I had originally thought I had to be there. I’m glad I got to come to the Hauer’s farm, and I hope I get to come back there.

We have a community in my home State of Arkansas called Ulm. It’s near Almyra, which is near Stuttgart—[laughter]—which is near Slovac. [Laughter] And they grow rice down there.

I’m glad to be back in Minnesota. I was in St. Paul last week, at America’s first charter school, on my education tour. And I’m coming back in a couple of weeks to speak at Carleton

College. If I come anymore, you’ll make me pay taxes here, but I’ve had a good time. [Laughter]

I’d like to also acknowledge somebody who can’t be here today, but somebody I really want to thank. Last week we had an astonishing event at the White House with President Carter and President Ford and virtually every living former Secretary of State, former Secretaries of Agriculture, former Trade Ambassadors, former Secretaries of Defense, National Security Advisers, two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A whole history of the last 50 years in America was represented in the White House that day—except for Vice President Mondale’s predecessor as Ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, our former Senate majority leader; he’s 98 years old now. When he was 15, he lied about his age to get into World War I. [Laughter] He’s from Montana, and he’s about—he would give a speech about as short as the one Terry gave today. [Laughter] Sort of consonant with coming from the northern part of the United States.

But when we swore Fritz in, Mike Mansfield came, and I said—you know, he was then, I think, 91 or 92—I said, “You know, he walks 4 miles a day.” And Mansfield stood up in the back, and he said, “Five.” [Laughter] So when he was 98 I said, “Mike, are you still walking every day?” He said, “Yeah, but I’m down to 2 miles a day.” So I figure if we could all walk 2 miles a day at 98, we’d be doing pretty well.

I also want to thank your Governor, Jesse Ventura, who was there. He was the only sitting Governor who came. And he’s been just great to support this initiative, and I’m grateful for him. It’s good for you, and it’s good for America. He’s not a member of my party; he didn’t have to do it, and it meant a lot to me that he showed up. I hope that it will mean something to you, too.

When my staff was boning me up on getting ready to come here and briefing me about the history of this area, I learned that the first citizens of Shakopee—I’ll get it right—were pioneers in more than one sense. Way back in the 19th century, they were already trading with China. China was then the biggest and richest fur market in the world, and many of the pelts they bought came from here, from the shores of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. They found markets in China.

Then trade was a small, though interesting part of your past. It's going to be a much bigger part of your future, one way or the other. That's why I wanted to come here to talk about expanding trade in China, what it means for farmers like you, for States like Minnesota, and, even more important than that, for the future of our children and America in this new century.

In less than 2 weeks, Congress will vote on whether to provide permanent normal trading relation status with China. Now, PNTR, that's pretty arcane sounding. But what it means, as you've already heard, is that China will join about 130 other countries with whom we have trading that is governed by international rules of trade, plus whatever specific agreements we have with them.

In 1979, when President Carter and Vice President Mondale and Bob Bergland were involved in opening our relationships with China, we signed a trade agreement. And ever since then—and 21 years, now, every year—we have granted them what used to be called most-favored-nation, but really was normal trading relations. We did it on an annual basis. And the idea behind doing it on an annual basis was, we knew we had big differences with the Chinese. They were a Communist country; we were a democracy. They had labor, human rights, and religious rights practices with which we did not agree. We were trying to continue to work with them to resolve their differences with Taiwan on a peaceful basis. And it was thought that the Congress reviewing this every year would give Congress—and through Congress, the President, whoever that happened to be—some way of reviewing where we were with China; whether it was in our larger national interests, as well as our economic interests, to review this every year.

So now, I am proposing that we give them permanent normal trading status and let them come into the World Trading Organization, where they'll be governed by the same rules that govern us and all the other countries that are in it. And I came to tell you why I think we ought to make that change.

The biggest benefit, as you have heard from Secretary Glickman, will probably go to the agricultural sector, in economic terms. One out of every three American acres grows exports. We are the world's largest exporter of agricultural products. During the last 5 years, in spite of the Asian financial collapse and the terrible

thing it's done to farm prices, we've still seen our exports nearly double. If you look at gross cash receipts, trade means about twice as much to America's farmers as it does to the economy as a whole.

Minnesota is third in soybean exports and production, fourth in corn—feed corn—seventh in overall agricultural exports. In 1998 Minnesota sold \$2.4 billion in agricultural products to foreign markets, \$316 million to China—more than twice what you sold in 1993, when I became President.

As Secretary Glickman described, the magnitude of the Chinese market virtually defies the imagination. There are 1.3 billion people in China. It's no wonder already China consumes more pork than any other nation. It is also the world's largest growth market for soybeans and soybean products. When I was Governor of Arkansas, back 15, 16 years ago, I used to go to Taiwan. And Taiwan was our biggest export market; they have 17 million people. And since the Chinese people are the same, if you extrapolate from 17 million to 1.3 billion, it's almost incalculable what this could mean for soybeans. The dairy consumption in China is going up as people's incomes rise.

Now, that's the way they are today, with a fairly modest per capita income. It is projected that over the next 30 to 50 years, China will have the biggest economy in the world. And obviously, as the people grow wealthier and move more and more to the city, the markets will grow, not only because more people will be able to buy food but the per capita food consumption will go up.

What does it mean for China to go into the World Trade Organization? It means they won't subsidize their farm sector as they used to. They're already making adjustments—planting less wheat and less cotton, for example. There is no way the Chinese farmers can keep pace with the growth of their own consumers. But America's farmers can. And Congress can give you the chance to do so, but only if it votes for permanent normal trading relations. And I want you to understand why: because in order for the members of the World Trade Organization to let China in, and then to benefit from whatever trade concessions China makes—and they've made the most in their agreement with us—every one of the members has to agree to treat China like a member. So if we don't vote for permanent normal trading relations, it's

like we're saying, well, they may be in there, but we're not going to treat them like a member. And if we don't do that, what it means is, we don't get the benefit of the deal I just described to you. That's what this is all about.

This agreement, which we negotiated—and it's self-serving for me to say, I realize that, because it was negotiated by our Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky, with heavy input from Secretary Glickman and Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser, who was there in China with her—but it really is a hundred-to-nothing agreement economically. Normally, when we negotiate a trade agreement, we swap out, just like you do if you make a deal with somebody. Somebody says, you know, "I'll give you this," and you say, "Okay, I'll give you that."

This is not a trade agreement in that sense. This is a membership agreement. They say, "If you let us into this world trading unit, we'll abide by the rules, including rules that we weren't governed by before. And, in order to get in it, we'll agree to modernize our economy, which means we will drop our tariffs, open our markets, let you sell into our markets, let you invest in our markets." It is a huge deal.

If you look beyond agriculture, it used to be that if we wanted to sell manufacturing products in China, they'd say, "Fine; put a plant here." Or if we wanted to sell some high-tech products, they'd say, "Fine; transfer the technology to us." Now—that's one reason we have representatives from 3M company here—we'll be able to sell for the first time into the Chinese market American cars, for example, without putting up auto plants, without transferring the technology.

But nowhere will the benefits be greater than in agriculture. You've already heard from Dallas that export subsidies have kept American corn and other products from being priced competitively. No more. No more baseless health barriers, which China uses or has used to keep our beef and poultry outside their borders; no more high tariffs on feed grains, soybeans, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. Indeed—as Secretary Glickman reminds me from time to time when we have problems with our European neighbors and friends—the Chinese have offered us lower tariffs on some farm products than the European Union imposes today.

Now, China's going to grow no matter what we do, and they're going to get into the WTO. The only issue here—the only issue is whether we are prepared to give up this annual review

in return for the economic benefits that we have negotiated. That is the decision before the Congress, and it seems to me that it's a pretty easy decision. I think if Congress turns its back on this opportunity, we'll spend the next 20 years regretting it. And I know we'll spend the next 20 years paying for it, in ways that go far beyond dollars in farm families' pockets.

This is a vote for our economic security. China agrees to play by the same trading rules we do, and if we don't like it, we have two options. One is, we can pursue them in the world trading organization mechanisms, which means it won't just be America against China, and they won't be able to say, "There are those big, ugly Americans trying to take advantage of us." It'll be us and everybody else who plays by the same rules.

But in addition to that, you need to know that we negotiated an agreement with China unlike any one we have with any other country, which says that we can go against them bilaterally, us against them, if they dump products in our market, or if for some reason, like changing currency, there's an enormous surge of their products in our market threatening to dislocate a lot of Americans. And they have agreed to let us bring action with a lower standard for proof of injury than we have in our own trade laws. Plus which we have got money set aside to monitor this agreement in greater detail than any one we've ever had. So I think it's a pretty clear issue.

Now, why isn't everybody for it? Well, some people say, "Well, maybe they won't keep their word." Well, we have trade disputes all the time. We've got two outstanding with Europe still that haven't been resolved, where we just keep running around. But you've got a better chance of getting it resolved with people in a rules-based, law-abiding international system than outside it.

Some people say, "Well, they still do a lot of things we don't like." Well, that's true. But I can tell you that we'll have a lot more influence on Chinese foreign policy, when it comes to the proliferation of dangerous weapons, and on human rights and religious rights and political rights in China, if we have an open hand of working with them, than if we say no, if we turn our backs on them. I am absolutely certain of that.

And I just want to point out, that is why all of our allies in Asia, the democracies—Japan,

South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand—these countries want us to give them normal trading status. They're very worried that we might not do this and that it will increase tensions in Asia and increase the chance of something bad happening between Taiwan and Japan and make China focus more on military buildups than building their economy and their relationships with their neighbors. That's why the President-elect of Taiwan wants us to approve this.

That's why Martin Lee, who's the leader of the democracy movement in Hong Kong—a man prohibited by law from even going to China—if anybody ought to have an axe to grind, you'd think he would. He came here to America to tell the Congress they had to vote for this because that was the way to get human rights and political freedom in China, to put them in a rule-based system of international law.

Yesterday there was a detailed report in the Washington press interviewing dissidents in China, people who have been persecuted for their beliefs. Every one interviewed said, America has got to approve this, otherwise America will have no influence to try to keep moving China toward democracy and freedom.

You know, we get frustrated, but China is an old country, and it's changing fast. Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. At some point, you tell me, when they get to 50 or 100 or 150 million—which by then will still be barely more than 10 percent of their population—the country will change forever. You cannot maintain top-down control.

And I think it might be interesting for you to know that not everybody in China wants us to do this. You know who is against it in China? The most reactionary elements in the military and the people that run those old, uncompetitive state-owned industries that want to keep those subsidies coming, that want to keep these markets closed, and that want to keep their thumb on the little folks in China.

Look, this may or may not work out. I can't tell you what the future will hold. Nobody knows that. And the Chinese will have to decide what path they take to the future. All I know is, this is a good economic deal, and it's an imperative national security issue, because we ought to at least get caught trying to give every

chance to the Chinese to take a responsible path to tomorrow, to have a constructive relationship with this country when our children are grown, when our grandchildren are in school. We don't want a new arms race. We don't want every mutt in 2010 or 2020 to be calculating—see the papers full of stories about whether we're calculating whether we've got enough nuclear missiles against the Chinese.

We ought to give this a chance. We ought to give the future a chance to work. It's a great deal for you now. But as much as I want to help the farmers here and the farmers home in Arkansas—so when I go home, they'll still let me come around—[laughter]—it's far more important to me to do the right thing by our national security, to give our children a chance to live in the most peaceful world in human history.

And that's what this is all about. So I hope you will support David Minge. I hope you will ask your Senators to vote for this. I hope you will ask the other Members of the Minnesota delegation to vote for this. And I hope you will tell people that it is clearly the right thing to do economically. It is clearly the next logical step from the historic news made in the Carter/Mondale administration in 1979.

But the most important thing is, it gives us a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. People ask me all the time, "Now that you've been President 7 years, what have you learned about foreign policy?" And I always tell them, it's a lot more like real life than you think. And 9 times out of 10, you get a lot more reaching out a hand of cooperation than you do shaking a clenched fist. That's what this is about.

Now, if they do something that's terrible that we're offended by, we don't give up a single right here to suspend our trade relations or do anything else that any emergency conditions might dictate. All we're doing is saying we'd like to build a future with you if you're willing to do it. And we're prepared to work over the long run.

I thank you for coming here today. I ask you to recognize that this is not a foregone conclusion. I believe it is by far the most important national security vote that Congress will cast this year. And if you can do anything as

an American citizen, as well as Minnesota farmers, to help us prevail, you'd be doing a great thing for our grandchildren.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the barnyard at the Hauer Farm. In his remarks, he referred to farmers Terry Hauer, his wife Kitty and father Gene; Dallas Bohnsack, chair, Scott County Board of Commissioners, who introduced

the President; former Secretary of Agriculture Robert Bergland, member, University of Minnesota Board of Regents; Scott Shearer, director of national relations, Farmland Government Relations; Nick Giordano, international trade counsel, National Pork Producers Council; Susan Keith, senior director of public policy, National Corn Growers Association; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and Mayor Jon Brekke of Shakopee, MN, his wife, Barb, and their daughter, Maria.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Consumer Product Safety Commission Enforcement Legislation *May 12, 2000*

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for immediate consideration and prompt enactment the "Consumer Product Safety Commission Enhanced Enforcement Act of 2000." This legislative proposal would increase the penalties that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) could impose upon manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of consumer products who do not inform the CPSC when the company has reason to believe it has sold a product that does not meet Federal safety standards or could otherwise create a substantial product hazard. The proposal would also improve product recalls by enabling the CPSC to choose an alternative remedy in a recall if the CPSC finds that the remedy selected by the manufacturer is not in the public interest.

Under current consumer product safety laws, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of consumer products are required to inform the CPSC whenever they have information that one of their products: (1) fails to comply with a CPSC product safety standard; (2) contains a defect that could create a substantial product hazard; or (3) creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. After a company reports this information to the CPSC, the CPSC staff initiates an investigation in cooperation with the company. If the CPSC concludes that the product presents a substantial product hazard and that a recall is in the public interest, the CPSC staff will work with the company to conduct a product safety recall. The sooner the CPSC

hears about a dangerous product, the sooner the CPSC can act to remove the product from store shelves and inform consumers about how to eliminate the hazard. That is why it is critical that companies inform the CPSC as soon as they are aware that one of their products may present a serious hazard to the public.

Unfortunately, in about half the cases involving the most significant hazards—where the product can cause death or serious injury—companies do not report to the CPSC. In those cases, the CPSC must get safety information from other sources, including its own investigators, consumers, or tragically, from hospital emergency room reports or death certificates. Sometimes years can pass before the CPSC learns of the product hazard, although the company may have been aware of it all along. During that time, deaths and injuries continue. Once the CPSC becomes aware of the hazard, many companies continue to be recalcitrant, and the CPSC staff must conduct its own independent investigation. This often includes finding and investigating product incidents and conducting extensive laboratory testing. This process can take a long time, which means that the most dangerous products remain on store shelves and in consumers' homes longer, placing children and families at continuing risk.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission can currently assess civil penalties against companies who fail to report a dangerous product. Criminal penalties are also available in particularly serious cases. In fact, in 1999, the CPSC

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assessed 10 times the amount of civil penalties assessed 10 years ago. But, even with this more vigorous enforcement, too many companies still do not report, especially in cases involving serious harm.

This legislative proposal would enhance the CPSC's civil and criminal enforcement authority. It would provide an added incentive for companies to comply with the law so that we can get dangerous products out of stores and consumers' homes more quickly.

My legislative proposal would also help to make some product recalls more effective by allowing the CPSC to choose an alternative remedy if the CPSC finds that the manufacturer's chosen remedy is not in the public interest. Under current law, a company with a defective product that is being recalled has the right to select the remedy to be offered to the public.

My proposal would continue to permit the company to select the remedy in a product recall. My proposal would also, however, allow the CPSC to determine—after an opportunity for a hearing—that the remedy selected by the company is not in the public interest. The CPSC may then order the company to carry out an alternative program that is in the public interest.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission helps to keep America's children and families safe. This legislative proposal would help the CPSC be even more effective in protecting the public from dangerous products. I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 12, 2000.

The President's Radio Address

May 13, 2000

Good morning. This weekend Americans celebrate the first Mother's Day of the 21st century. For most of us, it's a happy occasion, a chance to thank the women who gave us life, cared for us as children, nurtured us into adulthood. But for thousands of mothers and fathers whose children have been killed by gunfire, tomorrow will be a day of sad memories.

Every day in America, nearly a dozen children are killed by guns, and 12 families receive a wound that never heals. And every day in America, millions of moms and dads watch their children walk out the door in the morning and wonder if they'll come home safe that night.

That's why the First Lady and I are giving our strong support to tomorrow's Million Mom March. Tens of thousands of mothers and others are marching in Washington and more than 60 other cities across our Nation. They're saying, enough is enough. Congress must pass commonsense gun legislation to protect our children without constraining the rights of legitimate gun owners.

Many of the organizers have lost children of their own and other loved ones to gunfire. This past week I met with some of them at the White House and heard their stories: a son shot

while playing with neighbors in his own backyard in New York; a teenager shot at his front door by party crashers in Virginia; a daughter shot with four others by classmates at her Arkansas middle school; a young man shot by Illinois gang members who expected, just like on television, that he would get up and walk away.

These moms are finding in their fear and loss the strength to send a wake-up call across America. As a father, I was heartbroken by their stories; as an American citizen, I was inspired. They're saying gun violence touches us all, wherever we live, whatever the color of our skin, whether or not we have children. They remind us that the loss of a child is a loss for us all. And they know we have the power to do something about it.

We do have the power to teach our children the right values, to build strong communities, to crack down on those who use guns to commit crimes. But the key to our success in this, as in so many areas, has got to be more prevention, doing more to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals in the first place. There's no reason why we can't do that.

The Million Mom March is calling on Congress to act on the commonsense gun legislation

that has been before it for 10 months now. The bill wouldn't take away anybody's gun or make anyone miss a day during the hunting season. What it would do is to close the loophole that lets anyone buy a gun at a gun show without a background check. It would require child safety locks with all new handguns. And it would ban the import of large capacity ammunition clips, which nobody is using for sport or self-defense, and which makes a mockery of our assault weapons ban.

I think the Million Mom March is already a success, before anyone takes the first step. These people are helping to lead a grassroots effort that has already put stronger laws in place in States like California, Massachusetts, and Maryland. They're letting the gun lobby know it is no match for America's moms. But our nationwide fight won't be over tomorrow, no

matter how many march. We have so much work still to do.

Throughout our entire history as a nation every movement for social progress, every step toward safety and justice for all has been fueled by the energy and effort of ordinary citizens. The Million Mom March is the latest successor to that great American tradition. If the moms stick with it, they will succeed. They will make America a safer, more humane nation. Helping to keep guns out of the wrong hands is a Mother's Day gift we can all be proud of.

Happy Mother's Day, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:25 a.m. on May 12 in the Ohio Army National Guard Facility in Akron, Ohio, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Rally for the Million Mom March May 14, 2000

Well, thank you very much, and good morning. First of all, I think we ought to give Christine O'Brien another hand. [Applause] She gave such a good speech, I was wishing she were running for Congress against some of those anti-gun-registration—[laughter].

I want to thank Donna Dees-Thomases and all the organizers and all the regions and all the States and all the communities, now over 60 of them—I think about 70 now in the country, where there will be marches today.

I want to thank my long-time friend Mike Barnes of Handgun Control. And I want to thank the many, many Members of Congress who are here to march with you today, many of them over here.

I would also like to welcome you on behalf of not only Hillary and me but also Al and Tipper Gore, who have embraced this challenge with us and believe so strongly in what you are trying to do. Our families care about it.

I want to say that—I've put my notes away here—I've just one or two things I want to say. First of all, you may have noticed that when I was walking up here, this lovely Native American woman behind me started crying. That's

because her child was killed on Mother's Day. She is the second mother I have met in the last 72 hours who lost a child on Mother's Day. There are so many—there's another one.

One of the things your mothers teach you—I want to cut to the chase here; let's get down to what this is all about. One of the things your mothers teach you when you're growing up is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Right? How many of us had our mothers tell us, "Look both ways before you cross the street. Tie your shoes before you start running. I don't want to get my shots, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—in every single way.

Now, what the argument in Washington, DC, has been, the dominant argument for the last 30 years, since we first began to discuss this, is that an ounce of prevention is totally unacceptable, and we'll try to throw 100 pounds of cure at it and hope it works out. That's the first thing I want to say. This is about prevention.

The second thing I want to say is, when I became President there were a lot of people, I think, who wondered whether the crime rate

would ever go down. But for a combination of factors and a lot of people's efforts around the country but certainly because of the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and other related efforts, we now have the lowest crime rate in a quarter century, and gun violence is down 35 percent. Now, that's the good news.

It's still the most violent civilized country in the world, with the highest murder rate. But at least we know we can make a difference now, and we know what works. So nobody has an excuse anymore. It's not like we don't know that prevention works. We know it does work. One of the things mothers learn to do real early is not let their kids make excuses when they shouldn't. We don't have an excuse anymore.

Now, the third thing I want to—the point I want to make is, the other side wins this argument on, basically, power, money, and fear, and using labels. You know, there was a story this week saying, well, they have reduced support for these measures because white males—not mothers, I might add—are shying away from gun control. I want to tell you something, folks, this is their labels against our facts.

Now, they talk about the second amendment. Well, the Supreme Court says there is a constitutional right to travel. But we license car owners, and we register cars, and we have speed limits, and we have child safety restraint laws, and we have seat belt laws, and you don't hear people talk about car control. When is the last time you heard somebody stand up and give a speech about the imminent evils of car control threatening our constitutional right to travel—car control?

Now, if somebody came to take all our cars and put them in somebody else's garage and we couldn't get around, we could talk about car control. Meanwhile, we are thankful for highway safety measures that keep our children alive. We believe an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to exercising the constitutional right to travel.

And when people talk about—as Christine said, and Hillary mentioned this—they say guns don't kill people; people do. Well, even our adversaries fly around on airplanes a lot. Suppose I gave you the following speech tomorrow. Suppose I said, "I'm really worried about how crowded airports are, and almost everybody who goes into an airport is honest, and after all, bombs don't kill people; people do. I'm going to take the metal detectors out of the airport,

and the next time a plane blows up, we'll throw the book at them." [Laughter]

Folks, remember this. The facts are your friends. Don't let people get everybody all upset and thrown into a turmoil here and start screaming and yelling names and labels. We have not been responsible parents for our children because we have, in this one area of our national life, said we're not going to live on prevention; we're going to live on punishment alone.

And when we did finally take some preventive action with the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, the cop-killer bullet bans—all of which were opposed, I might add, by the same people who say these measures are wrong—they made a difference to the lives of Americans. They helped to make us safer.

Let me just say this. I respect so much those of you who are here today who lost loved ones, who are here to redeem the lives of the loved ones you lost by saving the lives of other people's children. I am grateful to you. America is grateful to you. You could be sitting home today burying your heartbreak and anger, and you undertook this journey. I know how painful it must be for you.

But just remember, you're being good mothers today. You're reminding all those people out there who have listened to these crazy excuses that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, that your little babies didn't have advantage of it, and you're just trying to give it to the other children in this country. This day is especially for you. Don't be deterred by the intimidation. Don't be deterred by the screaming. Don't be deterred by the political mountain you have to climb.

You just remember this: There are more people who think like you in America. What we have to do is to get them to think. The facts are your friends. You have to get them to think. And then you have to get them to make it clear that as they think, they will vote. When that happens, when everybody thinks about this and once they think about it they decide to vote on what they think, you will have changed America. In the great tradition that runs from Seneca Falls to Selma, you will have redeemed the promise of freedom. You will have strengthened the bonds of community. You will have proved that the American Constitution works because decent people can stand against mountains of power and move those mountains for

the betterment of their children. That's what you're doing.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christine O'Brien, New Jersey or-

ganizer, who introduced the President, and Donna Dees-Thomases, founder, Million Mom March; and Michael D. Barnes, president, Handgun Control, Inc. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Death of Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan May 14, 2000

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. I want to extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Chizuko, his family, and his nation.

Japan has lost a strong and vibrant leader. The United States has lost one of our closest friends.

I had the honor of meeting with Prime Minister Obuchi several times after he became Prime Minister in 1998. I visited him in Tokyo that fall, and he came to Washington for a memorable visit in May 1999. In all our meetings, I was impressed by his effective statesmanship and his personal warmth. He believed ardently, as I do, in a U.S.-Japanese partnership built upon shared values and mutual respect. The personal friendship he and I forged helped us act on that belief and strengthened our desire to address all the issues affecting our two countries in a spirit of true friendship. The bonsai tree he gave me, and which he tended himself, is a living symbol of our alliance.

The job of Prime Minister is never easy, but Keizo Obuchi met every challenge with courage and confidence. He embodied before the world the famous Japanese virtues of honor, loyalty, and determination. He became known for imi-

tating the art and skill of an orchestra conductor in finding harmony among people of different views. From his first days in office, he took swift steps to meet the economic challenges facing Japan, and he also gave strong support to the cause of peace—from Kosovo to East Timor. Prime Minister Obuchi worked hard in countless ways to strengthen our alliance and to place it on a new foundation for the 21st century. The friendship between our peoples remains the cornerstone of stability in east Asia and was greatly strengthened by his lifetime of building bridges between us.

Prime Minister Obuchi touched the hearts of Americans in simple, human ways: when he threw out what he called an unhittable pitch to Sammy Sosa; when he reminded us of the honor he felt meeting Robert Kennedy as young man; when he told us how he drew from that meeting new inspiration for the noble privilege of serving a great people.

On behalf of all Americans, I am grateful for Prime Minister Obuchi's dedicated, principled public service and for all he did to build for us a brighter future. I will work closely with Prime Minister Mori to continue our close cooperation with Japan.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Situation in Sierra Leone and the Deployment of United States Forces May 12, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Military forces of the Government of Sierra Leone and Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) forces provided by the Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were engaged in military operations in Sierra Leone against the insurgent Revolutionary United Front (RUF) until mid-1999. At that

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time, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF signed the Lome Peace Agreement, which provides for an end to hostilities and the disarmament, demobilization, and resettlement of the insurgent RUF forces. The United Nations Security Council in U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1270 and 1289 established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of the Lome Agreement and provide security at key locations and government buildings and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, among other tasks.

Recently, as UNAMSIL expanded its efforts to establish monitoring and disarmament sites in or near RUF-controlled territory, RUF forces initiated military activity in those areas, killing at least four peacekeepers, and capturing or isolating hundreds of UNAMSIL personnel. The situation is critical. The United States is consulting with the United Nations, members of the U.N. Security Council, troop-contributing countries and West African States on ways to resolve the crisis.

The U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone has drawn down its Embassy personnel and evacuated U.S. citizens to minimize the number of U.S. citizens exposed to risk. The Ambassador and a small support staff will remain in Freetown for the time being to monitor the situation. As a prudent planning measure, a U.S. coastal patrol vessel, USS THUNDERBOLT (PC 12), has deployed to the region to participate in an evacuation operation of U.S. personnel should such action become warranted. This vessel and her crew are equipped with the normal complement of weapons.

The United Kingdom informed us that it was deploying an aircraft carrier and an amphibious readiness group to Sierra Leone to prepare to participate in evacuation operations if necessary. Some of the units identified to participate in such an operation include U.S. military per-

sonnel on exchange programs with the British military. The British government requested permission for a small number of U.S. military exchange personnel to deploy with their units if they were directed to participate in evacuation operations in Sierra Leone. Secretary of Defense Cohen has authorized these U.S. exchange personnel to deploy to Sierra Leone with their host units in support of these activities.

On May 12, a U.S. C-17 aircraft is scheduled to deliver urgently required ammunition and other supplies and equipment to Sierra Leone for the Jordanian contingent in UNAMSIL. The United States will provide further transportation support for the U.N. mission and its contingents. Such transportation support may result in the temporary presence of logistics aircraft and associated support personnel, including, as appropriate, force protection elements at the international airport near Freetown. In addition, the United States has sent an advance party of military logistics planners of the U.S. European Command to Nigeria to discuss with Nigerian officials their specific airlift requirements should it become necessary to move military forces from Nigeria into Sierra Leone.

These actions have been taken pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in these matters.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 15.

Remarks at a Peace Officers Memorial Day Ceremony

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, Gil Gallegos, for your kind remarks and your leadership and all these years we have spent working

together. I want to say to you and all the other leaders of this organization and the auxiliary—

Lmae Tull, Steve Young, Jim Pasco, and others—how much I appreciate what you have done in working with me and Attorney General Reno, Secretary Summers, and the other members of our administration.

I also want to thank the Members of Congress who support us every year. I see Congressman Gilman and Senator Kennedy over there. There may be others from Congress here, but I thank them for coming.

I thank the law enforcement executives, chiefs, and the rank-and-file members across America who are here today. And most of all, I thank the many family members of our fallen officers who have come here to observe this event in the midst of all their pain and loss. I appreciate the support of our fellow Americans for your endeavors.

Today they were embodied by the wonderful song my longtime friend Tony Bennett sang—I thought he was terrific. And they are embodied by the prayers and actions of so many of your fellow citizens. I would like to mention just one today, on a personal note.

Law enforcement doesn't have a better friend in the Congress than the former State policeman from Michigan named Bart Stupak. Bart and his wife, Laurie, lost their son over the weekend, and I hope you will remember them in your prayers, because he has been as good a friend as the people in blue have ever had in the United States Congress.

The event we commemorate today has a long history, not just 19 years. In 1789, 211 years ago, just a year after our Constitution was ratified, a United States marshal named Robert Forsyth was shot and killed in the line of duty. Since then, over 14,000 law enforcement officers have given their lives to protect the liberties upon which America was founded.

We owe these brave men and women a debt of gratitude that is immeasurable and unending. Every year we come here to honor them, carve their names in stone so that future generations will know who they are and know that they died as they lived, as heroes.

I could talk about all of them represented here today, and their families. Time doesn't permit, so let me just tell you two stories that I found to be representative.

Corporal Steven Levy, of the Washington Township, New Jersey, Police Department, always believed in being out front on public safety, whether saving a drowning man from icy

waters or teaching self-defense classes to women and children during off-duty hours. Last October he was out front again when he led his SWAT team into a house where a domestic dispute had escalated into gunfire. When there, he was shot through a closed bedroom door, leaving behind a wife and two young children and a legacy of service never to be forgotten.

Officer James Henry Camp was a community police officer walking the beat in some of Chicago's toughest public housing developments. A big ex-marine, he won the respect of young men whom he counseled away from gangs and drugs and the love of little children for whom he always had a piece of candy. One day last March he and his partner stopped two men driving a stolen car. While making the arrest, Officer Camp was shot and killed. He was a newlywed.

Today we recall the service and all the stories of the courageous law enforcement officers, 139 of them, whose names will be added to the Roll of Honor this year. Their purpose and passion was the safety of the people. We can never repay them or their families, but we can honor them, and not just with words but with action.

You heard Gil Gallegos talk about the role of law enforcement in the declining crime rate. I always try to make sure the American people know how it happened. Men and women in uniform did not give up when, year-in and year-out, the crime rate went up. We decided 7 years ago to try to give you some support, because it was obvious already that there were strategies in many of our communities that would work to bring down the crime rate: more police, more prevention, tougher penalties.

You told us that assault weapons and illegal guns were undermining your ability to fight crime and drugs. So we passed the assault weapons ban; the Brady law, which has stopped over a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns; banned the cop-killer bullet; provided 100,000 more police for our neighborhoods, ahead of schedule and under budget.

Last week we learned that, thanks to you, crime is now down for 8 years in a row. Every officer here and every family here who has lost a loved one should be very proud of the lives you have saved in the United States of America in bringing that crime rate down.

Yet no one here believes we are safe enough, and the very fact that we now know what works imposes on all of us an even higher responsibility to do more of what works: to put more

police on the street in the toughest neighborhoods; to hire more prosecutors and ATF agents and inspectors; to go after gun crimes; to invest in gun-tracing systems until we can trace every bullet in every gun used in a crime anywhere in America.

I also believe we must pass more common-sense gun safety legislation: the child trigger locks, banning the importation of large ammunition clips, closing the gun show loophole. We passed it last year in the Senate, when the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote, but it's been stalled here for 10 months. And yesterday on this Mall, there were somewhere between a half a million and 750,000 mothers gathered, and over a million in 70 sites across America, to say that we shouldn't wait any longer for this kind of legislation. I hope we will listen to what they had to say. It will also save a lot of police officers' lives.

Last Friday the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Henry Hyde, and his Democratic counterpart, John Conyers, made some real progress to resolve the impasse we're having over this legislation and the gun show loophole. I thank them for their efforts. This should not be a political issue. It should not be, and it is not, about taking guns away from law-abiding citizens. It's about keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and keeping more of our citizens, especially our children and our police officers, alive. I hope the conferees will meet and pass legislation so that I can sign it.

I also think we have to do more to protect law enforcement officers, men and women who risk their lives every day. Sixteen years ago now, when I was Governor of my home State of Arkansas, a friend of mine, a State trooper by the name of Louis Bryant, made what he thought was a routine traffic stop. He stopped a man in an RV, who was a political radical with an arsenal in the vehicle, and he was shot to death. Then I was told that if only he had a bulletproof vest on, he probably would have survived.

I remember that day as if it were yesterday. I knew his wife; his brother-in-law was one of my State troopers on my security detail. I lived through their agony. And so I began to try to make sure every police officer in our State could have a vest. Every police officer in America should have one.

Two years ago I was proud to sign the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act. Now, the

Federal Government pays up to 50 percent of the cost of vests that State and local officers buy—or agencies buy for their officers. To date, we've purchased over 92,000 of these vests. There's enough money in this year's budget to increase that number to 180,000. But I asked Gil today and the Attorney General how many law enforcement officers needed them, how many are in the line of fire. We figure there are at least twice that many, twice that 180,000. But the program is set to expire next year.

So today I intend to ask Congress to support new legislation offered by the original sponsors of the bill, Senator Leahy, Senator Campbell, Congressman Visclosky, to extend the program for 3 more years and double the funding. If we do it, we'll be able to protect every single police officer in the United States with a bulletproof vest.

I also want to thank Gil Gallegos and your organization for the work you are doing to see that a medal of valor is awarded to honor the courage of officers who move above and beyond the call of duty. There is legislation to do this in Congress, but it is now stalled. Today I have directed the Attorney General to develop a plan to create an award through executive action of the President to recognize public safety officers who have exhibited extraordinary valor.

You should not have to wait any longer. And there are many reasons bills get caught up in Congress, not all of them the fault of the Members who are supporting them or those who have the committee. But we should not wait. This country, every year, should issue a medal to honor extraordinary acts of valor by police officers.

Shortly before he, himself, was killed in 1968, Robert Kennedy said that the fight against crime is a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness. The fallen officers we honor today put themselves at the forefront of that fight. And they do exemplify America's greatness.

Nothing we say or do will bring them back. Perhaps nothing we can say or do can ease the pain of their families or the sorrow in your hearts. Only God and time and family and friends can do that.

But we do want you to know, every one of you, we honor them, and we honor you. The best way for us to continue to do that is to press on with the struggle for a safer America, a struggle they thought was worth their lives.

And it's certainly worth everything we can possibly do.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. on the West Grounds at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gilbert G. Gallegos, president, Steve Young, vice president, and James O. Pasco, Jr.,

executive director, Fraternal Order of Police; Lmae Tull, president, Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary; and singer Tony Bennett. The Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week proclamation of May 11 and the Executive order of June 29 on establishment of the Presidential Medal of Valor for Public Safety Officers are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Memorandum on Honoring Extraordinary Valor of Our Public Safety Officers

May 15, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Honoring Extraordinary Valor of our Public Safety Officers

Over the past 7 years, the cooperative efforts of law enforcement officers on the Federal, State, and local level have resulted in dramatic declines in our crime rate. I am proud of the key initiatives my Administration has proposed and supported that have given law enforcement officers the resources they need to fight crime. Through our Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, we have funded the hiring of over 100,000 more police officers to work at the local level to build partnerships and combat crime. We have fought for tools to keep guns out of the wrong hands, and passed the Brady Law that has stopped over half a million felons, fugitives, and domestic abusers from buying guns. We have taken more criminals off the street with tougher penalties and we have helped States build more prisons to keep dangerous criminals behind bars. And we have given our young people positive alternatives to prevent crime in the first place.

As a result of our crime-fighting strategy and the cooperative efforts of law enforcement at the Federal, State, and local level, America has experienced dramatic declines in our crime rate. The overall crime rate has dropped for the eighth year in a row, the longest continuous decline on record. The national homicide rate is at its lowest level in over 30 years. By making crime prevention, reduction, and prosecution a top priority, we have created a renewed sense of security in our Nation's cities, towns, and neighborhoods.

This extraordinary record of success has not come without a heavy cost. Every day, the brave men and women of law enforcement put themselves on the front line of our battle to reduce crime. Each year, there are countless acts of individual courage and heroism by officers in the field. Although the majority of these acts do not result in any permanent disability or death, sadly, each year we mourn the loss of those who sacrificed their lives for this cause. The annual Police Week and National Peace Officers Memorial Day commemorations allow all Americans to pay tribute to the brave men and women of law enforcement. Few among us are put in the daily jeopardy that peace officers can find themselves in during even seemingly routine policing activity. To find examples of this courage, we need to look no further than the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial where the names of more than 14,000 officers who gave their lives to protect ours are carved in stone and memorialized for the ages.

In order to recognize the exemplary work carried out by public safety officers at all levels of government, the Congress should immediately pass legislation to create a Medal of Valor for exceptional valor and courage demonstrated by our public safety officers. Unfortunately, such legislation has remained stalled for months.

These heroes should not have to wait any longer for the recognition they deserve. So as we await the passage of legislation, I hereby direct you to develop a plan to create a Presidential award through Executive action to recognize public safety officers who have exhibited extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty. The award shall be awarded annually

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by the President. In developing this plan, where appropriate, you should consult with other relevant Government departments and agencies. The plan should designate a group of experts representing all aspects of the public safety sector, management, and labor, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency services officers who will submit written recommendations to you of candidates who exemplify the valor this award recognizes. Further, the plan should establish criteria for recommending nominees for the award of valor, as well as the design of the award itself. I direct

you to report back to me with this plan within 30 days.

All Americans can feel pride in the work done each and every day by those who promise to protect and serve. It is my hope that with the creation of this award of valor the efforts of public safety officers are more publicly recognized and appreciated by our Nation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: The Executive order of June 29 on establishment of the Presidential Medal of Valor for Public Safety Officers is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision Striking Down a Provision of the Violence Against Women Act

May 15, 2000

I am deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision today in *United States v. Morrison*. In this case, the Court struck down the civil remedy provision contained in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In 1994, as part of comprehensive crime control legislation, I signed into law the Violence Against Women Act. This historic, important piece of Federal legislation contains a broad array of groundbreaking laws to combat violence against women. VAWA passed Congress with bipartisan support.

The Supreme Court's decision today does not affect the viability of VAWA as a whole. It does not affect any of the VAWA grant programs nor does it affect Federal criminal provisions that punish interstate domestic violence and stalking crimes. The Supreme Court did, however, invalidate one important provision of the

Violence Against Women Act that gave victims of gender-motivated violence the ability to sue their attackers for lost earnings, medical expenses, and other damages. Because I continue to believe that there should be remedies for victims of gender-motivated violence, we plan to study the Supreme Court's decision in *Morrison* to determine the best means to help these victims.

VAWA has provided funds to communities across the Nation to address the tragedy of violence against women. These funds have made a crucial difference in women's lives. Unfortunately, VAWA funding is only authorized until the end of fiscal year 2000. I have made the reauthorization and strengthening of VAWA a top legislative goal for this year. If we work together, we can enact a bill that will keep women in this country safe from violence.

Remarks to the 1999 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Houston Comets

May 15, 2000

The President. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the Rose Garden. I want to thank the Marine Brass for playing for us

and bringing us in, and also thank three Members from the Texas delegation for being here: Representative Ken Bentsen, Representative

Sheila Jackson Lee, and Representative Gene Green, thank you for coming.

I want to welcome the president of the WNBA, Val Ackerman; Coach Chancellor; and Leslie and Nanci Alexander. And I know we have all the team here. Sheryl Swoopes was here in April of 1993 with the Lady Raiders of Texas Tech. How about that? I remember that.

And I want to say a special word of welcome to Loretta Perrot, sister of Kim Perrot. I know we're all glad that she's here with the team today, and I welcome her.

We have a lot of other distinguished athletes and sports figures in the crowd today, as well as some students from Ben Murch Elementary School, the DC city public school champions. Welcome.

Today we're here to celebrate the team that refuses to lose, the Houston Comets. Three years ago I had the privilege of speaking with your team after you had won the first championship, the first in WNBA history. In 1998 you took the crown again. And this season, with your victory over the Liberty, you're at the top again, joining the ranks of Bill Russell's Celtics and Michael Jordan's Bulls, becoming only the fourth franchise in the history of basketball to win three titles in a row. I have—yes, give them another hand. *[Applause]* That's good.

Some of you may know, I'm a modestly fanatic basketball fan, and I follow the WNBA every season. And I am delighted by the continuing progress in both the great quality of play and the enthusiasm of the fans, and I think it's only going to get better and better and better.

I want to say, too, I watched the final series. I saw some or all of every one of those games. And I was impressed by the teamwork, as well as the star work. I was pretty impressed that in the last game, Cynthia and Sheryl scored 20 of the first 22 points. I need some people like that on my team from time to time around here. *[Laughter]*

And I want to say also, though, you don't win three times in a row unless you have a team, unless everybody has a role to play and everybody plays it, and unless people understand that they all do better when they help each other. And that's the sort of spirit that we need more of, indeed, in more other teams in our country and in running our communities and our Nation.

Great basketball teams are also led by great coaches. Coach Van Chancellor has raised the standard of excellence in women's basketball. And in return, he's been named Coach of the Year three times in a row. I know, because of the loss of Kim, this has not been an easy year for this team. Adversity breaks some people. It caused you to break records. You should all be proud of that as well.

Your team has taught America a lot, not just about the game at which you excel but about courage and perseverance, self-confidence and teamwork. It's no wonder so many young girls are now following your lead in taking up basketball. A new generation of women are watching, learning, developing better skills, and dreaming loftier dreams.

Congratulations on a well-deserved victory, and thank you for setting an example for all of us to follow.

And now, I'd like to introduce the president of the WNBA, Val Ackerman. Val.

[At this point, Ms. Ackerman and Coach Van Chancellor made brief remarks. Players Cynthia Cooper, Sheryl Swoopes, and Tina Thompson then presented a jersey to the President.]

The President. Well, thank you very much for the unisex jersey here. *[Laughter]* I'll fight with Hillary over the right to wear it.

Thank you again for your example. I did want to say this about your coach: When I first started watching him on television, you know, when I saw him working with them and I thought about his roots, I thought, it's kind of nice to have a guy winning in the WNBA who speaks without an accent. *[Laughter]* Maybe it's just my ear, but it sounds good to me.

Coach Chancellor. We're from the same area.

The President. I know. That's what I was meaning, you know. You may get mine back, before I know it. *[Laughter]*

And thank you, Cynthia, for your remarks. And I thank all of you. And I will wear this when I work out, and I'll always remember this day. I wish you many more championships. We have a lot of happy moments here in the Rose Garden, but I have a feeling that this is one I'll remember for a good long while.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:06 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Houston Comets President Leslie

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L. Alexander and his wife, Nanci; and Loretta Perrot, sister of team member Kim Perrot, who died of cancer.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Robert Wexler

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. When Rob started saying all that, I had to pinch myself and make sure I was still alive. [Laughter] I want to, first of all, thank all of you for being here for Rob and for Laurie. And I want to thank you for your support for what his career has embodied.

I feel just as strongly about him, if not more strongly, as he apparently does about me. I was very pleased. I admire him because he stands up and fights for what he believes in. He'll take a tough vote when it has to be taken, and he tries to think things through in ways that always have an eye on the future.

You know, the great problem that any advanced society has is that it's always well organized, and that's good. But the bad news is, too often there are too few people who will be willing to change and move us toward the future.

And he was a part of this, what we called the New Democratic movement, when I started back in '93. We believed we could be pro-business and pro-labor. We thought we could balance the budget and still invest in education more. We thought we could be pro-economic growth and pro-environmental preservation. And I think part of it was his experience with State Government before coming here, because a lot of us who had lived in the real world before we moved to Washington—[laughter]—thought that it was sort of strange here. Everybody expected you to get on one side of an issue or another, and then just scream as loud as you could and hope every third or fourth day you'd get your 15 seconds on the news. It wasn't a very efficient way to govern or run a country, and we were paying for it.

And so we've had a pretty good run here. But you must understand that very little I've achieved would have been possible if I hadn't had the support of Members of my own party in Congress at critical times. And nobody embodies, in my view, the approach we ought to

be taking toward the future any better than he does. I'm really proud of him.

And we have a lot of big decisions to face this year and next year. But when you encapsulate them all, I would say, here's the story line: When I took office in 1993, a lot of people didn't know whether America would work or not. If I said to you in '92, in the election, "Vote for me, folks, and when I get done here, we will have turned deficits into surpluses, and we'll pay off \$300 or \$400 billion on the national debt," you'd say, "You know, he seems like a pleasant young man, but he's slightly deranged. We'd better send him home." [Laughter]

So what did we do? We had to worry about, first of all, getting our priorities in order, putting people first, as I called it in '92, getting the right kind of ideas, and then, basically, pointing the country in the right direction. That was the metaphor I used in our '96 campaign, building a bridge to the 21st century. And a lot of it was really tough.

We passed our economic plan by one vote in the House and the Senate in '93. And there were several other times during the last 7 years when we won by one vote, especially in the Senate. As Al Gore always says, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter] And lamentably, he had to vote a lot. So it wasn't easy.

Now the country plainly is going in the right direction. Just last week we announced that for the eighth year in a row, crime is down, gun crime down 35 percent since '93, the lowest overall crime rate in over 25 years. So it's not just the economy—welfare rolls cut in half, 90 percent of our kids immunized for the first time in history. And I could go on and on.

So what's the question this time? The question this time is, what do we as a people propose to do with this prosperity? When you go home tonight you ought to think about it. Those of you that brought your children, you ought to look at them before you answer.

You know, as I get older—and unfortunately, it seems to be an irrevocable process—[*laughter*]*—*and I have a longer memory and probably more days behind me than ahead—there are some good things about it. And I know that it is a very rare time when a country has so much prosperity, so much social progress, so little internal dissension and relatively distant external threat. And a time like this comes along just once in a while. But it's happening now at a time of breathtaking change. So nothing lasts forever, and a long time is quicker than it used to be.

So this is very, very important. This election this year is just as important as the ones we had in '92 and '96, don't kid yourself. And yet, the danger is, because things seem to be going very well, everybody will take a relaxed attitude. And in fact, you should say, "Goodness gracious, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I'm going to think real hard about what to do with this election."

For me, this kind of opportunity means just one thing: We have the space, the emotional space; we have the money; and we have the knowledge to identify what the big, outstanding challenges are facing this country and what the greatest opportunities are and to actually go after them. In other words, in '93, we were bailing water out of America's boat. Now we have a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children, and in so doing, I might add, to be a much more responsible and constructive member of the world community.

I appreciate what you said about what we did in Kosovo and Bosnia before, and what we tried to do throughout the world on ethnic and religious and racial conflicts. We have to decide, what are we going to do?

Now, I gave the Congress an agenda that would choke a horse back in my State of the Union Address because I wanted to make the point that we ought to be building the future of our dreams for our children, and that if we let this moment get away from us, if we're at all confused about what the subject of this election is, we'll never forgive ourselves, especially those of us who are old enough to know better.

And I'll just tell you one last little story here. The last time we had a time which even approximated this was in the mid-sixties, the early sixties. We just celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history, longer than any expansion, including all the ones including our

wars. But the last longest economic expansion was during the Vietnam war, 1961 to 1969. But it started in peacetime.

Frankly, I think people—those of us who came of age—I graduated from high school in 1964. We thought the thing would go on forever. I'm telling you, I graduated from high school with an attitude like I am afraid people will take in this election. Oh, I was for all the right things. But I thought the economy would expand forever. I thought the civil rights crisis of America would be resolved in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets. I never dreamed Vietnam would tear this country in two. And neither did most other people, and they didn't think about it when they were voting.

And by the time I got ready to graduate from college in 1968, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection, and just a few months before the longest economic expansion in American history came to a shrieking halt, with not much to show for it.

And I can tell you—I'm not running for anything, you know? [*Laughter*] And pretty soon I'll be Joe Citizen again. I'm telling you, as an American citizen, I have been waiting for 35 long years to see my country once again in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we ought to be doing these big things. That's why I was thrilled all those million moms showed up here yesterday. You know, yes, we've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Does anybody think it's low enough? We can make America the safest big country in the world, but not if we don't have prevention. And he's taking this issue on, and I appreciate it.

I told somebody the other day, every time we get ready to do something that make sense, the other side screams "gun control," talks about we're infringing on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms. And yesterday I said what I always say, "You know, there's a constitutional right to travel, too." There is. But when we have speed limits and seatbelt laws and child restraint laws and we require drivers to get a drivers' license, you don't hear people standing around on street corner screaming about car control. [*Laughter*] They're talking about highway safety, and we like it, and we wish there were more of it, don't we? Now, if I come get your car and take it away from you, that's

car control. Otherwise, it's highway safety. And it's the same thing here.

It's a classic example of what I mean. It's easy to take a pass on a tough issue like that because times are good and your constituents are in a good humor. But it's not the right thing to do. The right thing to do is to say there will never be a better time to take on the big challenges; there will never be a better time to seize the big opportunities. And we need

more people in public life who have the kind of mind and the kind of heart that he does. That's why I'm here tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the Dining Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Wexler's wife, Laurie.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Charles S. Robb

May 15, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank Ron and Beth for having all of us here and for being so generous with their time and their home. However, now that I—you know, I thought I knew them pretty well. I never knew they met at a Chuck Robb fundraiser. [*Laughter*] We ought to put that out. We can raise millions of dollars on this. [*Laughter*] All the lovelorn who can write a check or show up at your fundraisers—this is wonderful. So I want to thank them.

And I want to thank all of you for coming and for supporting Chuck, and in just a minute, I'm going to tell you why. Let me say to all of you, you went through the line and had your picture taken. I appreciate the many nice things you said and especially those of you who expressed your support for my wife, whom I hope will be helping to swell the Democratic majority in the Senate after November.

I want to thank Lynda Robb for being our friend for probably 20 years now. We've watched our children grow up together. Chuck and I were Governors together in the early eighties. Out at Camp David I've got this beautiful picture of a carriage from colonial Williamsburg, from the Southern Governors' Association meeting in 1984, that Chuck Robb gave me. So we go back a long way.

And I want to tell you, quite briefly, why I'm here tonight, besides the fact that, yes, I'd show up if Ron and Beth asked me to come, and yes, I'd show up if Chuck and Lynda asked me to come. But I passionately believe, number one, that Chuck Robb ought to be reelected, and number two, I believe he will be reelected.

And I thought he would be reelected a year ago.

But there is a great question before the American people in this election, very different from the one we faced in 1992, but in some ways, maybe even more important and perhaps even more difficult to answer properly.

In 1992 the American people gave Al Gore and me a chance, but the country was mired in difficulty, and everyone knew that the way that things were being done in Washington was not working. You remember how it was then; you just took a position on an issue, and there was a position you had to take. If you were a Democrat, you had to take one position. If you were Republican, you had to take the other. And then you just stood off from one another and screamed as loud as you could and hoped you'd get your 10 seconds on the evening news, which might have been good politics but didn't move America forward very much.

So we set about turning the ship of state around. And without being self-serving, I think it's fair to say we did a pretty good job, and things are going in the right direction now. And I think it's one reason to vote for Chuck Robb and for Al Gore, because it wasn't because I was President; it was because we were all doing the right things. And I think that's very important.

I get tickled. You know, some of my adversaries, now that they want to win the election before us, they spent 7 years telling everybody how bad I was; now they say I'm the only guy that jumps higher than Michael Jordan—let's

throw the other Democrats out. That has nothing to do with it. We did the right things, and it's very, very important.

So now the question is not, how are we going to turn the ship of state around; how are we going to build our bridge to the 21st century? The question is, what are we going to do with these good times? We never had such good times before. We never had at one time so much economic progress, social progress with the absence of severe domestic distress or external threat. So what are we going to do? That is the issue. And it's a very hard issue for a democracy to answer.

It's easy to get people together when they're under the gun. It's hard to get people together when things are fun. It's easy to be distracted when things seem to be going well. And what I would like to say to you is that I'm old enough to know that nothing lasts forever and that these moments come along once in a generation if you're lucky, and you've got to make the most of them.

I'm also experienced enough in politics to know that our adversaries, both in the Virginia Senate race and the White House, they'll be very adroit at speaking in reassuring terms and helping to blur the lines of the election. But the truth is, as Senator Robb just said, there are huge consequences to the choices the American people will make. And you have to come to terms with that, as well.

If you want to change the economic policy of the country and go back to the way they did it, you can do it. If you like the way things are going, you've got to vote for Chuck Robb and for the Vice President. If you want someone to do something serious about gun violence, to keep building on the record of the last 7½ years, to keep crime coming down, you can have it. If you want someone who won't touch this issue with a 10-foot pole and won't do anything the NRA doesn't want them to do, you can have that, too. But you've got to make up your mind. And you can't pretend that there are no consequences to this election. There are.

You know, one of the things I really respect about Chuck Robb is, he is a fiscal conservative; he voted with me on that budget, knowing it could beat him in the '94 election. He did not blink; he got up there and voted in '93 for the budget. And if he hadn't voted for it, it would have never passed. You know? But also, after his distinguished career in the United

States Marine Corps, he has supported me on every human rights initiative, including gay rights, I have ever advanced. And I respect that more than I can say.

And he has supported sensible efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Yesterday Hillary and I had—and I like it, because Al Gore and I need some Southern cover, you know. [Laughter] I don't know if you saw it, but there was a picture in the paper that said, "gunnery sergeant for responsible gun control"—it was a great sign, yesterday at this thing.

You know, I just want to take a minute. This is a big choice you've got in the election. You've got to decide. But don't let anybody you know pretend that they're voting—the Senate race or the President's race isn't about what our policy is with regard to safety, public safety, or pretend that it's not about our policy with regard to human rights or pretend that it's not about our policy with regard to economics and whether you like having this surplus and you want to get America out of debt and keep investing in education or you'd rather go back and try it the way it was.

Now, there will be a great attempt to blur all this. I'm telling you, those are three inescapable consequences of this election and your choice. Will we change economic policy? Will we continue to try to make America a safer country and have responsible measures to promote gun safety? Will we continue to advance the cause of human rights? And the fourth inescapable consequence is, will we continue to grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time or let the old way prevail, and say the heck with that?

Now, there is no doubt about that. But you've got to decide. But don't let—if somebody asks you why you came here tonight, tell them because Chuck Robb played an inextricable role in the progress of the last 7 years, because you think there are choices that matter in this election, because you want to stand up for somebody that had as much courage in the United States Senate as he did in the toughest battles in Vietnam.

And I told him a year ago, when he was way behind in the polls, he was going to be reelected. And I believe it more strongly today. But we need your help. And you watch now—I've been watching this a long time. If you take this position, you will find all these people that will try to turn this election into Jell-O. And

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you will think you're punching a little sort of a pillow bag there. And everybody will say, "Oh, there aren't really significant differences, and I think I'll give the other guys a chance." That's not true. And you cannot afford to let people decide too late that there are great consequences here.

So I thank you for coming. You will rarely in your life get a chance to support anybody who has taken more chances to do what he thought was right, sometimes when he agreed with me and sometimes when he didn't, but

always had his heart and mind and spirit in the same place as this man. He's a good man. His wife is a magnificent woman, and they deserve this reaffirmation, and our country needs it. That's the most important thing.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Ronald I. Dozoretz and Beth Dozoretz; and Senator Robb's wife, Lynda.

Remarks on a Prescription Drug Benefit for Military Retirees and an Exchange With Reporters

May 16, 2000

Helen Thomas of United Press International

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Before we start, I would just like to say a few words of appreciation and respect about Helen Thomas, who has decided today to leave UPI after 57 years.

Presidents come and go, but Helen's been here for 40 years now, covering eight Presidents and, doubtless, showing the ropes to countless young reporters and, I might add, more than a few Press Secretaries. I hope this change will bring new rewards and new fulfillment to her. Whatever she decides to do, I know I'll feel a little better about my country if I know she'll still be spending some time around here at the White House. After all, without her saying, "Thank you, Mr. President," at least some of us might never have ended our news conferences.

Prescription Drug Benefit

When I gave my State of the Union Address this year, I said that in good conscience we could not let another year pass without finding a way to offer voluntary prescription drug coverage to every older American. I think we're beginning to make progress toward that goal. And today I want to support one step in the right direction, a congressional proposal, scheduled for a vote this week in the House, to extend prescription drug coverage to all retired military personnel over 65.

Keeping faith with men and women in America who have served in our Armed Forces is a sacred obligation for all of us. That's why we have raised military pay over 8 percent over the last 2 years, why we're working to provide our troops with better housing, and taking steps to improve access to medical care for all military personnel, families, and retirees. We asked them to risk their lives for freedom, and in return, we pledged our support.

Part of that promise is a medical network that helps to provide prescription drugs at reasonable costs. Some senior retirees are able now to take advantage of that network. But they're out of reach for as many as three of four of them.

This proposal would make sure that we meet our promise to more than one million older military retirees across the Nation, providing every single one of them with a prescription drug benefit, sharing with them the price discounts that the military negotiates with drug companies. At a time of unprecedented prosperity, there is no reason for military retirees to go without these prescription drugs that they need to live longer and healthier lives. We need to show them that they count, and they can count on us.

This initiative is another step for finding a way to offer every older American voluntary prescription drug coverage and affordable prescription drugs. That ought to be our next goal, because today, more than three in five American

seniors lack such coverage. Too many spend huge percentages of their income on prescription drugs. Too many have to choose every month between filling those prescriptions and filling grocery carts. Too many are simply not getting the medicine they need.

If we were creating Medicare today, as I have said over and over and over again, we certainly would include a prescription drug benefit to give older Americans and people with disabilities access to the most cost-effective health care. Prescription drugs help to keep seniors mobile and healthy. They help to prevent expensive hospital stays and surgical procedures. They promote the dignity that every retired person is entitled to, the quality of life all of us want for our own parents. We should act this year to make sure all seniors have access to such coverage.

In my budget, I proposed a comprehensive plan to provide a Medicare benefit that is optional, affordable, and available to all, based on price competition, not price controls; a plan to boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best prices possible, just as this military plan would; a plan that is part of an overall effort to strengthen and modernize Medicare so that we won't have to ask our children to shoulder the burden of the baby boomers' retirement.

I'm glad there is growing bipartisan support for providing this coverage to all beneficiaries. Both sides say they want to get it done. Unfortunately, I still believe that the proposals put forward by the congressional majority will not achieve the goal. They'd provide no assistance to middle income seniors, nearly half of all those who now lack coverage. They'd subsidize private insurance plans that the industry itself says it will not offer. This will not get the job done.

But the bipartisan spirit of this proposal for military retirees shows us the way forward for all retirees. In reaching out to extend coverage to older military retirees, Congress has recognized that high prescription drug costs are a burden for every senior and that we owe every military retiree a dignified and healthy retirement.

Both parties now have agreed that prescription drug coverage should be available and affordable to older Americans. We can, surely, come to an agreement on the details of how to do this. We all want our seniors, all of them, to live longer, healthier lives. And I'm very glad that here, as so often before, our armed forces are leading the way.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, on—

Q. Mr. President, you—

The President. I'll take them both. Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President, you seem to be having a prescription drug event each week, now. Is it safe for us to assume that this is the one piece of what would be historical legislation—historic legislation—that you would like to sign on behalf of your legacy?

The President. No. It's safe for you to assume that I think there's a fair chance we could pass this, and I think it's the right thing to do for America. The Congress will have a chance to cast any number of profoundly important votes, including the vote on China and the trade relations. And I hope they'll do the right thing on each and every one.

But you know, my philosophy has always been the same in election years as in off-years. I think that we owe it to the American people to govern, to do as much together as we can in good conscience, secure in the knowledge that no matter how much we get done there will still be significant areas of disagreement between the two parties, beginning with our Presidential candidates and extending to the Senate and the House candidates, on which we can have a marvelous election and a rousing debate.

So, do I want to get this done? Absolutely, I do. But I want to do it because we have the money to do it now and we know how to do it and because the people need it.

Go ahead.

Interest Rates

Q. Sir, on the economy, are you concerned that if the Fed Chairman's efforts to slow this economy down have the desired effect, it might negatively impact the Vice President's campaign going into the November election and really give the Republican challenger some ammunition to go after Mr. Gore with?

The President. No, because what we've done is to minimize inflation by paying down the debt and keeping our markets open. And I think that if anything, the Chairman of the Fed has made it clear that if you had a huge tax cut, it would cause even higher interest rate increases. So I think—you know, the Fed will do its job, and we will do ours. And I'm going to let them make whatever decision that Chairman Greenspan and the others think is warranted.

But I think it should remind us all of the wisdom of continuing to pay down the debt, because the more we pay down the debt, the more we'll keep interest rates as low as they can, the more we'll keep inflation down. It's also a good argument for passing the normal trade relations with China and continuing to expand our trade.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President—

Q. Mr. President—excuse me—poll after poll continues to show that Governor Bush is ahead of Vice President Gore. Do you think his campaign strategy, the Vice President's, is working?

The President. I don't want to comment on the campaign. It's a long time before it's over, and I think that in these elections the fundamentals tend to take over, and the American people tend to take the measure of both the candidates, especially in the course of the debates. And you know, I trust them to make the decision. I don't have anything to comment about that.

Q. Sir, are you a registered voter in New York, sir?

Q. Mr. President, on—

The President. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, on the Chinese vote, how are you doing? And could you elaborate on your statements of the other day that China could still get WTO membership, and the U.S. would be hurt if the Congress doesn't pass it?

The President. Sure. China could get into the WTO and will get into the WTO, but the United States would not be able to claim the benefits of the agreement we negotiated. So all those big cuts in agricultural tariffs, all that right to sell automobiles in China without putting plants up there or transferring technology, all the access to what will clearly be the biggest telecommunications market in the world, all those benefits we negotiated will go to the Europeans, the Japanese, and others who will be in a position to take advantage of them.

So that, it seems to me, is clear. You can't—if they go in, they have to be accepted on membership terms that apply to everyone else, and that's fair, because we expect them to follow the rules that apply to everyone else. And therefore, any nation that withholds those membership terms doesn't get the benefit of the agree-

ment that was negotiated. And it would be quite significant.

Q. How hard are you finding this China trade fight? And when you meet one-on-one with Democrats, are they saying they're just facing terrific pressure from the labor unions? Are you losing some of those one-on-ones? And what's your prediction for the outcome?

The President. I'm losing some and getting some. My view is that in the end it will pass, not only because the economic benefits are clear and overwhelming but in a larger sense, because the national security interests are so clear.

Let me just say again, I think it's quite interesting that for all the differences the Taiwanese and the Chinese have had, and the tensions between them, everyone, beginning with the President-elect of Taiwan, wants us to approve China going into the WTO. Why is that? They think it's good for them economically, but in a larger sense, they think it will reduce tensions along the Taiwan Straits and maximize the chance that the Chinese and the people of Taiwan will have a chance to work out their differences in a peaceful way, which is consistent with over 20 years of American policy. I think it's interesting that Martin Lee came all the way over here from Hong Kong, a man who cannot even legally go to China, who has never met the Premier of China, to say to us, we had to support this because China had to be brought into a system that extols the rule of law, and that was the beginning of liberty.

I think it's interesting that Chinese dissidents in China, people who have been subject to abuses we would never tolerate in our country, whose phones have been tapped, who can't sponsor public events, still implore us to support this because they know it is the beginning of the rule of law and change in China, and ironic that the people in China who do not want us to vote for this are those that hope they will have a standoff with us and continuing control at home, the more reactionary elements in the military and in the state-owned industries.

So I think the national security arguments are so overwhelming that, notwithstanding the pressures, and especially given the economic realities of this agreement, in the end that Congress will do the right thing. I believe they will.

Q. Mr. President, Charlie Rangel came out today and said he's going to go ahead and support normalizing trade relations with China. Can

you tell us how you feel about that, and how it may affect other Democrats?

The President. Well, I think it's an enormously important decision by Mr. Rangel. If we're successful in the elections in November in the House, then he would become the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. I think his decision will affect other Members on the Committee. And I think if we're fortunate enough to get a majority of Democrats on the Committee to vote for this, because of Charles Rangel's leadership and because some of the others are already come out, that surely will have an effect on our caucus, because they are in the best position to understand the economic issues involved here. And I think it's an immensely important thing.

And I think if this passes, combined with the bill for Africa and Caribbean Basin trade which was passed with overwhelming majorities last week, this Congress will build quite a legacy for itself in this area, and one that would be well-deserved for members of both parties that vote for it.

New York State Democratic Convention

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us how you came to the decision to go up to New York tonight, and any thoughts you have on seeing the First Lady nominated?

The President. I just decided I ought to be there. I mean, it's a big deal for her, a big night for her, and I want to be there with her. I just want to be there to support her. And I also—a secondary but important consideration for me is it's Senator Moynihan's, kind of his farewell address to the people in New York who have elevated him to the Senate and given him the chance to serve our country in a remarkable way. I'd like to hear what he has to say as well.

But mostly, I just wanted to be with Hillary tonight. It's a big night for her, and I just started working on my schedule today to see if I could go.

President's Voter Registration

Q. Are you yet registered to vote in New York, Mr. President?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Are you yet registered to vote in New York?

The President. No. But I intend to register so I can vote for her in November.

You know, this was a—Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], this was kind of a difficult issue. I just voted in the last school election in Little Rock a few days ago. And for me, it's hard, you know, on a personal basis. But this is a commitment that we made together. And it's something that she wanted to do and a lot of people in New York wanted her to do, and I want to support her in every way I can. And I certainly intend to vote for her. And since I'm a tax-paying resident of New York now, I'm entitled to vote, and I intend to take advantage of it.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, on guns, I know you didn't want to talk about the campaign in general terms, but there are a lot of polls that shows Bush is doing as well or even better than Mr. Gore on the issue of guns. How can that be? What's your take on that?

The President. The people don't know what their respective positions are. You know, one of the things I said here on Sunday morning, before the Million Mom March, is that I think we'd lose, particularly in how people vote on this issue, if it gets muddled in rhetoric; and we win, if people know what the specifics are. And this just—and that's often true about issues in America.

If you say, do you want more gun control or not, or you want the Government to control guns more, we'd probably win that, but it would be close. If you say, do you believe we should close the gun show loophole and ban large capacity ammunition clips from being imported and require child trigger locks, or should we have people who buy handguns get a photo ID license showing they passed the Brady background check and a safety course, then I think we win.

And I think that it's really interesting—it's very instructive to compare this with automobiles. The NRA always talks about the right to keep and bear arms. Well, the Supreme Court says there's a constitutional right to travel, enshrined in and guaranteed by the Constitution. And when we have speed limits, seatbelt laws, child safety restraint laws, and drivers have to get licenses, nobody talks about car control in ominous terms. You don't hear all the "there's a big threat of car control out there." Now, if I come get your car, park it in my backyard, that's car control. Otherwise, it's highway safety.

And I have not proposed to confiscate the gun or take away the gun or the right to hunt or sport shoot or even to have a gun in self-defense for any law-abiding American. I have not made any proposals. Neither, to the best of my knowledge, has anyone else in Congress. So what we're talking about is gun safety legislation, to keep guns away from criminals and other people who shouldn't have them and out of the hands of kids.

So my view is that as this debate unfolds and we have a chance to debate the specifics—and I hope we'll do it in a civilized fashion. I really enjoyed—I did one of the morning programs last week, and there were people on both sides of the issues there. And we actually had a chance to talk specifics, and some of them made a couple suggestions that I agreed with. And I think that surprised them.

I think we need to get down to the specifics here and get away from the labeling, and I think it will turn out just fine. The American people will make the right decision on this if we give them a chance to.

Social Security

Q. Sir, Senator Moynihan, who you mentioned, Senator Bob Kerrey, many of the Democrats from the DLC wing of the party, like yourself, have suggested changes to Social Security not unlike those outlined by Governor Bush. Yet the Vice President says the Governor would “destroy” the program. Would Democrats like those recommend changes that would destroy Social Security?

The President. Well, I'm not sure they are the same. And you know, I saw a headline in the paper today that said that the Governor's campaign had released more details on Social Security and Medicare, and I need the chance to study them before I do.

I do think—I will say again, to get something done on this in the longer term, you need a bipartisan solution. And it's going to have to come out of the Congress. And I had hoped we could get it done this year.

But let me just caution you. You have to see all this stuff together. I'll say—you know, one thing people all over America ask me is, “What did you do different on the economy that changed America?” And I always say, only half-jokingly, “We brought arithmetic back to Washington.”

So what you need to do on this is, for purposes of analysis, is take the projected revenues over the next decade, when they get—you know, and they'll be written up some when the so-called mid-session review comes out, because we've had more growth this year than was anticipated—subtract the size of both candidates' proposed tax cuts, take the Social Security program and see what the so-called transition costs are and then the other differences in spending in defense and education vouchers and what's inflation going to be, see what you've got left and whether you can pay for it, and then what do you think the chances are that we won't have this much robust revenue growth over the last 10 years, and don't you have to have some sort of guard against that, and then evaluate where it is.

We need to—I think it's going to be a good thing that we'll have a Social Security debate. But keep in mind, the people who want these private accounts, they argue two things. One is, we ought to have a higher rate of return on Social Security because it's going to go broke in 2034. Two is, we ought to give more Americans a chance to share in the wealth of the country with private savings.

Now, what I argued back is that if you take the interest savings that we get from paying down the debt because of the Social Security tax—just that that comes from the Social Security tax, so arguably that's a savings that you're entitled to as a payer of the Social Security tax—if you put that into the Trust Fund, you get it up to 2054, for probably no more cost than the transition costs would be. That is, if you let the people start taking money out of the Trust Fund, obviously, and you guarantee the rights of the retirees that are here, you've got to put something back in from somewhere.

Then what I suggested, that did not find favor with the Congress, was that we have some means of letting the Trust Fund as a whole benefit from the markets, up to about 15 percent of the Trust Fund. That would increase the rate of return. And then remember, the year before last I proposed a very ambitious program—and I proposed a more modified, income-limited program this year—that would have the Government support private savings and wealth creation outside the Social Security system by individual citizens. I still think that's the safer way to go, and we could easily get the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the

life of the baby boom generation just by doing that.

So we've got a chance now to have a big debate. I haven't seen the Medicare proposals, but I think that we've got to be particularly careful with that. We've added 24 or 25 years to the life of the Medicare Trust Fund since I've been here, and we need to put some more time on that and do the drug issue. And there are some—I've proposed some structural reforms, but we need to be careful with that.

But just—let me just say, there are four or five different variations that I've seen of people who have proposed various kinds of private accounts. So I think it's important—again, you've got to get behind the labels to the facts and see how everybody's proposal works. And that would be my advice on that. I think the way we're—the safer way is to take it the way we've done, and it would achieve the other two objectives. That is, you could get a higher rate of return on the Social Security Fund, and you could open savings and wealth-creation opportunities for individual Americans, without actually privatizing the fund itself and running some of the risks that are inherent in that.

But that's a debate the American people will get a chance to resolve, if they get together and discuss it, and if they flesh out their ideas. I think it's an important debate to have.

Tobacco Regulation

Q. Mr. President, what was your reaction to the first McCain tobacco regulation bill, that gives the FDA direct authority to regulate tobacco products?

The President. Well, you know, I think they should have that authority.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. In your discussions with House Speaker Hastert last week on Patients' Bill of Rights, what assurances were you given that he's willing to support some form of coverage for everyone?

The President. He said that that was his position. And I must say, so far he's been as good as his word on everything he said.

Now, we do have some differences there. You know, he admitted that we still don't have the liability issues worked out, and we've got some other issues to resolve. But I think he wants legislation to pass, in this area and in the new markets area, which is terribly important. Again, that's something that could change the face of

America. It could give us a chance to bring free enterprise to poor areas in a way that we've never tried to do before as a nation and to go beyond, even, what we've done with the empowerment zones, which has been quite successful.

So we were just talking, and that's what he said. And I've found that when he says something, he normally means it—or he always means it when he's talked to me.

Prescription Drug Benefit

Q. Sir, on prescription drugs, isn't this similar to a measure that you told the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that you couldn't afford to put into an already bulging FY 2001 defense budget? And how is it that that measure can be afforded now by Members of Congress?

The President. Well, for one thing, when they—no. What happened is, after I had already presented the budget, they asked me about it. And I pointed out that under our program all the military retirees would be covered by a system very similar to this legislation. But I'm certainly not opposed to the military retirees being covered.

I think that the real question is, how can the Congress, in good conscience, provide this coverage in the same way—actually, the mechanism works just like what I want to do to cover all seniors. How can they do this and say they're not going to do it for people in the same situation in the rest of the country, the other senior population, when we can do it and do it with the same sort of mechanism that they provide here?

So I'm fine for them to do this, and if they do it in this way and then they pass the other, then the cost of the other program will be diminished if—for the military retirees who stay in this program. In other words, they're not going to be in both programs buying the same drugs twice.

So what I said was, I didn't—I had already presented the budget and that all military retirees would be covered in my program, along with all other seniors. But now that Congress is doing this, I think that this ought to be evidence that they understand, A, that people over 65 need this coverage and, B, that this is a good kind of mechanism to guarantee that they get the medicine at affordable prices.

Thank you.

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Colombia

Q. Mr. President, are you worried about Colombia aid? Mr. President, the aid to Colombia?

The President. Well, it's funny, I talked to General McCaffrey about it this morning, actually. At this time I'm not worried about it, but I think it's important, given the continuing difficulties and challenges the Government in Colombia is facing, that it pass as soon as possible. We need to send a signal to those people down there who are fighting for democracy, fighting for freedom, fighting for the rule of law, fighting against the narcotraffickers, fighting against terrorism, that we're on their side.

And we also need to signal to them that there is an alternative economic way that the people can make a living who've been caught up in the drug trade kind of at the grassroots farmer level. And this bill does that, so that I think in the end, Congress will pass this bill. But I hope it can be put on some bill I'll get as quick as possible so we can send the right signal in a very timely fashion. I just don't want it

dragged out another 3 or 4 months. I think it would be a really bad mistake in terms of our national security interests, not just in Colombia but throughout the Andean region. People are looking at us to see if we're really going to make a serious commitment.

It also will help Colombia to get the other support it needs from the international institutions, from other countries, to make a stand there, and in the process, hopefully, to see victory there for a democratic government and the rule of law, a reduction in drug production and exports, and a stabilization of the democracies that surround Colombia in the Andean region.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:09 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China.

Memorandum on Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by the Fires in the Los Alamos Area

May 16, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by the Fires in the Los Alamos Area

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses suffered by many as a result of the fires in the Los Alamos, New Mexico, area. Many parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I ask the heads of executive departments and agencies to excuse from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay those Federal civilian employees who are affected by the fires in the Los Alamos area and their aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities. Specifically, I request that excused absence be granted to employees who are needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or cleanup efforts authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction and employees who are prevented from reporting

for work or faced with a personal emergency because of the fires and their aftermath.

I am also authorizing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine whether there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by this major disaster. An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to donate their unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who were adversely affected by the fires in the Los Alamos area and who need additional time off for recovery. If the need for donated annual leave becomes evident, I direct the OPM to establish the emergency leave transfer program and provide additional information to agencies on the program's administration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at a Reception Following the New York State Democratic Convention in Albany, New York

May 16, 2000

First of all, I want you to know how I came to be here tonight. [*Inaudible*]*—*but before we knew exactly when Hillary was going to give her speech, I agreed to appear tonight at the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and to a campaign event for the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee. So I told all that group, I said, “I’ve been with you folks a long time, and if you’ll let me go hear my wife give a speech, I’ll do any event you want, anywhere in America, any time.” [*Laughter*] And I told the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee that the Senate campaign I was most interested in was otherwise occupied tonight, and I was going there. [*Laughter*]

So I’m delighted to see you. And I want to thank Judith Hope for doing a wonderful job as the chair. A lot of you don’t know this, but Judith Hope grew up in Warren, Arkansas, in a community that I never failed to carry as Governor, proof positive that people from Arkansas can do very well in New York.

I want to thank all the leaders of Congress and the State legislature and your State officials who are here with me tonight, and my good friend Andrew Cuomo, for the wonderful job he’s done as our HUD Secretary.

I want to ask you one question. Did Hillary give a great speech tonight? I was sitting next to Senator Moynihan, and she kept going over all these issues. And Senator Moynihan looked at me, and he said, “Good speech.” [*Laughter*] “Now, that would be like the rest of us who—*[inaudible]*—into the Gettysburg Address.” [*Laughter*] And I knew that she was on a roll.

I want to say three things very quickly. First of all, I do not have the words to express to the people of New York my gratitude for the primary victory in ’92, for the magnificent convention in ’92, for the overwhelming margin of victory in ’92, and the even bigger margin of

victory you gave to me and to Al Gore in 1996. I will never forget it.

The second thing I want to say is that I am profoundly grateful to you for the way you have embraced Hillary and the way you supported her tonight and the way you have been helping her. And I thank you for that. But I can tell you this, that she will not disappoint you. She’ll be one of the great Senators this country has ever—*[applause]*.

And the last thing I want to say is this. On this night we’ve had a lot of fun. And big tests facing New York and America is what are we going to do with this magic moment of prosperity we have all worked so hard for? And a moment like this imposes a test on people just as severe as great adversity does. When we were flat on our back in the Depression and we elected Franklin Roosevelt President, we did in part out of desperation. We knew we had to have somebody who was upbeat and strong and who would try new things.

When I was elected President in 1992, the American people took a huge chance. I was just, as President Bush used to say, the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And I was so dumb and inexperienced, I thought he was complimenting me. I was kind of proud of it. [*Laughter*]

But we were feeling rather desperate, and now we feel good. But I was so proud by the response you gave Hillary tonight, because this is a great test for us. And make no mistake about it, this election in 2000 is every bit as important as the election in ’96 was, every bit as important as the election in ’92 was. I worked so hard for 8 years with clearly the finest and most effective Vice President in the history of the United States to turn this country around.

Now we’ve got a campaign, and the people have to choose. And the Republicans are telling us they’re compassionate. [*Laughter*] And

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they're saying, "I'm for all the same things that they're for, we're just doing it a little different. And we want to give you a whole lot bigger tax cut. We'll give you everything else you ever dreamed of." And it's all sort of being blurred.

What I want to tell you is if you believe the things that Hillary said, that you clapped for tonight, if you believe that she's worth fighting for, then you have to believe me. I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—but I know a little something about American history. It may be 30, it may be 50, it may be 80 or 100 years before our country ever has so much prosperity, so much social progress, so little internal crisis and external threat as we have today. We are being tested as surely as if we

were in the middle of war or a depression. And we are being tested.

It's easy for us to be distracted. And I'm telling you, if you want this to go on, if you want to continue to change in this direction, you've got to elect Al Gore; you've got to elect Hillary; you've got to elect these Democrats who have supported this direction. I will do my best to be a supporting part in that.

The next Senator of New York, my wife.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in the Ten Eyck Ballroom at the Crown Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut May 17, 2000

Thank you very much. Secretary Slater, Admiral Loy, Rear Admiral Teeson, Captain Dillon, Senator Dodd, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, Dr. Haas, members of the faculty and staff, and honored guests—the friends, family, and members of the class of 2000.

I want to begin by complimenting Cadet Christopher Burrus on what I thought was a remarkable speech showing the devotion to the Coast Guard and the country that every American can be proud of.

I would also like to thank the family members who are here for standing behind these cadets for 4 years and for making it possible for them to be here.

This is a highly appropriate place for me to give what is, for me, a very nostalgic address. It is the last speech I will ever give as President to a graduating class of one of our military service academies.

This class came to Washington and marched in my second Inaugural Parade. I pledged to use this term to build a bridge to the 21st century. And in so many ways, the first class of the 21st century represents that bridge.

I have been personally, deeply indebted to the Coast Guard because of the military aides I have had every year I've been President who

are Coast Guard officers. The last one, Pat DeQuattro, class of '88, is here with me today. They have all been outstanding people, and it made me think more and more of the Coast Guard.

You can be proud of the road you have traveled from Swab Summer to today. You've survived academic rigors, countless games of football and volleyball against officers, even golf balls and dog food in the wardroom. For those of you who, like me, are somewhat less literate in these matters, that is cadet-speak for hard-boiled eggs and corned beef hash. [Laughter]

You have, as we have heard, done extraordinary volunteer work. You placed first among universities at one of America's most prestigious national science competitions. You engineered Solar Splash, the top-ranked solar-powered boat in the Nation this year. Four of your classmates were all-American athletes, and one of your classmates even found fame and fortune on "The Price is Right." [Laughter]

I can't help noting that you were also the first class in history to have an adviser who had a recurring role on "Baywatch." [Laughter] Now, Eric Kowack chose to give up that difficult duty, come back, and teach classes on personal

finance for those of you who don't become TV stars. [Laughter]

I have been told that your spirit as a class is so strong that this class received more letters from opposing class presidents complaining about heckling at soccer games than any other class in the history of this academy. [Laughter] It's really nice to know you feel bad about it. [Laughter] I don't know if any of you got in trouble for that, but pursuant to long-standing tradition, I hereby grant amnesty to all candidates marching tours or serving restrictions for such minor offenses.

As the first Coast Guard class of the 21st century, you will face a new set of challenges to America's security, values, and interests, though your mission will be consistent with the long and storied history of America's defenders. The waters off this shore have seen a lot of that history.

In the West Wing of the White House, just a few feet from the Oval Office, there's a painting of the first naval battle of the War of 1812 that happened off the coast of New London. That day a British frigate called the *Belvidera* was chased by five American warships. You might be interested to know that three of those ships were named the *President*, the *United States*, and the *Congress*. History tells us the *President* was the fastest ship. [Laughter] But unfortunately, the *Belvidera* got away anyway, because at a crucial moment the *President* suffered significant damage. We're not sure exactly what caused it, but I am curious to know where *Congress* was at the time. [Laughter]

I ask you to compare that picture with the picture to be painted in these same waters this summer, when the *Eagle* leads ships from more than 60 nations, including our adversary in 1812, Great Britain, into New London Harbor, the biggest, broadest gathering of its kind in history, a strong symbol of the global age in which you will serve.

It is a wonderful sign of these times that two of the cadets who graduate in this class today come from Russia and Bulgaria, nations that were our adversaries when they were in elementary school, and neither they nor we think twice about it. We know it's a good thing.

Globalization is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and people. The process is accelerated by the fact that more than half the world's people live in democracies for the first time in history, and by the

explosive advance in information technology that is changing the way we all do business, including the Coast Guard.

Just for example, a mere decade ago a cadet assigned to a buoy tender had to go through an elaborate process to place the buoys. Three people would stand back-to-back, tracking horizontal sextant angles, and then comparing those readings to hand-drawn navigational grids—with a lot of yelling back and forth. Today, all that work is done instantly by satellites and computers through the Global Positioning System.

The very openness of our borders and technology, however, also makes us vulnerable in new ways. The same technology that gave us GPS and the marvelous possibilities of the Internet also apparently empowered a student sitting in the Philippines to launch a computer virus that in just a few hours spread through more than 10 million computers and caused billions of dollars in damage.

The central reality of our time is that the advent of globalization and the revolution in information technology have magnified both the creative and the destructive potential of every individual, tribe, and nation on our planet.

Now, most of us have a vision of the 21st century. It sees the triumph of peace, prosperity, and personal freedom through the power of the Internet, the spread of the democracy, the potential of science as embodied in the human genome project and the probing of the deepest mysteries of nature, from the dark holes of the universe to the dark floors of the ocean.

But we must understand the other side of the coin, as well. The same technological advances are making the tools of destruction deadlier, cheaper, and more available, making us more vulnerable to problems that arise half a world away—to terror, to ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts, to weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, and other organized crime.

Today, and for the foreseeable tomorrows, we, and especially you, will face a fateful struggle between the forces of integration and harmony and the forces of disintegration and chaos. The phenomenal explosion of technology can be a servant of either side or, ironically, both. Of course, our traditional security concerns have by no means vanished. Still we must manage our relationships with great and potentially great powers in ways that protect and advance our interests. We must continue to maintain strong alliances, to have the best trained, best equipped

military in the world, to be vigilant that regional conflicts do not threaten us.

In this scenario, one of the biggest question marks of the 21st century is the path China will take. Will China emerge as a partner or an adversary? Will it be a society that is opening to the world and liberating to its people or controlling of its people and lashing out at the world?

Next week the Congress and the United States will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to influence that question in the right way. There are brave people in China today working for human rights and political freedom. There are brave people within the Government of China today willing to risk opening the Chinese economy, knowing that it will unleash forces of change they cannot control.

For example, in a country of 1.3 billion people, 2 years ago there were just 2 million Internet users. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. When over 100 million people in China can get on the net, it will be impossible to maintain a closed political and economic society.

If Congress votes to normalize trade relations with China, it will not guarantee that China will take the right course. But it will certainly increase the likelihood that it will. If Congress votes no, it will strengthen the hand, ironically, of the very people the opponents of this agreement claim to fight. It will strengthen the hands of the reactionary elements in the military and the state-owned industries who want America for an opponent, to justify their continued control and adherence to the old ways and repression of personal freedom.

I believe that a no vote invites a future of dangerous confrontations and constant insecurity. It also, by the way, forfeits the largest market in the world for our goods and services and gives Europe and Japan all those benefits we negotiated to bring American jobs here at home.

Granting China permanent normal trading relations, it's clearly in our economic interests. But from your point of view, even more important, it is a national security issue for stability in Asia, peace in the Taiwan Straits, possible cooperation with China to advance freedom and human rights within the country and to retard the proliferation of dangerous weapons technology beyond it. It is profoundly important to America's continued leadership in the world.

That's why all former Presidents, without regard to party, as well as former Secretaries of State, Defense, Transportation, Trade, National Security Advisers, Chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, support this legislation.

It illustrates a larger issue I want you to think about today, which is the importance of a balanced security strategy with military, diplomatic, and economic elements. I have worked hard to adapt our security strategy to the 21st century world, with all its possibilities and threats. Last year, as part of that effort, I asked the task force to conduct a fresh look at the roles and missions of the Coast Guard: What are you going to do in this new world anyway? The task force found that a flexible, highly motivated Coast Guard continues to be vital to our security.

We often see, personally, our reliance on the Coast Guard during floods in North Carolina, after Hurricane Floyd, after the tragedies of EgyptAir and Air Alaska. Today, in the average week, you and your fellow coasties will seize more than \$60 million worth of dangerous drugs, board 630 vessels for safety checks, intercept hundreds of illegal immigrants, investigate 119 marine accidents, respond to more than 260 hazardous chemical spills, assist more than 2,500 people in distress, and save 100 lives. And the more we travel and the more we are connected together, the more those responsibilities and opportunities for service will rise.

So your class will play an even larger role in defending and advancing America's security. It is very important to me, as the Commander in Chief, that each and every one of you understand the threats we face and what we should do to meet them.

First, international terrorism is not new, but it is becoming increasingly sophisticated. Terrorist networks communicate on the World Wide Web, too. Available weapons are becoming more destructive and more miniaturized, just as the size of cell phones and computers is shrinking—shrinking to the point where a lot of you with large hands like mine wonder if you'll be able to work the things before long. You should understand that the same process of miniaturization will find its way into the development of biological and chemical and maybe even nuclear weapons. And it is something we have to be ready for.

As borders fade and old regimes struggle through transitions, the chance for free agents

looking to make a profit on weapons of destruction and personal chaos is greater. In this sort of environment, cooperation is profoundly important—more vital than ever. We learned that in the days leading up to the millennium.

We are joined today by the Ambassador from Jordan to the United States, Dr. Marwan Muasher. He's sitting here behind me. He's an excellent representative of his country. And I want to tell you a story that, unfortunately, will not be the last example you will have to face.

Last December, working with Jordan, we shut down a plot to place large bombs at locations where Americans might gather on New Year's Eve. We learned this plot was linked to terrorist camps in Afghanistan and the organization created by Usama bin Ladin, the man responsible for the 1998 bombings of our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, which cost the lives of Americans and hundreds of Africans.

A short time later, a customs agent in Seattle discovered bomb materials being smuggled in to the U.S., the same materials used by bin Ladin in other places. Thankfully, and thanks to Jordan, New Year's passed without an attack. But the threat was real, and we had to cooperate with them, with the Canadians, with others throughout the world.

So the first point I wish to make is, in a globalized world, we must have more security cooperation, not less. In responding to terrorist threats, our own strategy should be identical to your motto: *Semper paratus*—always ready.

Today I'm adding over \$300 million to fund critical programs to protect our citizens from terrorist threats, to expand our intelligence efforts, to improve our ability to use forensic evidence, to track terrorists, to enhance our coordination with State and local officials, as we did over New Year's, to protect our Nation against possible attacks. I have requested now some \$9 billion for counterterrorism funding in the 2001 budget. That's 40 percent more than 3 years ago, and this \$300 million will go on top of that. It sounds like a lot of money. When you see the evidence of what we're up against, I think you will support it, and I hope you will.

We also have to do all we can to protect existing nuclear weapons from finding new owners. To keep nuclear weapons and nuclear materials secure at the source, we've helped Russia to deactivate about 5,000 warheads, to strengthen border controls and keep weapons expertise

from spreading. But Russia's economic difficulties have made this an even greater challenge.

Just for example, I know you know that when you decided to become a Coast Guard officer, you made a decision that you would not be wealthy. But let me give you some basis of comparison. The average salary today of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month. Needless to say, there are a lot of people who'd like to develop nuclear weapons capability who are out there trying to hire those folks.

The programs that we fund in joint endeavors to secure the Russian nuclear force and the materials and to do other kinds of joint research help to give such scientists a decent living to support their families. And I think we have to do even more to help them turn their expertise to peaceful projects. We shouldn't just depend upon their character to resist the temptation to earn a living wage with all of their knowledge and education. And we have asked Congress for extra funding here to help Russia keep its arsenal of nuclear weapons secure.

Still, we have to face the possibility that a hostile nation, sooner or later, may well acquire weapons of mass destruction and the missiles necessary to deliver them to our shores. That's what this whole debate over whether we should have a limited national missile defense is all about. Later this year, I will decide whether we should begin to deploy it next spring, based on four factors that I will have to take into account.

First, has this technology really proved it will work? Second, what does it cost, and how do we balance that cost against our other defense priorities? Third, how far advanced is the threat; how likely is it that another nation could deliver long-range ballistic missiles to our shore within 3 years, 5 years, 10 years—what is the time frame? And finally, what impact will it have on our overall security, including our arms control efforts in other areas, our relationships with our allies in other countries around the world?

I also want you to know, as I said earlier, we've got to be ready for the prospect of biological and chemical warfare. We saw that in the sarin gas attack in Japan 4 years ago. We've established a national defense preparedness office to train first responders, using new technology to improve our ability to detect these agents quickly. And we're doing all we can to

see that poison gas and biological weapons are, in fact, eliminated from the face of the Earth.

We have to do the same when it comes to problems in cybersecurity. Today, critical systems like power structures, nuclear plants, air traffic control, computer networks, they're all connected and run by computers. Two years ago we had an amazing experience in America and around the world. We saw that a single failed electronics link with one satellite malfunction disable pagers, ATM's, credit card systems, and TV and radio networks all over the world. That was an accident. The "love bug" was not an accident.

So to protect America from cybercrime and cyberterrorism, we have developed a national plan for cybersecurity, with both public and private sector brains putting it together. We're asking for increased funding to implement this plan to protect our vital networks. That's something else I hope you will support.

We talk about computer viruses and often forget the world is also threatened by physical infection like malaria, TB, and AIDS. Some people questioned me when our administration announced a couple of weeks ago that we considered the AIDS crisis a national security threat. But let me just give you a couple of examples.

In Africa alone, there are 70 percent of the world's AIDS cases. The fastest growing rate of AIDS is in India, which happens to be a nuclear power. In Africa, some countries are actually hiring two employees for every job, on the assumption that one of them is going to die from AIDS. In other African countries, 30 percent of the teachers and 40 percent of the soldiers have the virus.

In addition, millions of people suffer from malaria, and about a third of the world has been exposed to TB, a disease that can reach our shores at the speed of jet travel. With malaria, people now discuss in common parlance airport malaria, something people can get at any international airport in any country in the world because we're all traveling around and bumping into people from other countries.

These diseases can ruin economies and threaten the very survival of nations and societies. I think meeting this public health challenge is a moral imperative and a national security concern.

I issued an Executive order last week to help make AIDS drugs more affordable to people in poor countries. I propose that we give a gen-

erous tax credit to our private pharmaceutical companies to give them an incentive to develop vaccines for things like AIDS, malaria, and TB, because the people who need it most can't afford to pay for it. If we help them pay for it, we can save millions of lives and strengthen our security. If we don't, we will dramatically increase the chances of chaos, murder, the abuse of children, the kind of things we have seen in some of the terrible tribal wars in Africa in the last couple of years.

Finally, there's one more global challenge I want you to think about that I think is a security challenge, the challenge of climate change. Nine of the 10 warmest years since the 15th century were recorded in the 1990's—9 of the 10 warmest years since the 15th century. Unless we change course and reverse global greenhouse gas emissions, most scientists are convinced that storms and droughts will intensify as the globe continues to warm. Crop patterns will be disrupted. Food supplies will be affected. The seas will rise so high they will swallow islands and coastal areas, and if that happens, all the Luders training in the world won't save us. *[Laughter]*

I want you to laugh, but I want you to listen. This is a huge challenge that can become a national security challenge. If we value our coastlands and farmlands, we must work at home. If we value the stability of our neighbors and friends and the rights of people around the world, particularly in island nations, to live their lives in peace according to their cultures and religious faiths, we must work with other nations. This is a global challenge. And the good news is, we don't need to put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere anymore to grow the economy. All we need is the vision and will and discipline to do the job.

Finally, we have to deal with the global challenge of narcotrafficking and drugs. We have to do a lot here at home, zero tolerance for drug use, treatment for those who suffer, punishment for those who profit. But we also have to fight these big drug cartels and the criminal empires they finance. Ninety percent of the cocaine consumed in America, two-thirds of the heroin seized on our streets comes from or through just one country, Colombia.

Now, Colombia has a courageous new President, Andres Pastrana, who has asked for our help to finance his comprehensive Plan Colombia to fight drugs, build the economy, and deepen democracy. I've asked Congress to give \$1.6

billion to pay our share of Plan Colombia over the next 2 years. The House just passed a bill; I hope the Senate will do so as soon as possible. It is a national security issue. For Colombia, Latin America's oldest democracy, is not just fighting for its peoples' lives and its way of life; it's fighting to preserve stability in the entire Andean region, and it's fighting for the lives of our kids, too.

So again, it's not in the Department of Defense budget in a direct way, or in the Department of Transportation budget in a direct way, but it directly affects our national security, and I hope you will support it.

In all these challenges, the Coast Guard will play a vital role. You always have. In the 18th century, the predecessor to today's Coast Guard manned antislavery patrols and coordinated tariff collection for a young nation. In the 19th century, you assumed responsibility for search and rescue, marine inspection, and quarantine laws. In the last century, the 20th century, you arrested rumrunners during Prohibition, enforced environmental laws, interdicted drugs, and even delivered marines to the beaches at Normandy.

We're trying to make sure you can do your job in the 21st century. My 2001 budget requests another \$376 million for the Coast Guard, the largest one-year increase in 20 years, including a 34 percent increase to buy ships. I will also recommend to the next President that America continue to support the Coast Guard's Deep Water Project, so you have the ships and planes you need to meet challenges that face us. We can't meet threats to the future with a Coast Guard fleet from the past.

Let me say just this last point. We cannot accept the fact that the burden of protecting America's security falls solely on the shoulders of those who stand watch on our borders and coastlines, on the high seas or our allies' home ground, that it involves only immediate threats to our security.

Ever since the end of the cold war, some people have been saying, "We don't need to play such an active role in the world anymore or worry about distant conflicts or play our part in international institutions like the United Nations." I want to ask you what you think the alternative is: a survivalist foreign policy, build a fence around America and retreat behind it; a go-it-alone foreign policy, where we do it our way, and if people disagree with us, we just

don't do it at all? I profoundly disagree with both.

Remember the story I told you about the millennium and the help we got from Jordan and the work we did with Canada. It wouldn't have mattered what we had done; if they hadn't helped us, we'd have had bombs going off here as we celebrated the millennium. We have got to be more involved in a cooperative way with other nations to advance our national security.

America has been called a shining city on a hill. That doesn't mean our oceans are moats. It doesn't mean our country is a fortress. If we wait to act until problems come home to America, problems are far more likely to come home to America. I hope when you leave here today as new officers, you will be convinced that more than any previous time in history, your Nation must be engaged in the world, paying our fair share, doing our fair share, working with others to secure peace and prosperity where we can, leading where we must, and standing up for what we believe.

That's why I support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I hope the Congress will ratify it next year. That's why I've worked to relieve the debts of the poorest nations of the world and to help them build their economies and their educational systems; why we have worked to expand trade with Africa and the poor Caribbean nations, to deepen our economic ties to Latin American and Asia; why we work for peace in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, for democracy in Haiti, and an end to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo; for reconciliation between North and South Korea, India and Pakistan, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. They may be a long way from home, but more and more, as the years go by, you will see that in an age of globalism, our values and interests are at stake in these places, as well.

Almost 40 years ago, President Kennedy stood on the deck of the *Eagle*, and that day he said this: "There is not a single person who has sailed any of our lakes or oceans who has not at one time or another been the beneficiary of the faithful service of the Coast Guard."

Today, that great tradition falls to you in the greatest age of possibility in human history. You are the generation chosen by providence to lead the Coast Guard into the new century. Your class motto says, *Ducentes viam en millennium*—leading the way into the new millennium. Now you have the preparation to do it. You clearly

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have the courage and character to do it. I pray you will also have the vision and wisdom to take your motto and truly make it your own.

Good luck. Thank you for your service, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at Cadet Memorial Field. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. James M. Loy, USCG, Commandant of the Coast Guard; Rear Adm. Douglas Teeson, USCG, Superintendent, and Capt. Thomas J. Haas,

USCG (Ret.), Dean of Academics and Supervisory Professor, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; Capt. William P. Dillon, Chaplain Corps, USN, who delivered the invocation; Cadet First Class Christopher Burrus, who delivered the valedictorian address; and Onel de Guzman, who allegedly unleashed the “love bug” computer virus. The Executive order of May 10 on access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Environmental Protection Agency Proposal To Reduce Emissions From Trucks and Buses

May 17, 2000

The measures proposed today by the Environmental Protection Agency to reduce harmful emissions from trucks and buses represent another major milestone in this administration’s long-standing effort to ensure cleaner, healthier air for all Americans.

Air pollution has declined dramatically over the past quarter century, but stronger action is needed to protect public health and keep us on track to meeting our Nation’s air quality goals. That is why last year I announced tough new tailpipe and fuel standards to dramatically reduce emissions from cars, SUV’s, and other light-duty trucks. Today’s proposal would establish stringent new standards for heavy-duty

trucks and buses and the diesel fuel that powers them. These proposed standards would produce the cleanest trucks and buses ever, significantly reducing smog, soot, and other pollutants that contribute to asthma and other respiratory disease.

Americans today enjoy the cleanest environment in a generation and the longest economic expansion in our Nation’s history. I am confident that today’s proposal—which will be refined in the coming months with input from the public, industry, and the environmental community—will produce even greater benefits for both our economy and our environment.

Statement on Congressional Action on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 17, 2000

I am encouraged that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee have both approved legislation today authorizing the extension of permanent normal trade relations to China. Today’s approval of PNTR is a significant step toward final passage by the Congress. The strong bipartisan votes in both committees send a clear, strong message that permanent normal trade relations for China is vital to America’s prosperity at home, our

leadership in the world, and to positive change in China.

The full Congress will now consider this legislation. Members will not decide whether China will join the WTO—it will. Congress will decide whether we put American workers, farmers, and businesses at a disadvantage by denying them the access to and benefits from China’s markets that their competitors in Japan and Europe will have. A vote for PNTR will bring down China’s barriers to American exports, opening the largest

potential market in the world to our goods and services. A vote against PNTR will cost us exports and jobs and cede this massive new market to our competitors.

This is a decision of great importance and a moment of historic opportunity. In this, the

last week before the final vote, I will redouble my efforts to convince Congress and the American people to seize that opportunity to strengthen our economy, our national security, and the forces of reform and positive change in China.

Statement on the Need for Congressional Action on Tobacco

May 17, 2000

New studies released by independent researchers today underscore the need for congressional action in the fight to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. New studies by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the American Legacy Foundation show that tobacco advertising in magazines read by large numbers of kids has increased over one-third since the 1998 settlement agreement between States and tobacco companies. In addition, not only have tobacco companies increased the number of magazine ads targeted to young people, they may actually be doing it more effectively. The studies show that these ads are actually being seen by more young people. Top brand advertising alone now reaches 70 percent of all teens.

I call on the attorneys general from the States who signed the agreement to take immediate and appropriate enforcement action to stop these practices. And again, I call on Congress to give the FDA meaningful authority to regu-

late the marketing, sale, and manufacturing of tobacco products. The youth-oriented advertising addressed in these studies would have been limited by the FDA rule. FDA's hands should not remain tied by congressional inaction.

In 1998 Senators Frist and McCain introduced a bill that would have given the FDA authority to regulate the marketing and sale of tobacco products. Unfortunately, a weak, watered-down bill was introduced yesterday that would allow the marketing practices revealed today to continue. Instead of protecting our children from tobacco, some in Congress are actually trying to block out efforts to hold the tobacco industry accountable for decades of deception, as a Senate appropriations committee recently passed a rider that would stop the Justice Department from proceeding with litigation to recover Federal tobacco-related health costs from tobacco manufacturers. I urge Congress to reject this blatant effort to put special interests ahead of the taxpayers.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

May 17, 2000

Monday, May 22, marks the second anniversary of the referenda in which the voters of Ireland and Northern Ireland overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday accord. Since then, Northern Ireland has made great strides toward becoming a peaceful society, following three decades of violence. Today, we are on the threshold of a major achievement—a lasting political arrangement that will allow the people of Northern Ireland and their representatives to decide their future for themselves by exclu-

sively peaceful means, on the basis of consent. This is a chance to lock in the unprecedented progress that has been attained and propel the process forward. It is an opportunity that must not be lost. I urge the parties to lift their sights, seize the possibilities that are within their grasp, and take the steps necessary to advance the cause of peace.

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Memorandum on Strengthening Our Commitment to Service Through Voluntary Opportunities May 17, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Strengthening Our Commitment to Service Through Voluntary Opportunities

Volunteer community service is a great American tradition and a profound expression of the civic values that bind us together as a Nation. Nowhere is the spirit of volunteerism more alive than among employees of the Federal Government, thousands of whom serve their country with dedication at work and as volunteers in their local communities. On April 22, 1998, I directed Federal departments and agencies to expand community service opportunities for Federal employees by making maximum use of existing flexibility in work scheduling policies. On June 17, 1999, I encouraged all departments and agencies with operations in the District of Columbia to apply those policies so that their D.C.-based employees could take advantage of an important new community service opportunity: tutoring public school students in a program called *D.C. Reads This Summer*. Over a thousand Federal employees chose to take part, and based on the program's success last summer, I am today inviting Federal employees to sign up for the program again this summer.

From July 6 to July 27, 2000, an estimated 22,000 D.C. school children with low test scores will be in mandatory enrichment summer school programs run by the D.C. Public School system. Students whose scores do not markedly improve risk being held back a grade. This is part of the District's ambitious plan to end social promotion while also giving children the extra help they need to meet higher standards—the kind

of positive reform I have called on all school districts to adopt. As the District's largest employer, the Federal Government has a unique opportunity to help children improve their scores and rejoin their classmates this fall.

That is why I am pleased that the Corporation for National and Community Service is assisting Federal departments and agencies in recruiting Federal employees to become volunteer reading tutors through the *D.C. Reads This Summer* program.

Employees who choose to sign up with *D.C. Reads This Summer* will receive training and be able to work one-on-one with students once or twice a week for 4 weeks at one of 25 school- and community-based tutoring sites around the city. I encourage departments and agencies that have not already done so to find a member of their staff willing to volunteer as a liaison to *D.C. Reads This Summer*. I ask departments and agencies to inform employees of this rewarding volunteer opportunity and assist where possible in transporting employees to and from the sites. I also ask that you continue to encourage and support employees who choose to volunteer through other community programs. In addition to *D.C. Reads*, there are many excellent programs being run through libraries and religious and community centers throughout the D.C. area. Finally, I encourage you to maintain or strengthen any preexisting partnerships that your department or agency may already have with D.C. or other local school systems, including tutoring in year-round programs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan May 17, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section

204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report

on the national emergency with respect to Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997.

The White House,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON May 17, 2000.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Greenwich,
Connecticut
May 17, 2000

Scott, we ought to take this act on the road. [Laughter] I may do another video with you in it. [Laughter]

I want to say, first of all, I loved that introduction. [Laughter] And it meant more to me than you know. I hope most people do think I'm their kind of guy—but especially young people like him.

And I want to thank the Richmans for opening their beautiful, beautiful home to us. And I thank all the cochairs of this event, Ronni, Braith, Peter, Bob, and the others who worked on it. Thank you very much.

I thank Mayor Rendell for taking on this little part-time job of heading the Democratic Committee. [Laughter] And my old law school classmate Dick Blumenthal, I thank him for being here; and Mayor Malloy, Senator McDermott, and Barbara Kennelly, who now works in our administration at the Social Security Administration. You might want to talk to her about Social Security reform—[laughter]—give her all your ideas. And I thank Ed Marcus and the other folks who have come who've been active in Connecticut Democratic politics for a long time.

I would like to just make a few brief points. I know the hour is late, and I got to visit with a lot of you coming through.

Number one, whenever I'm anywhere now, I try not to miss a chance to say thank you. The people of Connecticut have been very good to me and to Al Gore, Hillary and Tipper. They gave us their electoral votes—you did twice, by a good margin the first time and a bigger one the second time. And I'm very, very grateful for that.

The second thing I would like to say is, believe it or not, even though things are going well, it's my opinion that the 2000 election is at least as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996, because in 2000 people will make

a very great decision, which is what to do about our good fortune and whether to ratify the policies that got us to this point and build on them in the future. It's a huge decision.

And if you listen to the debate, it's obvious that our friends in the other party, from the top down, hope that the American people don't think that's what they're supposed to do in this election. So they want to blur all these decisions, you know, and turn it into sort of a feel-good deal. And I mean, things are going along so well, who could mess it up, right? [Laughter] So just kind of, let's just, you know, a little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of the other thing.

So I'm glad you're here, and I thank you for your money, and we'll try to spend it well. But you're not done, because you've got to be good citizens between now and November, because I'm telling you, this election is just as important as the last two were.

I spent so much of the last 7½ years trying to turn the ship of state around, trying to build our bridge to the new century, trying to make sure things were going in the right direction. Well, now they are. And when I leave office, we will have paid off about \$355 billion of the national debt. And it was projected, when I took office, that this year the deficit would be about \$400 billion a year.

If I told you in 1992, "Vote for me, and before I get out of here, I'll give you at least 3 years of surpluses and pay off over \$350 billion of the debt, and I'll double investment in education and training at the same time," you would have said, "He seems like such a nice man, but he's slightly"—[laughter]—"deranged, and we'd better send him home."

So I'm grateful for what's going right. But it's just the beginning. And I go back to what I said in the State of the Union Address. It

is a stern test of a free people, not just how they behave when they're under the gun in depression and war but how they behave when all things seem possible and things are going very well. And the easiest thing to do is to let down and be distracted and be diverted and take the easy way out. This is the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children. But to do it, we have to make a lot of big decisions.

I think we have to decide to keep paying down the debt; to make extraordinary efforts to bring the benefits of the new economy to people and places that have been left behind, through incentives to invest in those places; to give every child a world-class education and access to college, and to those who need it, pre-school and after-school programs; to give working families access to affordable health care; to do more to help people balance work and family; to prove that you can grow the economy and improve the environment, not undermine it—and you can, by the way, in the new information age; to prove that we can be the safest big country in the world; to prove that we can build a country that brings us together instead of divides us at election time.

Now, I think this is important. This is big. I've worked real hard so you guys could do this when I was gone.

I'm not running for anything. Most days I'm okay about that. [Laughter] I had a great time at Hillary's nomination last night. She was great. And thank you, those of you that are helping her; I'm very grateful.

But you've got to think about this. That's what this election is about. Whether people think that's what it's about, enough, is another thing altogether. But I'm telling you, that's what this election is about. And 50 years from now, when people look back and write about this time, this is how this election year will be judged: What did we do with our prosperity? What did we do with a declining crime rate, welfare rolls cut in half, other social problems getting better? What did we do with this enormous period of good fortune, with the absence of domestic crisis or foreign threat to our security? What in the wide world did we do with it, with all these big challenges and opportunities sitting there right before our eyes?

It's not like we have to look around the corner—as the Irish say some people can do, can see around corners. You don't have to see

around corners. You know what the big challenges and opportunities facing this country are. That's the whole deal. That's the first thing I want to say.

The second thing I want to tell you is, I think that Vice President Gore is uniquely qualified to lead this country at this moment, because he understands the future and knows how to get us there. And I've listened very carefully to all the things that have been said, pro and con, in the last several weeks. And one of the most amazing things I have ever heard is people saying, "Well, you know, this guy won't take a tough position." He broke the tie in the budget. It passed by one vote. The Republicans, every one of them was against it—100 percent of them. They said we were going to bankrupt the country and we were going to wreck the economy. Now they say, "Oh, so what if we were wrong? So what if we quadrupled the debt? Please put us in control again." We won by a vote.

He broke the tie on gun control. We won by one vote in the Senate. We voted to close the gun show loophole; we voted to have a ban on large capacity ammunition clips being imported into this country; we voted to require child trigger locks in the Senate, by one vote.

He supported me when I gave financial aid to Mexico. You know what the poll was on that? Eighty-one to fifteen, don't do it. He supported me when we went into Bosnia. He supported me when we went into Kosovo. He supported me when we went into Haiti. He supported me when no administration had ever consistently taken on either the gun lobby or the tobacco lobby before.

So that's the first thing you need to know. Every tough decision I had to make that was unpopular in the short run but was right for the long run, he was there early in the do-it camp.

The second thing I want to say is, I'm a little bit of an amateur historian of this country. I know a little bit about other Presidencies and the institution of the Vice President. And you should know this. I work at night in a private office on President Grant's Cabinet table. Now, when Grant was President, when Lincoln was President, there were only seven Cabinet Departments. And they actually had a form of Cabinet government: the Cabinet met two or three times a week. And there are eight drawers around this table. It tickles me; they could all

keep their important papers in one little old drawer. Everybody had a key to a little drawer. [Laughter] And you know, there wasn't even a place for the Vice President, not even a place.

Even after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated—and before that William Henry Harrison died of a bad cold, because he spoke for 3 hours and a half at his inaugural without a coat—people didn't even think about it. We were just lucky that Theodore Roosevelt turned out to be a great President, after William McKinley was assassinated. And though I love him very much, President Roosevelt, we were just lucky that Harry Truman turned out to be a very great President indeed, because he did not even know about the existence of the atomic bomb when he became the President of the United States in the springtime of 1945.

Now, after that happened, people began to take this job a little more seriously. Before that, people—guys that were running for President just picked somebody for Vice President they thought would balance the ticket, geographically or politically or age-wise or some otherwise.

And if you think about it, it was a crazy waste of potential, right? How would you like to be able to hire somebody, give them a good job, a nice staff, and tell them what to do, and if they had a lot of talent, give them a lot of power, and they'd make you look good? I think these other guys didn't know what they were missing. But I'm just telling you, it didn't happen.

Now, President Eisenhower gave Richard Nixon a little more responsibility. Then President Kennedy gave Lyndon Johnson still more responsibility. He had been the Senate majority leader; he was a man of great experience and knowledge. And Hubert Humphrey had more or less the same role that Lyndon Johnson did.

Then, to be fair, the first big breakthrough came with Jimmy Carter, who made Walter Mondale a genuine partner in the Vice Presidency. They had lunch every week. Walter Mondale could come to any meeting. Vice President Mondale had been in the Senate and worked in Washington. Governor Carter, then, before he was President, had never done that. And they had a fabulous partnership. And to give credit where credit is due, President Reagan followed that model when George Bush, President Bush, became Vice President. And he had about as much of a role in the Reagan/Bush years—often they were doing things I didn't

agree with, but the point is, it was a responsible decision. Ronald Reagan made a responsible decision to let George Bush be a part of that.

So in the whole history of the country, you've got everybody else—Johnson and Nixon, Mondale and Bush, okay? And then here's Gore. This is a matter of historic fact. There has never been a Vice President who has had so much positive impact on the American people as Vice President.

For one thing, as he points out, whenever he votes in the Senate, we win. [Laughter] But far beyond that, let me just tell you a few things. He ran our reinventing Government program. We have the smallest Federal Government in 40 years, and I'll give you 100 bucks if you can name five programs that were eliminated. We eliminated hundreds of them. You haven't missed them, have you? Why? Because we doubled our investment in education; we continued to increase our investment in science and technology and medical research.

He ran our empowerment zone program, that has brought thousands upon thousands of jobs to people and places that were left behind, by creating special tax-incentive zones with special public investments to create more economic opportunity.

He was our principal adviser in telecommunications and technology. And we had a lot to do with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Since then, there have been hundreds of thousands of jobs created in the high-tech industry. I went to a dinner the other night in New York City with 40 executives of companies that did not exist in 1996, before the telecom bill was signed.

And he fought for the E-rate, which is now giving \$2.2 billion in discounts to school districts, the poorest school districts in this country, to make sure that all of our schools can be hooked up to the Internet. In '94, when we started, we had 16 percent of the classrooms and 3 percent—I mean, 16 percent of the schools and 3 percent of the classrooms with an Internet connection. Today, we have 95 percent of the schools and 75 percent of the classrooms because of the E-rate that Al Gore fought for.

He has managed a lot of our environmental policies—and being criticized by the Republicans for doing that. If we had not demonstrated that you can have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food, and set aside more land than

anybody but the Roosevelts and still grow the economy, I don't know what it would take to convince people that you can have a strong economy and a good environment. And he deserves a lot of credit for that.

He managed big chunks of our relationship with Russia, our relationship with Egypt, our relationship with South Africa, a lot of the initiatives we took in arms control.

There has never, ever, ever, in the history of the United States, been a person who, as Vice President, had remotely the range of responsibility or positive impact that he has had. There has, therefore, never been a person who was Vice President who, because of that service, was remotely as well-qualified to be President as he is. Now, you need to know that.

And you also need to know that, in my opinion, he really does understand the future. And he knows how to lead us there. Ninety-five percent of the scientists say the climate's warming, and the big oil companies accept it, just about. And a lot of the big companies that emit a lot of greenhouse gases are saying, "We've got to do something about climate change, otherwise it's going to wreck the whole environment of the world and flood island countries and destroy economies." In 1992 Al Gore was showing me his little chart—[laughter]—saying the same thing that everybody else now takes as the conventional wisdom.

If you want to make the most of prosperity in a time of rapid change, you'd better hire somebody who understands the future and knows how to get us there.

Now, I want to make one last point. There will be consequences to these decisions. I think you would all admit there were a few consequences to the decision the American people had to give the Congress, to the Republicans in 1994. There will be consequences.

The public will either choose to continue paying down the debt and to stay with the economic policy that has given us 21 million new jobs and the longest economic expansion in history or to revert to a policy that risks running deficits and drastically underinvesting in education, science and technology, and other things. That's going to happen. Whether people are aware of it, when the decision is made or not is up to you, but it will happen.

There will be a decision, which will either lead to continued improvements in the environment or people who believe that the Federal

Government's got no business doing half of what we've done. And they'll try to undo some of what we've done. A couple of you told me how great you thought that 40 million roadless acres was, that we set aside in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's one of the most significant things done in the 20th century. It will be history if the other side wins the White House and the Congress, because they've characterized it as a vast land grab. I don't know how you can grab what already belongs to you—these are Federal lands—but they have.

There will be vast consequences in whether we continue to make America the safest big country in the world. You saw where the gentleman from the NRA said the other day that if we lost the White House and they won, the NRA would have an office in the White House. Now, since he's said that, they probably won't do it. That would probably be too embarrassing. But they will have a veto over policy.

You will—you know, I've got to say something about this gun control business. Progressives lose on labels and win on facts. So don't you let anybody talk to you about gun control and all that. You know, they act like—you know, you practically hear vampire music in the background when the other guys talk about this. They talk about the second amendment and its right to keep and bear arms. And I just want to—next time somebody talks to you about that, say, "Listen. The Supreme Court has also given us the right to travel. But when we have seatbelt laws, child safety laws, speed limit laws, and you have to get a driver's license to drive your car, nobody talks about car control." As if it's some—now, if I come get your car and put it in my garage, that's car control. [Laughter] Otherwise, it's highway safety.

This is a huge deal. We can make this country the safest big country in the world and not keep a hunter out of the deer woods or keep anybody from sport shooting. But we have to do sensible, preventive things to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. If it's important to you, you better manifest that in your election. You better make sure that everybody you know understands that, because there are huge consequences. There are huge consequences.

If you believe that the Supreme Court ought to protect individual liberties, including a woman's right to choose, you need to know that that's at stake in this election. It will stay if

the Democrats win. It will go if the Republicans do. That's what I believe with all my heart. Within 24 months, it's goodbye; it's gone. And I'm old enough to remember what it was like before.

So for all the happy talk, you need to understand that number one, we owe it to the American people to say, "Set your sights high. Aim for the future. Build the future of our dreams for our children." Number two, we've got a candidate who's the best qualified person I can imagine and by far the best Vice President in the history of the country. And number three, there are huge differences in economic policy, crime policy, social policy, environmental policy that will shape America's future. And I haven't even mentioned national security.

We're for a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, like most everybody else in the world. They're not for it. They want to get rid of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. They think all this arms control is an idle—you know, "Why worry about that? We've got more bombs than anybody else, and the Russians can't afford to build any more right now, so just go on." So, I'm just telling you folks, this is a big deal.

The voters have not yet begun to focus on this. They will begin to think more and more about it. They will draw their own conclusions. But my experience over many years, now, has been that the person who wins the election may be determined by what the people think the election is about.

What is the subject of the election? If the people of this country believe it's whether we should be building the future of our dreams for these kids and the millions like them and the millions that are still living in poverty, without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, or anything else—if that's what they think, we win.

If they think, "This is a stroll in the park; this economy's on automatic; nobody could mess it up if they tried. And people say all kinds of things in an election to make promises to these radical interest groups, but maybe they won't happen, and so let's just kind of feel our way through this," who knows what's going to happen?

Clarity, facts, specifics, issues, evidence—those things are our friends. You've got to start asking everybody you know, what do you think this election is about?

So maybe this is too severe a thing for me to say to you after a nice dinner and a funny introduction—and I won twice in Connecticut. And I don't want you to think I'm an ingrate. But I went to all this trouble, and I worked, and I loved every day of it, and I'm not done. I'm going to get a lot of stuff done before I have to leave.

But I want you to understand, this is a millennial election in more than calendar years. This is a profoundly important decision about where we're going as a people. And you can't let anybody think that it's just some ordinary event or that there are no consequences.

I'll close with this. When we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history last February, I asked my advisers, I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to nineteen sixty-nine.

Scott's 17 years old. When I graduated from high school, I was 17 years old, in the spring-time of 1964, in the full bloom of the last longest economic expansion in history. You know what I thought? I thought the sucker would go on forever. [*Laughter*]

Ah, we knew we had civil rights challenges. I thought they'd be settled in the courts and in Congress, not in the streets. I knew we had a few people in Vietnam. I never dreamed that we would have trouble prevailing and that the agony of it would someday tear our country apart and tear my generation apart. We just thought everything was fine.

Four years later, when I was a senior in college and I was fixing to graduate from college—passes like this—it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after my President, Lyndon Johnson, could not even run for reelection because this country was torn half in two over Vietnam. And just a couple of months after that, the last longest economic expansion in American history was itself history.

Now, those of us who are old enough to have memories have responsibilities. And I'm here to tell you I've been waiting for 35 years for another chance to do right by our future. And now we have no domestic civil rights struggle that puts millions in the street. Instead we have a million moms that just want our kids to be safe. We have no Vietnam war to divide us

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and distract us. And if we make the wrong decisions, we have only ourselves to blame. I'm telling you, this can be the best time in human history.

But this election decision for the Presidency and for Congress will determine what the shape of this country is for decades to come. That's why, if somebody tomorrow asks you why you came here, tell them that's why you came here. And tell them some of the things I've told you tonight. And whatever happens between now and November, don't you get tired. I've been waiting 35 years for this, and I'm not going to see us blow it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Rich and Ellen Richman and their son Scott, who introduced the President; Ronni Ginott, State chair, Women's Leadership Forum; dinner cochairs Braith and Peter Kelly and Bob Rose; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Dannel P. Malloy of Stamford, CT; State Senator Brian McDermott; and Connecticut State Democratic Party Chair Edward L. Marcus.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China May 18, 2000

The President. Good morning. It's always good to have Chairman Greenspan back at the White House, and I'm especially pleased that he has come today to join me in voicing his support for permanent normal trade relations with China. We all know that when Chairman Greenspan talks, the world listens. I just hope that Congress is listening today.

Many Members remain undecided, and we are doing everything we possibly can to round up each and every potential vote. I'm encouraged by the vote in the committees in both Houses, including both Republican and Democratic members, to overwhelmingly approve extending permanent normal trade relations with China. This legislation now goes before the full Congress.

All the former Presidents support it, along with former Secretaries of State, Defense, Trade, Transportation, National Security Advisers, Chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, religious leaders, many of the courageous people in China fighting for human rights and the rule of law.

Momentum is building, but we've still got a challenging fight. I thank Chairman Greenspan for coming here today, and I'd like for him to say whatever is on his mind about this issue.

Mr. Chairman.

[At this point, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say that, first,

I believe that Chairman Greenspan has established a pretty good record for knowing what is in America's economic interest. He has once again reiterated, clearly and unambiguously, that this agreement exchanges membership rights for China in the WTO for economic opportunities for America in China, for American businesses and American workers, without the tariffs and technology transfer requirements and production in China requirements and other requirements which have limited our ability to benefit from their market for too long. So economically, the case is clear and compelling.

But I would also like to emphasize here the national security aspects of this, and the human and political rights aspects. You've heard Chairman Greenspan address the human and political rights aspects, and make the point that increasing access to a market economy increases personal freedom in other ways. I will just cite one example, which is that China has gone from 2 million to 9 million to 20 million Internet users over the last 3 years. And it was exploding again this year. We do not know where it will be next year, but this is a profoundly significant thing.

That's why Martin Lee came all the way from Hong Kong. That's why people who have been, themselves, oppressed in China have pleaded with us to support this, because they know getting into a rules-based system and promoting

economic competition will both enhance the march of liberty and law and human rights.

The other point I would like to make is, there is a serious national security issue here. We do not know what China will choose to do in the future, and China will make that decision for itself. But we know that one decision will dramatically increase the chances of a constructive relationship with China in a stable Asia, and the other will dramatically increase the chances of a less happy outcome. That's why Japan and North Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, our democratic allies in northeast Asia, are for this.

If you want to reduce tensions along the Taiwan Strait, if you want a more stable Asia, if you want to maximize the chances of avoiding proliferation of dangerous weapons and a new arms race, a yes is the right vote.

Last point. As has been well-documented by those of you in our press, it is indeed ironic

that the only people in China who want this vote to fail are the more reactionary elements of the military, economic, and political structure, who do not want to give up control and may need America as a continuing adversary to maintain that control and that capacity to repress liberty and human rights.

I believe the issue is profound and clear. And I am grateful for what Chairman Greenspan has said today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Greenspan.

Remarks on Signing the Trade and Development Act of 2000 May 18, 2000

The President. I would like to, first of all, welcome all of you here to the South Lawn on this beautiful day for this important occasion. I thank the members of the Cabinet and the administration who are here. I thank the very large number of Members of Congress who are here from both parties, the mayors and other public officials who supported this legislation. I want to thank our Special Envoy for the Americas, Buddy MacKay, my point person on the Caribbean Basin Initiative, and our former and first Special Envoy to the Americas, Mack McLarty.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Roth and Senator Moynihan, to Representative Rangel and Representative Archer, to Senator Lott and to Speaker Hastert, who supported this legislation, and to all the Members who worked so hard to get this bill passed, including Representatives Crane, Jefferson, McDermott, Payne, Royce, and so many others who are here, too numerous to mention. I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps who are here, who also supported this initiative.

The votes in the House and the Senate for the Trade and Development Act of 2000, what

is commonly known as Africa-CBI, were bipartisan and overwhelming, because they reflect the judgment that the results of this legislation will be good for the United States, good for Africa, good for Central America, and the Caribbean.

This day has been a long time coming, but it is here. It is clear that by breaking down barriers to trade, building new opportunities, and raising prosperity, we can lift lives in every country and on every continent. Nowhere is that more apparent than here in the United States, where our exports and our open markets have given us the longest expansion in our history with low inflation.

This bill reaffirms that position. And I hope it will be reaffirmed next week when Congress votes on permanent normal trade relations with China. Congress will have another opportunity in considering the "Trade Preference Act for the Balkans," another poor region of the world that is important to our future.

Today I want to focus, though, on the areas that are affected by this legislation, on the Caribbean Basin and Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than 700 million people, one of our biggest potential

trade partners. I say potential because American exports now account for only 6 percent of the African market. This bill will surely change that as it expands Africa's access to our markets and improves the ability of African nations to ease poverty, increase growth, and heal the problems of their people. It promotes the kinds of economic reform that will make sub-Saharan nations, on the long run, better allies, better trade partners, and stronger nations.

Closer to home, in the Caribbean Basin, we already have strong trade relations. Last year our exports to the region exceeded \$19 billion, making it the sixth largest market for our goods, larger than France or Brazil. That is remarkable but not as remarkable as the transformation of Central America and the Caribbean as a whole.

Despite the aftermath of war, the devastation of natural disasters, the region has made great strides toward recovery, democracy, peace, and prosperity. On all my visits to the region, I have marveled at these changes.

Trade is one of the most powerful engines driving development in the region, and the Caribbean Basin Initiative has played a part. It's a key building block to a free trade area of the Americas, which I hope we will have in the next few years.

What we see in the Caribbean Basin and in Africa is that trade can broaden the benefits of the global economy and lift the lives of people everywhere. But it is not enough, and our agenda for the developing world must be multifaceted, recognizing that trade must work for all people and that spirited competition should lift all nations. I am pleased, for example, that this bill contains important child labor protections authored by Senator Harkin.

I'd also like to say that there's another big issue I hope we'll take up, as the Congress had been willing to do last year and again in a bipartisan fashion. Too many nations, developing nations, are still forced to choose between paying interest on their debts and meeting basic human needs for clean water, shelter, health, and education. Last year the wealthiest nations pledged faster and deeper debt relief to developing nations that make needed reforms, countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, many in sub-Saharan Africa. In September I pledged to go even further and make it possible to forgive all the debt of the poorest countries—that the poorest countries owe to the United States. And I am pleased

that since then, every other wealthy nation has made the same commitment.

Now, we're here today because so many Members of Congress and those who talk to them dedicated themselves to trade, to development, to the future of the Caribbean Basin and Africa. Today I ask that we apply that same energy to our debt relief efforts.

I would also just like to take a few moments to remind you of what we all know, which is that there are enormous health challenges in the developing nations, which threaten their prosperity, their future, and could threaten their democracy. We know the massive human and economic costs the AIDS epidemic exacts in Africa, where every day 5,500 people die. Last week I took executive action, building on the work of Senator Feinstein, to make AIDS-related drugs more affordable there. I've asked the Congress to enact tax incentives to speed the development and delivery of vaccines for AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis and to contribute to a global fund for the purchase of such vaccines so that they will go where they're most needed. And I hope again we will have a strong bipartisan level of support for this.

Finally, let me say that the legislation I sign today is about more than development and trade. It's about transforming our relationship with two regions full of good people trying to build good futures who are very important to our own future.

During the cold war, to many Americans, Central America was a battleground and Africa was a backwater. All that has changed. We have worked hard the last few years to build genuine partnership with both regions, based on not what we can do for them, not what we can do about them but on what we can do with them to build democracy together.

Let me finally say just a couple of words about Africa, because the good news this week comes against the backdrop of some tragic developments on the continent. Two of Africa's poorest but most promising nations, Ethiopia and Eritrea, resumed their senseless war. For over 2 years we've worked with the OAU to resolve that dispute. We won't abandon the effort. But Ethiopia and Eritrea must first see that backing away from self-destruction is not the same thing as backing down. Giving your people a future is not cowardice; it's common sense and courage.

We are also working with our African partners to support the people of Sierra Leone and the U.N. forces there, and we will do what is necessary to provide military transport and other support so the U.N. will get the reinforcement it needs.

We need to see the problems of Africa plainly and do our best to meet them. But that must not obscure the promise of Africa, which is also profoundly clear. It is the home to three of the world's fastest growing economies—three of the four fastest growing economies in the world are African economies. The progress of democracy, from Nigeria to South Africa; the proof offered by countries like Uganda that AIDS and other diseases can be arrested and the rates can be reduced where the governments care to try and work with people to do the hard things; even in Sierra Leone, we see signs of hope, and we have been working with other nations in Africa to increase the capacity to meet the challenge there.

We must not avoid our neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean or our friends half a world away in Africa. We must build a better future together with both. That's what this is all about. That's the ultimate message of this trade bill.

I could not be prouder that over 70 percent of both Houses voted for this legislation, that majorities in both parties supported this legislation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and Senator Lott for the role you played. I want to thank the members of the Congressional

Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus and the others whom I have just mentioned and everyone else who is here. This is a happy day for America. And 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, as we grow closer and closer and closer to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America and to our friends in Africa, we will look back on this day and say this was a big part of how it all began.

Thank you very much.

And now I'd like to call up here a gentleman who worked very, very hard for this day, the minority leader of the Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Charles Rangel from New York.

[At this point, Representatives Charles B. Rangel and Bill Archer, Senators William V. Roth, Jr., and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky made brief remarks.]

The President. I would like to invite all the Members of Congress who are here to please come up and join us on the stage for the signing, along with Ambassador MacKay, wherever he is. Come on up here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. H.R. 434, approved May 18, was assigned Public Law No. 106–200. The Executive order of May 10 on access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Arrests in the 1963 Bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church May 18, 2000

The terrorist bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963 ended the lives of four young girls and broke the hearts of millions of Americans. To this day, the deaths of Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley stand out as a powerful

symbol of the terrible toll of racial hatred. I applaud the continuing efforts of those who have worked so hard to see to it that justice is done in this case. We must not rest until all those responsible for this horrific crime are held accountable for what they have done.

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Statement on the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership *May 18, 2000*

When I called on the business community in 1996 to work with the administration to develop a new Presidential award for corporate citizenship, the response was immediate and enthusiastic. The Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership is now a preeminent corporate citizenship award in America. And so today I am pleased to welcome to the White House the most recent winners of this honor.

The five companies we recognize today earned this award because they've developed some of the Nation's most innovative, successful programs in employee and community relations. General Mills is strengthening communities through an inner-city joint venture. GTE's literacy programs reach 40 millions adult Americans who struggle with basic reading. Hewlett-Packard's commitment to diversity in education reaches talented individuals from kindergarten

to graduate school. IBM's partnerships with our public schools bring new ideas and new technologies to American youngsters. US WEST's commitment to diversity benefits employees and communities across a broad swath of America.

As I had hoped, the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership is making a significant difference in America by showing that businesses can do well by doing good—something that Ron Brown, for whom this award is named, often reminded us. Like the Malcolm Baldrige award, it exemplifies the best of American business. Managed by the independent research organization, the Conference Board, this award has broad support in the business community. I know it will continue to strengthen employees, families, and communities for many years to come by celebrating and spreading the highest achievements in corporate citizenship.

Statement on the Budget Surplus and Debt Reduction *May 18, 2000*

The American economy and our strategy of fiscal discipline continue to break records. Today the Department of the Treasury is announcing that in April the United States had the largest monthly budget surplus ever. In the first 7 months of this year, the surplus stands at a record \$124 billion, matching the surplus for all of last year. This dramatic news is yet more evidence that our strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in people, and opening markets abroad is working.

These unprecedented surpluses call for new tools to manage our finances in the best interest of the American economy. Today the Department of the Treasury is once again buying back

some of our Nation's debt. In total, we are on track to pay off a record \$355 billion of debt over 3 years.

It is essential that we stay on the fiscal course that has brought us the longest economic expansion in history. Risky tax cuts that threaten this prosperity are the wrong approach. We should invest in our future by strengthening Social Security and Medicare, making investments in key priorities like education, and paying off the entire debt by 2013, making America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

May 18, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to Burma is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2000.

As long as the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale re-

pression of the democratic opposition in Burma, this situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 20, 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

May 18, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to

Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the South Africa-United States Extradition Treaty With Documentation

May 18, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, signed at Washington on September 16, 1999.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report explains, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

The provisions in this Treaty follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.

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The Treaty is one of a series of modern extradition treaties being negotiated by the United States to counter criminal activities more effectively. Upon entry into force, the Treaty will replace the outdated Treaty Relating to the Reciprocal Extradition of Criminals signed at Washington, December 18, 1947, and in force between the two countries since April 30, 1951. Together with the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, also signed September 16, 1999, this Treaty will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation be-

tween the law enforcement communities of the two countries. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts against serious offenses, including terrorism, organized crime, and drug-trafficking offenses.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 18, 2000.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus *May 18, 2000*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period February 1-March 31, 2000. The previous submission covered events during December 1999 and January 2000.

As noted in my last submission, the United Nations has held two sessions of proximity talks, December 3-14, 1999, in New York and January 31-February 8 in Geneva. The next session of talks was scheduled to begin on May 23 in New York. This session will likely be postponed several weeks to allow President Clerides time to recover from surgery on May 5.

The United States, under the guidance of my Special Presidential Emissary Alfred H. Moses and Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas G. Weston, has been actively engaged in supporting the United Nations effort to bring about a comprehensive Cyprus settlement. Ambassador Moses and his team were present during the Geneva talks and afterwards traveled to Cyprus in March to prepare for the next sessions of talks.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Remarks at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Armed Forces Day in Suitland, Maryland *May 19, 2000*

Thank you very much. Secretary Cohen, thank you for your kind words and your truly exemplary leadership of the Department of Defense. Secretary Slater, thank you for your presence here and the support you have given the Coast Guard. General Shelton, thank you for your life-

time of service and for your leadership of the Joint Chiefs. And Senator Glenn, I thank you for your service, your personal friendship to me, and your astonishing lifetime example. We're all looking forward to going into space in our late seventies, thanks to you. I thank the members

of the Joint Chiefs and the Service Secretaries. General Jones, General Shalikhshvili, thank you for being here. Ladies and gentlemen of our Armed Forces, family members, and friends.

I want to begin, if I might, by paying tribute to the men and women of our military who work in the White House, my Andrews-based Air Force One crews, my helicopter crews, my military aides, and those from every branch of the services who actually work at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Without you, we couldn't do America's business, stand up for America's interests, or even keep the White House open as America's house. Thank you for 7½ wonderful years.

As has already been said, 50 years ago tomorrow America marked the first Armed Forces Day. It was then an uncertain time for our country, Americans coming to realize that our new global leadership carried with it global responsibilities, chief among them, the defense of freedom across the world. American troops then still occupied Germany and soon would be pouring into Korea. All around us there were new and terrifying weapons, determined adversaries, and an unfamiliar landscape. Against that backdrop, President Truman moved to put in place the foundations of America's modern military, a force united under the Department of Defense.

The first Armed Forces Day celebrated service unity, honored those in uniform, and reassured Americans that our military was ready for whatever challenges lay ahead. Fifty years later we can look back proudly on a half-century in which America's best have more than met those challenges. We are as secure at home and safe from external threat today as we have been at any time in our long history. For that, we owe every American in uniform and everyone who has served before an eternal debt.

Next week, as we celebrate Memorial Day, we will remember the thousands of men and women who have given their lives so that we might live in peace. I hope all Americans will teach our children how their forebears fought and died for the freedoms we hold dear. I have asked every office in the Federal Government to observe a moment of remembrance for our military dead, to put the "memorial" back in Memorial Day.

Over my service as President, I have seen our men and women in uniform meet every conceivable kind of challenge, from flying flaw-

less missions over Kosovo, to working to contain Saddam Hussein, to keeping our word on the Korean Peninsula, to slogging through the mud to rebuild lives and communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in Central America, to keeping the peace in Bosnia—and everywhere you go, always representing the best of America.

Some of you have mentioned to me, from time to time as I meet our service personnel, that you see in the pictures at the Oval Office the stands of military coins I have there given to me by units, officers, and enlisted personnel all over the world. I have about 400 now. And my historians at the White House say I have visited more military units than any President before. All I can tell you is, it's been one of the great honors of my life. I never get tired of it. And if you have a coin I don't have, I'd be glad to have it today. *[Laughter]*

I never cease to be amazed at all the different things we ask our Armed Forces to do. We ask them to serve in the White House or in Kosovo's Camp Bondsteel, on the deck of a carrier or on the crew of a space shuttle launch. We ask you to defend our interests in a 21st century world of high-tech weapons, fast-moving, small-scale warfare, peacekeeping—sometimes when there's no peace to keep—and terrorism. But the 21st century challenge is the same essentially as President Truman defined 50 years ago, readiness for any eventuality. Today I want to talk just a little bit about what we are doing and must continue to do in the areas of personnel readiness, combat readiness, and civilian readiness to help you meet that challenge.

As has already been said by previous speakers, the people in our Armed Forces are our most important asset. So our first task is doing the best job we can of recruiting and retaining good people, to train them to do their jobs right, to train them so they can do their jobs safely, and then to provide the state-of-the-art equipment that will keep them ahead of every adversary and every eventuality.

Keeping faith with you is a sacred obligation. We've tried to do it. Over the last 2 years, military pay has been raised by more than 8 percent, with another significant raise slated for this year. This year's raise was the largest in about 20 years. In July we're increasing parts of the military pay scale as much as 5 percent more to reward service members who gain experience and stay with us to put it to use.

And we must never forget that, although we recruit individuals, we must retain families. Thanks to the leadership in the Department of Defense, military child care and schools are now the envy of many civilians. We are working to provide better military housing and taking steps to improve access to medical care for all military personnel, families, and retirees.

Readiness also means making sure our forces are trained to fight and equipped to win. The world we live in demands a high tempo of operations. That puts strains on individuals and families and creates important challenges for readiness.

I realize that I am the first President to serve his entire service in the post-cold-war era and that, as a consequence, I have imposed more high-tempo operations on the military, more different kinds of things in more different circumstances than any previous President in peacetime. Often, when I see our young men and women in uniform, I don't know whether to thank them or apologize, because I know what burdens I have imposed on many of you and your families. All I can tell you is, America is a safer, stronger place and the world is a more peaceful, more democratic place because of what you have done. And we have to continue to do everything we can to ease your burdens and make it more likely that you will be successful.

We have tried to watch combat readiness closely. We have tried to respond rapidly where there are strains. For several years now, we've increased the amount of money available for readiness spending, including \$5.4 billion for the year ahead. We've worked with Congress to protect funds for training and equipment and proposed an increase of \$124 billion to support military personnel, strengthen readiness, and speed modernization with improved facilities through the next 5 years. That includes the latest advances in digital communications and navigation technology for soldiers in the field; advanced combat aircraft like Super Hornets, Raptors, and the Joint Strike fighter; new and modernized destroyers and a new aircraft carrier; and, less exciting but perhaps even more important, more money for spare parts.

I've talked about our budget and priorities for readiness, but we also must meet our responsibility for civilian readiness, creating an understanding among our elected officials and among our people at large that power and pres-

tige don't just happen, that America cannot be a leader for peace and freedom and prosperity without paying the price. Civilian readiness means commitment to keeping our military the best trained, the best equipped, the best led fighting force. It means support for diplomacy that can help us avoid using force in the first place. It means that when we do make the difficult decision to commit our troops, we stay the course.

Secretary Cohen talked about our involvement in Kosovo. Last spring I had the privilege of meeting with our fighting men and women, from Barksdale and Norfolk to Aviano and Skopje. When I met the Wing Commander of Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany, he told me, "Sir, our team wants to stay with this mission until it's finished." He could have spoken for every one of our men and women in uniform. When we and our allies responded to the rising tide of violence in Kosovo, we sent a message of hope and determination to Europe and all the world.

Let me remind you that there had previously been a terrible war in Bosnia. It took the world community a long time to respond. When we did, we put an end to it, and people are living and working together there in peace. Then as if no lesson had been learned, Mr. Milosevic drove nearly a million people out of their homes in a poor country, over difficult roads and adverse circumstances. Thousands lost their lives, but nearly a million people were run out of their country just because of their ethnic background and the way they worship God. That was a threat to our national interests because it was a threat to the security and stability of southeastern Europe and because it was a colossal affront to the basic notions of human rights and freedom.

The 20th century has witnessed a lot of this kind of hate and human suffering. But it ended with an affirmation of freedom and human dignity, because in the face of division and destruction, we helped to stand with our allies and good people in that region for humanity and for freedom.

Well, what's happened since then? Our troops are on the ground in Kosovo, doing another job every bit as vital, working to help the people there rebuild their lives and build a lasting peace. Now our allies and partners have taken on the lion's share of the burden. Since the end of the conflict, our European allies and

others are supplying 85 percent of the troops and nearly 85 percent of the police on the ground. Our share of international assistance for Kosovo is now well under 20 percent.

It's been a fair burden sharing because we bore the majority of the responsibility for the military conflict that made the peace possible. But it's still important that we do our part. Our presence is vital, for our forces symbolize something fundamental about the promise of America, the possibility of true peace and, frankly, the confidence your presence gives to others because nobody doubts that if any job can be done, you will do it. Our forces in Kosovo are doing a terrific job under still difficult circumstances. We must give them the tools to succeed and the time to succeed.

Yesterday the Senate of the United States, in bipartisan fashion, cast a profoundly important vote. They affirmed our Nation's commitment to stay the course in Kosovo, rejecting language that would have called our resolve into question, permitting people to say, had it passed, that the United States would walk away from a job half-done and leave others to finish. But the Senate said, "No, we won't walk out on our allies. We won't turn our back on freedom's promise. It may be a difficult job, but we started it, and we intend to finish it." And I would like to thank the Senators, Republicans as well as Democrats, and the American leaders around the country, Republicans as well as Democrats, who took this position to stand by you until the mission is completed.

In 1963, on Armed Forces Day, a great American veteran, President John Kennedy, said that our service men and women "stand as guardians

of peace and visible evidence of our determination to meet any threat to the peace with measured strength and high resolve. They are also evidence of a harsh but inescapable truth, that the survival of freedom requires great cost and commitment and great personal sacrifice."

We're a long way from the cold war world in which President Kennedy spoke those words. But today, the words are still true, where you stand as freedom's guardians in a world where communication is instant, but so is destruction; a world where the threats of the last century have largely been vanquished, but the timeless demons of hate and fear and new destructive possibilities rooted in new technologies and new networks are with us; in a world where millions still struggle for liberty, decency, and the very basics of life.

Today America thanks you for your commitment, renews our pledge to stand with you, and asks you to continue to do your best and give your best for freedom. The last 50 years are proof that when you do your job, and we support you, the world is a much, much better place.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Hangar 3 at Andrews Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. David C. Jones, USAF, (Ret.), and Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Brig. Gen. Donald J. Hoffman, Commander, 52d Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem Air Base; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 19, 2000

Thank you so much. I told the folks at our table here that I have been in this room many times. The first time I came here was long before I was President, but I've been here a lot since I've been in office. I've been to a lot of dinners, lunches, meetings. I love this city hall, and I love this room, and I never tire of coming here.

I want to thank all of you, and in their absence, the mayor and your former mayor as well, Ed Rendell. He's doing a great job as the chairman of the Democratic Committee. I thank the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia officials who are here. And I particularly want to say how much I appreciate my good friend Susan Bass Levin, running for Congress in New Jersey,

and Pat Casey and Ed O'Brien, running here. I thank Bob Borski and Bob Brady and Chaka Fattah and Ron Klink for being my friends and allies in the United States House.

And let me say to all of you, this is an important occasion, and I want to say just two personal words, if I might, before I begin. First, I'd like to express my deepest condolences for the crash of Pier 34 last night, the loss of life, the people who have been injured. The Coast Guard has been up here helping with the search and rescue, and I've been informed and kept monitored on it. But I know it's a painful thing for the city, and I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am.

I'd also like to say to the Casey brothers here that Hillary and I send our prayers and best wishes to your mother and your father. He has been astonishing these last 7 years. I think his survival and courage in the face of his illness is as important as the remarkable persistence he showed in his political career.

I'm going to—Congressman Borski was saying, I've been to a lot of great events in Philadelphia. We've had a lot of hot rallies and enthusiastic moments, but this is a fairly early period in the election process. And so I'm going to do something a little unconventional today, but what I would like to do is to kind of just have a talk with you as a person who is not on the ballot this year. And most days I'm okay about not being on the ballot. [Laughter] The other days that I'm not okay about it, you have the Constitution to protect you. [Laughter]

What I'd like to do is just take a little time to have a talk. I would like to tell you what I think this election is really about, what the big issues are, and without going into an enormous amount of detail, what the major differences are, because this is a profoundly important election. We're electing a President who will serve the first full term of the 21st century. We have a chance to change control of the House of Representatives with a shift of just five seats. We have a chance, believe it or not, to be even-up, or even to be one ahead in the United States Senate, which is why Ron Klink's election is so important.

And I can tell you, I think I know a little something about Pennsylvania. You've been very good to me and voted for me twice. It's my opinion that if his race is competitively funded, I believe he'll win. And so I hope you'll help him be competitive, because we need to win.

I was just sitting here thinking off the top of my head, there are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight other seats that could shift from Republican to Democrat. There is, I think, a reasonably good chance that five of them will do so, if our candidates are well funded.

There are about four seats that the Republicans believe they have in play, and I think a better than 50–50 chance only one of them will shift and maybe none. I think the Senate candidate in New York's doing a pretty good job of trying to hold on to—[laughter]—and a number of you in this room have helped her, and I'm very grateful for that as well, and I thank you.

So this is a big election. Now, very briefly, here's what I want to say to you about it. But I do want you to try to remember some of these things, because people are going to talk to you about this, and they're going to ask you why you came, and they're going to ask you why you are where you are.

It's clear that our country's in better shape than it was 8 years ago, that we are moving in the right direction, that we not only have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. We've got declining poverty, declining inequality, the lowest minority unemployment rates we've ever recorded. We have the highest homeownership in history. We've got the lowest crime rate in over a quarter century—8 years of decline in a row—welfare rolls about half the size they were 7½ years ago. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against childhood diseases, with over 2 million kids with health insurance that didn't have it before. And I could go on and on.

We set aside more land than any President in history, any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelt, in the continental United States, something I'm quite proud of.

Now, the first point I want to make is, a lot of you have been very good to me over many years, and you have supported me, and you have been my personal friends. And I am very grateful for that. And you might have been, without regard to the ideas we had or the policies we advocated. But the results would not be this, what they are, if we hadn't stood for the right things. So what has happened is far bigger than my Presidency.

Al Gore deserves a lot of credit for it. He's had, by far, more influence on the affairs of

the Nation than any person who ever served as Vice President in that job—by far, not even close. The Congress deserves a lot of credit for it. The other people who helped—those of you that helped us to be elected and reelected. It was a common endeavor, but the consequences that flowed from it happened because what we did was right.

And we were right in the economic fight of '93, when not a single Republican voted with us. We were right in the crime bill fight in '94, when a handful of them voted for us but not many. We were right to insist that if we're going to reform welfare and require able-bodied people to work, we shouldn't hurt the kids. We should guarantee their food and their medicine and that their mothers have child care and transportation if they're going to go into the workplace. And I could give you dozens of other examples. So there is a difference.

Now, I believe the outcome of this election will be determined, in large measure, by what people think the election is about. No one else will ever tell you that. They'll say, "Well, this week Bush is up; Gore is down." Last week Gore was up; Bush was down. Next week it will be something different. "The Democrats are here; the Republicans are there." You hear all this handicapping. I believe that in important elections, as you get toward the end, the people come to some sort of conclusion about what the stakes are, what is it about anyway. And the question that they ask and answer may determine the people they vote for.

I believe that this question is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? Most of us have never seen anything like it in our lifetime. Something like this comes along once in a lifetime. What is it that we propose to do with it? And I hope the answer is, as I said in the State of the Union, we're not going to squander it. We're not going to indulge ourselves with it. We're going to take on the big challenges and seize the big opportunities so that we can build the future of our dreams for our children.

Now, if that's the question, then I believe the Vice President will be elected, because he understands the future and he knows how to get us there. I believe the Democrats will win the congressional races, because they're right on the issues. But the question is important. Now, let me just give you a couple of examples.

Clearly, one big issue is, how can we keep this economic growth going, and can we extend it to people in places that have been left behind? Big question. Is there any difference in the approach of the two parties? Absolutely. What's our belief? Our belief is that we ought to have a targeted tax cut that will help people do the essential things: take care of elderly or disabled family members; send their kids to college; pay for child care; help them raise their children if they're making very low incomes. But we ought to save enough money to also invest in education and new technologies and scientific and medical research, and most important, we've got to keep paying this debt down to keep the interest rates down.

You see right now, every time the Fed meets, there's this big debate about whether they should keep raising interest rates, because how long can this economy grow without inflation? If we keep paying the Government's debt down, we can make it possible for you to borrow money at lower interest rates to finance personal costs like cars and homes or expansion of businesses. This is a big deal.

Their position is, we should have a huge across-the-board tax cut and other costly items that I believe would ensure that we would go back to deficit spending and that would drive interest rates up again. It would make it very difficult to keep the expansion going.

Now, I do have some hope that we'll have a bipartisan agreement on what I call the new markets initiative to help provide incentives for people who invest in the neighborhoods in America, in urban American and rural America, that haven't grown. But we still won't be able to get that done unless the overall economy keeps growing.

So there's a huge difference here in economic policy, and it cannot be papered over. And the people need to sort of say, "Well, do we think this whole thing is an accident, or do we think this economic policy is on automatic, and you couldn't mess it up if you tried, and therefore there are no consequences?"

I can tell you, I don't believe that. I have worked day and night for 7½ years to make good economic decisions for America. And I believe it is imperative that we have a tax cut that we can afford, that we invest as much as we can afford but that we keep paying this debt down, and make sure that even as we save Social Security and Medicare for the baby

boom generation, we're continuing to keep the economy strong.

And there is a serious difference here in economic philosophy. And so you can decide whether you would like to go back to the—their theory is that if they have a huge across-the-board tax cut, and people with a lot of money, including more than half of you in this room who would get a lot of the money—if you get even more and have lower taxes, that you will invest it, and even if interest rates go up and inflation goes up, that it will be all right.

I believe that we ought to confine the tax cut to what we can afford, keep investing in education and technology, and keep this debt coming down because that's going to keep the economy stronger. And it's a big tax cut. You know, the average person is paying \$2,000 less in home mortgages, \$200 a year less in college loan payments and car payments than they would have paid if we hadn't gotten rid of the deficit. So it's a big deal.

Now, this is not what you see in the daily headlines, but it's a serious issue. And you guys—you ought to be discussing it.

The second thing is, how are we going to deal with the challenge of the aging of America? Now, this is beginning to be discussed in a serious way in the headlines, and I like that. That's good for America. There are two big—from our point of view—the next President and the next Congress will have to deal with the challenge of the aging of America primarily in three ways. One, the big issue is, how are you going to reform Medicare, and are you going to add a prescription drug benefit? Two, how are you going to make sure Social Security doesn't go broke, and what else do you want to do with it? And three, how are you going to help people deal with elderly or disabled family members that need long-term care?

Now, on those issues I think there are differences, and I'll just go through them real quick. There is a chance that we'll reach a bipartisan agreement on a long-term care tax credit. If so, I'll be thankful for it. It's a good thing to do, and we ought to do it.

On Medicare, our differences, largely, today are over the nature of the structural reforms on Medicare, because I think it's important not to mess it up. And the truth is, I think a lot of the health care providers need more money to pay for the Medicare program, not less. And

I believe we should add a prescription drug benefit which I think, over the long run, will save money, because we would never design a program for seniors today that didn't have prescription drugs.

Thirty-five years ago, when we set up Medicare, it was basically to help people when they got real sick, for doctor bills and hospital bills. Now, when people are living longer than ever before, we want to keep people well and minimize the costs they impose on the health care system and increase the length and the quality of their lives.

So we've got a big difference between the two parties on this. They say we should help people up to 150 percent of the poverty line with their medicine, but it would be too costly to go above that. We say half the people in the country who lack affordable prescription drug coverage—half—are over 150 percent of the poverty line. And if you're living on \$15,000 a year and you've got a \$300-a-month drug cost or a \$500 a month cost, you don't have much money left, and you should get help, too.

They say our program is too costly. We say theirs doesn't really do the job and that we have the money and we set it aside, and we can pay for it and still pay the debt down and still—and I think I ought to get some—I think we, the Democrats, including the Vice President and the Members of Congress, should be entitled to the benefit of the doubt on this. Why? Because when we took office in '93, Medicare was supposed to go broke in '99, last year. Now it's projected to be alive and well until 2024. So we have shown that we can control costs, make tough decisions. And as I said, I'm not sure we didn't overdo it. I think we're going to have to give the health care providers a little of that money back. We tried to do it in the budget last year.

But that's a big difference. Now, on Social Security, there's a very interesting debate emerging where the Republican position is essentially for younger people paying into the Social Security system—younger is, I guess, a relative term. I think younger is anybody today younger than I am. [Laughter] But it hasn't been worked out yet, but basically, they say, "Look, we'll guarantee everybody who is on Social Security now, and people who are near retirement, their retirement benefits. And everybody else, we're going to give them 2 percent of payroll back and let them invest it, because

they can get a higher rate of return than Social Security could.” And it sounds reasonable. And a lot of you who have made money in the stock market, it may sound great to you. And they point out Social Security is supposed to go broke in 2034, that the baby boomers, when they retire, there will be two people working for every one person retired. And the rate of return that you get for your investment in Social Security, they say, is very low.

Now, here’s what we say, generally, although there are differences in our crowd about this. What we say is, you can’t measure Social Security’s rate of return the way you do everything else, because a third of Social Security money goes to take care of disabled people. Don’t forget that. This is not just a Social Security retirement program. This is a program—if you have a child who—God forbid—has a paralyzing accident and you’re in a limited income group, Social Security will help you. A third of this money goes to people with disabilities. So a lot of these arguments that are made about what a bad investment Social Security is obscure the fact that it is something all of us pay to benefit the minority of us that are going to have something really difficult happen to our family members.

But if you just look at the retirement fund, they say, “Well, the stock market always outperforms Government investments over a 30-year period,” which is true. We say, “What about the poor suckers who retire in the bad times when they don’t get the 30-year period?”

Let me just say—and they say Americans ought to be able to create wealth; lower income Americans ought to be able to create wealth, just like we can. And they’re right about that. But there’s another way—but we say there’s another way to do it. This is a serious debate.

Here’s what I want to tell you. Here’s the problem with the proposal that they made, in my view. Keep in mind, Social Security is supposed to go broke anyway in 34 years, right? So if you give everybody under 40, or everybody under 50, 2 percent of their payroll back, you will shrink the number of years it takes for the thing to go broke, because there will be less money being paid into Social Security.

So they have to pay what are called big transition costs if they want to guarantee the Social Security payments for everybody that retired or is about to retire—hundreds of billion of dollars. If you put that on top of the big tax cut they proposed, we’ll certainly be in deficits. If the

economy goes down, all these discussions become academic, because the numbers just get terrible. You may think this is a highly technical discussion, but this is your life we’re talking about here.

Here’s what I think ought to be done. I think that we should allow low income people a chance to accumulate wealth, but we ought to do it outside the Social Security system with the proposal I made the year before last to let people set up savings accounts. And I think—and something else you should know—if Congress would simply vote to put the interest savings that we get from paying the debt down because of your Social Security taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could take the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out way beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation.

If you spent money directly to give lower income people money to save and invest, you could give them a chance to participate in the wealth of the country, and you could, in other words, fix the problem without running the risk. And the only problem would be for that is that those of us in higher income groups would not get 2 percent of payroll that we pay in Social Security to invest in the stock market, but most of us have already got money or can find money or have the capacity to save.

So this is a big difference. And I welcome this debate, but I believe we have the better side of the argument here. I hope you can see—I’ll just give you—economic policy, Medicare, Social Security, huge differences. I haven’t even talked about the environment, where there are massive differences, or whether we’re going to continue to provide more affordable health care for working families and children, where there are huge differences, or whether we should pass hate crimes legislation, where there are huge differences, or Patients’ Bill of Rights, or raise the minimum wage.

What should our crime control policy be? When I was walking the streets with Ed Rendell in 1991, people just took a chance on this. We’ve now had 8 years of declining crime in a row. What works? A comprehensive policy: Put more police on the street; punish people who should be punished; enforce the laws that are there; have commonsense measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. That’s our policy.

Their policy is, I have to drag them kicking and screaming to get any more for police; increase the penalties for everything; do nothing else to help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. I think we should close the gun show loophole. I think that people that get handguns ought to have a photo ID that proves that they don't have a problem in their background and that they can use the gun safely. I think that's reasonable.

I think we ought to put 50,000 more police on the street. Even our Democrats who disagree with me on the gun issue are for putting more police on the street. So there's a difference between us and them on crime.

And let me tell you an issue that almost is never at stake in an election, but we have serious differences on world peace and security this year. Yesterday—I don't know if you saw it, but I'm very grateful—I had a handful of Republicans, and I want to thank them for joining the overwhelming number of Democrats, in voting to support the mission we undertook in Kosovo. I know it wasn't popular when I did it, but it was the right thing to do. A million people got run out of their homes because of their religion and their ethnic background. The last time we let that happen in Europe and didn't do anything to stop it, the results were not salutary. And I'm proud of what we did in Bosnia and Kosovo, and it was the right thing to do. A majority of our party was for my position. A majority of theirs was against it.

They defeated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I think that's a terrible mistake. I think we should continue to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons. They believe it's an anachronistic document. They honestly believe that. It's not a personal attack. I'm saying we have honest differences.

The only place where our party is still divided over trade—and you all know about that—I'm for the China trade agreement because I think it's a good deal, economically, and I know it's important to our national security. But that masks a larger issue that I urge you to look for also in this election, which is that we Democrats, even those who disagree with me on China, we believe it's going to be impossible to create a global economy without also having some sort of global society. And therefore, we believe we should be moving toward not only an integration of the global economy but a lifting of labor standards, an abolition of child

labor, an abolition of other labor abuses, lifting of environmental standards across the world, so that people all over the world share this. And I think our party is united on this. Most of the folks in the other party think that that will probably happen anyway if there's more trade, and we shouldn't push it.

Now, I know most of you probably thought you were just coming to a political rally today and not a seminar on trade and all this other stuff. [Laughter] But I'm telling you, this is what the election is about. If you're worried about how your kids and your grandchildren are going to live and what kind of country you're going to live in, it really matters. There are differences in economic policy, differences in how we'll handle the aging of America, differences in how we'll handle health care, the environment, minimum wage, other family-related policies, and big differences in what we want to do in education, which I didn't even get into.

Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. We want to help you build and repair thousands of schools in this country. They think it's not a Federal responsibility. We want to give families a \$10,000 tax deduction to send their kids to college. That's a tax cut we're for. So far we haven't sold them on it. So there are big, big differences.

You look at the kids in this room—I'm just telling you, I worked for 7½ years to try to turn this country around. And I'm not on the ballot, and I'm talking to you as a citizen. I have waited all my life to see our country in a position to build a future of our dreams. And what I hope will happen is that we will not have a mean election. We don't have to say they're bad people. We should assume they're honorable people and that they mean to do exactly what they say. And they should assume the same about us. But we should deal with everything they say, not just what comes out in the general election, as opposed to the primary. It ought to be a comprehensive record here. But we should assume we have two honorable people running for President, honorable people running for Congress. We intend to do what we say; they intend to do what they say. And you need to say, where are the differences and what are the consequences?

And when you leave here, if somebody asks you what do you think the election is about, I hope you'll say, "It's what are we going to do with our prosperity, whether we're going to

build the future of our dreams for our kids. I want to vote for people who understand the future, who can take us there. I don't believe we ought to jeopardize the economic policy that has brought us this much prosperity. I think we ought to deal with the aging of America in a way that helps promote both opportunity and guarantees for people who need it. I think we ought to do more to improve excellence in education for everybody. We ought to bring economic opportunity to the people who have been left behind. I think the Democrats are right on these things, and that's why I'm staying here. Look at the minimum wage. Look at Patients' Bill of Rights. Look at all these other issues." That's what I hope you will say.

But whatever happens, I hope every single solitary soul you talk to between now and November, you will tell, "Look, do not blow this. This is the American people's chance to conduct vastly important job interviews that will determine what kind of people we're going to be in 10, 15 or 20 years. And we've never had

a chance like this before, at least in my lifetime, so I want us to make the most of it."

We need a Democratic majority in the House. We need to win these other elections—not for partisan reasons but because the divides between us, I think, are clear, and I believe we're right. If you think that, don't leave your activity when you walk out the door here. Keep talking about it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. in Room 202 at City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John F. Street of Philadelphia; Mayor Susan Bass Levin of Cherry Hill, NJ, candidate for New Jersey's Third Congressional District; Pat Casey, candidate for Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District, his father, former Gov. Robert P. Casey of Pennsylvania, and his mother, Ellen; Ed O'Brien, candidate for Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District; and Representative Ron Klink, candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania.

Remarks at Mayer Sulzberger Middle School in Philadelphia May 19, 2000

Well, one thing I can say is, I'm glad I didn't have to run against Toya Doe for President of the United States. [*Laughter*] Didn't she do a wonderful job? I thought she was great. She was terrific. Thank you.

I'm so glad to see you all. I'm glad to be back in Philadelphia. I want to thank my great friend Chaka Fattah for so many things, but especially for championing this program and creating the certificate that the students will receive today. I also want to acknowledge the presence here of another great Member of the House of Representatives from the State of Pennsylvania, Ron Klink. Thank you for being here today, Ron.

I thank Pedro Ramos for his fine remarks and his work. And I thank your principal, Kathleen Lacey, for having us here. Thank you. I'd also like to acknowledge, on this side of me is the Deputy Secretary of Education from Washington, DC, the people who fund this program, Mr. Frank Holleman. Thanks for coming, Frank.

And we also have the Shoemaker Middle School principal, James Slaughter, and two of your cluster leaders, Janet Samuels and Armita Sims. Thank you for being here. And I'd also like to acknowledge the two school board members who are here, Sandra Glenn and my long-time friend Reverend Ralph Blanks. It's nice to see you, my friend. I'm glad to see you.

There's one more Sulzberger success story I'd like to acknowledge today, and that is a man who was vice president of his class here 42 years ago, just got a master's degree in education—in elementary education and administration. And he's a teacher at Shoemaker, Congressman Fattah's father, Mr. David Fattah. Welcome. Thank you, sir.

Now, before I talk about this program, I have to just mention one other thing, because something happened nearby here yesterday that I want to mention. Previous speakers have said that I devoted a lot of time as President to education, and I have. I have supported virtually

every one of the reforms that Mr. Ramos discussed. I believe there should be no social promotion, but I think there ought to be strategies to turn around schools that aren't working. I think that children ought to have after-school and summer school programs and mentoring programs. I don't think kids should be branded failures when the system fails them. So I think all children can learn. That's why I like this.

I have supported the school dress policy that you mentioned and zero tolerance for guns in schools. But one of the things I have recognized over the years is that the first and most important thing is that our children have to be safe in school and on the way to and from school if they're going to learn in school.

The reason I bring that up today is that I've been heavily involved in trying to make our streets and our schools safer, for over 7 years. I'm proud of the fact that crime has gone down every year I've been in office and that we've put another 100,000 police on the streets. We've provided more after-school programs and other things for kids to do. We passed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. But we need to do more.

And I have advocated a comprehensive strategy for stronger enforcement of the laws on the books, putting 50,000 more police on the street in high crime neighborhoods, and doing more to keep guns away from criminals and kids, including closing the gun show loophole and requiring child trigger locks and stopping large ammunition clips from being imported. I also think if people buy a handgun, they ought to get a license, like they do when they buy a car, to prove they don't have a criminal background and they know how to use the gun safely.

But anyway, the reason I mention this today is, yesterday the State senate of your neighbor, New Jersey, in an overwhelming bipartisan vote, Republicans and Democrats, voted to raise the legal age of handgun purchase to 21, to require ballistics tests for all new guns so we can keep up with the bullets used in crimes, to increase enforcement efforts, and require the development of smart guns that can only be fired by the people who own them and therefore cannot be stolen or otherwise used or abused.

Now, this is a big deal because it will also minimize accidental deaths involving children. So I just wanted to say that the people of New Jersey and their representatives, in joining Cali-

fornia, Massachusetts, Maryland, and other States in taking this kind of action, deserve our thanks. This will not keep any lawful gun owner from hunting, from sport shooting, from having weapons for self-defense, nothing that changes the law of lawful ownership, but it will save some children's lives, like the kids that are in this room today.

And that's what that Million Mom March was about last weekend. Nobody wants to take anything away from anybody they're legally entitled to. But we ought to do more to make America the safest big country in the world. And the NRA—they're about to meet in their convention down in Charlotte today, and I hope they have a good meeting, but I hope they—they need to think about this. Nobody who differs with them on this issue is trying to take anybody's gun away from them, but we just want more criminals and kids to be without the ability to get guns, because they're not supposed to have them. And nobody claims they can legally have them, and we just want to keep more people alive. And I think New Jersey did a good thing yesterday, and we ought to give them a hand for what they did. [*Applause*]

Now, I want to talk about GEAR UP a minute. And I want to sort of tell you how this started. It was mentioned earlier that a person in Philadelphia had promised sixth graders if they'd stay in school that he would send them to college. I have a friend in New York, Gene Lang, who did that many years ago—promised the kids at this old elementary school that if they'd stay in school, he'd send them to college.

And Chaka came to me one day, Congressman Fattah did, and he said, "You know, we're doing all this work to open the doors of college to everybody." Now, for example, all you kids, if you had to borrow the money to go to college, you might say, "Well, how can I borrow the money to go to college? I might not be able to pay it back." So we changed the law so you can borrow the money at lower costs, and then, whatever you decide to do, you can pay it back as a small percentage of your annual salary, no matter how much you borrow.

We increased the Pell grants. We passed the HOPE scholarship, which gives a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for a college education, which essentially says that we make community college free. This year I'm asking the Congress to allow a tax deduction of up to 28 percent of the cost of college tuition, up to \$10,000. So if you

owe \$2,800 in income tax and you spend up to \$10,000 on college tuition, you wouldn't owe any income tax anymore. That would be good.

Anyway, what he said to me was, "That's all well and good, but most people that I know in inner-city Philadelphia"—or rural Arkansas, where I'm from, for that matter—"they don't know we did that. And the kids that need it most are least likely to know about it." So, he said, "We ought to have a mentoring program to help kids when they're coming of age and they start to think about this, so that they get the learning and other support they need, and they know that they will be able to go to college if they do what they're supposed to do."

We worked as hard as we could to open the doors of college for all, but you guys have got to walk through those doors. And I really believe that in the future we will look back and see this GEAR UP program as a profoundly important step in ending inequality, in lifting people in America. And no matter what he said giving me credit for it, it was Congressman Fattah's idea. It wouldn't be here if it weren't for him, and he deserves the credit.

One thing I noticed about being President is, because you've got the microphone, you tend to get the credit. Now, sometimes you tend to get the blame, too. [Laughter] I was glad to support it, glad to fight for it, and I'm glad we got it done. But I thank you, Congressman, for what you did.

Now, why is it so important? Your great Philadelphian, Benjamin Franklin, once said, "Genius without education is like silver in the mine." Not mind, mine. What does that mean? The silver is not worth anything unless you get it out of the mine, right? Otherwise, it's just down some dark hole somewhere. So always, always, education has been important. But today it is more important than ever before. And all of you know why, don't you?

You've seen computers. You know how the Internet works. What you may not know is that we are doubling the whole volume of knowledge in the world about every 5 years now. We are developing supercomputers that will soon operate on chips the size of a teardrop. You will live in an age where you'll find out what's in the black holes in outer space and what's in the deepest holes in the ocean.

You may know somebody that's in a wheelchair because they had an accident. Probably in the lifetime of the children in this room,

the biological sciences and the computer sciences will merge, and when somebody has an accident and they've injured their spine, they'll take a picture of that spine, and a computer program will design a little chip you can put in the spine that will allow people to get up and walk—in your lifetime.

I think in your lifetime we'll find cures for Alzheimer's, for Parkinson's disease. I think we'll have a vaccine for AIDS. I think we'll be able to keep women from dying from breast cancer and men from dying from prostate cancer. I think that you will communicate, as a normal course, through your computers over the Internet with people all over the world. And pretty soon that little screen that you use for the Internet will get smaller and smaller, and you'll be able to use it for telephone conversations and for your television. And all your communications will be in one small but powerful computer, with one screen and one keyboard. And then someday, you'll get rid of the keyboard, and you'll just talk at the computer, and it will do what you tell it to.

It's going to be an exciting time. But if you don't have a good education, if you don't read well, speak clearly, write well, understand basic math and basic technology, you won't be able to take full advantage of it. On the other hand, if you do have a good education, this technological revolution is going to take more people out of poverty more quickly and enable more poor neighborhoods in America and poor villages in remote countries around the world to develop their capacities than anything that has ever happened in all of human history.

So I might see, as you grow up, the poor parts of my native State in the Mississippi Delta flourishing, because it won't matter that they're way out in the country anymore because they're connected to the Internet. I'll be able to see poor neighborhoods in Philadelphia and New York City and other urban areas able to get the same kind of investment and start the same kind of businesses and do the same kind of things anybody anywhere else can—if we have a good education.

You know, there are places in America—you kids might be surprised about this—there are Indian reservations in America where 70 percent of the people still don't have telephones—70 percent—where over half the people don't have jobs. But they, too, can be helped but only if they have education.

So I wanted to come here today because I think kids in poor neighborhoods and poor places like I grew up are just as smart as kids anywhere else. I think the good Lord has made education equal. But I think you've got to gear up. [Laughter] Otherwise, I don't care how smart you are—Ben Franklin was right, your silver might as well be down in the mine.

I was the first person in my family ever to go to college. I had a grandmother who got a correspondent's degree in nursing, lived in a little old place with about 50 people until she was old enough to move to the biggest city around, which had 6,000 people in it. But from the time I was a kid, for whatever reason, my mother and my grandmother and my step-father, who didn't have a high school diploma, they told me I was going to college. From the time I was 8 or 9, I believed them. They said it, and I just decided I was.

We've done everything we could to remove the financial barriers. We've done everything we could to give your schools support, to identify problems and turn them around and increase the quality of education. But the children have to live in an environment where excellence is expected and people know it will be rewarded. So the idea behind GEAR UP is, get children when they're young and stay with them until they actually go to college.

Every one of you who's been a part of it, I thank you. I thank the leaders from the schools, the universities, the businesses, the community organizations for mentoring our young people, for taking them around college campuses, for letting people see colleges and imagine it. I never went on a college campus when I was 9 or 10 years old, I think, until my music took me there. One of the things I learned from the time I was your age is, if you want to do something big with your life, first you have to imagine that you can do it. You have to know how to put a picture in your mind of what you want to be.

So Toya says, "I want to be a teacher." How does she know she wants to be a teacher? Because she's seen people teaching and doing good things and lighting fires of excitement in children's minds. And so she can imagine what a wonderful thing it would be to be a good teacher.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." I wish it were written in positive terms: Where there is vision, the people

flourish. I want you to be able to imagine your dreams. And that's another big part of this program.

I want to thank all the educators for getting the young people excited about academic achievement and helping to improve their study skills and strengthening the curriculum and getting kids to take courses like algebra they might otherwise just as soon not take, but it will help you go to college. And take the hard courses. Challenge yourself. Your mind is just like any other muscle in your body. If you want it to work better, you've got to work at it. Don't be afraid.

Do you know that over 90 percent of the people—really about 99 percent of the people—are capable of learning 100 percent of what they need to know to do nearly anything. Most of us never use more than a modest percentage of our brain power. You should be brave. You can do it.

I believe that intelligence is equally distributed in the world, but opportunity isn't. What we're trying to do is to make opportunity as equally distributed as intelligence is. But effort is not equally distributed, either.

I remember when—I'm going to Chicago when I leave you, and since Philadelphia is in the basketball playoffs and Chicago isn't, I can now say this. [Laughter] Back in the years when the Bulls were doing so well—you know, my wife grew up in Chicago—so we were out there, and we knew a lot of people that were associated with them. And everybody was talking about how Michael Jordan was the greatest natural basketball player they had ever seen. And this friend of mine who was associated with the Bulls said, "Yes, he certainly is, and you'd be amazed, because he's also the first person that comes to practice, the last person that leaves. He still shoots more free throws in practice than anybody on the team. You'd be amazed how much more of a natural athlete he is because he works harder than everybody else."

I like to play golf. But once I heard a commentator say to a great golfer that all the people who played with him said it was astonishing that he was also a lucky golfer. And he said, "Yes, I've been real lucky, but I've noticed that the harder I work, the luckier I get." [Laughter]

So we're dealing with three things here: What you've got inside you, the silver in the mine; whether you have opportunities and you know it, your vision; and then your effort, which only

you can supply. But we believe in you, and you must believe in yourself. You've got to stay in school and aim high and go to college, because you can afford it and there will be a place for you. And there is only going to be more emphasis on that.

And I understand that the Sulzberger School already has 300 students enrolled. And I understand that the reading and math scores have already gone up. So I want to tell you—I'm just going to make one announcement today, because I believe in this. Today we're going to give out \$185 million in new grants for summer school and after-school programs, to support 48 States in setting up learning centers, to try to help more people do what you're doing in this GEAR UP program and in other programs that work. Everybody needs an education in America, and we've got to provide it.

Now, guess what? We had 1,000 good applications we can't fund with that \$185 million. And one of the things that I want to do to support GEAR UP here is to get enough money into our budget so that every school in the country will be able to offer after-school programs to every child who needs it. That's in our budget this year. And we're going to fight for it, and I hope you'll help us.

And so far, we haven't persuaded the Congress to adopt this or to fully fund Representative Fattah's GEAR UP program so that more kids can be in it. But I think that my coming here and showing you and having Toya speak to the country through the press corps here, ought to give a little more impetus behind the GEAR UP program. We need more support for it.

Out here in this audience today, there may be another future great President; there may be another future great business leader; there may be another future great minister; there may be someone who will discover an absolute cure for AIDS; there may be someone who will design a car that will get 500 or 600 miles a gallon. All of you think about that. One of you could do that. And every one of you can have a good life and do something that makes a difference and have children of your own that will have even better lives. That's what GEAR UP is all about. We believe in you. And we want you to believe in yourselves.

Good luck, and God bless you.

Now, symbolizing what every student who completes this program will do, Congressman Fattah and I are going to give Toya Doe, representing all of you, her 21st Century Scholars Certificate. I hope that all of you will have these, go through this program, and finish it. This is a ticket to the future. And remember, if you gear up, you'll get to college. And after that, there's no stopping you.

So let's give Toya another big hand. [*Applause*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to student Toya Doe, who introduced the President; Janet C. Samuels, University City Cluster Leader; Armita B. Sims, Overbrook Cluster Leader; Pedro Ramos, president, Philadelphia Board of Education; and Eugene M. Lang, founder, "I Have a Dream" Foundation.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Joseph M. Hoeffel in Philadelphia May 19, 2000

Thank you, Joe. Thank you for inviting me here, giving me something to do so I didn't have to do the wash this afternoon. [*Laughter*] Marcel, I thought you did a great job. Thank you for your leadership of our party. I thank Chaka Fattah, my good friend. We just came from his district where we did an education event. And I want to thank Ron Klink for joining

us today and for making this race for the United States Senate. If he gets enough funding to get his message out, I predict to you he'll win. And I hope you'll help him do it. Thank you, Ron.

I'd like to thank all the other candidates and legislators and other officials who are here. My good friend Marge Mezvinsky, I thank her for coming here. Marjorie is—our children are good

friends, and so we always have something besides politics to talk about. There have been occasions in the last 8 years when that's been a great blessing, I might add. [Laughter]

I am glad to be here for Joe. I was glad to have a lunch in city hall earlier for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. You may know that if we pick up about five seats, we'll be in the majority. And if we hold the seats that represent swing districts like this one, we will almost certainly do that, because we're bound to win more than five. We just have to hold what we have as well.

And I want to just make a couple of points here. First of all, I appreciate what he said about working. My big problem is not that I don't have anything to do, it's that I can't bear to go to sleep now, because I realize I've just got about 8 months left, and I want to get the most out of every day. But yesterday we signed a bill that you were very much involved in, a historic piece of legislation to open trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin, to be—if they do things that will help educate their people and give them healthy children, and to do more to help our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America and in Africa—a truly historic piece of legislation.

And we signed another good bill earlier in this session to lift the earnings limit for Social Security retirees, so once you become eligible to draw, you can go on and earn all the money you want to. And that will become increasingly important when all the baby boom generation reaches retirement. And under present projections, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security.

So we're actually capable of doing things, even in this partisan election year atmosphere. But I think that how much we get done at the end of the year depends in part on whether I'm modestly successful—as Joe said, we tend to be—in the budget process, but also in part on what the American people are telling their Representatives in Congress about this election season.

And I'll be quite brief, because I realize I'm sort of preaching to the choir here; if you weren't for him, you wouldn't be here. And our friends in the press will say I came here and we raised money, so they probably won't give my arguments out for him. And that's not a criticism; there's only so much they can report. But I think it's important that you understand

that for me, as someone who is not a candidate but is still a citizen, I consider the election of 2000 as important as the election in 1992 or 1996. And I want you to understand why.

In 1992 the people took a chance on me and Al Gore. You all heard then-President Bush refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. I was so dumb and inexperienced, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] And I still do.

But anyway, you took a chance on me. I said, "Look, we've got to have a different economic policy. We've got to have a different crime policy. We've got to have a different welfare policy. We've got to get really serious about education. But we've got to get the economy going again or the rest of this stuff won't amount to anything; we'll just all be up here making speeches about it."

And so the people of America and the people of Pennsylvania and, overwhelmingly, the people of Philadelphia and surround took a chance on us. And then we had some very tough decisions. The budget, the vote Marjorie cast, legendary around here—I got tickled the other day, Hillary and I were with somebody, some political expert, who said, "You know, if it weren't for your first 2 years, you'd have the highest approval ratings in history." I said, "Yeah, and if it weren't for my first 2 years where my approval ratings went down because we made the hard, right decisions, the last 6 years wouldn't have occurred."

I say that to make this point. What's that got to do with Joe and this election year? The issue before the American people is not whether we will change. We will. Things are changing too much for us; there is no such thing as a standpat status quo. That's not the issue. The issue before the American people is how we will change and whether we decide that our main mission is to make the most of this magic moment of prosperity.

What are we going to do with the longest economic expansion in history? What are we going to do with the fact that crime is down for 8 years in a row? What are we going to do with the fact that welfare rolls have been cut in half? What are we going to do with the fact that we have a mechanism for giving our children health insurance, and we've immunized 90 percent of them for the first time in history? What are we going to do with the fact that we've set aside more land in the continental

United States than any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelts? What does all this mean? What do we propose to do with it?

My strong belief is that we should use this moment to take on the remaining big challenges facing the country, because that's the way we can build the future of our dreams for our kids. And that means we have to keep changing, but we have to keep going in the same direction. And that's why Joe's election matters a lot to me, because I think he represents what I believe is the right direction.

And it's important to me that all of you understand that while I am immensely gratified by the support I have received from people all across America, and especially here—which has been unbelievable here—the things that have happened have happened because we had a good team, not just because I was President, and they've happened because we did the right things. And therefore, it's real important, I will say again.

In many ways, we are being tested as severely in 2000 as we were in 1992. You know, when people feel a sense of desperation and they think the wheel is running off, it doesn't take all that much courage to change. I was the beneficiary of a difficult situation, and the people said, "Well, he may be the Governor of a small southern State; he may be a little young; he may be a little of this. I haven't voted for a Democrat in a long time, but he does seem to have thought through this matter; he does seem to have some idea about what should be done about the economy. I think we'll take a chance on him."

Now, because we've had 8 good years, we've got young multimillionaires now who have never been involved in the stock market that didn't grow like crazy, who have no memory of what it was like when we quadrupled the debt in 12 years and had a \$300 billion annual deficit. And it is very important that people understand what this election is about.

There may be people up there that think you couldn't mess this economy up if you had every effort to do so. I don't agree with that. So I think it's important that Joe be reelected because he represents not only—he's a good man with good ideas, but he has the right ideas. You heard him say—I think we ought to have a targeted tax cut to help families with their most pressing needs: with college education for

their kids; long-term care for parents and disabled family members; with child care for those who need that. But I don't think we ought to have an across-the-board tax cut that's so big that it will put us back into deficits. We just shouldn't do it. We shouldn't do it.

On the other hand, I think we ought to keep investing in education, but I think we ought to invest in what will bring results and not just have money untied to results. Let me give you an example. In 1996 the Congress voted for a request I had to require all the States to identify the schools that were not learning—not producing kids that knew what they were supposed to know, failing schools, schools that were low performers—and then to develop strategies to do something about it.

I have been trying for 2 years now to go to the next step and say, "You ought to end social promotion and require people to turn these schools around or shut them down. But we should provide funding for after-school programs, for summer school programs, for mentoring programs, and programs to help turn these schools around." Now, let me just give you one example.

Kentucky set up a system like this. In 1996 they identified 170 low-performing schools or failing schools. Within 2 years, 91 percent of the schools were off the list. I was in such a school, where over two-thirds of the children were eligible for free or reduced lunches, where within 4 years—listen to this—an elementary school—within 4 years this school, which had been miserably failing, produced the following results: They went from 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level to 57 percent; they went from 5 percent of the kids doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent; they went from zero percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level to 64 percent—within 4 years. Why? Because they had a system, and because they held the kids to high standards, and because they believed they could all learn, and because we put teachers in the classrooms to make the classes smaller and gave them the money for after-school and summer school programs.

Now, why am I telling you this? Because beginning with the Presidential campaigns and going down to the congressional campaigns, if you listen to the rhetoric of both parties, everyone sounds like they're saying the same things

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today—we want high standards; we want accountability; we want results; we've got to support education—but there is a practical difference. We're for putting 100,000 teachers into the schools to make the classes smaller because that works; they're not for doing that. We're for helping cities like Philadelphia, where the average school building is 65 years old, build or modernize schools. We're for helping these schools where there are more kids in house-trailers than in the school building build new schools. They're not for doing that. We believe that we ought to specifically fund after-school programs for every child who needs it. They think that we ought to just bundle up the money and send it down to the States and hope it all comes out right.

And they've accused me of trying to be America's principal; that's not true. We have eliminated, this Democratic administration has eliminated, two-thirds of all the regulations that were imposed on schools, school districts, and States when I became President. We've cut more regulations than any administration in modern history. But we have not given up requirements based on what local educators and research say works. And so there's a big difference.

I think he's right about that. We agree about that. But I'm not going to have a vote in Congress in 2001. It's important that he does. And it's important you understand the differences from top to bottom, in economic and education and all these other policies.

But that's what I want you to think about. We can win the Senate if Ron can get enough

money. We can win the House. We can win the White House. But the people have to decide what the election is about.

You think about this. There's a lot of things—if somebody says, "Well what kind of car are you going to buy?" the first thing you have to ask yourself is, what kind of car do you need? And then you say, well, what kind of car will you want? And then you say, well, can I afford that car? [*Laughter*] Then after you ask those questions, it more or less answers the beginning question, right?

Who are you going to vote for for President? Well, what do you think the election's about? What do you want for your country? Can you afford what they're promising? What are the consequences? If you ask the right questions, they get you the answer where you start. The same thing for Congress. If somebody asks you why you came here today, you say, "Because I like my Congressman; he's a good man. He's attentive to his duties. He's got the right ideas. He'll change in the right way. And I do not want to see America or our State or this congressional district blow the best chance we have ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom A at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Marcel Groen, chairman, Montgomery County, PA, Democratic Committee; and former Representative Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky.

Statement on China-European Union Negotiations on China's Accession to the World Trade Organization

May 19, 2000

I welcome the conclusion of the bilateral negotiations between China and the European Union on China's accession to the WTO. This agreement highlights the importance of congressional passage of permanent normal trade relations with China.

It is now clearer than ever that China will join the World Trade Organization. For America to reap the broad benefits of China's historic decision to open its markets and to strengthen

the forces of positive change in China, Congress must enact PNTR. A vote against PNTR will cost America exports and jobs, cede this massive new market to our competitors in Europe and Japan, and embolden those resisting reform in China.

Statement on Assistance To Support Efforts To Stabilize the Situation in
Sierra Leone
May 19, 2000

I have authorized the Department of Defense to provide up to \$20 million in defense goods and services to support efforts by the United Nations and other international forces to stabilize the situation in Sierra Leone. This assistance, which we will provide on a nonreimbursable basis, will include military transport, supplies, equipment, and services, so the international community has the capabilities it urgently needs.

Our African and other partners have taken a stand to restore peace and hope to Sierra

Leone; we will stand with them. Sierra Leone's people have suffered far too much for far too long, and they need immediate assistance to prevent a return to full-scale civil war. We have a genuine opportunity to make a difference, to give them a chance for a better future, and to aid the cause of stability and democracy in Africa. We will do what is necessary for Sierra Leone so the international community can get the job done.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in
Chicago, Illinois
May 19, 2000

Thank you very much. Senator Durbin, thank you for those wonderful remarks and for your friendship. I want to begin by joining everyone else in thanking Fred and Ken for opening their beautiful home. I don't know what to make of Torricelli's remark about the concrete. *[Laughter]* Since I'm the only guy here that's not running for anything, I'm probably the only person to get away with cracking a joke about it, but I'm going to let it go, anyway. *[Laughter]*

I will say this, Senator Torricelli, in your shameless pander to Mayor Daley—*[laughter]*—referring to Chicago as the greatest city in America, I took the precaution of sending a note to the people who tape all my remarks to make sure we delete that so it can't be played in Newark the next time you run for election. *[Laughter]* And I might say, I got the mayor to approve of that before I did it. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, I am so proud to be here with these members of our Senate caucus and with our candidate. I want to thank all the host committee, not just Fred and Ken but Joe and Yvonne, Lou and Bette. And I thank you, Joe Cari, for the work you do for our party every day. I could talk all night long just about the people who have been introduced tonight.

Tom Daschle is an extraordinary leader and one of the best people I think I've ever known. I'll never forget going to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota with him. The night before we went to visit Mount Rushmore, and I told him, I said, "Tom, you win six Senate seats and we'll put your face up there, too." *[Laughter]*

Senator Torricelli has really been—you can tell just from the way he spoke up here tonight that he's so laid back and passive, it's amazing—*[laughter]*. I can't thank him enough for pushing all this.

I thank my good friend Carl Levin, who's here from Michigan, one of the States where I think we'll win a Senate seat, and he'll have a genuine partner after this election. And Senator Bayh, who, like me, was a Governor, and we served together many years. I was once the youngest Governor in America; then he got elected. *[Laughter]* I've spent the last 10 years overcoming my resentment—*[laughter]*—and I've about got it done.

And my friend Tom Harkin. You know, it's funny to think, sometimes when people are in elections together, as we were in 1992, you never know how it comes out. And I really—all my life I will think one of the best things

about my campaign in 1992 was that I had the honor of running with Tom Harkin. He is a magnificent human being, and I love him like a brother. And he has been kind and generous and steadfast to me from the moment that election was over, and I will never forget it. And I thank you, sir.

I want to thank Speaker Madigan for helping all these people—what most State Governments think of the interior branch of our national system of government. And I, too, want to thank Mayor Daley for his friendship and support, for letting me borrow his brother to be Commerce Secretary. [*Laughter*]

And I want to thank Tom Carper for running for the Senate. Tom Carper and I have been friends for many years. When I was a Governor and he was in the House, we worked on the first round of serious welfare reform, years and years ago—12 years ago now. And I can tell you—Senator Bayh, who also served with him, would echo this—there is not a more respected Governor in the United States than Tom Carper. He has a fabulous record in education and a terrific record in all things related to family policy.

One of the things I sought to do in '92 was to prove that the Democratic Party was both pro-work and pro-family. And when I talk about what we've tried to achieve around the country, Governor Carper is exhibit A. And he's generally thought to be the most likely Democratic pickup in the entire United States, not because he has a weak opponent—his opponent is the distinguished chairman of the Senate Finance Committee—but because he is such a good man and such a great leader. And I thank you for running. We need you, and I'm going to be glad when you get there.

I was making a list here to give you some feel for this. If we pick up six House seats, we win the House. And because there are more House Members, it's generally considered easier to do than to pick up six Senate seats. But I think it's quite likely. There are eight or nine States in which we have a legitimate chance of winning a Senate seat. I believe there are probably only two States in which the Republicans—given what I think will be a highly competitive election for President—will have a chance to win. And if I were a betting person, I would bet that they would not pick up more than one. So this is a realistic possibility.

You heard them talking about the stakes, and they couldn't be clearer, whether it comes to confirming judges or ratifying foreign policy decisions. I'll just give you one example. Normally, in national elections, foreign policy doesn't play such a big role if both candidates for President, for example, cross some threshold of acceptability.

But there is—I'm grateful, for example, that both the Vice President and Governor Bush supported my position on China and supported the position of the Senate Democrats on continuing our mission in Kosovo. But there is an issue in which the majority of Senate Republicans and the Presidential nominee apparently are in agreement that, I think, has such enormous consequences for the American people that I hope it will be hotly debated and thoroughly debated in this election. And that is whether we should continue our historic commitment to reducing the nuclear threat.

When the Senate voted to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it sent a shock wave through the world. No one could believe that America, which had consistently led the way, through Republican and Democrat administrations alike, was walking away from a test ban treaty which I was the first head of state in the world to sign. And the conventional quick analysis was, well, this is all just politics, you know, it's election year—or it was almost election year. They just wanted to kind of pop Bill Clinton.

If you talk to these Senators here, they will tell you a different story. They do not believe in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And apparently, that is going to be the position of their nominee and their platform. And I can just tell you that this is a big deal.

I have spent a lot of time in the last 7½ years trying to get an indefinite extension of the treaty which commits countries that sign it not to proliferate nuclear weapons or materials which can be used to make nuclear weapons; trying to get the Chemical Weapons Convention ratified; trying to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. I believe that in the years ahead, the threat of a nuclear war which hung over us in the cold war between Russia and the United States will probably continue to abate, unless something really dumb is done. But there will be more challenges from other countries who think, "Well, we need nuclear weapons to prove we are somebody, or because

there is somebody we feel threatened by and they're trying to develop it." And I have worked with this enough now to know that unless you have very, very sophisticated systems, the chance of an accidental launch is not insignificant, and the chance that conflicts between countries will spin out of control is always there. One of the reasons I went to India and Pakistan was to try to do whatever I could to minimize the chances that they would allow their conflict to escalate to the point when somebody, on impulse or fear, might launch a nuclear weapon. So this is a huge issue.

And I guess one of the things—people always ask me, "What have you learned as President?" One of the things I've learned out of many is that the Senate matters even more than I thought it did when I showed up in Washington. It really matters, every single vote. And one of the things that I hope will happen this year—if you'll forgive me, I won't give you a whoop-de-do speech tonight, because I know I'm preaching to the saved, as we say at home. [Laughter] But one of the things that I hope will happen this year is that we will actually have an honest debate on the future of America and that we'll ask the right question. And I think the right question is, what are we going to do with this magic moment of prosperity and improvement in our social condition and, at least in this moment, the absence of a searing domestic crisis or external threat?

And I believe the character of a nation and the wisdom and judgment of a nation can be tested just as much at a time like this as in adversity. You know, if we all had our backs against the wall, we'd know what to do. Now we have to decide, and we have the option not to decide and just drift. It would be a terrible mistake. So I hope you will think about that.

And I would just like to just very briefly say a couple of things about it. When I was running for President in 1992, and beginning in '91, I knew I had to make a good showing in Illinois because Illinois and Michigan were the first big elections after Super Tuesday. Back then, Super Tuesday was a southern deal, and I figured I'd do pretty well. And it was, like, not a fair fight, and so I did pretty well, because I was the only guy from my part of the country running. And I'd been hanging around down there a long time. [Laughter]

So I came to Illinois, and I came to Chicago, which is my wife's hometown. And I sought out a lot of friends I had here, mostly in the African-American community, who were born in Arkansas. There were more here than anybody knew. I might have gotten the nomination uncontested if anybody knew how many African-Americans in Illinois were born in Arkansas. And a lot of you helped me. So I feel a special gratitude to you.

And I remember when President* Bush referred to me as the Governor of a small southern State. You know, I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] And I still do.

But to be fair, we knew what the deal was then. The country was in trouble. The economy was down; the deficit was exploding; we quadrupled the debt in 12 years. As the Vice President used to say on the campaign trail, "Everything that should be down was up; everything that should be up was down." And the people took a chance on me because they knew we had to do something, and I seemed like I had thought about it. And I had.

Now, the test this year is more difficult, because we have to decide what to do with our prosperity. And there's not a person in this room tonight over 30 years of age that hasn't made at least one mistake in your life not because things were going so badly but because things were going well in your life, and you didn't think you had to concentrate. There is not a person here that can't recall at least some personal or business error you made at some point in your life, large or small, because you thought there were no consequences to the moment.

Now, I'm not running for anything, but I can tell you something. There is a big consequence to this moment, because we have not had a chance like this to build a future of our dreams for our kids in a long time. And I'd like to see this election run on the premise that we're not going to try to tear everybody down, that both the candidates for President are honorable and mean what they say. But they have to mean everything they say. You've got to take what you said in the primary and what you said in the general—[laughter]—but they mean what they say.

And if you look at it, it's pretty clear what the choices are. There is a huge difference in economic policy, which the Senate will have to

* White House correction.

vote on. We favor—starting with our nominee, the Vice President, all the way down the line—an economic program that has a tax cut for the American people targeted to what we need, but one that we can afford and still pay the debt down and have enough money to invest in children and education and science and technology and the things we need to be doing as a country.

And I think that's important, because paying the debt down is one reason that interest rates and inflation haven't exploded as we have the longest economic expansion in history. And I think it's progressive social policy to keep getting this country out of debt because it keeps interest rates lower and spreads economic benefits.

They favor a tax cut that will exceed a trillion dollars over 10 years. And if you put that with their Social Security proposal, which would cost another \$800 billion, and their defense proposals, which are about, I don't know, probably \$200 billion more than ours, it means the country will go back into debt. And you have to assume—again, we don't have to criticize people; just assume everybody is honorable and they intend to do what they say.

So you have to decide whether you would like to go back to a version of the economic policy that existed before I took office, or whether you would like to continue to change but to build on what has produced the prosperity the last 8 years. This is a huge decision. And no amount of papering it over and talking about it can obscure the fact that every time an American votes for Congress, for Senate, or for President, that is one of the decisions that that voter is making. And you need to talk about that.

We're making decisions about what to do with the aging of America and basically, how to deal with Medicare and Social Security when all the baby boomers retire and there are only two people working for every one person drawing funds out of those programs. We believe that we can make Medicare more competitive, but we're not willing to bankrupt the hospitals and the other providers, and we think there ought to be a prescription drug benefit for seniors and that every senior that needs it ought to be able to buy it. That's what we believe.

They believe that we should cut the benefit off at 150 percent of poverty. Now, the problem with doing that is that half the seniors that need it make more money than that. And if you're

living on \$15,000 a year—which is more than 150 percent of poverty—and you get \$300, \$400, \$500 drug bills a month to stay alive, pretty soon you've got to decide whether you want to eat or have your drugs. So there's a difference there.

On Social Security, it would take me all night long to go through the differences; but let me tell you, I've spent years studying this. There is a problem there. The system—if we don't do anything, the system will run out of money in about 37 years. And it will start costing us more before that, in terms of foregone opportunities. And that's in spite of the fact that ever since 1983, we've been collecting more in Social Security than we're paying out.

Now, they believe the system could be partially privatized because the markets outperform Government bonds and give everybody back 2 percent of their payroll to invest if they're under a certain age, guarantee everybody else the benefits in the conventional system. Sounds reasonable. They say, "Well, we want to get higher rates of return, and we want to let ordinary people, including poor people paying Social Security, have a chance to create wealth."

I think that's important; those objectives are worthy. Here's the problem: If you do that, the system is going to run out of money in 2037 anyway; if you start taking out more money right now, you have to put in \$800 million, at least, over the next 10 years, to keep it from going broke just to pay the people you promised to pay. And if you put that with a \$1.3 trillion tax cut, you're broke again; the Government is broke again; we're back in trouble again.

What we believe is—at least I think most of these Senators do—and I know what the Vice President believes is, since the Social Security surplus that's been coming in since '83, that you've paid in your taxes, is responsible for a lot of our decline in the debt, we ought to take that portion of our declining interest rate requirements caused by your Social Security taxes and put the savings into the Trust Fund. That will take it out to 2057, beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

Then I believe that there are ways, without having the Government interfere with the market, to get the benefits of the markets for the Trust Fund. And what we favor—it's much cheaper than their costs—is letting the Government or having the Government help lower income people have an additional IRA, or I call

it a USA savings account, to invest however they want, to get into the market, but if they lose the money, they'll still have the Social Security.

Now, you have to decide. The American people have to decide. This is a worthy debate, and it ought to be held.

If you look at education, everybody says they're for education now. We think we ought to be modernizing school facilities all over America like Mayor Daley is here in Chicago. We think we ought to have a no-social-promotion policy and that every kid who needs to get pre-school should get it, and every child who needs to be in an after-school program should have it. And we ought to have a strategy for turning around or shutting down failing schools, and that's what we ought to fund.

They say they're for all that, but we shouldn't really require anybody to do it when we give them Federal money. That's like me trying to be America's principal. You have to decide whether you think we're right or they're right. All I know is—I'll tell you this one little story.

In 1996 I got a law through Congress saying that every State had to identify its failing schools and develop a strategy for turning them around. Kentucky adopted the most aggressive program to do it. I went to one of those schools in Owensboro, Kentucky, 2 weeks ago. Two-thirds of the kids were on free or reduced lunches. Here is what has happened since '96—and, I might say, they also got some of the teachers the Democrats fought for, to make smaller classes.

In '96 there were 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level; today, 57 percent are. There were 5 percent of the kids doing math at or above grade level; today, 70 percent are. There were zero percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level; today, 64 percent are. That grade school ranked 18th in the entire State of Kentucky, with two-thirds of the kids on free or reduced lunches, and it was an absolute failure 4 years ago. Ten of the 20 schools in the State of Kentucky that are highest rated have half or more of their kids eligible for free or reduced lunches. Race, income, and region are not destiny if you have high standards in education. That's what we believe. Our position works. So you have to decide which one you agree with.

I think we ought to have HMO reform on Patients' Bill of Rights. I saw what the Illinois

Supreme Court did the other day. I don't think we ought to have to wait for that. I think that people ought to have a right to see a specialist if they need it. They ought to have a right to go to the nearest emergency room. And I've been a supporter of managed care, and I remain a supporter of managed care. But I think we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they don't.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage, and they don't—and so does our crowd here. And I think we ought to do more things to spread the benefits of this economic revolution of ours to people in places that have been left behind. And we may or may not get a bipartisan agreement on that. But these are big issues.

I could go through a lot more. I'll just mention one or two more. I think that—if you ask me what one thing I wanted for America is, if I tonight got a vision from the good Lord, and I got a message that I had to leave the Earth tomorrow morning, and that I could not finish my term, but I could have one wish—not like a genie with three, just one—I would wish for everything to be done in this country that would heal all the divides of race, of religion, sexual orientation. That's why we're for hate crimes legislation, why we're for employment nondiscrimination legislation. And they're against it. And I think that's really important.

You know, this is a smart country. Look at all you folks. Most of you'd do well, unless somebody put you in jail or locked you in a closet. [Laughter] This is a great country. And if we can figure out a way to celebrate our diversity and reaffirm our common humanity as even more important, we're going to do fine. So this is a big difference; these are just a few things.

On the environment, they think I did the wrong thing to set aside 43 million acres, roadless acres, in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's maybe the most important conservation move in 50 years. I think if they have the White House and the Congress, they'll reverse it next year, early next year. One of you mentioned it to me when you were going through the line tonight. You ask every Senator here—don't take my word for this—we have fought for cleaner air, cleaner water, more land set aside; we have proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment. And if they have the Government, they will reverse

a lot of our environmental gains. And I think this is important to point out.

So if people ask you tomorrow why you showed up here tonight—and most of you have never met Tom Carper before—tell them you understand this: This is an election about what we're going to do with this great and good moment, and you're determined to build a future of your dreams for your child and for everybody's children.

The last thing I'd like to say is, I think it's very important that we win the White House, and I think we will. But I think you, who have come here, there are some things that even you need to be reminded of about Vice President Gore. First of all, I am something of an amateur historian of the Presidency. And I've spent a lot of time since I've been President reading books not only about all the Presidents that we all are interested in but some you probably don't know much about, to try to get a full, rich picture of the history of America.

And I'm interested in the institution of the Vice Presidency. In the 19th century nobody paid any attention to it, in spite of the fact that one of our Presidents, William Henry Harrison, died a month after he took office; Abraham Lincoln was assassinated; Benjamin Harrison was shot and died after 9 months of poor medical care. And still nobody paid any attention. If you were to come visit me in the Residence of the White House and I took you to my office, you'd see that I work on Ulysses Grant's Cabinet table. And there are eight drawers in this table—one for the President, one for the seven Cabinet members; no drawer for the Vice President. Nobody paid any attention to it.

William McKinley got assassinated; he was shot. And we were just lucky that Theodore Roosevelt was a great President. Warren Harding had a stroke. Calvin Coolidge worked out okay. [Laughter] Not great, but okay. [Laughter] But it didn't have anything to do with somebody thinking about whether he should be President. And Franklin Roosevelt, whom I think along with Lincoln were our two greatest Presidents, I admire him more than anything. But we're just lucky Harry Truman was a very great President. He did not know about the atomic bomb when he became President.

Now, what's all this got to do with this? President Eisenhower and President Kennedy took it more seriously and gave more to Richard

Nixon and Lyndon Johnson to do, and they had more responsibility than their predecessors. Then when Jimmy Carter appointed Walter Mondale, he notched it up big time. And Vice President Mondale had lunch with the President every week, had defined responsibilities, could come to any meeting. And Ronald Reagan, to give credit where credit is due, did the same thing for George Bush and made him an important figure.

So if you look at history, you've got—everybody else, here's Johnson and Nixon, here's Mondale and Bush, and then here's Al Gore. He's probably the only person in the history of America who has had a clearly discernible impact on the welfare of the country as Vice President. He not only cast the decisive vote on a number of occasions—from breaking the tie on the budget bill, which started all this stuff in '93, to the issue for sensible gun control just a few weeks ago—he has been our leader in technology policy, in trying to hook up every classroom in the country to computers, in making sure that we had an E-rate so poor schools could afford to do it. He's run the empowerment zone program, which has brought thousands of jobs into poor neighborhoods. He ran our partnership with Detroit to try to develop high mileage vehicles, and it won't be long until you'll be able to buy a car that will get 80 miles a gallon; and a couple years after that, you'll be able to buy one made with biofuel, where the conversion ratio is a gallon of gasoline to make 8 gallons of that, and then you'll be getting 500 miles to the gallon, and the world will be different. And he did that. That's what he did. He ran our reinventing Government program that has given us the smallest Government in 40 years. And I heard all this talk about tough decisions. He supported me on the budget, on Bosnia, on Kosovo, on Haiti, on giving aid to Mexico when the people were 81–15 against it, on taking on the gun lobby and the tobacco lobby for the first time that any White House has consistently done that. And he was an ardent supporter of our effort to end discrimination against gays and lesbians, early. So he has taken tough decisions.

I want you to know this because this campaign is going to have a lot of twists and turns; there will be ups and downs. But he should be the President of the United States. Nobody has ever done this.

But I will say this. He'll have a lot harder job unless you help us elect six Senators and at least six House Members. As I said, I could tell you a story about every one of these Senators who's here, and our candidate, that would make you feel more strongly. One of the things I've learned as President is, I always knew the Senate was important. I admired the whole story of all the great Senators in our history and the great creators. But it's even more important than I dreamed it was when I became President.

So the investment you've made tonight is a worthy investment. And I just hope when you leave here, some of what I have said has made an impression so that you will take every single, solitary opportunity you have between now and

November to tell people why you came tonight, why you stand where you stand, and why this election is so important to our future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Fred Eychaner and Ken Lee; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; event host committee members Joe and Yvonne Stroud, Lou Weisbach, and Bette Cerf Hill; Joseph A. Cari, Jr., finance cochair, Democratic National Committee; Illinois House Speaker Michael J. Madigan; and Governors Thomas R. Carper of Delaware and George W. Bush of Texas.

The President's Radio Address

May 20, 2000

Good morning. For the last 7 years, we've worked hard to enhance the health and safety of the American people. Today I'd like to talk about new measures we're taking to save the lives of many thousands of men and women who fall victim to one of America's biggest killers, sudden cardiac arrest.

Every day—every day—more than 600 Americans die from sudden cardiac arrest. In some cases, the cause is long-term coronary artery disease. In others, it can be triggered by intense emotional or physical stress. Either way, the heart starts beating chaotically and cannot send blood to the brain and other vital organs.

The key of survival is the speed of response. In addition to CPR, most cardiac arrest victims need an immediate electrical shock to restore the heart's normal rhythm. When victims receive that shock within a minute, there's a 90 percent chance of resuscitation. When it takes 10 minutes, the odds fall to less than 5 percent. Keep in mind, in a big city with a lot of traffic, it can often take far more than 10 minutes for emergency medical technicians to arrive.

But thanks to new devices called automated external defibrillators, or AED's, a person with moderate training can now administer lifesaving shocks to someone in cardiac arrest. An AED, which is about the same size and price as a good laptop computer, uses voice commands to

lead the rescuer through every step and delivers a shock only if it's necessary.

Mike Tighe, a public health official in Boston, spent several years on a crusade to put AED's in police cars and fire trucks. A year and a half ago Mr. Tighe needed an AED himself. Four hours into a flight from Boston to Los Angeles, his arm started flailing and his head fell forward. A flight attendant used an onboard AED and saved his life. The device had been installed on the plane only 2 days before.

There are countless other stories of AED's saving people's lives. In the first 6 months after AED's were installed at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, 9 out of 11 people who went into cardiac arrest were saved. In Las Vegas, AED's in hotels and casinos have increased the survival rate from 14 percent to a remarkable 57 percent. Just last week a visitor here at the White House collapsed and would have died if not for one of the AED's that our medical unit acquired last year.

On the basis of successes like these, it's time for the National Government to help bring AED's to public places all over America. Today I'm pleased to announce three major steps to achieve that goal. First, I'm directing the Department of Health and Human Services and the General Services Administration to develop guidelines for putting AED's in all Federal

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buildings. To help with this effort, the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross have volunteered to train Federal employees to use AED's.

Second, I'm working with Congress to complete a vital piece of legislation that would not only encourage the installation of AED's in Federal buildings but also grant legal immunity to good Samaritans who use them, whether in public or private buildings.

And third, I'm proposing a new rule that would require all commercial planes with at least one flight attendant to include an AED in their in-flight medical kit.

If this entire Nation comes together to place AED's in airplanes, Federal buildings, and other key locations, we can save more than 20,000 lives every single year. I expect there are very few people listening today who don't know someone who has been struck down by sudden

cardiac arrest. Perhaps a father, a great-aunt, a cherished teacher, a dear friend. With this new technology, we have the ability to turn around the odds.

We can give average citizens the power to restart a heart and save a life. It is now our responsibility to bring this technology, this modern miracle, to every community in America.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:50 p.m. on May 19 at the Mayer Sulzberger Middle School in Philadelphia, PA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 20. In his remarks, the President referred to Michael Tighe, community affairs director, Boston Public Health Commission. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Automated External Defibrillators in Federal Buildings May 19, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator for General Services

Subject: Automated External Defibrillators in Federal Buildings

This country has taken many steps to try to reduce the number of persons who die each year from heart disease. Advances in the field of medicine and private-sector public education campaigns have helped to prevent and treat heart disease, but there is much more work we can do. Recent studies estimate that more than 250,000 persons die each year from sudden cardiac arrest—about 700 a day.

The most common lethal arrhythmia responsible for sudden cardiac arrest and collapse is ventricular fibrillation, which if treated quickly, can be reversed. By some estimates, one-quarter to one-third of people in sudden cardiac arrest might be saved with optimal emergency care. One of the most effective ways to reduce the number of people who die from sudden cardiac arrest is the prompt intervention of defibrillation. Estimates show that for every minute that passes without defibrillation, a victim's chances of survival decrease by seven to

ten percent. After as little as 10 minutes, very few resuscitation attempts are successful. Automated external defibrillators (AEDs), which deliver a shock through the chest wall to the heart and enable the heart to regain its own normal rhythm, may be a helpful adjunct to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in saving lives.

Recently, private companies, local governments, and airports have begun instituting programs to put AEDs into place and have provided training programs on how to use the devices for their employees. In June of 1999, the City of Chicago put AEDs within a minute's walk in airport terminals with accompanying emergency medical support. In the first month after they were made available, the devices saved four lives. Similar results may be found in Las Vegas, where many buildings now provide AEDs.

The Federal Government employs approximately 1.8 million people. Many millions more visit Federal buildings each year. While a number of agencies such as the Department of

Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency have begun putting AEDs in some of their buildings, I believe that we must make a more systematic effort to provide for the safety of Federal employees and the persons who visit Federal buildings each year.

To that end, I direct you to report back to me within 120 days with guidelines on a program for AED placement in Federal buildings. These guidelines should optimize the use of AEDs, putting them in buildings and other Federal areas. These guidelines should include, among other issues, training programs in the use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AEDs; appropriate physician oversight; integration with the local EMS system; the use and maintenance of AEDs; placement of AEDs in each facility according to each facility's needs; response system activation and coordination; and legal issues. In creating these guidelines, you should cooperate and consult with interested parties, including other Federal agencies—par-

ticularly, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Justice—and State and local agencies focusing on research and public health, consumers, health organizations, and academia. The plan should make special efforts to build on efforts of the private sector, including nonprofits such as the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross, through the use of public-private partnerships or other appropriate mechanisms.

These steps, taken together, will help to protect the lives of Federal employees and the millions of other persons who visit Federal buildings each year.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 19 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on May 20.

Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council in Hyde Park, New York May 21, 2000

Thank you. Bill, thank you for welcoming me back to Hyde Park and the Roosevelt Library. I love coming here. I'm sorry I've only come three times. And Al, thank you for your wonderful introduction, and to you and Ginger, thank you for your years of friendship. He's very good at giving the credit to everybody else, but the truth is it would be hard to think of a single American citizen who, as a private citizen, has had a more positive impact on the progress of American life in the last 25 years than Al From.

I am delighted to see so many Members of Congress here, Members of the Senate and the House; the Governor; present and former members of the administration. Mack McLarty was Chief of Staff when we did four big DLC things. We did the economic plan, the Brady bill, family leave law, and NAFTA. Somebody said, Mack, the other day—I saw a commentator; Hillary and I were watching the commentators—“You know, if it hadn't been for his first 2 years, Bill Clinton's approval ratings would be the highest ever recorded.” And Hillary looked at me, and she said, “If it hadn't been for the

first 2 years when you made all the unpopular decisions, the next 6 years would not have happened.” [Laughter]

Mayor Brown, we're glad to see you here. And my Mayor, Mayor Williams, thank you. And thank all of you for being here and for what you're about to do.

Franklin Roosevelt said he often came back to Hyde Park because it gave him, quote, “a chance to think quietly about the country as a whole, and to see it in a long-range perspective.” That's what you're being asked to do.

I've often, in quiet moments at the White House, thought about my predecessors, the ones that succeeded, the ones who didn't, why they did. Roosevelt had what Justice Holmes called a first-class temperament, a lot of personal courage, a good mind, and a great attitude. He had a good time being President, even in difficult times. And he learned to have a good time in the midst of almost constant personal pain.

It's worth remembering that life's successes are a curious blend of what you make happen and what happens to you, the gifts God gives

you and what you do with them. But today I want to focus on the fact that he was always interested in ideas.

I read the other day Frances Perkins' wonderful book about her lifetime friendship with Roosevelt. You know she was the first woman in the Cabinet; she served as Secretary of Labor the entire time President Roosevelt was in office. She kept trying to quit, and he wouldn't let her. And if you read this book, at the end you get some sense just in the curious, wonderful relationship between these two remarkable people that he had some sense of his own mortality. She kept trying to leave, and he kept trying to get her to hold on to the end. And then, of course, he died shortly after being re-elected to his fourth term.

But through this whole thing, you get this sense that from the time she was a young social worker and he was a young State Senator, when he still had full use of his physical facilities—and played a pretty good game of golf, I might add—that they had this magical chemistry born of the fact that even though they were different people from different worlds in the beginning, with very different positions on certain issues, they both understood that public service was something that you weren't supposed to covet for the power but something you wanted to do so you could help other people, and that ideas mattered.

So you come here today to think about where we are and where we ought to go and what the long-range challenges are. And Al's already said a lot of what I want to say, but I want to say some of the things he said and tie it back to what we did in New Orleans in 1990, because I believe that thinking is a big and often underutilized part of success in public life. [Laughter] And I think ideas matter.

Let me say that some time into my first term, maybe 1995 or something, a distinguished scholar whom I at that time had never met, and who at that time was at Syracuse—I believe he's at Harvard now—named Thomas North Patterson—no, Thomas Patterson—I can't remember what his middle name was. Anyway, he wrote this article, and he said, "Contrary to the popular belief that most politicians are congenitally dishonest, most people do what they say they're going to do when they get elected." And if you look at the history of Presidents, most of them do what they say they're going to do. And when they don't, it's usually because

something has really changed, and we're glad they didn't.

We're glad Franklin Roosevelt didn't balance the budget, because if he had, under those circumstances, it would have been worse. Abraham Lincoln promised not to free the slaves. We're glad he broke that commitment. But, by and large, if you look at the whole history of American public life, when a President runs for office and says, "Vote for me; this is what I want to do," they pretty well do that. Or they at least get caught trying to do it.

And one of the things that really has meant the most to me, of all the things I've read—and I've read a lot a stuff I just as soon not have in the last 8 years—[laughter]—was Patterson said that by 1995 our administration had already kept a higher percentage of its commitments to the American people than the previous five Presidents. And we had made more commitments.

And the point I want to make today to emphasize the importance of what it is you're about to do is that the reason that was possible is, I had thought a lot about that—what I would do. And I had thought with many of you—with Bruce and Will and Rob and the whole DLC crowd and a lot of you that were going to these meetings back in the eighties and the nineties—so that when I announced for President, I did it not because I wanted to get out of what I was doing—I was actually happier than I had ever been with my work as Governor and with my situation at home in Arkansas—but because I thought something needed to be done, and I had thought a lot about it. And this New Orleans Declaration had a lot to do with it.

So the first thing I want to say to you is, you cannot possibly overestimate the importance of what you're here to do if you do it in all seriousness.

Let's just look at New Orleans. We met in New Orleans in 1990. As Al said, the times were different. The economy was bad; the deficit was high; the debt had exploded; all the social conditions were worsening. And Washington seemed to be stuck in a kind of ideological trench warfare, where the Republicans said that Government was the problem, and we said that it was the solution. And we always had to have a false choice: You had to choose the economy or the environment; you had to choose

impoverishment or entitlement; you had to choose business or labor.

And most of us, many of the DLC people—this is one of the reasons the DLC succeeded, by the way, is that we had people who were in politics in Washington and out in the country, and a lot of our people in Washington spent a lot of time in the country. And we realized that no one else in the world thought about things or experienced things in the way the Washington media and political establishment talked about issues, and that we didn't agree with all these false choices.

And so in New Orleans 10 years ago we set out to say and to outline what we believed ought to be done. Our approach came to be known as the Third Way. But basically, it was rooted in common sense, a common devotion to our party's oldest values, and a common vision of the new era in which we were living.

In 1992 the American people gave us a chance to put our ideas into action. And we have done our best to do that, working across party lines where possible, and where bitter partisanship forced it, going alone.

In New Orleans—let's just look at some of the things we said in New Orleans, as against some of the things that Al has already mentioned. This is what the New Orleans Declaration said: We believe the Democratic Party's fundamental mission is to expand opportunity, not Government; that economic growth is a prerequisite for expanding opportunity for everyone; and that the way to build America's economic security is to invest in the skills and ingenuity of our people and to expand trade, not restrict it.

Now, these ideas were all turned into action in the '93 economic plan, in the '97 Balanced Budget Act, in the Telecommunications Act, in our commitment to science and technological research, in our education budget. We doubled investment for education and training even as we were reducing the deficit, and we emphasized results and proven strategies. We very nearly opened the doors of college to all Americans. We had 300 trade agreements. Those ideas put into action have given us those 21,615,000 jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the highest homeownership ever and the longest economic expansion in history. And the Government—Al is continuing to shrink it—is now the smallest it has been since 1958.

We said we believe the purpose of social welfare is to bring the poor into the Nation's economic mainstream, not to maintain them in dependence. That idea, turned into action through the expansion of the earned-income tax credit, the Vice President's empowerment zone program and welfare reform, has given us the smallest welfare rolls in absolute numbers in 32 years, a 20-year low in the poverty rate, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years, while we fought and succeeded in maintaining health and nutrition benefits for poor children and increasing our investment in child care and transportation for lower income workers.

We said we believed in, quote, "preventing crime and punishing criminals, not explaining away their behavior." That idea was turned into action through the crime bill, which gave us 100,000 police, an assault weapons ban, and through the passage of the Brady law, which has kept a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. That's given us the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest homicide rate in 30 years, and a 35 percent reduction in gun crime since 1993.

We said we believe in the politics of inclusion, in the protection of civil rights, and the broad movement of minorities into the American economic and cultural mainstream. That idea, turned into action, has given us the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, record numbers of minority-owned businesses, vigorous enforcement of civil rights, and the widest participation of minorities in the Federal Government at high levels and in the Federal judiciary in American history.

We said we believe in the imperative of work and the importance of family. I could give you lots of examples of that, but if you just take the family and medical leave law, the first bill I signed, vetoed by the previous administration, 21 million-plus Americans have taken some time off when a baby is born or a parent is sick. And they said it would wreck the economy. Well, 21 million families are stronger, and so is the American economy. The idea was right in the New Orleans Declaration.

We said we believe American citizenship entails responsibility as well as rights, and we mean to ask citizens to give something back to their community. That idea, turned into action, has led to a whole series of remarkable partnerships.

The Welfare to Work Partnership, for example, has led to 12,000 companies to voluntarily

commit to hire now something like 400,000 people off the welfare rolls. The Vice President's partnership with the auto companies and the auto workers has led to this whole effort to develop the next generation vehicle, which already has prototypes that will be on the market within 2 years—60, 70, 80 miles a gallon. The partnership we had with the entertainment industry led to the passage of the V-chip requirement and rating systems for movies, television programs, and video games.

And most of all, of course, it led to AmeriCorps, which now has permitted over 150,000 young Americans to serve in their communities. We had more people in AmeriCorps in 5 years than the Peace Corps did in its first 20 years of existence because of the idea that the DLC relentlessly advanced.

We said we believed, quote, "the U.S. must remain energetically engaged in the worldwide struggle for individual liberty, human rights, and prosperity, not retreat from the world." That idea, turned into action, has given us a stronger and expanded NATO, new initiatives against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, progress on peace in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, forceful stands against ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, and new initiatives to expand trade and advance democracy in Africa, the Caribbean Basin, Latin America, and the Asian-Pacific region.

In short, because of the work done in New Orleans and the fact that the American people gave us a chance 2 years later to test it, we have proven that ideas matter and that for the decade of the nineties our ideas were the right ones. They have put the Democratic Party at the vital center of American life and inspired the rise of new progressive governments throughout Europe and the industrialized world. Indeed, I'm going to be meeting with many of these leaders next month in Berlin—people all over the world now who have seen what happened here, taken ideas seriously, and want to see what they can do to lift their people and make them a part of the new information age of globalization.

And most important of all, these ideas, put into action, have brought our country into a moment of unparalleled prosperity and promise. Now, I think we have a rare opportunity to identify and move on the big, long-term challenges the country faces in the new century. And I think the DLC—to borrow a little of

your own medicine—has both the opportunity and the responsibility to put forth a declaration here which will guide our party and should guide our Nation for the next 10 years.

That's your task: What is the New Democratic agenda for the 21st century? Here's what I think it ought to say.

First, we will keep the economy strong by paying down the debt, maintaining our lead in science and technology, and extending our economic benefits to people and places left behind, opening new markets and closing the investment and digital divide.

Second, we will lift up all working families out of poverty, ending child poverty by increasing the EITC, the minimum wage, our support for child care, housing, and transportation, and for responsible fatherhood.

Third, we will make sure every child starts school ready to learn, graduates ready to succeed, has the chance to go to college by investing more in education and demanding more of all the participants in our education process, and by opening college access to everyone by making tuition deductible.

Fourth, we will enable Americans to succeed at work and at home, with more support for child care, expanding opportunity for health care coverage, passing a Patients' Bill of Rights, and providing middle class families tax relief to educate their kids, take care of them through child care, take care of their parents if they need long-term care.

Fifth, we will make America the safest big Nation on Earth, with more police, more prevention, more prosecutors, and more effective measures to keep guns away from children and criminals.

Sixth, we will meet the challenge of the aging of America by extending the life of Social Security, strengthening and modernizing Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, and providing a tax cut for long-term care, and helping working families to establish their own retirement accounts so that more Americans have a chance to create wealth.

Next, we will reverse the course of climate change while enhancing rather than eroding economic growth with new technologies and new sources of alternative energy.

Let me just say, when I went back and read the New Orleans Declaration, the one thing I wish we'd made more of is the environment, because we have now proved you can grow the

economy and improve the environment. And this is a much more important issue now than it was 10 years ago because of the global impacts of climate change. We must address this.

Every Member of Congress here will tell you that a huge portion of decisionmakers in our country and throughout the world—and most troubling, in some of the biggest developing nations—still believe you cannot have economic growth unless you pour more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Just like these big ideas helped us back in 1990, there is nothing so dangerous as for a people to be in the grip of a big idea that is no longer true. It was once true that you had to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to grow the economy, to build a middle class, to make a country rich. It is not true anymore.

And there are all kinds of manifestations of this: the assault that the other party is making on my decision to set aside the roadless acres in the national forests—the Audubon Society says it's the most important conservation measure in the last 50 years. It's just a—[*applause*].

I say that not—the applause is nice, but that's not the point I'm trying to make here. The point I'm trying to make is that good people will continue to make bad decisions if they're in the grip of a wrong idea. This is not simply a case of interest groups fighting each other. This is really a question of whether we have honestly come to terms with what the facts are, what the evidence shows about the way economies can and, indeed, should work.

And there's no way in the world we'll be able to convince our friends in India or China, which over the next 30 years will become bigger emitters of greenhouse gases than we are, that they can take a different path to development and that we're not trying to keep them poor, unless we can demonstrate that we have let this idea go and that we have evidence that a different way will work.

You can't expect any of these Members of Congress who come from rural districts that have a lot of poor people or that rely on agriculture to take different approaches unless there is a specific, clear, meaningful alternative that they can embrace.

So I'm sort of off the script here, but this is a big deal. We need more of our people—every one of our people—we need to know what the facts are here. We need to know what can we really get out of automobile and truck mile-

age; how realistic is it to have alternative sources of fuel; what can you get if you build all new houses and office buildings with glass that lets in more heat and light—lets in more light and keeps out more heat and cold. We need to know these things.

This is something that most of you normally wouldn't think of as something that an elected official needs to know. We need to know this. This is a huge, huge issue. And we will not be able to convince either our own people or, even more importantly, developing countries who are our partners around the world, unless we have the evidence in hand and we understand the argument.

Next, we will keep working to build one America at home, to make a strength of our diversity so that other nations can be inspired to overcome their own ethnic and religious tensions. For me, that means passing the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," the hate crimes bill, and expanding national service. I meet with these AmeriCorps kids everywhere I go, and the thing they say over and over and over again is that "this gave me a chance to see how different people live, to see how much we have in common as human beings, and understand just what it means to be an American citizen at the dawn of a new century."

And last, we will continue to lead the world away from terror, weapons of mass destruction, and destructive ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts, toward greater cooperation and shared peace and prosperity.

That's what this vote about China is all about. Yes, it's a good economic deal. China has agreed to open its markets. I just stopped, when I got out of the airplane here, before I drove up here, there were a few hundred people at the airport. So I went over and shook hands and said hello to all the children. And this guy says, "You really think this China thing is a good deal?" I said, "Yes, it is; I do." [*Laughter*] And he said, "Why?" And I said, "Well, in the first place, we've been calling it a trade agreement, and it isn't." I said, "You know, when I made the agreement with Mexico and Canada, it was a trade agreement. So I got a few things, and I had to give up a few things." I said, "This is a membership agreement. All we give them is membership, and they do all the market opening. And that's their dues for membership in this world organization."

That's why, in narrow self-interested terms, it's a 100-to-nothing deal not only for the United States but for anybody else who lets the Chinese—votes to let the Chinese into the WTO. But even though, for me, the economic choice is clear, I have to tell you, far, far more important to me are the moral and national security arguments. I looked at all those kids in that crowd today I was shaking hands with, and I was reminded again that we fought three wars in Asia in the last half of the 20th century and that we have a chance to build a different future—not a guarantee but a chance.

Yes, China is still a one-party state, restricting rights of free speech and religious expression, doing things from time to time that frustrate us and even anger us. But by forcing China to slash subsidies and tariffs that protect inefficient industries, which the Communist Party has long used to exercise day-to-day control, by letting our high-tech companies in to bring the Internet and the information revolution to China, we will be unleashing forces that no totalitarian operation rooted in the last century's industrial society can control.

Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users in China; last year there were 9 million; this year there are something over 20 million. At some point there will be over 100 million, and at some point, some threshold that no one can identify with precision will be crossed, and it will be a very different world.

And I think it is worth also pointing out that the more China operates within rule-based systems, with us and with other countries, the more likely they are to see the benefit of the rule of law and the more likely that benefit is to flow down to ordinary people in those 900,000 villages where they're already electing their mayors and in other places. So this is very important.

I think it is quite interesting that the people who hope we will beat this next week in China are the ultraconservatives in the military and the state-owned industries—and quite interesting that people who have been persecuted in China and other places, by and large, want us to adopt this, want us to vote yes on PNTR.

Martin Lee, the head of the democracy movement in Hong Kong, came all the way over here to ask the Congress to vote for this. This is a man who cannot, himself, go to China; a man who has never met Zhu Rongji; a man who is still considered persona non grata. But

he said to me, he said, "You know, we've got to back the reformers in China. We've got to get them into a system where there is rule of law. We have got to move this way. This is the next big step. All the human rights activists in America are, I think," he said, "blinded by their opposition to things that have happened in the past, that may be happening now, instead of thinking about what is most likely to change China in the future."

The new President of Taiwan supports us letting China into the WTO and America extending PNTR. And yesterday the Dalai Lama, a man who has undergone literally decades of frustration in his dealings with China, strongly endorsed PNTR with China.

So this is a big deal to me, beyond the obvious economic benefits which make it easier for some Members and others to vote for because of the economic makeup of their districts. You have to understand that by far the bigger issue is, what can we do to promote human rights; what can we do to promote the rule of law; what can we do to minimize the chances that there will be another war in Asia in our lifetime or in our children's lifetime? To me, that is what is at issue.

So that's my pitch here. What you're about to do is really important. I've told you the kinds of things that I hope you'll do. But those of you out here listening to me will have a bigger role than me in the next 10 years of America if you just remember what I did with that New Orleans Declaration today and every specific thing that I could cite to you that grew right out of that. It really matters whether you think and whether you put your feelings into organized fashion and whether that then organizes the process for developing specific policies.

The New Orleans Declaration is largely responsible for the success we have enjoyed in the last 8 years, because it gave us a platform on which to stand and a framework from which to work.

You've got a lot of really creative people here. I could cite a thousand examples, but I want to just mention two or three to give you an illustration of how we got started, partly on what we did. You remember Franklin Roosevelt; one of the greatest successes of his New Deal was that he essentially took social welfare progress that had been made in various States and went national with it, especially in New York, which

is one way Frances Perkins got to be Secretary of Labor.

But Marc Pacheco back there from Massachusetts, the State senator, sponsored a program to give medical students and other health professionals academic credit for providing primary and preventive health services to underserved people. Should we do more in our public health clinics like that? Mayor Webb negotiated a contract with the teachers unions in his city to give an incentive to teachers to improve academic performance. Michael Thurmond, his Georgia labor commission has taken absent fathers who weren't supporting their children and given them training and jobs and values of responsible fatherhood. And now 84 percent of those fathers are working and supporting their children. That's a huge deal. Shouldn't we go national with that? These are the kinds of things that I hope you will think about.

There's just one other thing I want to say. I didn't do this by myself. If it hadn't been for the Members of Congress here who have helped me, I couldn't have done it. If it hadn't been for the members of the administration, past and present, I couldn't have done it. If it hadn't been for the DLC, with its constant idea machine and Al From constantly harping on me not to abandon the reformist path—[laughter]—I couldn't have done it. If it hadn't been for Al Gore, I couldn't have done it.

And I just want to—I have said this in other places, but I have—I believe I have a good grasp on the institution of the Vice Presidency, and I can tell you it is my judgment that he has had far more positive impact in practical ways on the way the American people live as Vice President than any other person as Vice President in the history of the Nation, by a good long ways.

He managed the empowerment zones program. He managed our administration's position on the Telecommunications Act, which had two important features. One, it was pro-competition; we didn't give in to the monopoly forces, and there are now hundreds of thousands of jobs that have been created, mostly in companies that didn't even exist in 1996, because we stood firm for competition. And we got the E-rate, which is now providing \$2.2 billion a year so that poor schools and libraries and hospitals can hook up to the Internet.

Second, he managed our positions, many of them, on the environment, including the part-

nership for new generation vehicles, which I mentioned, and the climate change.

Third, he ran the RIGO program, which many of you were involved in, which in addition to reducing the size of Government, has dramatically improved the performance of many agencies, expanding health care for children and parents of working families, and the mental health parity issue, and the fatherhood initiative.

He cast the deciding vote on the economic plan and on the gun safety legislation in the Senate. And on every tough decision I had to make, from Haiti to Bosnia to Kosovo to loaning money to Mexico—now, there was a winner; the day I made that decision, there was a poll that said, by 81-15, the people didn't want me to do it—to taking on the gun issue and tobacco issue, to lobbying for NASA at the beginning and now all the calls he's made on China PNTR at the end, he's been there.

So I wanted to say that because we did this together. And that's the last thought I'll leave you with. Roosevelt loved ideas, had good ideas, but he had a first-class temperament, and he had a good time, and he enjoyed working with people. So you guys have got to keep working together. We've got to get behind all of our crowd; we've got to work to win elections. But afterward, remember, this document is a big deal.

Some day somebody will write a whole book on how this New Orleans Declaration was the foundation of the success of the last 8 years. That's what what you do at Hyde Park ought to be. And if you do it, you will change America forever for the better. And what happens in 2000 fundamentally is just as important as what happened in '92 and '96, because what a country does with its prosperity is just as stern a test of its character and vision and wisdom as what it does when its back is against the wall.

I've done everything I could to turn the ship of state around. Now you've got to make sure that it keeps sailing in the right direction.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library. In his remarks, he referred to former Ambassador William J. vanden Heuvel, president, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council, and his wife, Ginger; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York;

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Mayor Lee P. Brown of Houston, TX; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China; President Chen

Shui-bian of Taiwan; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; and Georgia Department of Labor Commissioner Michael L. Thurmond.

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa

May 22, 2000

President Mbeki, Mrs. Mbeki, distinguished members of the South African delegation, we welcome you back to America and to the White House, where we hope, despite the rain, you feel our warm welcome and you feel very much at home.

Sometimes the most important history is made quietly. Last June was such a day, when the people in townships in South Africa waited patiently in long lines to vote for President Mbeki, to elect him the new President of South Africa, and complete the first transition from one democratic government to another.

It reminded us that for all the setbacks, the 1990's were a time of extraordinary liberation for humankind, with democracy spreading to more people in 1999 than it did in 1989, the year the Iron Curtain came down.

President Mbeki, you embody both the courage of the long struggle that brought democracy to South Africa and the vision now needed to define South Africa's critical role in the new century. You are leading your nation and an entire continent forward, supporting peace-making and peacekeeping, fighting against poverty and illiteracy and for economic opportunity.

Our nations have drawn closer together over the last few years, thanks in no small part to the remarkable work that you and Vice President Gore have done together to deepen our ties. Today we will move forward on many fronts, fighting common threats and removing barriers to trade and investment. Last Thursday I was proud to sign into law a bill that will build commerce and investment between us and many other nations in Africa and the Caribbean region.

As I said in South Africa in 1998, I believe in Africa's future, in its progress and its promise. Just one small example: Last year three of the

world's five fastest growing economies were in sub-Saharan Africa.

Of course, terrible problems remain in the Horn of Africa, where a senseless war is again claiming new victims; in the Congo and Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, in Angola, and across the continent, where so many millions are too burdened by debt and so many innocents are dying of AIDS, TB, and malaria. These are hard challenges without easy answers, and they will test our partnership. But that is what partners are for, to solve big problems together.

The United States can and must work with South Africa and all our friends in Africa to fight poverty, disease, war, famine, and flood. We do so because it is right and because it is in our interests. If we want a world of rising growth and expanding markets, a world in which our security is not threatened by the spread of armed conflict, a world in which bitter ethnic and religious differences are resolved by force of argument, not force of arms, a world in which terrorists and criminals have no place to hide, a world in which economic activity does not destroy the natural environment for our children, a world in which children are healthy and go to school and don't die of AIDS in the streets or fight in wars, then we must be involved in Africa.

That is why we have passed the Africa trade bill, why we support debt relief for the poorest countries, why we have been working to recognize AIDS as a security threat to the United States, and why we have moved to make critical drugs available at affordable prices and to lead an international effort to develop vaccines for AIDS, TB, and malaria.

A few weeks ago, President Mbeki announced a new coat of arms for South Africa. The motto of the coat of arms, written in an ancient African language, means, "people who are different join

together.” That sentiment strikes close to the heart of what it means to be an American, as well as a South African. And it concisely summarizes our goal today and for the future, advancing a partnership between two nations that will always be different but are joined together by a profound commitment to freedom and to our common humanity.

We welcome you here, Mr. President, and we look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:18 a.m. in the East Room at the White House, where President Mbeki was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, the President referred to President Mbeki’s wife, Zanele. The President also referred to Public Law 106–200, the Trade and Development Act of 2000. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the President Mbeki.

Exchange With Reporters Following the Welcoming Ceremony for President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa May 22, 2000

HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals

Q. President Mbeki, do you think your government could be doing more to distribute the medicines for AIDS in South Africa?

President Mbeki. We are discussing that now with the U.N. aides and the WHO. Our Health Minister has just come back from Geneva. We want to look at all of those things so that we can move more effectively against AIDS.

Q. Is it true that you don’t consider AZT necessarily a good drug in fighting it?

President Mbeki. I’ve never said that.

Q. How does that come about?

President Mbeki. Pure invention. Pure invention.

Q. So your position is what, now?

President Mbeki. I’ve never said that. No, what was said with regard to the anti-retrovirus is that we need to ensure that we are able to cope with dispensing. Because the WHO says when you dispense them, you’ve got to have a strong enough medical infrastructure because of the potential toxicities and counterindications.

You need to be able to supervise the patients close. But no, no, no—so that’s why it’s in the aftermath of the announcement that the pharmaceuticals were reducing the prices. When we sent our Health Minister to Geneva to talk with the WHO—so that we see how to respond to that. No, no, it said that there’s a lot of stuff that’s been written which is not true.

Q. Mr. President, we were asking President Mbeki if he could do more to distribute the

drugs that fight AIDS in South Africa. Do you think he could do more?

President Clinton. Well, we’ve got to get them to him. He’s got to be able to afford them. And that’s what my Executive order was about. And you’ve got these five big pharmaceutical companies now who said they’re going to help, and I think we’re—you know, in the next couple of months, we’ll see if we really can get a break for him. But I’m very encouraged by what those pharmaceutical companies said.

And then, of course, if the Congress will pass my tax proposal to give a big tax credit to them to develop these vaccines, I think that will make a big difference.

Q. So you think it’s a question of money and not his belief in the drugs?

President Clinton. Yes, I think—there are some drugs out there now; we need to get them out there at affordable prices, and then we need to develop the vaccines. And I think we’ll be able to do it.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. How close are you on China?

President Clinton. Well, I’m hopeful. But we’re making progress.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, President Mbeki referred to Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang of South Africa; and WHO, the World Health Organization. A tape was

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not available for verification of the content of this exchange. The Executive order of May 10 on access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical

technologies is listed in Appendix D of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Chile-United States Social Security Agreement With Documentation May 22, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)) (the “Act”), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Chile on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative arrangement. The Agreement was signed at Santiago on February 16, 2000.

The United States-Chilean Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force between the United States and Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two

countries. The United States-Chilean Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4) of the Act.

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, a report on the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Agreement and related documents to me.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 22, 2000.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the South Korea-United States Social Security Agreement With Documentation May 22, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)) (the “Act”), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administra-

tive arrangement. The Agreement was signed at Washington on March 13, 2000.

The United States-Korean Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the

United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation and to help prevent the loss of benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Korean Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4) of the Act.

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal

agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, a report on the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Agreement and related documents to me.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 22, 2000.

Interview With Tom Brokaw of NBC's "Nightly News" May 22, 2000

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Mr. Brokaw. Now to the President of the United States, live from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Mr. President, good evening. Thank you for being with us.

You need 218 votes in the House. How many do you have firm tonight?

The President. I don't know, Tom; we're getting close. I'm not sure I agree with Lisa. I don't know that we're confident, but we're working hard. And I think that the message is getting there because everyone knows, first of all, economically, China gets no new access to our markets, and we get vast new access to their markets. This is not like a normal trade agreement. This is more like a membership deal. They get in the World Trade Organization, and we get great new access to their markets.

And secondly, I think all these people who care about human rights in China coming out for the agreement because it will move China closer to the rule of law and closer to freedom—the dissidents in China, the new leader of Taiwan, the Hong Kong democracy leader, Martin Lee, the Dalai Lama even—all these people saying that this will advance the cause of human rights and personal freedom and the rule of law, and the fact that it's clearly in our national security interests, I think these things are helping us. And so I'm optimistic. But boy, we've got a lot of work to do. It's not done yet.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, Wei Jingsheng, who is a leading dissident, is violently opposed to this trade deal. Let me read to you from the 1999 State Department report on human rights in China: "The Government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the year as the Government intensified its efforts to suppress dissent. By year's end, almost all the key leaders of the China Democracy Party were serving long prison terms or were in custody without formal charges."

We're not going to be hearing those voices in this debate.

The President. Well, we have also taken the lead in trying to call attention to China's human rights abuses in the proper international forum. But I think it's quite interesting that you have people who have been persecuted in China or someone like Martin Lee, who can't even go to China from Hong Kong because he's for democracy, saying that the only way to get China into a system that observes the rule of law more and protects human rights more and has more liberty is to have this kind of strategic engagement and put China in a system where they will observe the rule of law.

And there are dissidents, of course, who don't think it should be done, but I think it's really important to know that in China the main people who don't want this to pass are the ultra-conservative Communists in the military and

those who run the state-owned industries, who know that if we give them the back of our hand, then they can use that as a way of saying, “Okay, America’s going to be our enemy now, so we’re going to maintain our control over the military, our control over the businesses, our control over the people more.”

I think it’s quite interesting that in China, the people who want us to vote against this are the—basically the more reactionary Communist elements who would like to have America as an enemy for a long time to come. I think if you—all the press reports coming out of China show that it is the reformers, the people who genuinely want to change China, who want to get into the WTO, and who want to have a constructive long-term working relationship with the United States.

So I’m doing this because, yes, it’s clearly good for America economically but also because we fought three wars in Asia in the last 50 years, and I want to give our children a chance to have a constructive relationship with China, give China a chance to evolve toward more democracy. Is it guaranteed? Of course not—

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President—

The President. —but it’s far more likely if we do this.

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, the Interfaith Alliance that has been advising Congress and the White House on matters of religion has also come out against it. But one of the people who says that he’s going to vote for the China trade bill is a New York Congressman by the name of Rick Lazio. Does he strike you as a pretty enlightened public servant?

The President. Well, I agree with him on this, and I’m glad he’s going to vote for it.

New York Senatorial Election

Mr. Brokaw. Do you think that Mrs. Clinton is going to have a much tougher race against Rick Lazio than she might have against Mayor Giuliani?

The President. Oh, I don’t know. I think Mayor Giuliani was a very formidable candidate because of his service as mayor, because of the big drop in crime in New York, and because he agreed with us on so many other issues. He supported my initiative to put 100,000 police on the street and on many other things.

So I think that—you know, I think it’s a hard race regardless. But I like her chances because I think the people of New York will like her

more and more as the days go by and because they agree with her on the issues. And I look forward to voting for her.

Arkansas Disbarment Proceeding

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, in your home State of Arkansas tonight a panel for the Arkansas Supreme Court has recommended that you be disbarred. Your lawyer has already said that you will appeal, that it’s unprecedented. Will you personally take part in that appeal and appear in Arkansas to argue your case?

The President. No. No, I promised myself, and I promised the American people when all the proceedings were over in Congress, that I would take no further personal part. And I knew when the timetable for this was moved up that I’d always be at a severe disadvantage because I will not personally involve myself in any of this until I’m no longer President. It’s not right.

The only reason I agreed even to appeal it is that my lawyers looked at all the precedents, and they said, “There’s no way in the world, if they just treat you like everybody else has been treated, that this is even close to that kind of case.” So the precedents contradict this decision, and ultimately the decision has to be made by a judge. And so we’re going to give the judge a chance to do what we believe is right, and I think that’s the right thing to do.

Mr. Brokaw. But Mr. President, this comes in a State where you were the attorney general, where you taught law. You’ve now been held in contempt of court by a Federal judge in that State, and you’ve been recommended for disbarment. With all due respect, this is a stain on your record well outside the political arena, isn’t it?

The President. Well, when I’m not President anymore, I’ll be happy to defend myself. And there is certainly another side to both those things you mentioned, and I’ll be happy to talk about it. But the main thing I want to say tonight is the only reason I agreed even to have papers filed, since I’m not going to defend myself while I’m President, is that there are clear precedents where more significant kinds of conduct—even if you assume what the judge says is right, which I strongly disagree with—that led to nowhere near this kind of decision. This decision contradicts all the cases on point that the committee has ever decided in the past. And so we’ll let a judge decide whether it’s right or wrong.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:30 p.m. in Roosevelt Room at the White House and was broadcast live. In his remarks, the President referred to Lisa Myers, national correspondent, NBC

News; President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa May 22, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. And let me say a special word of welcome to President and Mrs. Mbeki and the South African delegation.

In 1966 Robert Kennedy began a famous speech to the students at Cape Town by describing his deep interest in a land settled by the Dutch in the mid 17th century, then taken over by the British before finally becoming independent, a land with complicated and cruel racial problems dating back centuries, a land of untamed frontiers alongside a proud history of entrepreneurial achievement. He said, "I refer, of course, to the United States of America." [Laughter]

Obviously, in 1966 and in 2000, a great deal unites South Africa and the United States. We share a fundamental sense, dating back to our earliest struggles, continuing through our most recent ones, that nationhood is more than an inheritance; it is a living gift to be protected, defended, and redefined every day.

Few nations have worked harder at nationhood or achieved more impressive results than South Africa. Few leaders have given more of themselves to the struggle than Thabo Mbeki. His mother says that even when he was a small child, he used to get terribly excited whenever news broadcasts came over the radio. If only we could replicate that today. [Laughter]

When his father was in prison, alongside Nelson Mandela, in the early 1960's, Thabo Mbeki carried on the struggle from England. At the tender age of 21, he delivered a powerful appeal for his father's life in which he mentioned, as an aside, the fact that his father's birthday was the Fourth of July, 1910. Even though the United States was not exactly supporting the ANC in 1964, he saw that day, nevertheless, as a symbol of freedom and all the more reason his father should not lose his life for affirming

the simple truth that all people are created equal.

Fortunately, Thabo Mbeki won that campaign, as he has won so many since. And South Africa's resurgence has given the entire world something to feel proud of. Today we talk about how best to deliver on its promise, how to deepen the friendship between our nations. I have already thanked President Mbeki for his strong support for peacekeeping and his ongoing leadership throughout the continent. I pledged to him that we would work harder to hasten the return of peace in troubled parts of Africa and that we would do more to build the prosperity needed to make conflict and disease less likely.

So many people who are here tonight, Mr. President, Mrs. Mbeki, contributed to the landmark legislation I signed last week to expand our trade with Africa and the Caribbean. Now we need to keep the momentum going to support the Africans who are working and fighting for peace, to relieve the debt of the poorest nations so they can devote their resources to basic human needs, to find cures and treatments and preventive strategies for the diseases ravaging the continent.

With echoes of John Donne, President Mbeki once said we have to address the problems of other peoples, because "each one of us is a particle of the complete whole." A South African poet, Mongane Wally Serote, recently wrote a poem entitled "Come hope with me." As you might imagine, I sort of liked it. [Laughter] In the poem, he urges people never to forget, "life is a promise, and that promise is us."

Tonight I ask you to join me in a toast to President and Mrs. Mbeki, to the people of South Africa and the promise of South Africa, the promise that will always join our two peoples.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mbeki's wife, Zanele, and his mother, Epainette; and former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. The

President also referred to Public Law 106-200, the Trade and Development Act of 2000. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Mbeki.

Remarks on the New Markets Legislation Agreement

May 23, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. And I think it's just "good afternoon." [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, Secretary Summers, Secretary Shalala, Administrator Alvarez, and Mr. Sperling from the White House. And I want to recognize here from the House of Representatives Congressman Rangel, Congressman Talent, Congressman Watts, Representatives Watt, Kanjorski, Jefferson, Velázquez, LoBiondo, Chambliss, Becerra, Bono, Davis, LaFalce, Price, Reyes, Waters, Hinojosa. I think that's everybody. [Laughter]

I'd also like to acknowledge people who aren't here who have supported this effort, to Chairman Archer and Representatives Clyburn, Roybal-Allard, Hayworth, Kildee, and the members of the Congressional Black, Hispanic, and Indian Caucuses. And I want to acknowledge the presence in the audience of Mayor Webb of Denver and Mayor Campbell of Atlanta.

This morning Speaker Hastert and I have the honor of announcing a truly remarkable bipartisan achievement. We have completed an agreement to making historic investments in the untapped markets of America's inner cities, rural areas, and Native American reservations.

Today, our economy is the strongest it has ever been. But there are places that have still not been touched by our prosperity. For over 7 years, our administration has worked hard to change that. Under the Vice President's leadership, we have created and administered empowerment zones and enterprise communities; we have strengthened the Community Reinvestment Act and fostered community development banks and other community financial institutions. These initiatives, I believe, have made a significant difference in many places in America. But we know that we have more to do, and we know we must do more to get private sector

firms to step up to their responsibility to create jobs and opportunity.

That's why I launched this new markets initiative last year. I've been to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to East Palo Alto, to Newark, to Phoenix, to many other inner cities, and I've been on the reservations of the Lakota Sioux and the Navajo.

Every place I've gone, I've seen talented people eager for opportunity and certainly able to work. They are the untapped markets that are not only crying out for their own opportunity but clearly presenting us an opportunity to keep our economic expansion going without inflation.

Early in this endeavor, I began to talk to the Speaker about this, and he told me he was interested in doing something, that it was something he was genuinely concerned about. Last November, on our second tour, the Speaker and I went together to Englewood, Illinois, along with Congressman Rush and Reverend Jackson. It's on the south side of Chicago. And together, we made a pledge to try to pool all the ideas that both parties had for dealing with this challenge and to try to come up with one unified, bipartisan effort. At the time, I said, and he said, that giving people a chance to make a living or start a business was neither a Republican nor a Democratic issue but an American imperative.

Today we have Members of both parties here in substantial numbers to say that we're honoring the commitment we made at Englewood. We have achieved an agreement that will allow us to give every family in every community a stake in the prosperity Americans have worked so hard to build.

I'd like to give some of the details of this agreement and leave it to the Speaker to outline the rest. And then we'd like to invite four of our Members, two from each caucus who have

been particularly active in this endeavor, to speak.

First, under the agreement, people who invest in a high unemployment, high poverty area anywhere in our country will qualify for a new markets tax credit equal to 30 percent of the amount they invest. The American people will share the risk of taking a chance on Americans. Of course, no one's going to put up the money if they think they're going to lose it. But at least this will give them a greater incentive to take that risk.

Second, the House of Representatives will authorize the other major pillars of the new markets initiative: new markets venture capital firms geared toward helping small and first-time entrepreneurs; America's Private Investment Companies, modeled on the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which will help large-scale businesses expand in or relocate to distressed inner-city communities. With these venture capital firms and APIC's, we'll provide two dollars of Government-guaranteed loans for every one dollar of equity capital investors put into new markets. That will lower their interest costs for borrowing and, again, reduce the risk of taking a chance on America. We will now be able to spur, with these initiatives, more than \$20 billion in private sector investment.

Third, the agreement will give a major boost to our empowerment zones, which the Vice President helped to launch in 1993 and which have proven that investment in inner-cities and rural areas is a right and smart thing to do. The agreement will create a third round of zones and bring the total number up to 40. It will make both wage credits and tax-exempt bonds available across all the empowerment zones and extend the life of the zones to 2009.

As Speaker Hastert will explain in a moment, it will also create, in addition to 40 empowerment zones, 40 renewal communities. These communities were designed by Representatives J.C. Watts, James Talent, and Danny Davis, and they will operate much like the empowerment zones, although with different tax incentives, which the Speaker will explain.

When I first started this process, I said no one had all the answers—if we had all the answers, unemployment would be uniform across America—and that I thought we ought to try the best ideas from both parties. That is in the best American tradition, and that is exactly what this legislation will do.

Last year the leaders you see here today could have said, "We've got an idea. They've got an idea. Let's have a fight." [Laughter] But instead, thank goodness, they took a different course, and it led us to common ground and, I would argue, higher ground. Once again, I want to thank the Speaker for being as good as his word on this. I want to thank the Members of both parties for making a personal commitment to taking that what we call Third Way.

Tomorrow the House will vote on the issue of opening new markets abroad when it deals with the question of permanent normal trading status with China. I hope that we'll see the same bipartisan spirit tomorrow we see today. I believe it is very much in our interest. And again, as I said, I think it's very important to advance the rule of law and human rights in China, which is why we have seen support from the President—the new President of Taiwan, the leader of the democracy movement in Hong Kong, and most recently, the Dalai Lama, for this approach.

I want to say one final thing. The consequences of this vote will be felt after I am no longer President. But our country fought three wars in Asia in the last half century. We ought to give our children a chance to have a different 50 years ahead of us. No one knows what the future holds, but we do know which course is likely to give us a more peaceful future. It's the sort of thing I hope everyone will think about before they cast that vote tomorrow.

Again, let me say, this is a happy day. It would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the Speaker. I thank you, and I'd like to give you the podium now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[At this point, Speaker J. Dennis Hastert made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you. Now, I'd like to ask Congressman Watts and Representative Nydia Velázquez, Congressman Talent, and Congressman Rangel to say a few words.

[The Representatives made brief remarks.]

The President. Well, Mr. Talent, just on that point, I called Senator Lott this morning before we started this and pointed out that Mississippi would do as well as any State in America under this legislation. [Laughter] And I talked to Senator Daschle about it, who obviously has a lot of Native America's population that need the

benefits of this bill. I think we've got a good chance to succeed if we can move this bill quickly.

In closing, I would—there are so many of you here who have worked on this for so many years. And I don't want to get into—I'll never finish calling you all. But I do want to thank, in his absence, Secretary Cuomo and my long-time friend Alvin Brown here, who have operated the empowerment zone program under the Vice President's leadership. They've done a great job, and I thank all of you.

I just want to make two points in closing. We actually believe—we may be wrong, but we actually believe that we can bring the benefits of free enterprise to poor people. And I think there's a lot of evidence.

The other point I'd like to make is, I want to emphasize something the Speaker said because I thought it was so important. We revel in our mobility, you know, and the average American probably moves 5 times in a lifetime. Nearly 20 percent of our people move every year. But the people that will really benefit from this are the people that cherish their roots, people that don't want to leave the Delta or Appa-

lachia or the city neighborhoods from Anacostia to Brooklyn to Englewood to wherever, where they grew up; the Native Americans who want to go to college and go back home, even if it's to Shiprock, New Mexico, a long way from any urban center. And a lot of these people live in communities that still don't even have water or sewers or telephones. But if you believe intelligence and effort are equally distributed in this old world—and I do—we owe it to them.

And I agree with what Mr. Talent said. I think what we've done is a privilege for us. We're just doing what we ought to do. Now we've got to go out and finish the job.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta, GA; Rev. Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist; President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Speaker Hastert.

Statement on Steps To Enhance the Safety of Clinical Trials

May 23, 2000

This is a moment of remarkable promise for our country. Not only are we in the midst of the longest economic expansion ever, but thanks to the brilliant, persistent work of scientists all over the world, we are also in the midst of a remarkable revolution that is allowing us to live longer, healthier lives.

In December I asked the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a plan to ensure that mandatory safeguards for individuals participating in clinical trials are upheld. Public uncertainty about the safety of clinical trials could discourage participation in these critical studies and undermine the critical progress science has made towards developing new methods to detect, treat, and prevent diseases once thought to be deadly.

To that end, I am pleased to announce that the Department is taking new steps to enhance the safety of clinical trials. These include: new

actions designed to ensure that individuals are adequately informed about the potential risks and benefits of participating in research; new training requirements to ensure that researchers are familiar with ethical issues related to human subject research; and steps designed to address the potential financial conflicts of interest faced by researchers. We are also sending the Congress a new legislative proposal to authorize civil monetary penalties for researchers and institutions found to be in violation of regulations governing human clinical trials.

We are on the brink of discoveries that are astonishing in their complexity and implications for human life in the decades ahead. But as committed as we are to further progress, we must be as committed to ensuring that we enter

this new age of discovery in a manner that protects the safety of those making these new discoveries possible. These new actions are a critical first step towards meeting that goal.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Bahrain-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the State of Bahrain Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex, signed at Washington on September 29, 1999. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Bahrain is the third such treaty between the United States and a Middle Eastern country. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Bahrain in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this

Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Bolivia-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Bolivia Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Santiago, Chile, on April 17, 1998, during the Second Presidential Summit of the Americas. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Bolivia is the sixth such treaty between the United States and a Central or South American country. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Bolivia in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this

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Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treat-

ment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Croatia-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Croatia Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Zagreb on July 13, 1996. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Croatia was the fourth such treaty between the United States and a Southeastern European country. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Croatia in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this

Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the El Salvador-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit

herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of El Salvador Concerning

the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at San Salvador on March 10, 1999. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with El Salvador is the seventh such treaty with a Central or South American country. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist El Salvador in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thereby strengthening the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the

Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Honduras-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Honduras Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Denver on July 1, 1995. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Honduras is the fourth such Treaty with a Central or South American country. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Honduras in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and for-

foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty, with Annex and Protocol, at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

May 23 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Jordan-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Amman on July 2, 1997. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Jordan was the second such treaty between the United States and a country in the Middle East. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Jordan in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this

Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Mozambique-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation May 23, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Mozambique Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Washington on December 1, 1998. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Mozambique is the first such treaty between the United States and a country in Southern Africa. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Mozambique in its efforts to develop

its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thus strengthen the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements;

fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treatment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice

and consent to ratification of the Treaty at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 23, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Ellen O. Tauscher May 23, 2000

Well, thank you very much. Let me say first, I'm delighted to be here in Ellen and Katherine's home, with so many of Ellen's family and her friends. And I think we have three Members of Congress here. I think Representative Thurman from Florida, Representative Dooley from California, Representative Hoyer from Maryland are here. And if they're not, I gave them credit for being, anyway.

I appreciate what Ellen said about running for a third term. I'd like to, but I understand that the salary is insufficient to support a Member of Congress. [Laughter] So I suppose I'll have to do something else for a living next year. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, we've had a pretty good few days here. Several days ago, I signed the bill to open America's markets more, to increase trade and investment in Africa and the Caribbean Basin in Central America, which I think is very important. And I've been working, I might add, with pharmaceutical companies and others to lower the costs of life-saving drugs to those places and to try to hasten the day when we can develop vaccines for AIDS and TB and malaria. And we've got a lot of bipartisan support and a lot of public/private partnership there.

Today, with the Speaker of the House, we had an astonishing bipartisan announcement in the Roosevelt Room at the White House—that we have actually reached agreement, which I think will produce 350 or 400 votes in the House, on what could be the most significant antipoverty initiative in the last 35 years. It's called, for us, the new markets initiative. The Republicans have a different name for theirs, but the point is, we put them together.

You know, we usually—for years I've been watching Washington say, one side says, "I've

got an idea," and the other side says, "I've got an idea." And then they say, "Good, let's fight." [Laughter] And instead—you know, there really was a feeling in Washington this year that there are still people and places that haven't participated fully in this economic recovery. Those of you from northern California, for example, know that ironically, in East Palo Alto there's still a terrible unemployment problem, a lot of people who aren't even part of the digital economy.

I was in the Navajo Indian Reservation at Shiprock in northern New Mexico not very long ago, one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen, the only thing I've ever seen in America that looks sort of like Ayers Rock in Australia. You just come up on it. It's just breathtaking. But the unemployment rate's 58 percent, and 70 percent of the people don't even have telephones.

And of course, I come from the Mississippi Delta, which is one of the poorest places in America. And the whole idea behind this legislation is that we ought to give people like those of you who can afford to come to this fundraiser tonight—[laughter]—the same incentives to invest in developing areas in America that we give you to invest in developing areas overseas, in Latin America and Africa and Asia. It's a terrific idea.

And if this bill passes, we will not only create a total of 40 empowerment zones—a program I've been working on for over 7 years now, that's been managed brilliantly by the Vice President—but we'll create 40 enterprise zones that the Republican Party wanted in poor areas that have zero capital gains rate. Ours has a different set of incentives. But all over America, in areas of high unemployment or high poverty, people who invest in financing devices to create new businesses will get a 30 percent tax credit,

and people who borrow money will be able to get, if they put up one-third equity, they'll be able to get two-thirds in money fully guaranteed by Government guarantees, which will cut the interest rates dramatically.

So what we're saying is, America as a whole will share the risk with you, if you'll give these people a chance to go to work and make a living. And at a time of very tight labor markets, I think it has the promise of really proving that we can bring free enterprise to the poorest parts of America.

By and large, the people who live there are just as smart and just as hard working as people anywhere else. They're not always as well-educated. But mostly they stay there because they don't want to leave, especially in these rural areas. Their kids, maybe their neighbor's kids, may go to Silicon Valley or Silicon Alley in New York or someplace else; they may go to Dallas to make video games. But most of these people want to keep living where they are. And what we're trying to do is to create an investment climate that will help that.

But the main thing is, there were like 30 Members of Congress there today, roughly equally divided between both parties. I thought I needed to go to the optometrist to make sure my eyes were working. It was wonderful. [Laughter]

And tomorrow, I believe—although I never count my chickens before they hatch, and I don't have—I'm only counting the votes on our side, not their side—I think we're going to make this PNTR vote with China. And I think it's important.

Now, that brings me to the point of why I'm here tonight. Obviously, I'm interested in the economics of the agreement I made with the Chinese. We had a good agreement in April, but I wanted to make it better, and we did. And I think one thing that is widely misunderstood among the American electorate is, most people think this is a trade agreement. It is not. It's a membership agreement. That's why it's basically, from a trade point of view, a one-way street. That is, China lowers its tariffs and its other restrictions on our investments and our sales, in return for membership in the WTO.

So it's a very good economic deal for the United States—in that sense, relatively speaking, the best one we've ever negotiated. And I know that's why most people lobby it.

But you know—I never thought I'd say this, but I'm beginning to feel old and creaky, and I've only got about 8 months or so left to serve. And I want you to know, the real reason I'm for it—even though I'm proud of the economic terms, and I'm glad of what we negotiated—the real reason I'm for it is, I think it will hasten the day of freedom and honoring the rule of law in China. And I think that's why all these—the President of Taiwan and Martin Lee, the Hong Kong democracy leader, a lot of dissidents in China today, have asked us to vote for this.

And you know, in the last 50 years, we've fought three wars in Asia. And I can't say we won't fight another one in the next 50 years. I can't even promise you that what I think will happen in China will happen if we pass this tomorrow. But I can promise you this: If we turn it down, we will dramatically increase the chances of irresponsible behavior and conflict.

And so to me, the most important thing is, I don't want my daughter's generation to have to go through what our parents' generation did in World War II and Korea and what our generation did in Vietnam. And I think we've got a good chance, not a guarantee—they have to make all the decisions about how they conduct themselves—but we've got a good chance to have a very different future than the past 50 years.

And that's basically why I really wanted to come here tonight. I don't think—you know, you probably couldn't beat Ellen Tauscher with a stick of dynamite out there. [Laughter] But I want you to know, I'm here, number one, because nothing we've achieved in the last 8 years would have been possible without the support of Members of Congress like her. Number two, she really is sort of my philosophical soul mate and my personal friend, and I love her.

But most important, it's very important to me, as I look forward to an election, the first election since 1974, when I haven't been on somebody's ballot somewhere, that we vote for people who understand the future and are prepared to do what it takes to make the most of it. That's really, to me, what this is about.

People ask me all the time, "Who's going to win the Presidential race? Will the Democrats win the House? Who's going to win this or that Senate race?" I tell them it all depends on what the American people think the question is when they go into the voting booth. You just

think about that. It depends on what you think the question is. Many, many times, if it's any kind of a competitive election, what you think the question is will determine who you believe should be elected.

I think the question is what are we going to do with this incredible moment of prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence and enormous responsibility throughout the world?

And you know, we've got some very difficult decisions to make. Are we going to continue to be the world leader for disarmament? Or are we going to throw away the treaties that have protected us for generations and refuse to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, after I was the first President in the world to sign the thing? The American people will decide that in the next election. Most of them don't know it yet, but they will. And so they have to decide, because that will determine the shape of the future.

Are we going to squander this surplus in ways that risk going back to deficit spending, higher interest rates, and will certainly bring a quicker end to our recovery? Or will we have a tax cut we can afford, in the context of paying the debt down and dealing with the retirement of the baby boom generation and our plain obligation to continue to invest in the education of our children, in science and technology?

Are we going to prove that we can grow the economy and improve the environment? Or are we going to keep our heads stuck in the sand and say, "Global warming is a plot to undermine the strength of free enterprise," and, "What does it matter if we burn up the atmosphere?" Big issue, one of the things that will be decided in this election. Those are just a few issues.

Do we believe we can balance work and family? If we do, we're going to have to do more with family leave; we're going to have to do more with child care; we're going to have to do more with flexible work hours. We're going to have to do a lot of it out of the private sector, but some of it's going to have to be negotiated with the Government so it's fair to all employers and nobody's at a significant disadvantage. Huge issue.

And let me just say one other thing about this vote tomorrow. This is a difficult—this has been a personally painful vote for me, because a lot of the labor guys who are on the other side of this are good friends of mine. They

worked for me in '92. They worked for me in '96. And I basically have been the best friend they've had in the White House, I think, since LBJ. But I believe strongly that—you know, going back to Roosevelt, our party has been the party of engagement and partnership with the rest of the world.

Now, having said that, a lot of people are against this who don't even know what the details are. A lot of people are against our efforts because they have this generalized sense of unease about the globalized world into which we're moving, and they're afraid that, even if they see somebody else flitting around on an airplane or living in a big house, they're somehow going to be left behind, that somehow the rules are going to work against them, and all this change is going to leave them totally disoriented and at sea. And a lot of these people are our friends and our natural allies.

So I think one of the big questions that will occupy the United States for at least another decade is how to put a human face on the global economy. It is inconceivable to me that we can globalize the economy without trying to develop some sort of consensus about what kind of global society we will live in, what our mutual responsibilities are to the planet, what our mutual responsibilities are to stand up against child labor, prison labor, female slavery, other abusive labor conditions.

And it's inconceivable to me that the World Trade Organization—which I supported bringing into being, which I have labored to protect and expand—but they're going to have to open their proceedings. They can't continue—the WTO cannot continue to be the private preserve of politicians and CEO's, in other words, people like those of us in this room. [Laughter] It's not just us. We're fooling with people's lives out there with these decisions, and you know, sooner or later, you keep making enough decisions that affect someone else, and you're going to listen to them one way or the other.

So while I think that that is a poor excuse, all these things, to vote against this bill, and we must never be in the position of making the perfect the enemy of the good, we should remember that for another decade America will have to be about the business of putting a human face on the global economy, of trying to make it advance our values as well as our pocketbooks.

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And when I think of those big questions and I think about the handful of people that I know in this town that I feel most comfortable making those decisions, she's one of them. And I also like to make her blush. *[Laughter]*

And this is the last thing I want to say to you. You know, on the one hand, I hope the American people will be more relaxed about this election than sometimes I fear they are when you see all these hysterical ads. And some of the things that happened, particularly in the other party's primary, just sent me around the bend. *[Laughter]* But I hope they will also be more serious.

I mean, I'd like to see—you know, Governor Bush made a serious proposal today about what he thought ought to be done on missile defense and other stuff. And Al Gore's got a serious proposal. How will the American people that don't think about this all the time know what to do unless they get together and discuss it? They made different proposals on Social Security and Medicare. They ought to get together and talk about it.

But the thing I want to say to you is in addition to being here for Ellen, because a lot of you come from other parts of the country, you need to make sure that everybody you talk to understands that the consequences of this election are just as significant as they were in '92, when the country was in the doldrums, or in '96, when they had to decide whether to ratify the direction we were taking.

And sometimes it is a sterner test of character to make the far-sighted decision when times are good than when they're bad. When times are bad, you don't have to be a genius to know you've got to do something different. *[Laughter]* You don't have to be smart as a tree full of owls to know that you've got to figure out what in the world you're going to do and go forward. *[Laughter]* When times are good, you know, people just sort of drift off and say, "Well, that

sounds nice, and that sounds nice," or, "Maybe I'll stay home and do something else." I'm telling you, this is a big deal.

Once in a lifetime a country finds itself in the position we're in now. And I do want you to be relaxed and have a good time, but you've got to understand, if we squander this opportunity, you have no earthly idea how long America will have to wait for it to come back around again, no earthly idea how long you'll have to wait for Members of Congress like Ellen and Steny and Karen and Cal to be able to go there and debate how to build the future of our dreams for our children, instead of how to throw the water out of a leaking, sinking boat.

And there's not a soul here over 30 years old that can't cite one time in your life when you have made a serious personal or professional mistake not because things were so terrible but because things were so good you thought there were no consequences to breaking your concentration.

So that's the other thing I want to say. Every day between now and November, if you talk to somebody about anything like this, you remind them: This is a big deal. This is not just the first election of the millennium in calendar terms. It is the first election in psychological and political terms as well.

We have not been in this shape in my lifetime. We may not get here again, and we'd better make the most of it. Your being here for her shows that you've got a big head start on understanding that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Katherine Tauscher, daughter of Representative Tauscher; President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

May 23, 2000

Thank you to the modest Mr. McAuliffe. *[Laughter]* There's one other person I'd like to thank. I'd like to thank Abe Pollin for making

this place available to us tonight. Thank you. And your reward for raising all this money is

that you don't have to listen to me give a long speech tonight. You've heard it all.

But I want you to know that I am profoundly grateful. And when we started this campaign year, I was very, very worried that we would be, in this period between April the 1st and August the 1st, swamped by the Republicans financially. And it didn't work out that way, partly because they had a rather competitive primary. And then the idea—and I've been, as you know, I've been exerting some modest efforts, with a lot of your help, to raise money for our party and for our Senate campaign committee and our House campaign committee.

But this is a truly wonderful thing. You know, we'll still have to go out and raise some hard money and do some things. But this really puts the Democrats in a competitive position between now and November. And the gift you're giving the Vice President is, I think, inestimable, and I'm grateful to you for that.

I just want to say one thing. A lot of you have heard me say this before, but I want to say it one more time: The test of a country when times are good may be more severe than the test when times are tough. We don't know when again in our lifetimes, any of us, we will have at once so much economic prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence.

But there are huge, huge questions out there. We saw today, Governor Bush outlined one. You know, both candidates want to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, but one is not so sure we need either the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Most Americans don't know there's a big difference there and don't understand what that means for their children's lives. But it's huge.

You know, what does national security mean in the early part of the 21st century? How are we going to keep the economy going? And should we pay down the debt, or risk a tax cut that will put us in debt again? What are the consequences of either course? Do you

think you can grow the economy and make the environment better, or do you think that's some sort of a subversive plot to destroy free enterprise? Do you believe that we will have to make further efforts, like employment nondiscrimination and hate crimes legislation, to be one community in the diversity of the 21st century or not? How are we going to put a human face on the global economy? What's the best way to deal with the aging of America? These are big questions.

And I say this repeatedly, but anybody over 30 years old can remember at least one time in your life when you made a huge mistake, personally or professionally, not because times were so bad but because they were so good you thought there was no incentive to concentrate and no consequence to the failure to do so.

This is a major election. I'm grateful for this dinner. I'm grateful that you're honoring me. I'm grateful for your extraordinary efforts and for Terry's indefatigable energy. But the purpose of all this is to build the future of our dreams for our kids. So I want us to have a huge, good time tomorrow night. And then I want us to go out and spend this money in the wisest possible way to make sure that all the work we've done in the last 8 years is not squandered but instead built upon.

And I thank you for helping the Vice President. I believe he is going to win, and I believe he's going to be a wonderful President. But it's going to be a lot more likely after tomorrow night.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. in the Capital Club at the MCI Center. In his remarks, he referred to Terence McAuliffe, former finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Abe Pollin, owner, National Basketball Association Washington Wizards and MCI Center; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on House of Representatives Action on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 24, 2000

Good afternoon. Today the House of Representatives has taken an historic step toward continued prosperity in America, reform in China, and peace in the world. If the Senate votes as the House has just done to extend permanent normal trade relations with China, it will open new doors of trade for America and new hope for change in China.

Seven years ago, when I became President, I charted a new course for a new economy, a course of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and open trade. I have always believed that by opening markets abroad, we open opportunities at home. We've worked hard to advance that goal of more open and more fair trade since 1993, all the way up to the landmark legislation I signed just a few days ago to expand trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin.

Just this week Speaker Hastert and I reached an agreement that many Members of the House in both parties have already supported, to bring the same kinds of investment opportunity and jobs to America's new markets, to people and places here in this country who have not yet participated in our prosperity, in rural areas, inner cities, on our Native American reservations.

With more than a billion people, China is the largest new market in the world. Our administration has negotiated an agreement which will open China's markets to American products made on American soil, everything from corn to chemicals to computers. Today the House has affirmed that agreement.

We will be exporting, however, more than our products. By this agreement, we will also export more of one of our most cherished values, economic freedom. Bringing China into the WTO and normalizing trade will strengthen those who fight for the environment, for labor standards, for human rights, for the rule of law.

For China, this agreement will clearly increase the benefits of cooperation and the costs of confrontation. America, of course, will continue to defend our interests, but at this stage in China's development, we will have more positive influence with an outstretched hand than with a

clenched fist. The House today has affirmed that belief.

Now, I have spoken personally to many, many Members of Congress. I have heard their concerns and those of their constituents. I know this, for many, was a difficult vote. Decisions like this one test our deepest beliefs. They challenge our hopes, and they call forth our fears. Though China may be changing, we all know it remains a one-party state, that it still denies people the rights of free speech and religious expression. We know that trade alone will not bring freedom to China or peace to the world. That's why permanent normal trade relations must also signal our commitment to permanent change.

America will keep pressing to protect our security and to advance our values. The vote today is a big boost to both efforts. For the more China liberalizes its economy, the more it will liberate the potential of its people—to work without restraint, to live without fear.

In January I pledged an all-out effort to take this important step. I want to thank everyone who has joined in it. I want to express special gratitude to Speaker Hastert for his leadership, to Congressman Archer and Congressman Rangel of the Ways and Means Committee. I also want to acknowledge Congressman Levin and Congressman Bereuter, who authored a provision on human rights that improves this bill and strengthens our ability to stand up for our values.

I thank all the others who spoke out for this action, including all our former Presidents, all the former Secretaries of State, Defense, trade ministers, other Cabinet members, all the military leaders. I thank those who worked for human rights and the rule of law who spoke out for this legislation. And of course, I want to thank all those who worked in this administration: Secretary Daley, for spearheading our campaign; Charlene Barshefsky and Gene Sperling, for their negotiation of the agreement; Steve Ricchetti, here in the White House; and Sandy Berger and all the others who worked so hard for this agreement here. I appreciate what everyone has done.

Today the House has taken an important step for the kind of future I think we all want for our children, for an America that will be more prosperous and more secure, for a China that is more open to our products and more respectful of the rule of law at home and abroad. The House has spoken, and now the eyes of the world turn toward the United States Senate. I am confident it, too, will act swiftly to advance these interests.

I will be speaking with many Senators in the days ahead to ensure that we continue to move ahead to get this done as promptly as possible. This is one of the most important votes the Senate will face in this session. I hope we can build on our momentum on this issue and on other pressing priorities, as well.

I still believe the Congress can act to add voluntary prescription drug coverage to Medicare, to invest more in our children's education, to pass the legislation to invest in these American markets here at home, to pass the common-sense gun safety legislation, to raise the minimum wage.

Again, I thank the House, and I look forward to working with the Congress in the days ahead.

This is a good day for America. And 10 years from now we will look back on this day and be glad we did this. We will see that we have

given ourselves a chance to build the kind of future we want. This is a good economic agreement because we get all the economic benefits of lowered tariffs and lowered access to the Chinese market. We get new protections against dumping of products in our own markets. What we have granted is full membership in the World Trade Organization, which brings China into a rule-based international system.

But I have said many times, and I'd just like to say once more, to me, the most important benefit of all is that we have given ourselves and the Chinese a chance—not a guarantee but a chance—to build a future in the Asia-Pacific region for the next 50 years very different from the last 50. We fought three wars in that part of the world. A lot of Americans died for freedom; a lot of sacrifice should not go unredeemed. We owe it to them, to their children, and to our children and grandchildren to give the world a chance to build a better and a different future. We have taken a big step toward giving them that chance today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Public Law 106-200, the Trade and Development Act of 2000.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee's "National Tribute to President Clinton"

May 24, 2000

Well, first of all, thank you, thank you very much. Let me tell you something—wait, turn this on. If you'd turn this on, they could hear me instead of them.

Now, I don't believe that it's corruption to take money to pass the Brady bill, instead of beat it; to pass the family and medical leave bill, so 21 million ordinary working people can take some time off when their babies are born and their parents are sick, instead of to beat it; to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, instead of to beat it; to reduce the deficit and get rid of the debt, instead of keep giving big breaks to special interests. I don't think that is corruption. I think that's good for America. That's why we're here tonight; that's why you're here to-

night. We made a difference, and I'm glad you're helping us to win the next election. Thank you.

Let me also say to all of you how grateful I am that you're here, how grateful I am for your support. I thank Ed and Joe and Loretta and Dennis and all their predecessors in the Democratic Party. I thank my good friends Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle, who will be the leaders of their respective chambers after the election. I thank Terry McAuliffe for making sure we'll be able to stick out there and give our message to fight for our candidates and elect our President in the year 2000. Thank you, Terry, and thank all of you who helped tonight.

And I want to thank Al and Tipper and Hillary and all the others who were part of our team. All those things that were on that film—mostly they were just my face up there. We had a great team, the four of us; we had a great White House; we had a great Cabinet; we had all these great young people working for us who believed in what we were doing every day. To every one of you who had anything to do with any of the progress of this administration, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now, I also want to thank my buddies from Sims and Lindsey's and the Rendezvous for bringing us barbecue so Al and I could feel at home tonight, and I hope you felt at home tonight with that barbecue. And besides that, we needed a backdrop for McAuliffe to do that comedy gig he did on the Republicans. So, thank you for bringing the barbecue. It was wonderful.

Now, I don't know about you, but I came here to hear the entertainment, not to hear the politicians speak. So, since I'm really grateful to you for your support, I'm going to spare you much of a speech. But I want to say just two or three things real seriously.

Number one, the election of 2000 is every bit as important as the elections of '92 and '96. And in some ways, we are handicapped by all those good things that were just recounted on the film. A lot of younger voters have even forgotten what the economy was like in 1992. A lot of people have forgotten that 7½, 8 years ago no one thought the deficit could be brought down, much less the budget balanced and the debt begin to be repaid. No one thought the crime rate could be brought down, the welfare rolls could be reduced, that the performance of our public schools would be increasing dramatically. No one believed that back in 1992.

Now, what is the problem? The question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity and with our social progress? And I would argue to all of you, just in one moment of seriousness tonight, that how a great nation handles its success can be an even sterner test of character than how it deals with adversity.

I have sort of mixed feelings looking at that film, actually. I watch myself get grayer and grayer and grayer. [Laughter] And I thought to myself, before I got into my second term here, I was always the youngest person who did everything. Now I'm up here in my old

boots and my old jeans, and I'm just kind of an old gray-haired redneck trying to put in some good months here. [Laughter] But I've learned a few things earning those gray hairs.

And what I want to say to you is that if you believe, as I do, that it's just a test of our character that's as severe as any we've had, what are we going to do with our prosperity, then this election matters, and I'll tell you what I think we need.

We need to elect someone President who understands the future and knows how to take us there. We need to elect someone President who's actually made tough decisions and not just talked about it. And we need to elect people to the Senate and the House who supported us on our economic program, supported us when we brought the crime rate down, supported us when we cleaned up the environment and grew the economy at the same time, supported us when we protected the individual liberties of America, supported us when we said we could build one America across all the lines that divide us. That's what we need to do in the year 2000, looking toward tomorrow.

Terry has already said this. Ed has already said this. But I want you to know that not only as President but as something of an historian, there is no one in the history of the Vice Presidency who has ever, ever had remotely the positive impact on the lives and the future of the people of the United States as Al Gore has these last 7½ years. It's not even close—ever.

From casting the deciding vote on our economic plan in '93, to sticking up for us when we had to go into Haiti, into Bosnia, into Kosovo, to all the tough calls we made in helping to end the financial crises in the world, down to voting to close the gun show loophole and require child trigger locks, Al Gore has led the way.

Now, when you think about the future, what are the questions? Well, how are we going to get the country out of debt, keep the prosperity going, and give people who live in poor areas who have been left behind a chance to be part of our prosperity? How are we going to deal with the environmental challenges of global warming and grow the economy? How are we going to give all working people the security of access to health care and world-class education for their kids? How are we going to proceed in a world full of uncertainty, where you have to make complicated judgments about the

security threats out there and still try to build a better and brighter future based on trade, not conflict, based on lifting labor standards and environmental standards, not walking away from the human rights of the people of the world? How are we going to do these things?

The answer is, we ought to pick the person who is the best qualified person based on experience. We ought to pick the person who has proved that he makes good decisions based on lots of evidence. We ought to pick a person whose mind and heart have always been focused on the future that his children—now his grandchild—and all of our children ought to have. Al Gore should be, and with your help, will

be, the next President of the United States of America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:15 p.m. at the MCI Center. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, national chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national finance chair, Representative Loretta Sanchez, general cochair, Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, general cochair, and Terence McAuliffe, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Vice President Gore, and Tipper Gore.

Remarks on Proposed Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters May 25, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, Members of the House and Senate leadership, and Secretary Shalala. Let me say how much I appreciated the meeting we had this morning and how much I support the agenda they outlined. I'd like to say a few words about it, myself. But before I do, I'd like to put it into some larger context of our overall strategy.

We just have some new evidence that our long-term strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in our people, and expanding opportunities for American markets' products around the world is working. Revised GDP figures released today confirm that our economy grew at 5.4 percent in the first quarter and that business investment soared by 25 percent. This strategy has now given us over 7 years of growth and investment, the longest economic expansion in history. We ought to stay on the path that got us here and continue to invest in our people and their future, as our leaders have outlined today.

Last month—I want to emphasize this—just last month the distinguished investment firm in New York of Goldman-Sachs estimated that that turnaround from record deficits to record surpluses has kept interest rates 2 full percentage points lower than they would have been without this strategy. Therefore, if we turn away from

it and go back to the deficits, we can expect a corresponding rise in interest rates. A 2 percent cut in interest rates on home mortgages, car loans, college loans, credit card bills, has been an enormous, effective tax cut to the American people and has done a great deal to strengthen our economy.

That's why we feel so strongly that we should use this moment of unprecedented prosperity to lengthen the life and modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, to strengthen Social Security, to invest in key priorities, especially education, to have a tax cut we can afford, and keep paying that debt down to keep those interest rates down.

Now, as you've heard already, we mostly discussed providing prescription drugs for America's seniors in that meeting. I want to thank these leaders for standing with us on this important issue. This is a show of unity and a demonstration of resolve. There is no reason that Congress cannot take the necessary steps to ensure that every older American has access to the lifesaving, life-enhancing prescription drugs they need.

Now, just a few weeks ago Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt came here to announce that the Democrats were united in a single strategy to provide these prescription

drugs. Today they will be joined by leading architects and backers of the plan—all these people behind me who have worked on the details. So we now know exactly how we would do this. We know we can afford it, and we think the time to act is now. I'll just say this one more time. If we were creating Medicare today, there is no way in the wide world we wouldn't provide prescription drugs.

Some of you were with me last Sunday afternoon when I went up to Hyde Park. Then I landed in the Poughkeepsie airport. There were probably 300 people there, so I had an impromptu town meeting. I went down and shook hands with everybody and just sat there and visited with them. And the only issue that was mentioned to me more than once—spontaneously—over and over and over again, was this prescription drug issue. It is a big issue, and it's a big hole in America's social safety net. It is totally voluntary, it is driven by the market, and we ought to do it.

We're talking more than three in five of our seniors, who are like the Lachnits Tom talked about. They may be a particularly egregious case, but over 60 percent of our seniors don't have affordable prescription drug coverage.

Now, I think that the case has been made. I don't know how in the world we can deny the fact that with the funds we have, with the evident obligations we have, with the fact that anybody who lives to be 65 in America today has a life expectancy of 82 or 83 years—and that is only going to increase, and therefore their need for life-enhancing and life-preserving prescription drugs will only increase—this is the best chance we will ever have to address this. And we have to do it.

Now, the budget I presented to Congress will continue our efforts to pay off the debt in 13 years. It will make Medicare more competitive, as many in this group have urged. But it will also provide this kind of voluntary prescription drug coverage.

Now, last month—or earlier this month—the Republican leaders in the House did put forth the plan that had the stated goal of providing affordable prescription drugs for seniors, but the policy falls far short of the promise. Suggesting a private insurance benefit that insurers themselves say they will not offer—and no one will buy if they did offer it, because it would be too expensive—is an empty promise. Limiting direct financial assistance for prescription drugs

to seniors below the \$12,500 income will leave out over half, including the Lachnits. Their drug bills alone, if my math is right, are \$16,800 a year, and that's about what their income is. They wouldn't get a nickel under the Republican plan. That's not right, and we can do better.

So we're here to say we have a full-time obligation to deal with the big opportunities and the big challenges of this country, and Congress should feel that obligation, even when they go into recess. There is no heavier evidence of that today than the need to provide voluntary, affordable prescription drug coverage.

Let me say there are many other priorities, and I want to just mention them. The announcement we had on new markets a couple of days ago ought to give some impetus to raising the minimum wage, passing commonsense gun legislation, expanding health insurance for the parents of poor children, passing a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. And I hope that we will see more action in all these areas.

Now, today the House and Senate conferees are meeting again on the Patients' Bill of Rights. Again, this is like the prescription drugs. This ought not to be a bill that's held up by interest groups; it ought to be a bill that is passed in the public interest. That's our commitment, and you will see it nowhere more intensely than our efforts to get this prescription drug coverage in the closing days of this Congress.

Thank you very much.

New Markets Initiative/Working With Congress

Q. Mr. President, since you mentioned the new markets initiative, some Republicans say that that was the product of intense private negotiations between your staff and Hill Republicans, and there were substantial differences when those debates began. There were no public podium events dealing with new markets. And yet they say there have been numerous public podium events on these issues—prescription drugs and HMO—but no intense private negotiations. Can you tell us why, sir, you and your staff have tried to use the podium more than intense negotiations?

The President. No, I'm more than willing to engage in private negotiations, but I don't think that's a fair representation of exactly how these issues developed. We did have some interest on the part of some Republicans with new markets—I know some of you have to go vote, so

as long as you don't say they're abandoning me on the—[laughter]—on the Patients' Bill of Rights, I'm going to give the Senators who have to leave a pass.

We did have a lot of interest on the front end in that, and I made some calls around myself. But I have actually tried—I have actually had several private conversations on these issues, and I will continue to do it. I think—I believe we could pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We already passed a strong bill through the House with virtually 100 percent of our caucus and a pretty good group of Republican votes with us. We're having trouble in the Senate, manifest in the conference committee, because some of the interest groups are still fighting what I think everybody who's looked at this believes is necessary to make a good bill.

But I'm trying to negotiate on that. I had a private meeting on the gun safety legislation. I've had several conversations about that. I will—I'm willing to do anything to resolve these things. But what we can't do here is to—let me just say what the difference is in blunt terms.

There is no great, powerful special interest out there trying to beat the new markets legislation. And therefore, what we had was people—Washington was able to work the way it ought to work, because all we had were our philosophical differences. But we had a common goal. So we agreed in the best tradition of the Founding Fathers to let the Republicans try their ideas in 40 of their enterprise areas—whatever the proper name is—renewal community areas, and 40 for our empowerment zones. We agreed to provide for poor areas all over the country—including those that aren't here, in either one of those two groups—these special incentives of the new markets.

It was a wonderful example. And if all we ever had to do was reconcile our philosophical differences, we could pass all kinds of bills up here. But when you have an independent, powerful interest group that won't let them go, then we can have all the private talks that we want until we're blue in the face; it's still hard to work it through. I haven't given up. But if you want to know the difference in new markets and those things, it's not that we haven't had private talks; it's that there's no overwhelming interest group trying to beat this thing.

Support for Democratic Party/Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, the labor unions are threatening to withhold support from Democrats, including Vice President Gore, who opposed them on the China trade deal. Do you think those are empty threats?

The President. Oh, I think—no. I don't know. You'll have to ask them about that. What I think is that there's much more that unites us than divides us. And I think that as far as I know, there are no divisive issues out there that have remotely the power that the issues we talked about today do, particularly the prescription drugs and the Patients' Bill of Rights and these other issues we're talking about.

So I think what we need to do is play it straight, put our issues before the American people, and let everybody decide who they're going to be for. But I think that you'll see a very united Democratic Party in the fall, and I'll think you'll see a united Republican Party. I think we'll—and we'll take our debate to the American people, and we'll see what happens.

Q. May I follow up on that, sir?

Q. —you talk about the differences, the interest groups. There are only 24 legislative days left. Realistically, sir, how can we expect to get this done, and do you think we'll accomplish any of these things you just itemized for us?

The President. Oh, I think the only time that the power of the interest groups fade here is when the majority believes—if the interest groups are involved—is when the majority believes that the public interest is so intense that action has to be taken. And I think there's a fair chance that will happen on one or two of these issues. And there are some people in their party who really would like to work with us on these, and I think we'll just keep working at it and see.

You just never—look, for the last 5 years, we've surprised everybody, including ourselves, a time or two, and really had breakthroughs and gotten stuff done. I'm here opening—asking for cooperation, and I think that I speak for our leaders and our Members—we're interested in doing something, so we're willing to do what we can to do our part on that.

Yes.

Peruvian Elections

Q. Mr. President, you've been a great proponent of democracy, especially in Latin America. Peru is going to supposedly hold elections on Sunday. An OAS mission is there. There are a lot of problems. There have been a lot of criticism from your own government toward the Peruvian elections. What do you say at this moment?

The President. I think what I should say at this moment is that, first, obviously it's troubling that one of the candidates said he didn't really want to participate on the runoff election; and secondly, I think we should wait until we get a report from the people that are monitoring the elections, and then I'll have more to say about it.

Yes.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

Q. Mr. President, a followup on the China trade matter. What can you say to American workers in industries that will continue to lose jobs to China, perhaps in spite of the pact, but who will continue to lose jobs to China and elsewhere, and in particular, the textile industry workers, who feel they're the sacrificial lambs of the trade pacts you've worked out?

The President. The first and most important thing is that nothing in this legislation, in this debate, proposed to close our markets to imports that are coming in from China or anywhere else, so that there was nothing in this vote that would have affected them one way or the other.

And if you look at—what we have to do is to hold as many jobs as we can by doing whatever we can to support the industries that are competitive. And if people lose their jobs, we believe—all of us believe we ought to spend more money more quickly to retrain our workers and to get more investment into areas that lose them.

One of the things that I think that will be most helpful with this new markets initiative is, we'll be able to say to investors all across America, if a plant closes down, for example, in a rural area, "Hey, now if you go back and invest and give these people another job, we'll give you a 30 percent tax credit to do it. If you have to borrow money, we'll guarantee two-thirds of the money you borrow, and you get lower interest rates." And if we have an ade-

quate, intense, immediate effort to retrain people, and we have that, I think that the dislocation periods will be shorter, and their ability to get good jobs if plants close will be greater.

But there was nothing in this bill—what this bill did was to lower tariffs for other products, so it will save other manufacturing jobs. And it didn't—no one has suggested raising any barriers.

We've got to do a better job in our country of making sure that we shorten the period of dislocation and increase the likelihood that people get a job as good or better than the one they lost. And that's what we're working on. All of us have worked on that for 7 years, and we're making some progress there.

Working With Congress

Q. Mr. President, as a followup to my first question, are you saying on the prescription drug and HMO issue that there are no philosophical differences from Republicans, and they're simply beholden to special interests?

The President. No, no, no, no, no. There are genuine philosophical differences. I would never say that. No. What I said is, when all we have are philosophical differences, we have an easier time of working through them and accommodating them, as we did on new markets, than we do if there are both philosophical differences and very powerful interest group resistance.

Oh, no, I would never say—no, they have honest philosophical differences on these things. But you asked me why we couldn't work them through, and I don't think it's lack of private meetings. I think it's philosophical differences plus an interest group anchor.

Death of American Journalist in Sierra Leone

Q. Mr. President, Kurt Schork, the American journalist killed in Sierra Leone yesterday—do you have any thoughts on that and ideas on its significance?

The President. First of all, I knew that journalist over 30 years ago; we were in Oxford together. And I'm very sad today. He was a good man, and if you look at all the many posts that he occupied, he was a brave man. He went to a lot of places, a lot of the troubled and dangerous places of the world, to bring the news to people. And I am very sad about it.

But let me say, in a larger sense, I think it shows how important it is for the United

Nations missions to succeed. I appreciate very much the willingness of the Nigerians to go back in there, and we are aggressively committed to providing the support necessary to take the Nigerians and other troops into Sierra Leone and to support the United Nations mission in other ways and to contribute our share and maybe a little over that to try to stabilize the situation.

I think that it's obvious that the RUF have—these are just the last in a long line of their victims, many of whom are innocent children who had their limbs chopped off. And they had a chance to participate in a peace process which was more than generous to them in terms of

giving them an opportunity to walk away from what they had done, and they didn't take it. And I think the United Nations mission has to prevail. I will do everything I can to support it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipients Ronald and Eunice Lachnit; and Peruvian Presidential candidate Alejandro Toledo. The President also referred to RUF, the Revolutionary United Front. A reporter referred to OAS, the Organization of American States.

Remarks on the Observance of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month May 25, 2000

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much, and good afternoon.

I want to welcome all of you here. And a special word of welcome to a former Congressman and now our chair of the Commission, Norm Mineta. Daphne Kwok, Jin Sook Lee, Karen Narasaki, Senator Akaka, Senator Thomas, Representative Becerra, Representative Eni Faleomavaega, Representative Underwood, to Bill Lann Lee and all the members of the administration who are Asian-Pacific Americans. We just had a picture of over 60 of us, about—not quite 90 percent of the total.

I want to thank those of you who work in the White House and to say a special word of appreciation to Laura Efurd, who worked very hard on this event, and to our Director of Public Liaison, Mary Beth Cahill, for her work and support. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to the Asian-Pacific American whom I have known the longest in this group, Maria Haley, who helped me put the Commission together. I thank her for her work.

I am very proud that I've had the opportunity to appoint more Asian-Pacific Americans than any President in history. I am proud of the difference you make every day. Whether you're enforcing our civil rights laws, administering our Medicare program, representing America overseas, or in many other countless ways, you make a profound difference.

This month we celebrate the accomplishments of more than 10 million Asian-Pacific Americans in every aspect of our Nation's life from engineering to education, science to sports, public service to the performing arts. You might be interested to know that one of the performing arts is speechmaking, and the speechwriter who prepared this was Samir Afridi, one of the Asian-Pacific Americans in our administration.

You may be fifth-generation Americans or newcomers to our shores, but you have all enriched our country and reinforced our values of family, work, and community. We should recognize that, not just in one month but every day. Thanks to the inventiveness of people like Vinod Dham, we celebrate it whenever we use a computer with a Pentium chip. We celebrate when we read the works of writers like Amy Tan; when we visit the haunting Vietnam Memorial, designed by Maya Lin; when we benefit from the pathbreaking medical research of Dr. David Ho and from countless other Asian-Pacific Americans who are leading us to new frontiers of science and technology.

And I also want to say that just as we are enhanced when we tap the strengths of all Americans, we are diminished when any American is targeted unfairly because of his or her heritage. Stereotyping, discrimination, racism have no place. And if we can overcome it, America has no limit to what we can achieve.

I am proud of the progress that we have made together over the last 7½ years, both here and around the world. This spring I was the first President in over 20 years to visit South Asia. Just yesterday we took an historic step toward normalizing trade with China and continuing our prosperity at home, and I think most important of all, giving us the chance to have a very different 50 years with the Asian-Pacific region in the future than the 50 years we have all just lived through.

I am very proud of the contributions of Asian-Pacific Americans to the longest economic expansion in history, to the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. I am proud that we have worked hard to spread these benefits more equally across our society—poverty at a 20-year low and poverty among Asian-Pacific Americans declining by more than 10 percent since I took office. Last year the SBA approved loans to Asian-Pacific Americans entrepreneurs totaling over \$2.1 billion, more than 3½ times the number of loans guaranteed in 1992, the year before we took office.

We beefed up our commitment to the enforcement of civil rights laws. And we know that, in spite of all the successes, we still face challenges to building the one America of our dreams. So today I'd like to touch on just a few of those, if I might.

First, we face the challenge of ensuring that every American is part of our prosperity. The Asian-Pacific American community is the fastest growing racial group in our country; also among the most diverse, with more than 30 different ethnic groups, with roots that stretch from Pakistan to Polynesia, Thailand to Tonga, Hong Kong to Hawaii. Some have referred to your community as a so-called model minority. But that label, like any one, while it has its truths and strengths, masks the rich diversity and the diversity of challenges and disparities we find within the Asian-Pacific American community.

For example, cervical cancer rates among Vietnamese women are nearly 5 times higher than those for white women. Why is that, and what can we do about it? Over half of South-Asian-Americans have earned a bachelor's degree, but less than 6 percent of Cambodian- and Laotian-Americans have completed college. Why is that, and what can we do about it? Despite the strong economy, almost half of all Cambodian-Americans and two out of three Hmong-Americans

live in poverty. Why is that, and what are we going to do about it?

Let me say just sort of parenthetically, I was very, very grateful that amidst an otherwise very busy week dominated by the news about our discussions on China, we announced an historic bipartisan accord, thanks to the good work and good faith of the Speaker of the House, between Republicans and Democrats to launch an initiative to develop new markets in America—to give people the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods and people and places that have been left behind here, as we give them to invest around the world. And I hope the Asian-Pacific American community will, number one, help us pass this legislation as soon as possible, and number two, close the disparities in educational and economic performance within all the groups that make up your richly diverse community.

I signed an Executive order last year establishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and an Advisory Commission headed by Norm Mineta. One particular focus is going to be on how we can improve our data collection to better identify the specific needs of discreet populations. In a larger sense, the work of this commission is an extension of the new markets approach.

We do not have a person to waste in America. We all do better when we help each other, and that's what the White House initiative and this Commission's work is all about. I want to thank Norm and all the Commissioners here and those throughout our Government for being a part of it. But a special thanks to those of you who have agreed to serve on this Commission. We wish you well, and we're all committed to helping you succeed.

A second challenge we face in building one America is making sure that our Government reflects our growing diversity. I am proud to have nominated Bill Lann Lee as our Nation's top civil rights enforcer, the first Asian-Pacific American in that post. I still hope the Senate will do the right thing and confirm him.

Yesterday I nominated Norman Bay as U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico. And I also want to say a word about judges. I have appointed the most diverse group of Federal judges in history. They have garnered the highest percentages of top ratings the ABA has given in 40 years. We have shattered the myth that diversity somehow diminishes quality.

Today I want to thank the Senate for the progress made yesterday in confirming 16 judges. But we still have too many nominees who have waited too long.

One of them is a woman named Dolly Gee. I met with her yesterday; I'm going to embarrass her a little bit now. I nominated her for the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. She has some good news in her life: She got married last weekend. The bad news is she's supposed to be on her honeymoon. [Laughter] The worst news is her husband is on her honeymoon—[laughter]—in London. But because she wanted to be here with you, she sent him there without her. [Laughter] And I think every one of you should take it as a personal responsibility to try to persuade the Senate to confirm her.

Dolly, stand up there. [Applause]

Before I took office, it had been 14 years since the last Asian-Pacific American had been appointed to the bench. I've had the honor to appoint five, and Dolly would be six. Six is a nice round number, and she ought to be part of it.

I thank her for her service in Los Angeles, serving with great distinction on the Federal Service Impasse Board helping to mediate labor disputes. And again I say, in addition to that, in her distinguished career as a civil litigator, she has, nonetheless, languished with her nomination for more than a year in the Senate. The quality of justice suffers when people like Dolly are denied a hearing and a vote. So I hope we will get it.

Third, building one America means rooting out discrimination in all its forms. Part of that means healing the wounds of the past. Our budget includes almost \$5 million to preserve a number of World War II internment camps. Part of what I know about this stems from the fact that one of those camps was in my home State. We must never forget that sad chapter in our history or let fear and prejudice jeopardize our rights and our liberties.

I'll never forget when I went to Hawaii to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific. I played golf with a number of World War II veterans, and one of them told me that—he said that he was the only good example of what happened in an internment camp. He was sent to our internment camp in Arkansas, and there was—the only place that he could find anyone who made his

native food was across the river in Mississippi. So he went over there and met a young woman who became his wife. They let him out of the internment camp, and he joined the military and served with distinction in our armed services. I have never forgotten that. And I still can't believe it happened. And that may be the only good story that ever came out of one of those things.

So I would say that we need to do our best to preserve those camps so that there will never be any new ones in America, and our children don't forget what happened and the cautionary tale of how quickly good people can do bad things.

I am also really looking forward next month to awarding the Medal of Honor to 21 Asian-Pacific American veterans of World War II, including Senator Inouye. It is long overdue.

Finally, let me say, we have to do more to combat hate crimes in our society. We see case after case across our land: a man dragged to death in Texas because he was black; a young man beaten and left to die in Wyoming because he was gay; children shot in Los Angeles because of their Jewish faith; a postal worker gunned down in California because of his Filipino heritage. Hate crimes target people not because of what they do but because of who they are. And because of that, they strike at the heart of who we are as Americans. I hope we can pass the hate crimes legislation, and I hope you'll help us to do it.

I recently received a remarkable book called "Asian American Dreams." In the book, the author, Helen Zia, notes that Asian-Pacific Americans, and I quote, "are a people in constant motion, a great work in progress, each stage more faceted and complex than before. As we overcome adversity and take on new challenges, we have evolved. Our special dynamism is our gift to America."

Thank you for sharing that gift and renewing our Nation. Thank you for moving us closer to the America of our Founders' dreams, where we don't just tolerate but celebrate our differences, share our rich heritage and history with others, always reaffirming our common humanity.

Now, I would like to ask the next speaker to the podium, a World War II internment survivor, the first Asian-American to be a committee chairman in Congress, the founder of the Asian Pacific Institute for Congressional

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Studies, the chair of my Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and my friend, Norm Mineta.

Norm, come up.

[*At this point, Mr. Mineta and Daphne Kwok, chair, National Council for Asian Pacific Islanders, made brief remarks. Ms. Kwok then presented the President with an award.*]

The President. Thank you. I want to thank again the Members of Congress for coming, give them a chance to make their exit. We're adjourned. Let's just stand up and have a good time.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jin Sook Lee, secretary, and Karen Narasaki, treasurer, National Council for Asian Pacific Islanders; Special Assistant to the President and Presidential Speechwriter Samir (Sam) Afridi; and Albert Wong, husband of judicial nominee Dolly M. Gee. Executive Order 13125 of June 7, 1999, on increasing participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Federal programs was published in the *Federal Register* at 64 FR 31105. The Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month proclamation of April 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Casey Shearer in Providence, Rhode Island May 25, 2000

The President. Derek, Ruth, Anthony, Julia, Marva, Allyson, all of the family and friends, I want you to know why we're here today. Over 30 years ago, I lived with Casey's Uncle Strobe, and through him I met Casey's Aunt Brooke. And they were in love, and so I then had to meet Derek and Cody and Marva and Skip. And then I introduced them to Hillary. And then Derek introduced all of us to Ruth. And the rest is history.

What I want to say to all of you is, when we were young, we were to each other what Casey has been to you. And I think I can say for all of us, listening to you today has been overwhelming and wonderful. And all I can hope is that you will hold on to it for the rest of your lives.

But we have a few memories, too.

[*At this point, the First Lady made brief remarks.*]

The President. His classmates might be interested to know that when I ran for President first in 1992, Casey actually tried to tutor me in rap music. [*Laughter*] You know, I would do this whole shtick. I played on Arsenio Hall's show, and I was trying to show that I was in tune with younger voters. I knew nothing about rap music. [*Laughter*] I knew nothing about the music of the eighties. I went to work and missed

it all. Casey was horrified that I was going to embarrass myself on national television and blow the election. [*Laughter*]

I also remember, after we went to the White House, Casey and his family, we went to a Baltimore Orioles game together. And I actually thought I knew something about baseball until he offered the play-by-play. [*Laughter*] So I remember that.

[*The First Lady made brief remarks.*]

The President. Now, I come here today and find out that he gave a great gift to our Embassy in Italy with that—[*laughter*]. You know, even though I just have a few months left to serve, I still have some measure of influence, and I think I'll have a plaque put up at that pool. [*Laughter*]

Let me say to all of you just one last thing. Growing older has its joys. But one of the great burdens is the pain and mystery of losing children—the ones you know and the ones you don't. And I don't know any more about it today than I did when I was your age, but I know a little more about life. It's such a short time—21 years, 22.

But a few days ago, I went to Chicago to an event, and after it was over I went with my friends there to the Field Museum, where Hillary spent a lot of time as a kid. Now, at

the Field Museum now, they have this 67-million-year-old *Tyrannosaurus rex* named Sue, after the woman who found her on a South Dakota farm. I liked old Sue. And I thought to myself, we're all just passing through. I mean, she was here 67 million years ago.

And what I would like to say to you is that, whether you live for 20 years or 50 or 80 or 100, it doesn't take long to live a life. And Mr. Wordsworth was right, the last best portions of it are the little unremembered acts of kindness and love. Casey Shearer had a great life.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in Sayles Hall at Brown University. In his remarks, he re-

ferred to the following members of Casey Shearer's family: his uncle, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott; his aunt, Brooke Shearer, former director, White House Fellowships; his father, former U.S. Ambassador to Finland Derek N. Shearer; his stepbrother, Anthony Shearer, and his stepsister, Julia; his mother, Ruth Y. Goldway; his grandparents, Lloyd (Skip) and Marva Shearer; and his uncle, journalist Cody Shearer. The President also referred to Casey's girlfriend, Allyson Grant; and Susan Hendrickson, volunteer, Black Hills Institute of Geological Research. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Memorial Day National Moment of Remembrance

May 25, 2000

I am very pleased by the House and Senate's joint action to offer formal support to the Memorial Day National Moment of Remembrance. The recently passed House Concurrent Resolution 302 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 100 have established the National Moment of Remembrance as an important part of this year's program to honor those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. Earlier this month I directed all executive departments and agencies to recognize and promote a National Moment of Remembrance on Memorial Day.

The National Moment of Remembrance asks each American to pause for one minute at 3 p.m. local time on Monday, May 29th to reflect

and remember the sacrifices made by our fallen heroes. This simple, brief reflection asks little compared with what we have asked of our servicemen and women. With our united, solemn action, we honor and pay tribute to our Nation's heroes.

I wish to commend and thank Congressmen Dana Rohrabacher and John Murtha and Senators Chuck Hagel and Bob Kerrey for cosponsoring these concurrent resolutions. Their leadership and initiative are visible examples of how we as Americans can work in unison to honor our cherished history. I ask all Americans to join with Congress in pausing to observe this National Moment of Remembrance.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Bosnian Serbs, and Kosovo

May 25, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declara-

tion, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice

to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), as expanded to address the actions and policies of the Bosnian Serb forces and the authorities in the territory that they control within Bosnia and Herzegovina, is to continue in effect beyond May 30, 2000, and the emergency declared with respect to the situation in Kosovo is to continue in effect beyond June 9, 2000.

On December 27, 1995, I issued Presidential Determination 96-7, directing the Secretary of the Treasury, *inter alia*, to suspend the application of sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and to continue to block property previously blocked until provision is made to address claims or encumbrances, including the claims of the other successor states of the former Yugoslavia. This sanctions relief, in conformity with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1022 of November 22, 1995 (hereinafter the "Resolution"), was an essential factor motivating Serbia and Montenegro's acceptance of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina initialed by the parties in Dayton on November 21, 1995, and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995 (hereinafter the "Peace Agreement"). The sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) were accordingly suspended prospectively, effective January 16, 1996. Sanctions imposed on the Bosnian Serb forces and authorities and on the territory that they control within Bosnia and Herzegovina were subsequently suspended prospectively, effective May 10, 1996, also in conformity with the Peace Agreement and the Resolution.

Sanctions against both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Bosnian Serbs were subsequently terminated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1074 of October 1, 1996. This termination, however, did not end the requirement of the Resolution that blocked those funds and assets that are subject to claims and encumbrances until unblocked in accordance with applicable law.

Until the status of all remaining blocked property is resolved, the Peace Agreement implemented, and the terms of the Resolution met, this situation continues to pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy interests, and the econ-

omy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 30, 2000.

On June 9, 1998, I issued Executive Order 13088, "Blocking Property of the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Republic of Serbia, and the Republic of Montenegro, and Prohibiting New Investment in the Republic of Serbia in Response to the Situation in Kosovo." Despite months of preparatory consultations and negotiations, representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in March 1999, completely blocked agreement on an internationally backed proposal for a political solution to the Kosovo crisis. Yugoslav forces reinforced positions in the province during the March negotiation and, as negotiations failed, intensified the ethnic cleansing of Albanians from Kosovo. Yugoslav security and paramilitary forces thereby created a humanitarian crisis in which approximately half of Kosovo's population of 2 million had been displaced from the province and an unknown but apparently large portion of the remaining population had been displaced within Kosovo by mid-April.

On April 30, 1999, I issued Executive Order 13121, "Blocking Property of the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Republic of Serbia, and the Republic of Montenegro, and Prohibiting Trade Transactions Involving the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in Response to the Situation in Kosovo." Executive Order 13121 revises and supplements Executive Order 13088 to expand the blocking regime by revoking an exemption for certain financial transactions provided in Executive Order 13088; to impose a general ban on all U.S. exports and reexports to and imports from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (the "FRY (S&M)") or the Governments of the FRY (S&M), the Republic of Serbia, or the Republic of Montenegro; and to prohibit any transaction or dealing by a U.S. person related to trade with or to the FRY (S&M) or the Governments of the FRY (S&M), the Republic of Serbia, or the Republic of Montenegro. In addition, Executive Order 13121 directs that special consideration be given to Montenegro and the humanitarian needs of refugees from Kosovo and other civilians within the FRY

(S&M) in the implementation of the Order. Finally, Executive Order 13121 also supplements Executive Order 13088 to direct that the commercial sales of agricultural commodities and products, medicine, and medical equipment for civilian end-use in the FRY (S&M) be authorized subject to appropriate safeguards to prevent diversion to military, paramilitary, or political use by the Governments of the FRY (S&M), the Republic of Serbia, or the Republic of Montenegro.

This situation continues to pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national

security, foreign policy interests, and the economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond June 9, 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 25, 2000.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Bosnian Serbs, and Kosovo

May 25, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) emergency

declared in Executive Order 12808 on May 30, 1992, and with respect to the Kosovo emergency declared in Executive Order 13088 on June 9, 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 25, 2000.

Remarks at the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies Dinner

May 25, 2000

Thank you very much. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We had a wonderful day today at the White House. For all of you who were there, I thank you for coming. I thank my good friend Norm Mineta. He thought he had retired from public life when he left the Congress, and he found that there is life after politics, but there's no life without politics. [*Laughter*] I got him back in, and I thank him for that.

I also want to thank the Members of the United States House who are here. I have no glasses and this list—[*laughter*]—so I'm going to show my age here. But the chair of the APA Caucus, Bob Underwood; Lane Evans,

Shelley Berkley, Julian Dixon, Donna Christensen Green, and Phil Crane, thank you all for being here. I'd also like to acknowledge one Member of Congress who is not here, who led our efforts on China PNTR, Bob Matsui. I thank him as well for what he did. Thank you all.

I want to thank our Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Bill Lann Lee, who is here. I had a lot of fun today with Dolly Gee. I think she's still here; she's not on her honeymoon yet. Thank you very much for being here. And I want to thank all the people at the White House, but especially Laura Efurud, in my Office

of Public Liaison. The Director of our office, Mary Beth Cahill, came over here with me tonight, and we were laughing that—you may know, I had to go to a memorial service for a young friend of mine today in Rhode Island. That's why I'm a little late. And when I leave you, I'm going to the Sons of Italy dinner. [Laughter] So I said to Mary Beth, "Here we are, two Irish going to the Asian-Pacific dinner and the Sons of Italy dinner. Is this a great country or what?" [Laughter]

Let me begin by just saying a heartfelt thank-you to the members of the Asian American Pacific Institute for the support you have given to the efforts that Vice President Gore and I have made over these last 7½ years. It's meant more than you can possibly know. I was here 5 years ago, as Norm said, when you launched the institute. You've come a long way since then. You have embodied the wisdom of the Chinese proverb that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And you have taken a lot of steps in the last 5 years.

You've gotten more Asian-Pacific Americans interested, informed, and involved in the political process. You've had an impact on a lot of vital issues. You've helped to form more unity among the great diversity of the Asian-Pacific community in the United States.

When I was here in '95, I said, if we only understand what an incredible resource our people are, we can have more opportunities than any other country. I still believe that. I think no nation is so well positioned for this new century, for a global economy and an increasingly globalized society as the United States, if we are prepared to make the most of our diverse talents, our heritage, our contacts, what we know, what we feel, what we understand.

The first Japanese immigrants came here in 1843. Their spirit helped to build this country. The people who came to build the trans-continental railroad over 130 years ago, and are still throughout the Mississippi Delta and my home region, helped to build this country. The people who helped to put the first Asian-American in Congress in 1957 helped to build this country. And so have all of you.

Now there are more than 9 million Americans who trace their roots to Asia and the islands of the Pacific, more than 25 nationalities, more than 75 languages, hundreds of different ethnic groups, all with a long, rich legacy of working hard and overcoming obstacles to pursue the

American dream. You have greatly enriched the quality and the character of the United States, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

You have strengthened our common values of family, faith, and work, and our common vision of a better future for our children. For 7½ years, I have tried to reinforce those values and advance that future. I am grateful that we are in the longest economic expansion in history, with the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years—32 years now—with the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, a 20-year low in poverty, over a 10 percent drop in poverty among Asian-Pacific Americans alone.

Last year the SBA approved loans to the Asian-Pacific community in America exceeding \$2 billion, more than 3½ times the amount approved in the year before I took office. I have tried to make sure that we would go forward together.

I'm grateful that our social fabric is on the mend, something of immense concern to all of you: crime at a 25-year low; teen births down 7 years in a row; adoptions up 30 percent; welfare rolls cut in half, to their lowest level since 1968; expanded Head Start; 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious diseases for the first time in our history. Twenty-one million people took advantage of the family and medical leave law; 5 million families benefited by the HOPE scholarships to send their kids to college; 150,000 young Americans, many of them Asian-Pacific Americans, have served their communities in AmeriCorps. I am grateful for all of that.

Our country, I believe, is moving to develop a national security strategy for the 21st century which keeps a strong defense but relies on cooperation wherever possible. And I do believe that far more important than the obvious economic benefits, it is the chance to have a more secure future. That was the most important reason for the House of Representatives adopting the permanent normal trade relations with China yesterday, and I'm very, very grateful to them for doing that.

Now, having said that, you may have noticed that this is an election year. [Laughter] Since it's the first time I haven't been on the ballot in 26 years, I've hardly noticed it at all, but—[laughter]—I understand. Most days I'm okay

about it. And so I want to ask you to do something that comes naturally to you, whether you're Democrats or Republicans or independents. I want to urge you to use this year to mobilize your communities and those beyond your communities to have the right approach. Because the great question here is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? What are we going to do with our increasing social harmony? What are we going to do with our relative security in a still dangerous world? How are we going to make the most of a moment that truly is unprecedented in the lives of all of us in this room?

And maybe it's never happened to you, but at least I can speak for the Irish. Everyone I know over 30 has made a mistake in his or her personal or professional life not because things were going so poorly but because things were going so well. Sometimes when things are going well, you break your concentration. You think there are no consequences to taking the momentary benefit instead of the long-term look.

And I have decided that I will try to devote myself this year to getting the American people to take the long view, to say, "What are we going to do with this magic moment?" And I think we ought to say, "Okay, we can do things now we couldn't do 7 or 8 years ago," when I was preoccupied, overwhelmingly, with trying to turn the country around and get people together and go beyond the divisive politics that had paralyzed us into a rhetoric in Washington that I sort of characterized as "I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight." [Laughter] And we're trying to move beyond that.

And that's how we balanced the budget and produced this surplus. When I leave office, we will have paid off about \$360 billion of our national debt. I confess even I didn't think we could do that in 1992. If I had gone before the people in '92 and said, "Vote for me, and when I leave office, we'll have 3 years of paying down the debt," you would have said, "He seems like a nice young man, but he's a little touched. We'd better send him home." [Laughter]

So I ask you to think of that. What are those big questions? Well, first of all, in spite of our growing prosperity, there are still people in places untouched by it. And we ought to take this opportunity to give them a chance to be a part of the American dream. Just for example:

almost half of all Cambodian-Americans, two out of three Hmong-Americans still live in poverty. Over half of the South-Asian-Americans have earned a bachelor's degree, far above the 37 percent national average. But less than 6 percent of Cambodian- and Laotian-Americans have completed college, in an age in which getting a world-class education is a prerequisite to full participation in the global economy.

We can't rest until every community, every family, every individual has a chance to be a part of this magnificent opportunity that so many of you have worked so hard to create. That's why I signed that Executive order establishing the Advisory Commission. The Commission will work on ways to get the information we need to make the decisions that ought to be made to help the discrete groups of Asian-Pacific Americans that are still not fully participating. They will help us to lower the cultural and linguistic and other barriers to health and social services. But we have to do more.

Just this week we had what I think is a truly historic meeting in the White House that was, understandably, sort of overlooked in the great amount of attention given to the China vote. But the Speaker of the House of Representatives and more than a dozen Members of Congress, equally divided in both parties, came together in the White House, and we said, "Look, we're trying open new markets abroad, but we have to create new markets at home. And we want to give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas of America and in the people of America that aren't fully participating we now give people to invest in poor areas throughout the world." It's an historic moment. And if we pass this legislation—and I believe we will—it could be the most significant anti-poverty initiative in a generation. I hope all of you will support it, without regard to your party.

What are some of the other big questions? I won't go through the answers or what I think are the answers. The important thing is, you have to decide what you think the answers are. How are we going to guarantee every child a world-class education and make sure everybody can go to college? How are we going to make sure that people who work for a living don't raise their children in poverty? The child poverty rate in America is still about 18 percent, as wealthy as we are. How are we going to

help people to balance work and family, something that many Asian-Americans have been brilliant at, but it's not easy?

How are we going to make sure that, in this new and difficult world, we continue to be a force for peace and reconciliation, and help other people resolve their racial and ethnic and religious conflicts that are leading to so much turmoil and could disrupt our future? What are our obligations to people in the poorest parts of the world that are being plagued by AIDS, malaria, and TB, and other problems? All the children that are dying out there every day just because they don't have access to safe water—if we do something about that, won't that strengthen our security and make us more prosperous in the years ahead, because other people can raise their children in a good environment?

And how are we going to build one America here at home, after we make our country the safest big country in the world? What are we going to do about the aging of America, when two-thirds of our people will be working, but one-third will be retired—our adults? Well, maybe more older people will work. We lifted the earnings limit on Social Security, almost unanimously. It was a very good thing to do. But unless you young people dramatically increase your birth rates or we dramatically increase immigration when all us baby boomers retire, we have to ask ourselves, how can we preserve the integrity of Social Security and Medicare—and, I think, add a prescription drug benefit for the seniors—in ways that don't burden their ability to raise our children, or our children's ability to raise our grandchildren? How can we do that?

And to me, most important of all, still by far, is how can we build one America? How can we tear down the remaining barriers between us, rooted in our differences?

I have never believed that we should try to homogenize America. I think we're becoming more interesting every day. You obviously agree by the reaction you had when I told you I was going to the Sons of Italy dinner later. [Laughter] The trick is to respect our diversity, to go beyond it, to celebrate our diversity, to actually think it's a great thing and have fun with it, but to recognize that the reason we can enjoy it is because our common humanity and our common respect for the values of our Constitution are even more important than our diversity. That's the trick.

And the first thing we've got to do is make sure everybody has the chance to participate. That's why we've got 70 Asian-Pacific Americans in the administration. That's why I nominated Bill Lann Lee. And I still hope the Senate will have a blast of enlightenment and confirm him. I keep working on that. Before I took office, it had been 14 years since an Asian-Pacific American had been nominated for a Federal judgeship. We have appointed five so far.

Yesterday the Senate—I want to thank them—I've given them such grief because they've been so slow confirming my appointments, but yesterday they did confirm 16 judges. So I thank Senator Lott and the Senate for doing that, and I hope it is the beginning of a trend. And I hope that trend will include Dolly Gee from California.

I think we should adopt hate crimes legislation. I think we ought to pass—I think we ought to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." I think that people—I think that every school in this country should have programs which bring different people together. And if the student body is not diverse, they ought to bring people in from outside to talk, to ask questions, to understand what it is about all these myriad people that make up America that are different and what it is we have in common. I think this is profoundly important.

And so I will just leave you with this. I've had a great time. You've been good to me. I'm not done; we're going to get a lot of things done in the next 7 months. But you, through this organization and other efforts, have been brought into the mainstream of American public debate. You unite people across all kinds of ethnic and cultural lines and religious lines because of your common Asian-Pacific heritage—also, different philosophical and political lines. But true to your values, you can have a pivotal effect in getting America to take this millennial year to ask and answer the question, what will we do with this moment of good fortune?

You know, nothing lasts forever. And that keeps us going through the bad times, knowing that nothing lasts forever. But in good times, it means we must be careful, vigilant. We must nurture and be grateful for these opportunities and make the most of them.

So I ask you to think about that. If I were to receive a vision from heaven tonight that I was going to pass from this Earth tomorrow, and I could have one wish, and God said, "Now,

I'm not a genie, you don't get three wishes. I'll just give you one," I would wish for us to be one America, genuinely one America, because we've got hundreds of stories in this room that illustrate there is nothing that we cannot achieve if we're given a chance, a fair chance, and if we understand that everybody matters, everybody has got a role to play, and we all do better when we help each other. It's a simple little formula in the digital age, but it will carry us right where we need to go. And you can make sure it happens.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. at the Capitol Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Norman Y. Mineta, chairman, Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies; Virgin Islands Delegate Donna M.C. Christensen; and Dolly M. Gee, nominee for U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California. Executive Order 13125 of June 7, 1999, on increasing participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Federal programs was published in the *Federal Register* at 64 FR 31105.

Remarks at the Sons of Italy Foundation Dinner May 25, 2000

Well, thank you for the warm welcome. I am delighted to be here. I'm sorry to be late. I got here in time to see Mario Andretti's film, or at least to hear it. And I want to begin by congratulating Mario Andretti and Connie Stevens on their award and congratulating you on honoring them.

I was, today—the reason I had to be a little late tonight is, I'd been forced to go to Rhode Island; I had to go to a memorial service today for a friend of mine. And then when I came back, I stopped by the Asian-Pacific American dinner tonight. And I brought Mary Beth Cahill, my Director of Public Liaison. Now, she's Irish. I'm Irish. We went to the Asian-Pacific dinner, and then we came to the Sons of Italy dinner. Is this a great country, or what? *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here: Michael Capuano, Rosa DeLauro, Peter DeFazio, Nick Lampson, Dave Weldon. And I know John LaFalce was here, and since he's from New York, I think I'll mention him anyway. *[Laughter]*

I want to—I see Ambassador Salleso back there. Thank you, sir, for representing your country so well. And our U.S. Ambassador to Hungary has come all the way back, Peter Tufo, thank you. Thank you, Paul Polo. Thank you, Phil Piccigallo. Thank you, Phil Boncore. And I'd also like to recognize one of my heroes, since I'm a baseball nut, Tommy Lasorda, and Vic Damone. And Vince Panvini, the Sheet Metal Workers' president, thank you.

You know, I do a lot of these dinners. And I never come so late, but normally by this hour, people are beginning to flag. But you look pretty lively to me tonight. *[Laughter]* And I don't think it's me; I think, the espresso, maybe. *[Laughter]*

I am going to follow tonight the admonition of one of the greatest of all Italians, Cicero, who was a pretty fair speaker. He said this: "Brevity is the best recommendation of a speech." So I agree with that, except when it comes to the State of the Union. *[Laughter]* And Cicero never had to give one of those, so I forgive him.

Let me begin by saying that obviously this is the last one of these dinners I will attend as President. Many of you have helped me and the Vice President and our administration family over 7½ years, especially when it comes to advancing the cause of education. I thank you for what you do for the young people every year, and I hope to meet your young honorees tonight, which you've given the scholarships to. And I thank you very much for what you've done for us over these last 7½ years.

I'd also like to say how profoundly indebted I am to the host of Italian-Americans who have served in this administration: today, my Chief of Staff is John Podesta, the second Italian-American chief of staff I have had; my Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti; the Counselor to the Chief of Staff, Karen Tramontano; my Director of Communications, Loretta Ucelli; my

Deputy Press Secretary, Jennifer Palmieri; and that's just the beginning. I used to joke with them that someday, someone would file an affirmative action suit against me for having too many Italians in the administration. [Laughter] But I'm very glad also to have Secretary Andrew Cuomo, who's done a terrific job, and I want to thank him.

I want to also thank the Italian-American community for the contributions that so many millions have made to the progress of America these last 7½ years, to the economic progress, the social progress, bringing the values of immigrants, of hard work, faith, and family, to the forefront of America and bringing us together.

And I want to make basically just two points, very briefly, that I think are consistent with what the Sons of Italy have done for 90 years now and more. First of all, you may have noticed that this is an election year. It's the first time in 26 years I haven't been on the ballot, so I haven't paid much attention to it—[laughter]—but I'm told that this is an election year. Most of the time, I'm okay about not being on the ballot.

But what I want to say to you is this: I've done everything I know to do to help our country deal with the challenges that have faced us at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. We are now in a once-in-a-lifetime position, in terms of the strength of our economy, in terms of the strengthening of our social fabric, in terms of our security position in the world, and I believe the great question in this millennial year is, what are we going to do with this good fortune?

And those of you, at least in this audience, who are over 30 can all remember at least one time in your lives when you made a mistake—a personal mistake or a professional or a business mistake or, if you're in politics, a political mistake—not because things were going so poorly but because things were going so well you thought there were no consequences to a lapse in judgment, to taking the immediate path rather than the long view.

The whole history of Italian-Americans is the history of people who overcame obstacles, strengthened their families, made sacrifices today for the benefit of tomorrow. And what I hope and pray for Americans, without regard to whether they're Democrats or Republicans or independents, is that we will take advantage of this precious opportunity. We have to ask

ourselves, what are we going to do with this good fortune to build the future of our dreams for our children and our grandchildren? How are we going to meet the big challenges still out there? What about the people in places who have been left behind by this prosperity?

A couple of days ago we had what is, to me, one of my most moving days as President, when we had a large number of Members of Congress, including a couple who are in this room tonight, join the Speaker of the House and me to announce that we had reached a bipartisan agreement that I hope will pass the House and the Senate unanimously to give investors, like some of you in this room, the same tax incentives and other incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in urban and rural America and our Native American reservations we give you to invest in poor areas overseas and around the world. That's a big issue.

What are we going to do to make sure all of our children have world-class educations and they can all go on to college? What are we going to do to reward work and help people balance work and family, the most important question many people face?

How will we manage the aging of America? What's going to happen to Social Security? What's going to happen to Medicare? What about the families that are taking care of their parents in long-term care? How are they going to deal with that?

The average life expectancy of anybody that lives to be 65 today in America is 82, and it will soon be a lot higher. When we get the full decoding of the human genome sometime later this year, it will spark the most amazing revolution in the biological sciences we have ever seen. And I wouldn't be surprised if there are young people in this audience today who will have children over the next 20 years who literally will be able to look forward to a life expectancy of about 100 years.

Now, that is a high-class problem. But it means we have to do more to prepare the way. We've got to give seniors prescription drugs so they can live healthier and better as well as longer. We've got to deal with this. If a family's going to take care of a loved one, an elderly or disabled loved one, we've got to help them do that. They ought to have some sort of tax break to do that.

I think these things are very important. But they're big questions, and they don't have any simple partisan answers. They're people issues.

How are we going to deal with the new security challenges from terrorists and rogue states and narcotraffickers? Someone told me the Ambassador from Colombia is here tonight. The next big national security challenge we have is getting the Congress to pass America's share of helping to save the oldest democracy in Latin America, in Colombia, and I hope all of you will support that. We have got to prove that a free system of free people can defeat narcotraffickers and civil war and terrorists. We've got to prove that.

But to me, the most important thing of all is, as we become more and more a nation of immigrants, how shall we remain one America? How will we celebrate our diversity? I don't believe in tolerating difference; I think it should be celebrated and enjoyed. This is a more interesting country, don't you think—that it's growing more diverse?

You know, when I was over at the Asian dinner tonight, there are people from at least 25 different national groups, speaking over 75 different native languages, from hundreds of different ethnic groups, just in the Asian-American community alone. Across the river here, in Alexandria, there is one school district that has children in it whose parents speak over 180 languages as their first language.

Now, in a global economy and an increasingly global society, this is a godsend. But we don't have time anymore, or the luxury, for people to endure some of the prejudice and discrimination that the Italians and the Irish went through when they came here; that the Japanese felt when they were put in the internment camps in World War II; that we still see in the hate crimes around this country.

So I hope you will help us to support the hate crimes legislation, the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and even more important,

genuine efforts in every community and every school to expose our children to all the differences that make up America today, to let them appreciate them and respect them and celebrate them and recognize that the only way we're ever going to hold our ship of state together is to find that incredible balance between loving our ethnic diversity and understanding that our common humanity is even more important.

It's probably too late in the evening for such heavy stuff, but this is my last shot, and I thought I'd take it. [*Laughter*]

Again let me say, I thank you. I've had a wonderful time. The country's in good shape. You have to decide what to do with it.

You want to be able to tell your children and your grandchildren that when the century turned and when we started a new millennium, America was not just in good shape but you made the most of it, that we were a good friend and a good neighbor to the rest of the world and that we built a new future for all our people. That's what you want to be able to say.

And so whatever your political background, whatever your predisposition, be Italian this election year. Think about family. Think about work. Think about the future. Think about your grandchildren. And give it all you've got.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 p.m. in the Great Hall at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to former professional race car driver Mario Andretti; entertainers Connie Stevens and Vic Damone; Ferdinando Salleo, Italian Ambassador to the United States; Paul S. Polo, president, Sons of Italy Foundation; Philip R. Piccigallo, national executive director, and Philip R. Boncore, national first vice president, Order Sons of Italy in America; former Los Angeles Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda; and Luis Alberto Moreno, Colombian Ambassador to the United States.

Remarks Announcing the Coral Reef and Marine Protected Areas Initiatives at Assateague Island, Maryland May 26, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first, I want to thank all of our previous speakers. As so often happens when I get up to speak, what needs to be said has already been said.

Thank you, Carolyn Cummins, for your kind words and for your years and years of leadership for Assateague Island and for these beaches. I want to thank the park superintendent, Marc Koenigs. This is his last week here, because he has just gotten a new assignment at the Gateway National Recreation Area in New York Harbor, a place I've gotten a little more interested in, in the last few months. [Laughter] So he's got a very good assignment, and I wish him well.

I want to thank Sylvia Earle, the explorer-in-residence at National Geographic and, in a way, an explorer-in-residence for the American citizens, as you just heard. I want to thank also the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrator, Jim Baker, and Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Hayes, who are here.

And I'd also like to recognize the elected officials, particularly the Maryland delegation from the United States Congress, who have been just terrific on these environmental issues: Senator Barbara Mikulski, thank you, Senator. She came dressed to spend the day here. I hope she does. [Laughter] I want to thank Senator Paul Sarbanes for being here. When I came up, he said, "You know, this is my part of Maryland. And my mother is here, and she is celebrating her 92d birthday today." So welcome to Mrs. Sarbanes. We're glad to see you; thank you. Give her a hand. That's great. [Applause] She's also got the coolest sunglasses of anybody here, I might add. [Laughter]

I'd like to thank Representatives Wayne Gilchrest, to my left, and Ben Cardin to my right for being here. And I'd like to recognize a guest from all the way across the country, Representative Sam Farr from northern California. He represents the district where Monterey Bay is, where we had our oceans conference 2 years ago, and he's a great friend of the environment. Thank you, Sam Farr, for being here.

I'd also like to thank the mayors, the council members, the State legislators who met me here. And I'd like to recognize Carl Zimmerman, the chief of research management of the Assateague National Island Seashore, for your work. Thank you all for being here.

Well, I came down here today to get ahead of the Memorial Day rush. [Laughter] And I didn't want all of you who wanted to sit here to be lost in the stampede of fun-seekers. But I thank you for coming. We all know that this weekend marks the opening of the summer beach season, and by the millions, Americans will flock to our coastlines. Beachlines and coastlines are now our number one tourist destination.

Our oceans, however, are far more than a playground. They have a central effect on the weather, on our climate system. Through fishing, tourism, and other industries, ocean resources—listen to this—support one out of every six jobs in the United States of America. Coral reefs and coastal waters are a storehouse of biodiversity. Think about what children here—and we have some children here from Bennett Middle School I met on the way down. And just think about what they see and learn about the timeless movement of the dunes, about the complex life of a coastal marsh—horseshoe crabs, living fossils whose blood provides us a vital antibacterial agent. And I learned today that 5,000 years ago, this island was several miles out in the ocean, brought back closer to shore by the rising of the sea level, something which is okay in small doses but could be very troubling for us if we don't deal with the problem of climate change, global warming, the melting of the icecaps, and the alarming level at which ocean levels could rise.

Even though they cover—yes, you can clap for that. [Applause] You have to forgive me. When I give these kinds of talks, I veer off the script a little bit. Oceans cover more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface. They are immensely powerful, as anybody who has ever been caught in an undertow can tell you. But they are also very, very fragile. Poisonous runoff from the Mississippi River alone has created

a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico that is as large as the State of New Jersey. Here in Maryland, runoff threatens fish and crabs in the Chesapeake Bay.

Globally, already, people have destroyed 10 percent of the world's coral reefs. Another 20 percent are in grave peril. I saw the changes when I went snorkeling 5 years ago off the Great Barrier Reefs in Australia. And I read just last week of the challenges now presented to the second largest barrier reefs in the world, off the coast of Belize. Global warming, as I said, is helping to raise the ocean temperatures to record highs, changing weather patterns, killing coral reefs, driving species from their habitat.

When I was with Sam Farr 2 years ago in Monterey Bay, I went out into the bay with some young researchers from the Stanford center that's there. And they pointed out some small ocean organisms that just 50 years ago were 20 miles to the south—minuscule organisms that moved that far in 50 years.

Over the last 7 years, we've tried to change as much of this as we could, protecting millions of acres of forests and open space, showing we can clean up our environment and grow the economy at the same time. But we need to do more with our seas and our coasts. The old idea that we can only grow by putting more pollution into our lakes and rivers and oceans must finally be put to rest. Indeed, it is now clear that we can grow our economy faster over the long run by improving our environment, and it's really not enough for us just to try to keep it as it is. We have to do better.

I want to say, on behalf of Vice President Gore, as well as myself, that we are grateful for the opportunities we've had to do this work, grateful for the chance that we had to host the Oceans Conference in Monterey in 1998—and Hillary and Tipper were there, too. We had a wonderful day. Last year, the Vice President issued our one-year update, and we're going to try to put out a report every year. I hope that in successive years Presidents will do the same.

As has been said, we have quadrupled funding for national marine sanctuaries. We have new funding to rebuild our threatened fisheries. We extended a moratorium on offshore oil leases for oil and gas drilling through 2012. We've been an international leader in efforts to protect

whales and other endangered species. But we have to do more.

Today I want to announce two important initiatives that I believe will help to ensure that our oceans are places of delight and learning for generations to come. First, I am signing an Executive order to create a national system to preserve our coasts, reefs, underwater forests, and other treasures, directing the Commerce and Interior Departments to work together to create a network of marine protected areas, encompassing pristine beaches, mysterious deep-water trenches, and every kind of marine habitat. This Executive order directs NOAA to develop a single framework to manage our national network wisely. We intend to establish ecological reserves in the most fragile areas to keep them off-limits to fishing, drilling, and other damaging uses. I'm also directing the EPA to strengthen water quality standards all along our coasts and provide stronger protections for the most vulnerable ocean waters, to reduce pollution of beaches, coasts, and oceans.

Second, I'm announcing today our commitment to permanently protect coral reefs of the northwest Hawaiian Islands. If you've ever been there, you know why we should. These eight islands are not, all of them, so well-known, but they stretch over 1,200 miles. They shelter more than 60 percent of America's coral reefs. They're home to plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth and to highly endangered species, including leatherback turtles and monk seals.

I'm directing the Departments of Interior and Commerce to develop in the next 90 days a comprehensive plan to protect the reefs, working with State and regional authorities and making sure the people of Hawaii also have a voice at the table. It is in our national interest to do this, and it should not be a partisan issue. On more than one occasion, Representative Gilchrest has supported our environmental initiatives, and I thank you, sir, for that. It should not be a Republican or a Democratic issue.

I sent a budget this year to the Congress to provide significant new resources to fight climate change and air and water pollution. My lands legacy initiative would provide record funding to protect our lands and coasts. I think the leadership in Congress is swimming against the tide, because they've proposed a budget that would cut funding for critical environmental priorities. A House committee has slashed lands

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legacy by 75 percent. And once again, the majority is loading up the budget bills with anti-environmental riders that would cripple the new national monuments I created earlier this year, surrender our public lands to private interests, and undermine our efforts to protect water resources and combat global warming.

Already in this year of rather hot election rhetoric—you may have noticed there’s an election this year—[laughter]—there have been commitments to roll back the efforts I have taken to create 43 million roadless acres in our national forests. We need to have a clear, national, bipartisan consensus at the grassroots level that we don’t need these riders and we do need a national commitment to the environment.

For thousands of years, oceans and beaches have stirred the human imagination. Today, ocean depths offer hopes for medicine and science. They still stir the curious child in all of us. I said in my State of the Union Address that I thought in the next few years we would not only decode the human genome and find cures for various kinds of cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, we would also find out

what’s in the black holes in the universe. But we are also going to find out what’s in the darkest depths of our oceans, and what we find out may save hundreds of thousands of people.

Forty-five years ago Rachel Carson wrote from her Maryland home that the sea “keeps alive the sense of continuing creation and of the relentless drive of life . . . in the sea nothing lives to itself . . . the present is linked with past and future, and each living thing with all that surrounds it.” If we could all think that about each other and our community—that we do not live to ourselves, that we are linked to the past and the future, and that everything that happens requires a due consideration for all that surrounds it—then America would have its greatest days in the new millennium.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. on North Ocean Beach. In his remarks, he referred to Carolyn Cummins, president, Maryland Coastal Bays Program; Marc Koenings, superintendent, Assateague National Island Seashore; and Senator Sarbanes’ mother, Matina. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Memorandum on Protection of United States Coral Reefs in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands

May 26, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: Protection of U.S. Coral Reefs in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands

The world’s coral reefs—our tropical rain forests of the water—are in serious decline. These important and sensitive areas of biodiversity warrant special protection. While the United States has only 3 percent of the world’s coral reefs, nearly 70 percent of U.S. coral reefs are in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Many of the Northwest Hawaiian Island’s coral, fish, and invertebrate species are unique, and the area is home to endangered Hawaiian monk seals and threatened turtles. In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt set aside certain islands and reefs in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands for the protection of sea birds. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wild-

life Service manages this area as the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

In June 1998, I signed an Executive Order for Coral Reef Protection (E.O. 13089), which established the Coral Reef Task Force and directed all Federal agencies with coral reef-related responsibilities to develop a strategy for coral reef protection. States and territories with coral reefs were invited to be full partners with the Federal Government in preparing an action plan to better protect and preserve the Nation’s coral reef ecosystems. In March of this year, the Task Force issued the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*. The Plan lays out a science-based road map to healthy coral reefs for future generations, based on two fundamental strategies: promoting understanding of coral reef ecosystems by, for example, conducting comprehensive mapping, assessment,

and monitoring of coral reefs; and reducing the adverse impacts of human activities by, for example, creating an expanded and strengthened network of Federal, State, and territorial coral reef Marine Protected Areas, reducing the adverse impact of extractive uses, and reducing habitat destruction.

It is time now to take the Coral Reef Task Force's recommendations and implement them to ensure the comprehensive protection of the coral reef ecosystem of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands through a coordinated effort among the Departments of the Interior and Commerce and the State of Hawaii.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is in the best interest of our Nation, and of future generations, to provide strong and lasting protection for the coral reef ecosystem of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, and I am directing you to initiate an administrative process to that end. Specifically, I direct you, working cooperatively with the State of Hawaii and consulting with the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council, to develop recommendations within 90 days for a new, coordinated management regime to increase protection of the ecosystem and provide for sustainable use. Further, I direct that your recommendations address whether appropriate stewardship for the submerged lands and waters of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands warrants exercise of my authority to extend permanent protection to objects of historic or scientific interest or to protect the natural and cultural resources of this important area.

The recommendations should also:

- Review the status and adequacy of all ongoing efforts to protect the coral reef ecosystem, including proposed no-take ecological reserves and the ongoing work of the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council;
- To the extent permitted by law, ensure that any actions that the Departments of

the Interior and Commerce authorize, fund, or carry out will not degrade the conditions of the coral reef ecosystems;

- Identify any further measures necessary to protect cultural and historic resources and artifacts;
- Identify any further measures necessary for the protection of the ecosystem's threatened and endangered species, including the endangered monk seal, sea turtles, and short-tailed albatross;
- Establish a framework for scientific research and exploration;
- Establish a framework for facilitating recreation and tourism in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands consistent with the protection and sustainable management of the ecosystem;
- Provide for culturally significant uses of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands' marine resources by Native Hawaiians; and
- Address the development of a cooperative framework, in consultation with the State of Hawaii and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council, to ensure that the goals set forth above will be implemented in a cooperative manner, consistent with existing authorities.

I also direct that during the 90-day period, the Departments shall conduct "visioning" sessions, which would provide opportunities for public hearing and comment to help shape the final recommendations.

With this new effort, we are taking strides to fulfill the goal of the Coral Reef Task Force to protect our precious coral reefs for the benefit of future generations.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Videotaped Remarks to the National Nutrition Summit

May 26, 2000

I'm delighted to welcome you to the 2000 National Nutrition Summit and to thank you for promoting the need for good nutrition, phys-

ical activity, and a healthy lifestyle in preventing diet-related diseases. I also want to thank Secretary Shalala and Secretary Glickman for their

work on this summit. And I want to recognize Ambassador McGovern and Senator Dole, two of the leaders who played a pioneering role in the first White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health, back in 1969.

At that time, malnutrition, hunger, and obesity were too often an accepted part of our society, and we didn't have the right resources in place to address them. Our foods weren't labeled with nutritional information. Our national school lunch program wasn't administered properly, and we didn't even have the means to measure the levels of hunger and malnutrition in our own country. The 1969 White House Conference changed all that by encouraging the Federal Government to expand and strengthen its programs to reduce hunger and promote good nutrition.

As President Nixon said then, the moment is at hand to put an end to hunger. Today, more than 30 years later, we have made great strides in understanding and promoting the link between nutrition and personal health. Our national investment in nutrition assistance has increased more than thirtyfold since the first conference. In 1999 alone, we delivered more than \$33 billion in nutrition assistance to our children and our hardest pressed families.

Thanks in large part to your efforts, these programs play a key role in promoting the health of our entire Nation. The Women, Infants, and Children's program has given millions of young families, more than 7 million Americans, both the wise advice and the nutritious foods they need to grow healthy and strong. Children enrolled in WIC programs are immunized earlier, perform better in school, and spend less time in the doctor's office.

Our national school lunch program now provides nutritious lunches to more than 26 million children in 95,000 schools across our land. Our food stamp program brings nourishment to millions of Americans every day, and our improved and expanded Head Start program reaches even younger children and more families than ever.

But while we've come a long way in promoting good nutrition and health, too many Americans still are malnourished, without food, or living unhealthy lifestyles. Nearly 55 percent of our population is overweight or obese, including one in five children. And today, four of the leading causes of death in the United States are nutrition-related. That's why we must continue to help more Americans live healthier lives.

For 7 years now, our administration has tried to do that with substantial increases in funding for WIC, Head Start, and child nutrition programs. This year our budget builds on that progress.

I want to thank all of you for leading the way to a healthier America. If we keep working together, we can ensure that in the 21st century, our people and our Nation are in the best shape ever.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 11 in the Map Room for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador George S. McGovern, U.S. Representative, U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture; and former Senator Bob Dole. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Upcoming Elections in Peru

May 26, 2000

I deeply regret the decision by the Peruvian electoral authorities to proceed with the elections this coming Sunday in spite of the well-documented concerns of the OAS observer mission. Even a relatively brief delay would give the OAS mission an opportunity to monitor the electoral process with greater confidence.

As things stand, the OAS mission will not monitor Sunday's vote. I believe that is the correct decision under the circumstances.

Free, fair, and open elections are the foundation of a democratic society. Without them, our relationship with Peru inevitably will be affected.

We are consulting with our partners in the hemisphere and the international community to determine appropriate next steps.

Statement on Federal Compensation for Losses Incurred in the Bandelier National Monument Fire

May 26, 2000

This administration is committed to ensuring that all those who have been affected by the fire that began at Bandelier National Monument are fully compensated for their losses. At this time, we are working with the New Mexico delegation to craft legislation that would govern

Federal compensation and make available the funds needed to pay for this legislation. We are committed to working with the Congress to ensure that this matter is addressed as promptly as possible.

Statement on Signing the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000

May 26, 2000

Today I signed H.R. 371, the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000. This legislation is a tribute to the service, courage, and sacrifice of the Hmong people who were our allies in Laos during the Vietnam war. After the Vietnam war, many Hmong soldiers and their families came to the United States and have become part of the social fabric of American society. They work, pay taxes, and have raised families and made America their home. However, some Hmong seeking to become American citizens have faced great difficulty meeting the requirements for naturalization for reasons associated with the unique circumstances of the Hmong culture. Until recently, the Hmong people had no written language. Without this experience, learning English, a requirement of naturaliza-

tion, has been much more difficult for some Hmong. This requirement has prevented many Hmong from becoming full participants in American society. This new law will waive the English language requirement and provide special consideration for the civics requirement for Hmong veterans and their families. This law is a small step but an important one in honoring the immense sacrifices that the Hmong people made in supporting our efforts in Southeast Asia. I would like to recognize Representative Bruce Vento and Senator Wellstone, sponsors of the legislation, for their leadership on this issue.

NOTE: H.R. 371, approved May 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106-207.

Statement on the Meat and Poultry Inspection System

May 26, 2000

When this administration came into office, meat and poultry were inspected by the same old method used for 90 years. In 1996, we began a comprehensive, science-based system that, for the first time, requires plants to reduce bacterial contamination in meat and poultry.

This system has been a tremendous success. In just 2 years, the presence of dangerous salmonella on meat and poultry has been reduced

by up to 50 percent, and illnesses caused by salmonella are also down.

Unfortunately, a small minority of meat plants are acting against the best interests of the American people. They threaten to undermine an inspection system that is clearly effective in reducing food poisoning, jeopardizing the confidence that consumers have in the safety of the food they eat.

* White House correction.

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The Justice Department has vigorously defended this vital program and will decide on an expedited basis what further legal action to take. I am also calling on the food industry to use its vast resources to help ensure that

all meat processing plants maintain the strictest possible safety standards.

This administration will continue to use every available tool to ensure that our food supply remains the safest in the world.

The President's Radio Address

May 27, 2000

Good morning. Memorial Day weekend is a special time to honor those who have fought for our freedom, but also to gather with our family and friends at picnics and backyard barbecues. Where we take pride in serving up plenty of good food, we should also take pains that the food we serve is good for us. Today I want to talk about new steps we're taking to empower Americans with the latest and best information on food and nutrition.

For 20 years now, the Federal Government has been setting guidelines for good nutrition based on the best scientific evidence. And for over 6 years, the Government has required nutrition labeling on most foods. With better information, Americans are making better choices. We're eating less fat as a percentage of our diet, more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and average blood cholesterol levels are going down.

Yet despite this progress, the vast majority of Americans still don't have healthy diets, and some changes in our lifestyles are making matters worse. We're eating more fast food because of our hectic schedules, and we're less physically active because of our growing reliance on modern conveniences, from cars to computers to remote controls. As a result, more and more Americans are overweight or obese, including one in 10 children. This is an alarming trend, because obesity and bad eating habits contribute to four of the leading causes of death: heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

To address these challenges, experts from around our Nation will meet next week in Washington for a summit on nutrition sponsored by the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. It will be the first national nutrition summit in 31 years. To kick off the summit, today I am releasing the Federal Government's new Dietary Guidelines 2000. They're

updated every 5 years. These guidelines serve as the gold standard of nutritional information. They determine, among other things, the nutritional content of the lunches served to 26 million of our children every day in school.

These new guidelines strengthen the message that doctors and scientists have been telling us for some time now: We should choose more whole-grain foods and a variety of fruits and vegetables every day, and we should moderate the saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, salt, and alcohol in our diets.

There are two new guidelines this year as well. One emphasizes the importance of handling and storing food safely. The other makes clear the enormous benefits of building physical activity into our daily lives. Just a brisk 30-minute walk five times a week, for instance, can cut the chance of developing or dying from heart disease in half.

I'm also pleased to announce today that this summer the Federal Government will propose that packaged meat and poultry sold in stores must come with nutrition labels. This is just plain common sense. Shoppers value the fact that when they pick up a box of cereal or a frozen meal, they can check the nutrition labels and see how many calories or grams of saturated fat these foods contain. That's the same kind of information that ought to be put on every package of ground beef. Currently, fewer than 60 percent of retailers do so, because nutrition labeling for meat is voluntary. It's time we made it mandatory.

Providing citizens with accurate information that affects their lives is one of Government's most vital responsibilities. But citizens have a responsibility to use that information wisely, as well, especially when it comes to the food they provide their children and the habits they encourage in them. So this weekend, have a good

time. Let's all eat well and eat right. Let's enjoy the outdoors and get some physical activity and be thankful for the bounteous times in which we live and the country that makes us so proud.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:39 p.m. on May 26 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Ulster Unionist Council Vote in Northern Ireland *May 27, 2000*

I am delighted that, with today's historic developments, the Northern Ireland peace process is back on track. I congratulate David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Council on their decision to return to self-government in Northern Ireland. This is a giant step toward fulfillment of the historic promise of the Good Friday accord to provide self-government to all the people on the basis of equality, consent, and the use of exclusively peaceful means. The parties are now ready to reenter the Executive and Legislative Assembly in the coming days. It is

now possible for the politics of conflict to be transformed into the politics of consensus. I applaud the leadership of Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, and all the parties. The wind is back in the sails of peace in Northern Ireland.

NOTE: The statement referred to Ulster Unionist Party leader and Northern Ireland First Minister David Trimble; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *May 29, 2000*

Thank you very much. Secretary Cohen, thank you for your kind remarks and for your leadership. General Ivany, Superintendent Metzler, Colonel Durham, Secretary West, Secretary Slater, General Shelton and the Joint Chiefs, General McCaffrey, Members of Congress and the diplomatic corps, veterans and family members, members of the Armed Services, members of the Armed Services who gave their lives for our country, my fellow Americans.

We are blessed again today, together again in this magnificent amphitheater in our National Cemetery, to remember our fallen heroes. We honor, as well, all the proud veterans who would have made the same sacrifice if God had but called His heroes home in a different order.

As you entered the grounds this morning, you saw every gravestone decorated with an American flag. Indeed, this day of remembrance was first known as Decoration Day, launched in 1868 by the Commander in Chief of the Grand

Army of the Republic who designated this day for decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country. Some still mark this holiday in the same way.

On Thursday before Memorial Day, this year and every year for more than 40 years now, the entire regiment of 1,200 soldiers of the 3d U.S. Infantry has honored America's fallen heroes by placing American flags before every single one of the more than 260,000 gravestones here at Arlington; then remaining on patrol 24 hours a day all weekend long to make sure each flag remains standing.

All across our country in small towns and large cities, veterans groups represented here today perform the same sacred ritual. I want to recognize and thank the members of the Old Guard and the veterans all across America for their patriotism, devotion, and commitment to honoring the original meaning of Memorial Day. I thank them very, very much.

Arlington's hallowed earth embraces the bodies of service men and women from every one of our Nation's wars. Every generation has borne a share of the burden of defending the Republic and giving to each succeeding generation the chance for freedom. Presidents Kennedy and Taft are buried here. Generals Pershing and Bradley are buried here. Admirals Halsey and Rickover are buried here, as are John Foster Dulles and Oliver Wendell Holmes, George Marshall and Audie Murphy.

Three of the Marines we remember forever for raising our flag on Iwo Jima—they are buried here. And of course, all the unknown, unsung heroes of more than two centuries of fighting tyranny are buried here. This is sacred soil and the heart and the history of America.

Our hearts go out today especially to those our departed veterans left behind, the young women who had to cancel a wedding, young mothers who raised their children alone, mothers and fathers who faced perhaps life's greatest heartbreak. To all the families who have placed a gold star in their window, I renew our Nation's enduring pledge: The United States will always honor and never forsake its fallen heroes. We will not abandon their families. And wherever it takes, as long as it takes, we will keep our commitment to seek the fullest possible accounting.

This morning we were honored to receive at the White House the sons and daughters and spouses of servicemen still missing in action. There is no more compelling way to understand how important our continuous efforts are to the hearts and minds of Americans than to hear it from family members themselves. And that is why I am pleased to announce to you today that the United States and North Korea have agreed to resume the talks the first week of June in Kuala Lumpur in hopes of resuming recovery operations in North Korea this year.

As we prepare to observe the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean war on June 25th, we reaffirm our commitment to the more than 1.7 million Americans who served in Korea, the more than 36,000 who lost their lives there, and the more than 8,100 still missing.

I also want to tell you today about the latest American soldier to come home. Just last week our team of specialists identified finally and officially the remains of a soldier of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the Americal division, whose Huey helicopter was flying in the weeds at 25 feet

over Laos in the summer of 1970 when it lost power and crashed. The young soldier died immediately. When others rushed to the scene to bring his body out, they were forced back by enemy fire. When they tried again a short time later, they were again forced back. But finally, America returned to recover its own.

Years later, with the help of several governments, extensive interviews, excavations, and DNA testing, a positive identification was made. Army Specialist 4 John E. Crowley, of Williamson, New York, forever 20 years old, was laid to rest here in Arlington Cemetery on Friday in a simple ceremony attended by his mother, brother, cousins, nieces, and nephews. For the life and service of Specialist Crowley, for the sacrifice of his family and every family that has suffered such loss, America is eternally grateful.

We are also grateful for the many groups like Rolling Thunder who come to Washington to advocate for our POW/MIA families. We hear you. We certainly hear Rolling Thunder when they're here. *[Laughter]* We welcome you, and we are honored to work with you.

To preserve the peace, we must never forget the sacrifices that have paved the way to peace. Four years ago, Carmella LaSpada, a longtime advocate for families who have lost a loved one in conflict, asked a group of schoolchildren what Memorial Day means. And the children said, that's the day the pool opens. *[Laughter]* Well, that's not their fault that that was their answer. We adults must do more to teach them.

That's why Carmella worked with Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Douglass and so many of you here today to launch a new national commitment to put "memorial" back in Memorial Day. So today, for the third straight year, I ask all Americans, in a profoundly symbolic and important act of national unity, to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time, to observe a national moment of remembrance for America's fallen heroes.

At that time, the somber tones of "Taps," our national requiem, will be played all across America and beyond, in the U.S. Capitol, in the Vietnam Memorial, at Ellis Island and the Liberty Bell, in VA hospitals and national parks, on Voice of America and Armed Forces Network, and in hundreds of places we Americans will be gathering today. When little boys and girls turn to their parents and whisper, "Mommy, Daddy, what's happening?" a new

generation of Americans will have a chance to hear about the defenders of freedom.

As we remember their sacrifice, as Secretary Cohen so eloquently pointed out, we must also resolve to fulfill the obligation the rest of us incurred with their sacrifice, to keep America free and strong. If those who fought and died for us could talk to us on this Memorial Day, they might well ask, "America, have you made our sacrifice matter?" At the dawn of a new century, Americans can answer that question with solemn pride. Today, we are fortunate to be the most powerful and prosperous nation on Earth, with a military respected around the world. We could say, "Yes, America has made your sacrifice matter."

America is at peace, and the risk of war that would scar the lives of a whole generation has been vastly reduced. Yes, America has made your sacrifice matter. You fought for freedom in foreign lands, knowing it would protect our freedom at home. Today, freedom advances all around the world, and for the first time in all human history, more than half the world's people choose their own leaders. Yes, America has made your sacrifice matter.

You fought to conquer tyranny and bring unity to Europe, where more than 100,000 American heroes are now buried. You gave your lives in places like Flanders Field and Normandy. But today, Europe is more united, more free, more peaceful than anytime in history. We have three new allies in NATO and many new partners across Europe's old cold war divide. Central Europe is free and flourishing. Soldiers from almost every European country, the most bitter former adversaries among them, now serve under a single command, keeping the peace in Bosnia, in Kosovo. Yes, America is making your sacrifice matter.

We have more to do. Later today I will leave for Europe, to meet with our partners in the European Union in Portugal and to make the first visit of an American President to Berlin as the capital of a free and undivided Germany. We will continue our work with our European allies for peace and freedom—to make their sacrifice matter.

I will visit Russia, the former adversary with whom we are trying so hard to build a new partnership and a safer world. Russia has just seen its first transition from one democratically elected government to another in 1,000 years of history. For the first time, an American Presi-

dent will speak to a democratically elected Russian Parliament. As we support those changes, we will continue to push for greater and deeper ones—to make their sacrifice matter.

I will go to Ukraine, a large country with over 60 million people struggling to cast off the bitter legacy of communism, located in a strategic place that will determine much of the future of the 21st century, to support those who favor freedom and prosperity and stability—to make their sacrifice matter.

The world of today would not be recognized by those who lived at the beginning of the cold war. Old adversaries have become allies; dictatorships have become democracies; Europe is more peaceful and united; the communism we fought to contain has collapsed, reformed, or been discredited around the world.

Heartened by our progress toward peace and prosperity, we will pursue the two remaining challenges in fulfilling the age-old vision of a Europe peaceful, democratic, and undivided: bringing southeastern Europe and the former states of the Soviet Union into the community of democracies.

On this first Memorial Day of the 21st century, the eighth and last Memorial Day I have had the honor to address the people of this country in this place as President, I give thanks to all those who have stood their ground to defend freedom and democracy and human dignity, and especially to those and their families who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Americans never fought for empires, for territory, for dominance, but many, many Americans gave their lives for freedom. As we stand at the dawn of a new century they never saw but did so much to guarantee for us, far from fading into the past, their sacrifice is paving the way to our future.

Thirty, forty, fifty years after our fallen veterans have gone, we can say, "Glory! Hallelujah! Your truth is marching on." May God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Robert R. Ivany, USA, Commanding General, U.S. Army Military District of Washington; John C. (Jack) Metzler, superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery; Col. Michael Durham, USA, Command Chaplain, Military District of Washington; Carmella LaSpada, founder, No Greater Love,

and events coordinator for the National Moment of Remembrance; and Lt. Col. Jeff Douglass, USMC, liaison, National Moment of Remem-

brance. The related proclamation of May 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Arrival Ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal

May 30, 2000

Mr. President, Mrs. Sampaio, Mr. Prime Minister, members of the Portuguese Government, citizens of Portugal. Here at this historic point of embarkation, from which Portuguese explorers led an entire continent to see beyond the horizon, we find ourselves again, as you said, Mr. President, on a new voyage of discovery.

And at the dawn of a new century, Portugal again is leading the way, strengthening the European Union while preserving our transatlantic partnership, building peace in the Balkans, supporting democracy in Russia. Portugal has been a clear, strong voice for peace and stability throughout the world, and we have been proud to stand with you in responding to floods in Mozambique, in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations from Kosovo to Africa to East Timor.

I thank Portugal, especially, for its constant commitment to East Timor's freedom. Just before the ceremony began today, the President told me that some of the troops who marched for us soon will be sent to join the peacekeeping mission in East Timor. I know that this nation is proud of those troops and their mission, and on behalf of the American people, I thank you for it.

The United States has always considered Portugal an especially good neighbor, thanks in no small part to the shared pride we both feel in the numbers, the character, and the accomplishment of Portuguese-Americans who have done so much to shape our Nation.

I look forward to my meetings with the President and the Prime Minister. I want to learn more about new Portuguese initiatives on education, science, and technology. I applaud Portugal for the work it is doing to give all

its people the tools they need to succeed in this global information age.

I also look forward to the U.S.-EU Summit. I hope we will use these meetings not just to strengthen our own ties but to address challenges beyond our borders. Mr. President, you mentioned many of them, the AIDS epidemic in Africa and Asia, the economic gulfs separating the wealthiest from the rest of the world. These problems require innovation, imagination, and courage. Portugal's history is filled with those qualities, and I believe Portugal again will lead the way.

When Vasco da Gama left here to explore Africa and India, he built on the previous experiences of Portuguese explorers like Bartholomeu Dias, the first European to go around the Cape of Good Hope. That beautiful promontory briefly had a different name. It was called *Cabo das Tormentas*, Stormy Cape, after the storms that gathered round it. But after further reflection, its name was changed to *Cabo da Boa Esperança*, the Cape of Good Hope, to reflect the unbounded confidence with which Portugal faced the future.

Well, we have a few stormy waters still to navigate. But we should do it with good hope, and we should do it together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Plaza of Torre de Belem. In his remarks, he referred to President Jorge Sampaio and his wife, Maria José Ritta, and Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Sampaio.

Remarks to the Scientific Community in Lisbon *May 30, 2000*

Good afternoon, Mr. Prime Minister, Professor Quintanilha, Minister Gago, Dr. Vargas, ladies and gentlemen. I have just had a lot of fun touring this science center, but the meaning here of what is being done goes beyond the simple joy of learning. From the outermost reaches of space to the darkest depths of the ocean, from the mysteries of nanotechnology to the miracles of the human genome, men and women are gathering knowledge at a faster pace than ever before that will have the most profound impacts, especially on the way the young people in this audience live.

Knowledge is being more widely applied and more quickly disseminated than ever before, thanks in no small measure to the Internet. And therefore, universal education and universal access to technology are more important than ever before.

Today I applaud the scientific work being done in Portugal and the efforts of Prime Minister Guterres and Minister Gago to train the next generation of scientists, engineers, doctors, and astronauts, as well as to close the digital divide to make sure all the children of this nation have the tools they need to master the information age.

I am particularly impressed how much scientific research is being done in partnership. In my tour of the science center and its exhibits, I saw impressive examples of cutting-edge research across national boundaries, Portuguese scientists in close cooperation with Americans, Europeans, Africans, tackling some of the world's most critical health problems.

In Africa, Asia, and many parts of the world, diseases like AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis are killing not only people but hope for progress. In Africa, where 70 percent of all the world's AIDS cases exist in sub-Saharan Africa, some countries are hiring two employees for every job on the assumption that one of them will die of AIDS.

In other African countries, 30 percent of the teachers and 40 percent of the soldiers have the virus; millions suffer from strains of malaria that are increasingly resistant to any drug; and a third of the world has actually been exposed

to tuberculosis. These diseases can ruin economies and threaten the very survival of societies.

I was gratified to meet with some Portuguese scientists working on state-of-the-art malaria research, together with the U.S. Public Health Service, and to meet some of their students who were learning about it. Other Portuguese and American teams are learning together, studying the bacteria that cause TB, other new drug-resistant disease threats, and a recently discovered pathogen that can strike down those already suffering from AIDS.

I enjoyed meeting with the high school students who were using the Internet to study infectious diseases and share information with other students all across Europe. This kind of research and learning benefits both our nations. It reaches across continents to benefit people who really need it, especially in this case, in Africa.

Our challenge now is also to support prevention programs, to accelerate the creation of affordable drugs and vaccines. We have made a national commitment to do this in the United States. I've asked Congress for over \$325 million to increase our international efforts against AIDS. I've asked for a billion-dollar tax credit and a global purchase fund to speed the development by our pharmaceutical companies of vaccines for AIDS, TB, and malaria. We have committed over \$70 million to fight TB, over \$100 million to fight malaria.

And as the Prime Minister said, today we are announcing a new partnership with Portugal and São Tomé and Príncipe to study that African country's unique malarial epidemic and to develop a strategy to end it.

Tomorrow I am here also to meet with leaders of the European Union, and your Prime Minister is the President in this period. I hope we'll come out of that meeting with a common approach to the global health crisis that will increase scientific research, increase the availability of learning opportunities for our young people, and most importantly, keep more people alive in the 21st century.

We have got to make sure that today's revolution in science and technology serves all humanity, helps us to fight hunger, to mitigate natural

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disasters, to reverse the tide of global warming, to grow our economies without damaging the environment. This is profoundly important and a very great challenge, indeed.

I couldn't help thinking today that intelligence is equally distributed throughout the world, but not all the young people of the world have a chance to come together as the Portuguese young people I met today do, to study TB, to study malaria. Instead, many of them are fighting for their lives because they have it.

We have a solemn responsibility to take the benefits of the information economy, of the explosion in biomedical discoveries, and use them to give every young person in the world the chance to live up to their God-given potential and to create a safer, better, stronger, more

prosperous world for us all. That, in the end, is how these discoveries should be measured, by whether we did our part to spread them quickly to benefit everyone.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:56 p.m. at the Pavilion of Knowledge Science Center. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Antonio Guterres and Minister of Science and Technology Jose Mariano Gago of Portugal; Alexandre Quintanilha, professor, University of Porto, who introduced the President; and Rosalia Vargas, director, Pavilion of Knowledge Science Center. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal in Lisbon

May 30, 2000

Mr. President, Mrs. Sampaio, Mr. Prime Minister, members of the Government, members of the diplomatic corps. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, the Government, and the people of Portugal, for the welcome that I and my party have received. I'd like to thank you for the meeting we had today. It has been a pleasure for me to spend time with another President who likes to read detective novels, listen to good music, and play golf. We could have had a 2-day summit on those three topics alone. [*Laughter*] My staff suggested it so that they could go to the beaches.

Let me say that five centuries ago the vision and courage of Portugal helped Europe to find its way across the Atlantic. You were the first to set foot in South America, to sail down West Africa, to cross the Equator, to round the Cape of Good Hope, to reach India by sea from the west, to trade with China and Japan. It is little wonder then that Portuguese is now spoken by more than 200 million people in countries throughout the world. One of these nations, of course, is the United States.

Two centuries ago Portugal was the very first neutral state to recognize our independence. And as you noted yourself, Mr. President, the United States has been strengthened by the con-

tributions of Portuguese-Americans, from John Philip Sousa, who wrote the music we use to celebrate the Fourth of July, to John Dos Passos, whose voice helped to define America in the 20th century. Today, we are proud to stand with you as partners, allies, and friends.

Twenty-six years ago Portugal turned from dictatorship to democracy. Ten years ago Eastern Europe followed your lead. Today, Eastern Europe is still learning from your example. When finally we build a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in history, there will be a great debt owed by all freedom-loving people to Portugal.

Today, this nation that once brought the four corners of the world together is working with its EU allies and America to bring the world together to advance democracy and human rights. Portugal has taken a leading role in NATO and the EU. In Kosovo, nearly half the sorties that led us to victory flew out of Lajes Air Base in the Azores. In East Timor, Portugal's leadership rallied the international community. In Mozambique, our two nations are working together to lead the relief effort. From the Balkans to East Timor to Africa, our troops serve side by side to keep the peace and build a better future.

Here in Portugal, Prime Minister Guterres has charted new ways to solve old challenges and to make the global economy work for all your people. I admire that as well.

Two years ago a Portuguese author was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. A short time later, we in the United States had the honor of hosting Jose Saramago as he received an honorary degree from the University of Massachusetts. Looking out at generations of Portuguese who had traveled to America to enrich our culture and our country, he said that they are a part of an unremitting human chain that has always been and will continue to be an example of living history. That living history links not only past and present but the people of our two countries, from Lisbon and Porto to New Bedford, Fall River, Providence, Newark, all the places Portuguese-Americans have made their own.

Today, we look ahead to a new century. We celebrate our friendship and embrace common challenges. We hope that the values we share will spread across the Earth and bear fruit in more places for more people than ever before. We hope that we will always stand together as friends in the defense of those values and in their advance.

I ask now that all of you join me in a toast to the President of Portugal and Mrs. Sampaio, to the people of this great nation, and to our long friendship.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 p.m. in the State Banquet Room at the Ajuda Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Sampaio's wife, Maria José Ritta; and Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal.

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders in Lisbon

May 31, 2000

Prime Minister Antonio Guterres. Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. A few words in English before making my statement in Portuguese.

First of all, let me say that this was not a business-as-usual summit. It was a strategic summit: strategic in the way we discussed the diplomatic and security problems of our hemisphere, the new common security and defense policy of the European Union, its relationship with NATO, our relations with Russia and the Ukraine, our commitment to the protection of the values of all civilization in the Balkans; strategic in our approach, bringing confidence to multilateral way of dealing with trade issues, our commitment to relaunch this year the new round of World Trade Organization and to solve in a case-by-case situation our disputes based on the WTO rules; but especially strategic because we concentrated on the new global problems that represent today the main threats to our planet—infectious diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, or AIDS, the digital divide, the difficulties to make the new economy a truly inclusive economy; and strategic because we decided to

work together, the United States and European Union, to promote a global effort to match this challenge and to win this challenge, aiming at the next G-8 organization summit and working together in all relevant international fora.

Ladies and gentlemen, this has indeed been a meeting in which questions of global strategy have been a major element. Firstly, on this level of diplomacy and security, I think that we have fully understood the importance of our common European security and defense policy and the interrelations between this policy and the instruments within it and NATO and in perfect accord with the relations between these two organizations.

We also discussed in a very consensual manner the efforts that the United States and the European Union are going to be making in their relations with Russia and the Ukraine, considering this an essential triangle for the stability of our continent.

And we were able to reiterate our firm commitment to what we are doing in the western Balkans and our conviction that what we are

concerned with here are essential values of civilization—in Bosnia and Kosovo, as to the possibility there of establishing a real multiethnic community in this territory, and a commitment to transform Yugoslavia into a truly democratic country, commitment to guaranteeing or to trying to guarantee stability in such complicated areas as Montenegro, and to offer support to all the countries in the region in their development to offer a long-term prospect which is truly European for the whole Balkan region.

In our discussion, we attached great importance to the transformation of the new economy, the knowledge-based economy, not simply to be a privilege for the richest countries and for people and organizations with the greatest power in society but also, particularly in the United States and Europe, for all our citizens, for all our businesses, for all our organizations, and at the same time to establish a very strong inter-linkage in our efforts with the objective of promoting a broadband link between our education information services on either side of the Atlantic.

We want to develop our common efforts to combat separation between rich and poor countries in this area, since we believe that this new economy is a basic and fundamental opportunity for the poorer countries to be able to press forward, to leap forward, and come closer to the living conditions of the more developed world.

But we can't talk about this without recognizing the drama which exists today in the world, given the series of infectious diseases leading to suffering and death for so many, such as AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. And we need to work together, seriously cooperating to promote global action to combat effectively these diseases and to develop in the next meeting of the G-8 an approach on this subject and to involve the whole international community and all international organizations, with the support of the European Union and the United States of America, in being catalysts in our efforts in this area. Given the global responsibilities we have, we must also meet these challenges of our times.

We also discussed many other questions—foreign policy, for instance—and of course, one point that the Portuguese Government cannot fail to mention: We talked about the transition of East Timor to democracy and independence.

President Clinton.

President Clinton. Thank you very much. First, I would like to thank Prime Minister Guterres for his outstanding leadership in his tenure as EU President. I thank President Prodi, Commissioner Patten, High Representative Solana, for their strong leadership and the work they have done for transatlantic cooperation, and especially in Kosovo and in the Balkans in these last few months.

I would like to just take one minute to put this meeting into some historical perspective. We've come quite a long way since Portugal's first EU Presidency 8 years ago. At that time, many were predicting that Europe's new democracies would falter, that Russia would turn inward and reactionary, that NATO had lost its reason for being, that Europe's project for a common currency and foreign policy would founder, and that the United States and Europe would go their own separate ways.

Eight years later Europe's new democracies are joining the transatlantic mainstream. Russia, for all its problems, has completed the first democratic power transfer in its entire history. We have preserved and strengthened NATO. The EU has brought monetary union into being and made a fast start at a common foreign and security policy, a development the United States strongly supports. And far from moving apart, the United States and Europe today complete the 14th U.S.-EU Summit of my Presidency. So I thank all of those who have supported those developments.

Today we talked a lot about security in Kosovo, the Balkans, southeastern Europe. We talked about the European Security Defense Initiative, which the United States strongly supports, in cooperation with NATO. And we talked about a number of other issues, including Russia, at some length. We discussed the need to support democracy and economic reform in Russia and the continued need for a political solution in Chechnya.

I'd also like to thank the European Union for something else which is on my mind today because of the work I've been doing in the Middle East. I welcome the efforts that the EU has led to give Israel an invitation to join the Western Europe and others group in the United Nations. This is a very good development, and I think it will contribute to the negotiating atmosphere that is so important at this difficult and pivotal time in the Middle East.

Just two other issues briefly. We did talk, as Prime Minister Guterres said, a lot about the new economy, about how to maximize its spread within our countries and how to bridge the digital divide both within and beyond our borders, and we talked about the importance of dealing with other common challenges. I'll just mention two. I talked at some length about the climate change/global warming challenge, and we have made a joint commitment to do more to try to help developing nations deal with AIDS, malaria, and TB. And I am very grateful for the leadership and the energy of the EU in that regard.

So, in closing, I think it's been a good meeting. I think it demonstrated the vitality and importance of our partnership. I'd like to thank the business leaders who are here, who also have been meeting, and the environmental leaders and just say that from my point of view, all these exchanges have been very much worth the effort and are leading us into a better future.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Guterres. Senor Prodi.

President Romano Prodi. Well, I am most pleased to be here today with Antonio to discuss with our common friend the President of the United States the relationship between the European Union and the United States.

But before anything, I want to pay tribute to the support of President Clinton to the European Union. You always supported European Union, without any doubt. And this is the reason why our transatlantic ties are so good now and so strong. And I think that—you will go to Aachen to receive the Charlemagne Prize. I think you deserve it because this is the prize that is given to the Europeans.

Your predecessor President Kennedy was a Berliner. You now, you are not a Berliner but a European, I'd say, because I think that you belong to our family, really. The United States helped Europe, even at the most difficult point, even when Europe was becoming more and more powerful, like making up a euro in the last building of our new Europe.

Now we are 375 million people; we shall arrive to 500 million people with enlargement. And we discussed enlargement this morning, and we discussed how enlargement can be performed quickly, well, in a peaceful way, not harming anybody, and being accepted also by Russia. This almost was a photo op of the meeting that I had with the Russian President Putin

just the day before yesterday, discussing how enlargement would be done and the aim, the goals of enlargement.

Concerning the point you didn't touch in our relation, we discussed frankly about trade. And of course, conflicts between the two biggest trade powers in the world are always possible. We are the largest trade in the world, and we represent more than 40 percent of world trade.

We are committed, and we decided to be committed today to a more territorial trade system, and all trade disputes will be settled case by case under WTO rules. This was clear. There was a clear commitment. And we decided also that megaphone diplomacy will be replaced by telephone diplomacy. It is more constructive, even less sexy. [*Laughter*]

I am pleased that we have already two results of this cooperation. After 3 years of discussion, we are finally able to come today with a solution to settle our difference on that of protection, which is a very delicate issue. And then we developed jointly the safe harbor concept. And so we shall have, together, high data protection standards and free information flows.

This deal has been approved today by our member states and so will not be reviewed by the European Parliament. It's done. WTO accession of China will take place very soon, I hope—we hope. We are working for that, and we are—the two teams, the American, U.S. team and the European Union teams, are really working together for that.

And we launch today the biotechnology consultative forum to foster public debate and create more common understanding. I remember that this forum, which I proposed in October last year at my first meeting with you, Bill, is made of outstanding and independent individuals from outside the government. It's a very independent body. And I do expect that this forum will meet in July.

And so we agreed also to go together to the G-8 with a strong agenda on the tragic problem of sickness in the world. We shall elaborate this strategy for tuberculosis, malaria, and AIDS fighting over all the world. This is the agreement that we have today in a very good friendship environment.

And also, I want to add as the last reflection that—you talked about the Balkans—we know that together with the action, with the Stability Pact, with the progress that you are doing day by day, we must find a long-term solution in

the idea of European Union spirit, in the European Union environment, in order to give a long-lasting solution to the Balkan problems.

Thank you.

National Missile Defense System

Q. Prime Minister Guterres and President Prodi, in a few months President Clinton will make a decision about a national missile defense system for the United States. For an American audience, can you explain any European concerns about deploying such a system and whether, in your just-completed trip to Moscow, President Putin expressed any flexibility about amending the ABM to allow such a system?

And President Clinton, in the system that you envision, would that allow for the missile protection system to protect Europe and our NATO Allies, as Governor Bush has suggested?

Thank you.

Prime Minister Guterres. Well, President Clinton was kind enough to inform us about what he thinks about the matter. I think he'll express that better than myself. I'd like to say that this is a matter in which the European Union has not an official position, but we have—I'll say all of us—a main concern. We live in the Northern Hemisphere where from bearing to bearing we want to have a strong security situation. We believe we have built a lot on the process to create that. And we believe that every new move to strengthen these must be as comprehensive as possible, as agreed by everybody as possible, and as corresponding as possible to everyone's concerns and to everyone's preoccupations in this matter.

President Prodi. Well, I have to add also that President Clinton—there was no yet precise proposal done. But we discussed it on the general principle that there was no decoupling, that there is no division between the two sides of the Atlantic. We are still and we are more and more joined together in our defense purpose, not only in our economic purposes. And so the spirit in which we judge the program—we didn't go into the details—was a constructive and friendly talk.

Q. And the Russian President?

President Prodi. No, the Russian President didn't touch the problem 2 days ago. The program was not on the agenda, and we didn't make any head to that.

President Clinton. First, let me just very briefly reiterate the criteria that I have set out for

making a decision. First of all, is there a threat which is new and different? The answer to that, it seems to me, is plainly yes, there is, and there will be one; that is, the danger that states that are not part of the international arms control and nonproliferation regime would acquire nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them and that they might make them available to rogue elements not part of nation-states but allied with them. Secondly, is the technology available to meet the threat? Thirdly, what does it cost? Fourthly, what is the impact of deploying a different system on our overall security interests, included but not limited to arms control? So that is the context in which this decision must be made and why I have worked so hard to try to preserve the international framework of arms agreements.

Now, I have always said that I thought that if the United States had such technology, and if the purpose of the technology is to provide protection against irresponsible new nuclear powers and their possible alliances with terrorists and other groups, then every country that is part of a responsible international arms control and nonproliferation regime should have the benefit of this protection. That's always been my position.

So I think that we've done a lot of information sharing already with the Russians. We have offered to do more, and we would continue to. I don't think that we could ever advance the notion that we have this technology designed to protect us against a new threat, a threat which was also a threat to other civilized nations who might or might not be nuclear powers but were completely in harness with us on a nonproliferation regime, and not make it available to them. I think it would be unethical not to do so. That's always been my position, and I think that is the position of everyone in this administration.

NATO Enlargement

Q. Mr. President, for Portuguese Public Television, my name is Carlos Pena. In the middle of this month, in Lithuania, nine countries met, and they expressed their will to be part of NATO, and they want to work together. Did you address the question of further NATO enlargement and how you all see this kind of new "big bang"?

President Clinton. Well, the short answer to your question is, we didn't talk about further

NATO enlargement. But we have worked hard to try to make NATO relevant to the 21st century. We've taken in new members. We have had partnerships with dozens of new democracies, stretching all the way to central Asia. We have specific agreements with Ukraine and Russia. And I think we will have to continue to modernize the structure of NATO as we go along.

And I think more and more, the countries against whom NATO was once organized—that is, Russia and other members of part of the former Soviet bloc—will see NATO as a partner, not a former adversary, and you will see further integration and further cooperation. That's what I believe will happen.

European Union

Q. Yes, I'll start with Mr. President. Now that you are formally a European, considering Mr. Prodi has given you the qualification, I just wanted to ask you how do you feel about the position that's been expressed by some members of your administration that there is really not an adequate counterpart when they have to deal, for example, on economic and financial matters? That there is a Europe, but there are no ministers. Every 6 months you meet a different President of the European Union. Do you feel that it would be better for Europe as a whole to move further ahead into further integration, expressing better and with more determination their position?

And the same question is for Mr. Prodi and for Mr. Guterres. Mr. Prodi, I know you've been attacked and some people have been saying that Europe is really moving back into some kind of national environment, a national policy. Isn't that a negative development?

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, first, I think it's entirely a question for Europeans to determine, how they should organize themselves and at what pace this integration should proceed. But if you look at the roles now occupied, for example, by Mr. Solana and Mr. Patten, if you look at the work that the EU has done to get our common endeavors energized in Kosovo, for example, just in the last few months, I think you have to say that the European Union is growing stronger, not weaker, and that it's growing more effective.

How you should proceed from here depends upon, I think, both the attitudes of the leaders

as well as popular opinion and will be determined in no small measure by what the specific circumstances are confronting Europe in the next 4, 5 to 10 years.

But as an outsider, let me just say, I think that whenever something is in the process of being born, being formed, maturing, and you want to understand it and then explain it to other people, which is what your job is—since you're in the media, you have to first understand it and explain it to other people—there is always the tendency to see in any specific event evidence of a pattern which shows either that there's backsliding or accelerating, going forward. I think you have to resist that a little bit now because, really, history has no predicate for the European Union. Even the formation of the United States out of the various States is not the same thing. And we had quite a period of time before we had a National Government, when we were sort of a nation and we sort of weren't, when we were sort of together and we sort of weren't, in a much simpler time when the States had nothing like the history all the nations of Europe have.

So I think that we all have to have a little humility here and let this thing sort of unfold as history, popular opinion, and the vision of the leaders dictate. But I take it, from my point of view as an American, I think that so far all the developments, on balance, are very positive. I believe we want a strong and united Europe that is democratic and secure and a partner with us for dealing with the world's challenges of the future. So I think it's going in the right direction, and I think it's a very good thing.

President Prodi. Well, on my side, the answer is very simple. You know that the rotation of power is as ancient as ancient Rome, you know, and Rome became Rome and it began with the rotation of 6 months, as we are doing now. *[Laughter]* But I can also add there is a rotation of the President's Council, but there is no rotation of the President of the Commission. And so there is some stability in this, on this power.

But I will tell you something more, just a hint, joining what Bill Clinton told now—look, let's stay on the path. Let's stick on the facts. The enlargement, resting on the facts, never happened in history to put together 11 currencies, you know. Let's stick on the facts—never happen in history to enlarge this democratic process as we are doing now.

I'm touring every day in the new applying countries. And to see 12 parliaments working day and night to apply the new legislation, to conform to the European legislation, is something that it makes different with history. This is what is happening now. And so I am not only confident that Europe is strong, but Europe will be the real new event of the democracy of the 21st century.

Prime Minister Guterres. If I may add something. I think we have achieved a lot, but we are not satisfied. We are going on. We have an intergovernmental conference taking place now to improve our efficiency in decision-making, our democracy, our transparency, and to make sure we'll be able to cope with enlargement and, at the same time, to deepen our integration.

And if one looks back at the recent Lisbon extraordinary summit, I have to recognize that I, myself, was not expecting the European Union to be able to take so many policy decisions in so many relevant matters in such a quick frame of time, which proves that when we want—when we have the political will to do that, we really can have good decisions, quick decisions, and can find the right path.

So I'm very optimistic about the future of Europe, and I think my optimism is shared by all those that want to join the European Union at this moment.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, it's been a very busy couple of weeks in the Middle East, as you know. I'm wondering whether what's happened there recently has created any new opportunities for the peace process, what dangers it might have raised, and whether anything that's happened there has given you new hope that the September 13th deadline for a Palestinian-Israeli agreement will be reached?

President Clinton. Well, I think the decision of Prime Minister Barak to withdraw the Israeli troops from southern Lebanon, in accordance with the United Nations resolution, was, first of all, a daring one which creates both new challenges and new opportunities. It changed the landscape. And from my point of view, it imposes on—it should impose, at least, on all parties a greater sense of urgency, because things are up in the air again. So there is an opportunity, to use a much overworked phrase, to create a new order, to fashion a new peaceful

order out of the principles of the Oslo accord and all that's been done in the year since.

But from my point of view, it also imposes a much greater sense of urgency. I think the consequences of inaction are now likely to be more difficult because of this move. And so—for example, you have now—just for example, you talked about the Palestinians. I think this will heighten the anxieties of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Does this mean that there is going to be a peace and, therefore, they will be able to have a better life, either going home or going to some third country, going to Europe, going to the United States? Or does this mean that this is it, and there is sort of a new freezing of the situation? So there is anxiety in that community. You see that in every little aspect of this.

I think, on balance, it's good, because I believe they are going to reach an agreement. But it both turns the tension up in all camps and increases the overall price of not reaching an agreement fairly soon and the overall reward of reaching an agreement fairly soon. It changes everything in a way that both increases the pluses and increases the potential minuses. That's my analysis.

Q. President Clinton, sir, can you confirm if it's true that tomorrow you will meet in Lisbon with Prime Minister from Israel Ehud Barak?

President Clinton. Yes. I will, and I'm going to talk to Mr. Arafat before that, sometime today.

Yes.

Indonesia

Q. Mr. President, I'm from Indonesia. Since in the senior level group it was mentioned the coordinated support for the President, Wahid, and Indonesian Government, how do you feel the political and economic development in Indonesia?

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, first, I think it's worth pointing out that it's the largest Muslim country in the world, one of the handful of nations which will determine much of the shape of the 21st century the next 30 or 40 years by whether it does well or does poorly. So I think that everything that has been done to try to stabilize the country politically and get back to economic growth is a plus.

And I suppose, like any outsider, my only wish is that more could be done more quickly,

because so many people within Indonesia's lives are at stake, and the rest of us, we really need you to succeed.

Prime Minister Guterres. If I may say something that might sound surprising to you—probably before this press conference ends, our Minister of Foreign Affairs will fly to Jakarta. And under the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union, it will be held, the first political dialog between Indonesia and the European Union. And that also shows the attachment we have in the European Union for democracy, peace, and stability in Indonesia.

Russia

Q. The New York Times. Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. President, could you share with us your impressions of President Putin and the extent to which you see any prospects for some flexibility on a political solution in Chechnya? And President Clinton, could you kindly expand a bit on your discussions today about Russia? And on the eve of your trip to Russia, do you foresee any progress on any bilateral issue, including arms control, Chechnya, corruption?

Prime Minister Guterres. Well, in our last meeting in Moscow, I must say that I was quite impressed by President Putin's determination in creating in Russia a democratic state based on the market economy and rule of law. It was also clear, from our point of view, that even if our views about Chechnya are different, he said—and he said publicly—that he was committed to a political solution. And he also announced his firm support to the inquiries to be made by an independent committee, his will to see the OSCE back, and to give better support to international organizations involved in humanitarian help. And he even stressed in the press conference that there would be people prosecuted for violations of human rights in Chechnya.

So even if this does not correspond entirely to what we think, it really shows a move and a step which I believe is in a positive direction.

President Prodi. I confirm that there was a precise engagement on concrete decision to make inspections and transparency more visible in Chechnya for the immediate weeks, for the time that is in front of us.

Last question.

President Clinton. Wait, she asked me a question. Let me just say this, to start with a negative and end with a positive, I would be surprised

if we bridge all of our differences on Chechnya, and I would be surprised if we resolved all of our differences on the question of missile defense, although we might make more headway than most people expect. I'm just not sure yet.

However, I do expect that there will be two or three other areas where we will have truly meaningful announcements that I think will make a real difference—one of them, in particular, we're working on it. If we get it done, it will be very, very important.

So I think the trip is well worth it, and even in the areas where we may not have an agreement, in some ways that may be the most important reason for the trip of all. We shouldn't only do these trips and these dialogs when we know we've got a guaranteed outcome. Sometimes it's most important to be talking when there's still unresolved differences.

Upcoming Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

Q. Mr. President, can you please explain the timing and reasoning behind your visit tomorrow with Barak and tell us what you hope to accomplish?

President Clinton. Yes. They have—first of all, all the balls are up in the air as I just explained, and so there is both greater potential for something happening and also greater tension in the atmosphere, which is causing a ripple effect in the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Secondly, Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat have set for themselves an earlier timetable, as you know, to reach a framework agreement—not a final agreement; that's supposed to be done in September—but an earlier one. And there are lots of things that need to be gone through that we need to go through if we're even going to reach the framework agreement, because a lot of the toughest things have to be—they'll have to come to grips with those just to reach the framework agreement.

So I have been looking for an opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Barak. As you know, he was supposed to come to the United States a few days ago, and because of developments in the region, he could not come. Then he was going to come to Germany and participate in an event to which he was invited anyway, and we were going to talk, and then he couldn't do that because of a holiday in Israel. So this was the only shot we had to do it and still

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have enough time to meet the deadline that both he and Mr. Arafat are trying to meet.

There's no—you shouldn't overread this. It's not like there's some bombshell out there. But we just really needed to have a face-to-face meeting, and we needed to do it in this time-frame. He couldn't come last week to the United States. Then he couldn't come to Berlin to the meeting to which he was also invited. So we're doing the best we can with a difficult situation.

Prime Minister Guterres. Ladies and gentlemen, I must confess I have enjoyed some time ago, very much, a picture called "NeverEnding Story," but I don't think we can repeat that picture and transform this press conference in a new version. So, thank you very much, all of you.

NOTE: The President's 190th news conference began at 2:49 p.m. at the Palacio Nacional de Queluz. The President met with Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal, in his capacity as President of the European Council, and President Romano Prodi of the European Commission. A portion of Prime Minister Guterres' remarks were in Portuguese and were translated by an interpreter. In the news conference, the following people were referred to: Commissioner Christopher Patten of the European Commission; High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana of the European Council; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Minister of Foreign Affairs Jaime Gama of Portugal; and President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia.

United States-European Union Summit Statement on a New World Trade Organization Round

May 31, 2000

Since the last U.S.-EU Summit in December, we have worked together in Geneva to rebuild confidence in the WTO and the multilateral system, with particular reference to developing countries. With our trade partners, we have agreed to a short-term package on market access for the least developed countries, an implementation work program, and on the high priority to be accorded to effective delivery of technical assistance.

The U.S. and EU reaffirm their conviction that the early launch of an inclusive new Round of WTO trade negotiations would offer a major boost to global economic growth, employment

and sustainable development, but must address in a balanced way the concerns of all WTO members.

The U.S. and EU pledge to build on the constructive work of the last six months to try to launch such a new Round during the course of the year. We have reiterated our common view that the WTO agenda should include the social issues of labor and environment, not as a matter of protectionism, but as a matter of social justice and sustainability.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the Death of Governor Robert P. Casey

May 31, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Governor Bob Casey. Over the many years I knew him, I came to admire his toughness, tenacity, and commitment to principle. Those are the qualities that helped the son of a mule tender in the coal mines of northeastern

Pennsylvania lead a life of dedicated public service, culminating in two successful terms as Governor.

Throughout his career, Bob fought tirelessly for the people of Pennsylvania, never losing sight of the poor and their children. That

devotion was reflected in his support of universal health care, tougher environmental laws, expanded educational opportunity, and strong labor protections.

As Governors, Bob and I worked together on many of these causes. And when we dis-

agreed, I understood that his views were based on deep religious beliefs and a commitment to his convictions.

Hillary and I send our thoughts and prayers to his wife, Ellen, and the entire Casey family.

Statement on the Secretary of the Interior's Recommendation for the Creation of New National Monuments

May 31, 2000

I am pleased to receive Secretary Babbitt's recommendations today for the creation of new national monuments to protect unique Federal lands in Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington.

As trustee of much of our Nation's natural endowment, the Federal Government must do its utmost to ensure lasting protection of our most precious lands. That is why I asked the Secretary to identify Federal lands most in need of additional protection and why I have exer-

cised my authority under the Antiquities Act to grant such protection to some of our most cherished landscapes—from California's ancient sequoias to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Each of the areas recommended today represents an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural and cultural heritage. I will carefully consider the recommendations and hope to reach a decision on them in the near future.

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Lisbon

June 1, 2000

Thank you very much. First, I'm delighted to see you. I'm sorry we had to delay this a little bit, but we had the meeting with Prime Minister Barak. I want to thank, first, Gerry and Susan, my longtime friends. We went to college together. You can tell by looking at us, it was a very long time ago. [Laughter] Susan worked for me many years in the White House, and I miss her terribly, but I'm glad that they're here together. And I'm glad—we've got this whole McGowan bunch of kids here, proving that this is a pro-family administration. [Laughter]

I've been told that the people in our Embassy have produced 20 children in the last couple of years, so I want to thank you for that. I'll use that as an exhibit as I go around the world.

Obviously, I'm grateful to Secretary Albright and to Secretary Daley and to National Security Adviser Berger and our whole group. We had a wonderful time here, and I want to say more

about it in a minute. But I would like to say just a few words about the meeting I had with Prime Minister Barak this morning, because it is very important, and it's still early in America. So if I say it to you, they'll all hear it today. [Laughter]

First of all, he reaffirmed his intense commitment to reach an historic and complete agreement with the Palestinians, which I think is very important to settling all the issues and ending the conflict. I know from my own discussions with Chairman Arafat that he also shares this commitment and that he recognizes the real urgency of this moment to actually get back on the timetable and complete the work that has to be done.

I'm sending Secretary Albright to the Middle East next week to work with both leaders on narrowing the gaps that still remain between them. And I will soon meet with Chairman Arafat in Washington—I'll do it as quickly as

I can—finish my trip here and meet my other obligations.

Both leaders know from me, and they know from their own experience, that they now have to be prepared to make an intense effort and to do things that they have not done in the past, with real courage and vision, if we're going to actually get a framework agreement that deals with the outstanding issues.

And I can only tell you that I'm still convinced that they have the courage, the vision, and the ability to do this, and the United States will do everything we can to help them pass this milestone. And I know that your thoughts and prayers will be with them. This is tough work. If it were easy, somebody would have done it a long time ago. But actually, it is within view now. They could do and, I believe, they will do it. And I'm going to do my best to help them do it.

Let me also now just thank all of you. I have had a wonderful time here. I had a good meeting with Prime Minister Guterres, in both his capacity as Prime Minister of this country and in Portugal's presidency of the European Union. I had a good meeting and a good dinner with the Portuguese President, Mr. Sampaio.

Hillary was here 3 years ago, and she came home raving about everything about Portugal—literally raving about it. It was a couple of days before she sort of hit the ground. [Laughter] And the one thing she said is, "You've got to go to this restaurant where they make sea bass in salt"—[laughter]—"but there's no salt taste on the sea bass." I heard about this over and over again. I thought it was a joke, you know.

So last night, Gerry took us all. We had a huge contingent. We went to the Porta Santa Maria—is that right?—restaurant. It was too dark to see the ocean but not too dark to see the sea bass in the salt. [Laughter] So I can now go home and give a report that my wife did not exaggerate at all. It was the most interesting thing I ever did, I think.

And then something is happening—as I move toward the end of my term, my staff has relaxed its requirement that I actually suffer a physical breakdown on every trip from work, and I actually got to go play golf yesterday. And I will never forget that. It was wonderful. So we got a lot of work done; we had a good time; and I'm very grateful to you for all you have done.

I also heard at the state dinner that wonderful Portuguese music called *fado*. And I may never

get over that. I've been asking everybody I can find to send me CD's. I'm going to promote *fado* music all over the world. [Laughter] I have been sort of the single-handed ambassador for music coming out of northeast Brazil, but I think *fado* now has become my major passion in life. [Laughter] So I'll do what I can to help.

I want to say just a few serious words to you. The people who represent the United States around the world, both the people of our Foreign Service, our Commerce Department, our military, the others who are associated with our missions, and the foreign nationals who work with us, almost never get any publicity. And usually—once in a rare blue moon when they do get any publicity, it's because something bad happened. And all the rest of the time you never get the credit you deserve, day-in and day-out, for making the United States a good partner, a good friend, a good neighbor, for doing all the work that has to be done.

The relationship we have with this nation is strong, thanks in no small measure to the work you do, day-in and day-out, that too often goes unrecognized. And in the 7½ years I have been privileged to serve as President, every time I have gone to a foreign nation—and I've been to more, apparently, than any other President, and Hillary, I think, has been to more nations than any other First Lady. I've been told that it's unfair for me to say that because, given the breakup of the Soviet Union, we have more options than any previous First Couple has ever had—[laughter]—so, doubtless, my record will be broken some time by someone who likes to travel even more than I do and becomes President.

But I thought it was important for me to travel the world and for us to try to make a better future out of the post-Communist, post-cold-war world. So I've had the opportunity to see many things. And I just want you to know that I am profoundly grateful to you for what you do and that I have done what I could, both in ceremonies like this and in speeches back home, to make sure that the American people know that they are getting more than their money's worth—far more than their money's worth—out of our diplomatic mission.

I have done what I could at every budget debate of the United States Congress to argue that a lot of our national security and our national interests are advanced by the diplomatic investments we make, by the investments we

make in our AID programs, by the investments we make in the Peace Corps, by the investments we make in our commerce missions. It's not just a matter of military investments. If we want to advance the national security interests of America, we have to be good neighbors, good friends, and good partners. And you represent all of that, and I am very, very, very grateful to you.

I also want to say that I'm grateful for the things you do here in this country that kind of are above and beyond the call of duty. The work you do with Portuguese families and Portuguese citizens, the things that you share with them, are very, very important to me.

So let me say, I also have been told that there are three people who have been working here for over 40 years, and I think I should recognize them. Even if my Portuguese is not very good, I'll do my best. *Graca, Santos*. All I can say is, if you've been working here 43

years, you were obviously too young to go to work when you started. [Laughter] And Joao and Teresa Venancio, who have been tending your garden all these years. Where are they? I'm glad you're here.

So I say to you, to you three and to all of you, and to your family and your children, *obrigado*. Thank you for what you have done for the United States. And I know you'll be very glad when we're all gone. [Laughter] Have a good wheels-up party.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Dom Pedro Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; U.S. Ambassador Gerald S. McGowan and his wife, Susan; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Antonio Guterres and President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal.

Statement on Welfare Reform

June 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to announce that new guidance is being released that builds on my administration's long-standing commitment to reform welfare, reward work, and support working families in their transition from welfare to work. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Transportation are releasing updated guidance on how States and communities can coordinate Federal resources to address the transportation challenge in moving people from welfare to work. The guidance provides a variety of innovative strategies that communities can fund, ranging from making public transit more accessible for weekend and evening shifts to helping individuals lease, purchase, or repair a car. In addition, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services are releasing new guidance for housing and welfare agencies to work together to help families in public and assisted housing move toward self-sufficiency using services such as job search assistance, mentoring, counseling, transportation, and child care.

A new evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program confirms that promoting and rewarding work has powerful positive impacts on low income families. The Minnesota results show that welfare reform can substantially increase employment, reduce poverty, decrease levels of domestic abuse, and improve children's behavior and school performance when States combine strong work requirements with investments in supports for low income working families. Employment and earnings impacts were especially large for families in public and assisted housing. This research also found that welfare reform can increase marriage rates and marital stability among low income families.

These results highlight the importance of the interagency guidance on housing and transportation released today and the need for continued investments to support working families. I call on the Congress to enact my budget proposals to support working families: expanding the earned-income tax credit; improving access to affordable and quality child care; expanding health care for low income working families;

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providing more housing vouchers for hard-pressed working families; helping more low income families get to work by making it easier

for them to own a car or obtain public transportation; and helping more low income fathers work and support their children.

Statement on the Circuit Court of Appeals Decision in the Elian Gonzalez Case

June 1, 2000

I am pleased with the decision today of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. As I have said before, this is a case about the importance of family and the bond between a father and son. I have supported the Justice Department's conclusion that Elian's father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, is the one best suited to speak for his

child, and I am pleased that the court has upheld the Justice Department's determination.

NOTE: The statement referred to Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father.

Statement on the Death of Tito Puente

June 1, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of the Latin jazz band leader Tito Puente. For more than 50 years, Puente was more than a musician—he was a trailblazer. The five-time Grammy award winner's countless recordings are classics in the genre he helped define.

In 1997 I was honored to welcome Tito Puente to the White House and present him with the National Medal of the Arts. At that ceremony, I said, "Just hearing Tito Puente's name makes you want to get up and dance. With his finger on the pulse of the Latin Amer-

ican musical tradition and his hands on the timbales, he has probably gotten more people out of their seats and onto the dance floor than any other living artist." This is truly his legacy—music that brings joy to young and old, to people of any background and in many nations, all around the world. We will miss Tito Puente's vibrant presence both on stage and off, but we know his spirit will endure in the music he has given us.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and many friends.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany in Berlin

June 1, 2000

First, let me thank Chancellor Schroeder for making me feel welcome again in Germany and Berlin. I am delighted to be here, and I have enjoyed this visit. And I'm looking forward our dinner tonight and the Conference on Progress-

ive Governance, beginning tomorrow, and of course, my trip to Aachen in the morning.

The Chancellor has faithfully reported on our lengthy conversation. We spent virtually all of

our time discussing Russia, the question of missile defense, and the really heartrending child custody cases that he mentioned.

I would like to also, though, publicly thank the Chancellor for the leadership of Germany in the cause of European unity and in our efforts to bring peace and freedom and human rights to the Balkans, something that is very important to the United States.

Let me say to all of you that the relationship the United States has with Germany has been profoundly important for the last 50 years. But I think it may well be even more important for the next 50. And I intend to do whatever I can in the time I have left as President to make sure this relationship is on solid ground for the new century.

I am particularly grateful that a number of our citizens will be participating in Expo 2000 here, in the American Voices program, having conversations with the German people directly. And I thank Commissioner Rollnick and the others who are responsible for that.

Finally, just one word on a development back in the United States today. I was very pleased

with the decision of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in the Elian Gonzalez case, upholding the decision of the Justice Department that he should be with his father. We have tried to honor the principles that the Chancellor and I discussed today in the cases involving our two countries in that case. I think the Justice Department and the Attorney General did the right thing, and I'm very pleased that the eleventh circuit upheld their decision today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. at the Chancellery. In his remarks, he referred to Commissioner Nancy Ellison Rollnick, Presidential Scholars Foundation; and Cuban youth Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody case was decided by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in favor of his Cuban father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chancellor Schroeder.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Sanctions Under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act

June 1, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I hereby report pursuant to section 804(b) of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act, 21 U.S.C. 1901–1908, 8 U.S.C. 1182 (the “Kingpin Act”), that the following 12 foreign persons are appropriate for sanctions pursuant to the Kingpin Act, and that I am imposing sanctions upon them pursuant to the Act.

Benjamin Alberto Arellano-Felix
Ramon Eduardo Arellano-Felix
Jose de Jesus Amezcua-Contreras
Luis Ignacio Amezcua-Contreras
Rafael Caro-Quintero
Vicente Carrillo-Fuentes
Chang Chi-Fu
Wei Hsueh-Kang
Noel Timothy Heath
Glenroy Vingrove Matthews
Abeni O. Ogungbuyi
Oluwole A. Ogungbuyi

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; Bill Archer, chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary; Porter J. Goss, chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; John W. Warner, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Orrin G. Hatch, chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; and Richard C. Shelby, chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2.

Remarks on Receiving the International Charlemagne Prize in Aachen,
Germany
June 2, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, Chancellor Schroeder, Lord Mayor Linden, President Rau, President Havel, His Majesty Juan Carlos, President Halonen, previous laureates, members of the Charlemagne Foundation, leaders of the clergy and cathedral, and members of the German and American Governments. Let me begin by thanking the lord mayor for his welcome and his wise words and my good friend Chancellor Schroeder for his kind comments and his visionary statement.

The rare distinction you have bestowed upon me, I am well aware, is in large measure a tribute to the role the American people have played in promoting peace, freedom, and security in Europe for the last 50 years. I feel the honor is greater still because of the remarkable contributions made by previous recipients of this prize toward our common dream of European union.

Of course, as has already been said, that dream has its roots here in Aachen, an ancient shrine that remains at the center of what it means to be European, the seat of an empire, a place of healing waters, peace treaties, furious fighting. With its liberation at the end of World War II, Aachen became perhaps the first German city to join the postwar democratic order. Today, as I have seen, Aachen is both a sanctuary for sacred relics dating back to the dawn of Christianity and a crucible of Europe's new information economy.

Here, Charlemagne's name summons something glimpsed for the first time during his life, a sense that the disparate people of this Earth's smallest continent could actually live together as participants in a single civilization. In its quest for unity, even at the point of a sword, and in its devotion to the new idea that there was actually something called Europe, the Carolingian idea surpassed what had come before, and to an extent, it guides us still.

Twelve centuries ago, out of the long, dark night of endless tribal wars, there emerged a light that somehow has survived all the ravages of time, always burning brighter, always illuminating Europe's way to the future. Today, that shining light of European union is a matter of

the utmost importance, not just to Europeans but to everyone on this planet, for Europe has shown the world humanity at its best and at its worse. Europe's most violent history was caused by men claiming the mantle of Charlemagne, men who sought to impose European union for their own ends without the consent of the people. History teaches, therefore, that European union, not to mention transatlantic unity, must come from the considered judgment of free people and must be for worthy purposes that when threatened must be defended.

The creators of this prize and its first winners clearly understood that. We often say that theirs was the generation that rebuilt Europe after World War II, but actually they did far more. They built the foundation of something entirely new, a Europe united in common commitment to democracy, free markets, and the rule of law. That achievement endured for half a century, but only for half a continent.

Then, 11 years ago, the Berlin Wall fell, the Iron Curtain parted, and at last the prospect of a Europe whole and free opened before you. All of us will remember 1989 for the Wall crumbling to the powerful strains of Schiller's "Ode to Joy." It was a moment of great liberation, like 1789 or 1848, a particular triumph for the German people, whose own unification defied great adversity and set the stage for the larger unification of Europe.

Too often we forget that 1989 was also a time of grave uncertainty about the future. There were doubts about NATO's future, reinforced later by its slowness to confront evil in Bosnia and Croatia. There were fears that the EU's efforts to come closer together would either fail or, succeeding, would fatally divide Europe and the United States. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe feared becoming a gray zone of poverty and insecurity. Many wondered if Russia was headed for a Communist backlash or a nationalist coup.

In January of 1994 I came to Europe for the first time as President, both to celebrate Europe's new birth of freedom and to build upon it. Then I spoke of a new conception of European security, based not on divided defense

blocs but instead on political, military, and cultural integration. This new security idea required, as has already been said, the transatlantic alliance to do for Europe's East what we did for Europe's West after World War II.

Together, we set about doing that. We lowered trade barriers, supported young democracies, adapted NATO to new challenges, and expanded our Alliance across Europe's old divide. We made clear, and I repeat today, that NATO's door remains open to new members. The EU took in three new members, opened negotiations with a dozen others, created a single market with one currency.

We've stood by Russia, struggling to build their own democracy, and opened the way to a partnership between Russia and NATO and between Ukraine and NATO. We defended the values at the heart of our vision of an undivided Europe, acting to stop the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and forging what I believe will be an enduring peace there.

We acted in Kosovo in one of our Alliance's finest moments. A year ago in Germany we launched a Stability Pact for southeastern Europe. We stand, still, with crusaders for tolerance and freedom, from Croatia to Slovakia to Serbia. And we do encourage reconciliation between Turkey and Greece.

Over the last 11 years, of course, there have been some setbacks. But unquestionably, Europe today is more united, more democratic, more peaceful than ever, and both Europeans and Americans should be proud of that.

Think how much has changed. Borders built to stop tanks now manage invasions of tourists and trucks. Europe's fastest growing economies are now on the other side of the old Iron Curtain. At NATO Headquarters the flags of 19 Allies and 27 partners fly. In Central Europe and Eastern Europe, the realistic dream of membership in the EU and NATO has sparked the resolution of almost every old ethnic and border dispute. And, finally—finally—our friend Václav Havel has spent more years being President than he spent in prison.

In southeastern Europe, the Bosnians are still fighting, but now at the ballot box. Croatia is a democracy. Soldiers from almost every European country, including bitter former adversaries, are keeping the peace together in Kosovo. Last year as German troops marched through the Balkan countryside, they were hailed as liberators. What a way to end the 20th century.

In the meantime, Russia has stayed on the path of democracy, though its people have suffered bitter economic hardships, political and criminal violence, and the tragedy of the war in Chechnya, which yet may prove to be self-defeating because of the civilian casualties. Still, it has withdrawn its troops from the Baltic States, accepted the independence of its neighbors, and completed the first democratic transition in its thousand-year history.

European unity really is producing something new under the Sun, common institutions that are bigger than the nation-state and, at the same time, a devolution of democratic authority downward. Scotland and Wales have their own Parliaments. This week Northern Ireland, where my family has its roots, restored its new government. Europe is alive with the sound of ancient place names being spoken again, Catalonia, Piedmonte, Lombardy, Silesia, Transylvania, Uthenia, not in the name of separatism but in the spirit of healthy pride and heritage.

National sovereignty is being enriched by lively local voices making Europe safer for diversity, reaffirming our common humanity, reducing the chance that European disunity will embroil Europe and America in another large conflict.

One thing, thankfully, has not changed. Europe's security remains tied to America's security. When it is threatened, as it was in Bosnia and Kosovo, we, too, will respond. When it is being built, we, too, will always take part.

Europe's peace sets a powerful example to other parts of the world that remain divided along ethnic, religious, and national lines. Even today, Europe has internal disputes over fundamental questions of sovereignty, political power, and economic policy, disputes no less consequential than those over which people still fight and die in other parts of the world. However, instead of fighting and dying over them now, Europeans argue about them in Brussels in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

The whole world should take notice of this. If western Europe could come together after the carnage of World War II, if central Europe could do it following 50 years of communism, it can be done everywhere on this Earth.

Of course, for all of the positive developments and our good feelings today, the job of building a united Europe is certainly not finished, and it is important not to take all this self-congratulation too far. Instead, we should focus today

on two big pieces of unfinished business and one enduring challenge.

The first piece of unfinished business is to make southeast Europe fully, finally, and forever a part of the rest of Europe. That is the only way to make peace last in that bitterly divided region.

It cannot be done by forcing people to live together; there is no bringing back the old Yugoslavia. It cannot be done by giving every community its own country, army, and flag. Shifting so many borders in the Balkans will only shake the peace further.

Our goal must be to debalkanize the Balkans. We must help them to create a magnet that will bring people together, a magnet more powerful than the polarizing pull of their old hatreds. That's what the Stability Pact that Germany helped to establish is designed to do, challenging the nations of southeast Europe to reform their economies and strengthen their democracies and pledging more than \$6 billion from the rest of us to support their efforts. Now we must turn quickly those pledges into positive changes in the lives of ordinary people and steadily bring those nations into Western institutions.

We must also remain unrelenting in our support for a democratic transition in Serbia. For if there is to be a future for democracy and tolerance in this region, there must be no future for Mr. Milosevic and his policy of ethnic hatred and ethnic cleansing.

If southeastern Europe is to be fully integrated into the continent, Turkey also must be included. I applaud the EU's decision to treat Turkey as a real candidate for membership. I hope both Turkey and the EU will take the next steps. It will be good for Turkey, good for southeast Europe, good for more rapid reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and the resolution of Cyprus, and good for the entire world, which is still too divided over religious differences.

Our second piece of unfinished business concerns Russia. We must work to build a partnership with Russia that encourages stability, democracy, and cooperative engagement with the West and full integration with global institutions.

Only time will tell what Russia's ultimate role in Europe will be. We do not yet know if Russia's hard-won democratic freedoms will endure. We don't know yet whether it will define its

greatness in yesterday's terms or tomorrow's. The Russian people will make those decisions.

Though Russia's transformation is incomplete, there clearly is reason for hope in Russia's remarkable journey over these last few years, from dictatorship to democracy, from communism to the market, from empire to nation-state, from adversary to partner in reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Because the stakes are so high, we must do everything we can to encourage a Russia that is fully democratic and united in its diversity, a Russia that defines its greatness not by dominance of its neighbors but by the dominant achievements of its people and its partnership, a Russia that should be, indeed, must be, fully part of Europe.

That means no doors can be sealed shut to Russia, not NATO's, not the EU's. The alternative would be a future of harmful competition between Russia and the West and the end of our vision of an undivided continent.

As Winston Churchill said when he received the Charlemagne Prize in the far darker days of 1956, "In a true unity of Europe, Russia must have her part." Of course, Russia may very well decide it has no interest in formally joining European or transatlantic institutions. If that happens, we must make sure that, as the EU and NATO expand, their eastern borders become gateways to Russia, not barriers to trade, travel, and security cooperation. We must build real institutional links with Russia, as NATO has begun to do. Of course, it won't be easy, and there is still mistrust to be overcome on both sides, but it is possible and absolutely necessary.

The steps necessary to bring southeast Europe and Russia into the embrace of European unity illustrate the continued importance of the transatlantic alliance to both Europe and America. The enduring challenge we face, therefore, is to preserve and strengthen our alliance as Europe continues its coming together.

We have agreed on the principles. We have laid the foundations. But the future we're building will look very different from anything we have ever known. In a generation, I expect the EU will have as many as 30 members, from the Baltics to the Balkans to Turkey; a community of unprecedented cultural, political, and economic diversity and vitality. It will be a bigger Europe than Charlemagne ever dared dream, a reflection of our recognition that ultimately Europe is a unifying idea as much as

a particular place, an expansive continent of different peoples who embrace a common destiny, play by the same rules, and affirm the same truths: that ethnic and religious hatred are unacceptable; that human rights are inalienable and universal; that our differences are a source of strength, not weakness; that conflicts must be resolved by arguments, not by arms.

I believe America must continue to support Europe's most ambitious unification efforts. And I believe Europe should want to strengthen our alliance even as you grow stronger. The alliance has been the bedrock of our security for half a century. It can be the foundation on which our common future is built.

Oh, it's easy to point to our differences. Many do. On my bad days, I do. But let's keep a healthy perspective. Consider these news headlines about U.S.-European dispute: "Allies Complain of Washington's Heavy Hand," "France to NATO: *Non, Merci*," "U.S. Declares Economic Warfare on Allies," "Protestors Rally Against American Arms Plan." The first of those headlines is from the Suez crisis in 1956. The second is from 1966, when France left NATO's military command. The third is from 1981, the Siberian Pipeline crisis; the fourth, from 1986, during the debate about deploying intermediate nuclear missiles in Europe.

Yes, we've always had our differences, and being human and imperfect, we always will. But the simple fact is, since Europe is an idea as much as a place, America also is a part of Europe, bound by ties of family, history, and values.

More than ever, we are also actually connected. Underwater cables allow us to send staggering amounts of E-mail and E-commerce to each other instantaneously. A billion dollars in trade and investment goes back and forth every day, employing more than 14 million people on both sides of the Atlantic.

And there is the enduring connection, the 104,000 Americans who lie in military cemeteries across Europe. Today's Europe would not be possible without them. And whatever work I have done to merit your prize was built on their sacrifice.

So my friends, we must nourish the ties that bind us as we work to resolve honest disagreements and to overcome potentially harmful misperceptions on both sides of the Atlantic. Let me mention just two.

There is a perception right now in America that Europe doesn't always carry its fair share of our mutual responsibilities. Yet Europeans are providing more than 80 percent of both the troops keeping the peace in Kosovo and the funds for economic reconstruction there. And few Americans know that in our own backyard, Europeans paid for more than 60 percent of all aid to Central America when it was ravaged by Hurricane Mitch and a third of all support for peace in Guatemala.

At the same time, there is a perception in Europe that America's power—military, economic, cultural—is at times too overbearing. Perhaps our role in NATO's air campaign in Kosovo accentuated such fears. But in Kosovo, our power was exercised in alliance with Europe, in pursuit of our shared interest in European peace and stability, in defense of shared values central to the goal of European integration.

If, after Kosovo, European countries strengthen their own ability to act with greater authority and responsibility in times of crisis, while maintaining our transatlantic link, I think that is a very good thing. There is no contradiction between a strong Europe and a strong transatlantic partnership.

I would also like to mention that our partnership, as the lord mayor pointed out, and as Chancellor Schroeder said, remains profoundly important, not only to ourselves, but to the rest of the world as well. Together, we account for more than half the world's economy and 90 percent of its humanitarian aid. If we're going to win the fight against terrorism, organized crime, the spread of weapons of mass destruction; if we want to promote ethnic, religious, and racial tolerance; if we want to combat global warming and environmental degradation, fight infectious disease, ease poverty, and close the digital divide, clearly, we must do these things together.

Europe and America should draw strength from our transatlantic alliance. Europe should not be threatened by it, and America must not listen to those who say we should go it alone. America must remain Europe's good partner and good ally.

Lord Palmerston's rule that countries have no permanent alliances, only permanent interests, simply does not apply to our relationship. For America has a permanent interest in a permanent alliance with Europe. Our shared future

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is deeply rooted in our shared history. The American Revolution, after all, stemmed in part from the Seven Years War, which in turn stemmed from a treaty signed here in Aachen in 1748.

Now, a few days ago, I stood at the mouth of the Tagus River in Lisbon. From that spot over five centuries ago, brave Europeans began to explore the far reaches of our planet. They traveled unimaginable distances and conquered indescribable adversity on their way to find Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In their wake, the sons and daughters of this continent came across the Atlantic to populate places they called New Spain, New England, New France, New Netherlands, Nova Scotia, New Sweden, in short, a new Europe. Without the longing for a new Europe, there never would have been an America in the first place.

Now, as the longing for a new Europe takes root on the soil of the old continent, we should never let a sense of history's inevitability cloud our wonder at how astonishingly Europeans changed the rest of the world through enterprise, imagination, and their ability to grow, qualities that always will define Europe's identity far more accurately than any mapmaker ever will.

In the years ahead, as pilgrims of peace come here to Aachen, I hope they will reflect on

the similarity of the two monuments enshrined here: first, the magnificent cathedral holding Charlemagne's mortal remains, begun in his lifetime, added to throughout the Middle Ages, repaired in the 20th century, when our failure to keep the peace required it; and second, the peace and unity that three generations have been building for five decades now in Europe, a work far from complete, perhaps never to be completed, but completely worthy of our best labors and dreams. Let us keep building this cathedral, the cathedral of European unity, on the foundation of our alliance for freedom. Because I have tried to lay a stone or two in my time, I am honored and humbled to accept this prize.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Katschhof Courtyard at the Aachen Cathedral. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Lord Mayor Jurgen Linden of Aachen; President Johannes Rau of Germany; President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic; King Juan Carlos of Spain; President Tarja Halonen of Finland; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks to the Sponsors of the International Charlemagne Prize in Aachen June 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Mr. Mayor, Mr. President, the rector of the university, and the Charlemagne Prize Foundation members. I have given my speech today, so I would just like to make a couple of comments. First, let me say that I have wanted to come to this great city since I was a young man, over 35 years ago, when I first began to study the history of Europe. And so today was, for me, a personal dream come true. And I only regret that I didn't get to spend more time in the cathedral. [Laughter] But the mayor says I can come back. [Laughter]

Let me also say how very impressed I am by the modern things about this city, as well, beginning with the mayor and the enlightened

speech that he gave and the energy and friendliness of the people. I have enjoyed it very much.

I would like to say just a word about the Charlemagne Prize itself. Fifty years ago, when this prize was created, the city fathers were true visionaries. They refused to give in to the despair that enveloped so much of Europe. Today after I gave my speech, so many people came up to me and said, "You're so optimistic." And I thought I was being faithful to the founders of the prize. And I find it foolish to have any other attitude toward life. If you look back over the last 50 years, I think it is remarkable how far we have come. And yes, there are great challenges, but there's no reason to believe that good people can't do what needs to be done.

Let me say with regard to the prize, since it is really about European unity and, for me, transatlantic unity, I thought that the best thing I could do would be to donate the prize money to a student exchange program that would promote unity in a more immediate sense among people still young enough to make the most of it. And so the exchange program that I am going to give the prize money to joins Aachen and its sister city, Arlington, Virginia, which is just across the river from the White House. And there they are. I see them.

So I hope that some good will come of it and that young people from this community and

Arlington will gain a deeper insight into our respective nations and a greater understanding of the future that they will have to build.

This has been a wonderful day for me. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber at City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lord Mayor Jurgen Linden of Aachen; President Johannes Rau of Germany; and Rector Burkhard Rauhut, Aachen Technical University.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Normal Trade Relations Status for Vietnam

June 2, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby transmit the document referred to in subsection 402(d)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), with respect to a further 12-month extension of the authority to waive subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act. This document constitutes my recommendation to continue in effect this waiver authority for a further 12-month period, and includes my reasons for determining that continuation of the waiver authority and the waiver

currently in effect for Vietnam will substantially promote the objectives of section 402 of the Act.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The related memorandum of June 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Normal Trade Relations Status for Belarus

June 2, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby transmit a report including my reasons for determining that continuation of the waiver currently in effect for the Republic of Belarus under subsection 402(d)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, (the "Act") will substantially promote the objectives of section 402 of the Act.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The related memorandum of June 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

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Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Normal Trade Relations Status for China

June 2, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby transmit a report including my reasons for determining that continuation of the waiver currently in effect for the People's Republic of China under subsection 402(d)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, (the "Act") will substantially promote the objectives of section 402 of the Act.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The related memorandum of June 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address

June 3, 2000

Good morning. Earlier this week, I attended a summit with European leaders to focus on the opportunities and challenges of the new economy. One of those changes, clearly, is bridging the digital divide and helping all our people make the most of technology's promise. Today I want to talk with you about new steps our administration is taking to help America's students and teachers do just that.

I'm proud of the progress we've made over the last 7 years to expand access to technology in our schools. In 1994 only 35 percent of our schools had any Internet connection; today, 95 percent do. In 1994 only 3 percent of our classrooms were actually connected to the Internet. Today, thanks in large part to the E-rate program championed by Vice President Gore, 95 percent of our schools, as I said, are wired, but now 63 percent of our classrooms have an Internet connection. That's a very big step. But there's more to do, and it's about more than computers and connections.

Access is important, but it's only a means to an end. The ultimate purpose of computers in the classroom is to boost student performance and help children learn. That can only happen if teachers have the best training to make the most of this technology.

Today, two out of three teachers with access to a computer say they don't feel well-prepared to use it in class. We owe it to America's children to help their teachers become as com-

fortable with a computer as they are with a chalkboard. And we must start early. With rising student enrollment and teacher retirements, America will need more than 2 million new teachers over the next 10 years. We have to make sure every one of them can use a computer to help students meet high standards. We're taking steps to do that.

Earlier this year, the deans of over 200 colleges of education committed to work with our administration to meet this goal. Today I'm announcing \$128 million in new 3-year technology grants to help tomorrow's teachers prepare 21st century students. We're awarding 122 grants to teacher colleges and other partners in every region of the country. These resources will train new teachers to use technology to improve student achievement.

A grant to Western Michigan University, for example, will be used to build partnerships with business leaders and local school districts to help future teachers use technology in the classroom. San Diego State University is receiving a grant to develop advanced technologies to improve student reading and teach educators throughout California.

Combined with past grants, today's awards will help train as many as 600,000 new teachers nationwide. My budget for the coming year doubles our investment in quality technology training to reach a million teachers by 2004.

Unfortunately, so far, Congress has failed to provide the resources to meet that target. The House budget would deny hundreds of thousands of future teachers the training they need to use technology to help students meet challenging academic standards. Their budget also denies the funding I requested to create up to 1,000 new community technology centers to help young people and adults gain critical technology skills.

In too many ways, the education budget making its way through Congress simply doesn't make the grade. It invests too little in our schools and demands too little from them. In order to pay for large and irresponsible tax breaks, it fails to address some of our schools' most pressing needs, from increasing accountability to building and modernizing schools to improving teacher quality and reducing class size.

In this time of unprecedented prosperity, there is no reason to shortchange our children and our schools. So I ask Congress again to pass a budget that reflects our values and puts

education first, a budget that strengthens accountability and helps turn around low-performing schools, reduces class size and increases after-school opportunities, closes the digital divide and opens doors to help disadvantaged children gear up for college, rebuilds crumbling schools and boosts teacher quality.

If Congress sends me a budget that fails that test, I'll have to veto it. But I hope Congress will work with me to pass balanced, responsible budget increases to invest in our children and their future. Instead of widening the divide in technology and education, we can widen the circle of opportunity for every American. And now is the time to get this done.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3 p.m. on June 2 in the Presidential Suite at the Intercon Hotel in Berlin, Germany, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Berlin, Germany June 3, 2000

President Clinton. Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to, I think, speak for all of us in thanking Chancellor Schroeder for this remarkable meeting and the communique which is coming out of our meeting. It's, I think, a fair statement of the way we view the 21st century world and what our responsibilities and opportunities are in it.

There is a consensus among us that we face, in the globalized information society, great opportunities and great challenges; that we want economic growth and social justice; that the countries around this table, because of their size differences, their continental differences, their developmental differences, face particular challenges; but that there are things we can do to help each other and to help our own people.

We talked specifically about economic empowerment, about education, about closing the digital divide, about the importance of reducing income inequality as a result of the globalization.

We talked about the importance of a global initiative to reduce disease and poverty. We talked about climate change. And we talked a good deal about the importance of reaffirming our common humanity in the midst of the racial and ethnic and religious tensions that still dominate too much of the world's conflicts and are present, to some degree, in every one of our countries.

We did agree, as the Chancellor said, to set up a network of our people to work together to identify specific challenges and come up with specific responses to them, so that we can now move from the more theoretical level of our discussions to concrete suggestions that will be helpful and could actually improve the lives of the people we represent.

And finally, let me say we agreed that those of us who are members will emphasize a lot of these concerns at the coming G-8 meeting

in Okinawa, where we expect to see a real emphasis on, in particular, on three things we talked about today: on spreading educational opportunities in the developing world; on closing the digital divide; and on a major effort by the developed countries to increase our response to disease, particularly to HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

So this was a very good meeting. And Chancellor, again I thank you, and I, for one, learned a lot, and I think it was very much worth the effort that you made to put it on.

[At this point, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany began the question-and-answer session. A participant asked if and when another meeting was scheduled and if the group would stay together regardless of election results. The Chancellor stated that the group was indissoluble and had scheduled another meeting in July.]

European Union

Q. Mr. President, yesterday the Chancellor called you a true European. As a true European, can you tell us where you think Europe should be moving? Should Europe be moving to become a United States of Europe; should it become a kind of federal state? Is that what it should be doing, or should it be a rather looser confederation of nation-states? [Laughter]

President Clinton. Well, I'm also a true democrat, which means I believe people should make their own decisions—[laughter]—about their lives.

Let me say, as I said yesterday in Aachen, I have strongly supported the cause of European union. I think that what has been done so far is a plus. I think that more members will be added to the Union, and I think that is a good thing. You already have a common currency and a forum for resolving common concerns.

Whether the Union will grow tighter, as well as larger, I can't say. That's a decision you have to make. And my guess is that now that you have a framework that's plainly working economically and politically, that those decisions will be made over a longer period of time and that for the next few years you'll be at least as concerned about how many other countries should be let in. But it's entirely a decision for Europe to make. The United States will support you whatever you do as long as we continue to share values and work together and

deal with the kind of questions we're discussing today.

Latin America

Q. To President Clinton, how do you view the situation in Latin America? And I'd like to know how you can see the principles you're advocating here coming about in Latin American countries with the difficulties facing democracy there at the moment.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, first, I think that all the people here who are not from Latin America should know that every country but one is a democracy; that there has been an enormous amount of economic and political reform in Latin America in the last decade; but that because of the rise of narcotraffickers and terrorist activities in Colombia and in other countries, democracy is under great strain in Latin America.

And my belief is that we should do everything we can to support the elected governments and democratic tendencies. We should make sure that we do whatever we can to see that the economies work for ordinary citizens, that there is a human face on Latin America's part of the global economy, and that we try to strengthen those governments that are under particular stress, which is why I've done what I could to persuade our Congress to help Colombia and the other countries in the Andean regions to deal with the combined impacts of the narcotraffickers and the civil wars in the region.

Perhaps the Latin American Presidents here might have a better insight. But I think the fact that we have the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile here, I think, has been a big addition to the quality of our discussions because of the particular challenges facing Latin America at this time.

[President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil and President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina commented on democracy in Latin America.]

Progressive Governance

Q. Mr. President, you said that globalization should be given a new human face. What was striking was that the term "Third Way" wasn't used at this conference; progressive governance was the motto of this conference. Is this a turning point for future meetings of the center-left?

President Clinton. I hope not, because I believe that, to me, it does reflect the Third Way.

But, you know, that term, “the Third Way,” is fairly closely identified with our administration and with what Prime Minister Blair has done in Great Britain. And I think this idea of progressive governance is perhaps less of a political slogan and more of a description of what it is we’re all trying to do.

But essentially, I think what unites us is, we believe in the positive possibilities of a globalized information economy. And we know we have to have responsible economic policies to make the private markets work, but we don’t believe that’s enough. We don’t believe you can have social justice and deal with all these other challenges we face unless you have effective, progressive governance that makes the most of the new economy and deals with its rough edges and difficulties as well. I think that’s so—I think, in that sense, progressive governance describes what we’re trying to do. We don’t believe in just laissez-faire economics, but we don’t believe that government alone can solve these problems or ignore the importance of economic performance. So what we want is progressive governance to deal with the opportunities and challenges that are out there.

I think it is a fair description of what we’re about, and it is perhaps more inclusive of all the countries here represented than the Third Way. I like the Third Way because it’s sort of easy to remember. [Laughter] But I think that far more important than the labels are the substance, and I think that’s what has really bound us together here today, is the substance of what we’re about.

[Chancellor Schroeder commented that the absence of Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom was due to the birth of his child rather than to differences of substance.]

President Clinton. Progressive governance and the Third Way are pro-family. [Laughter]

Chancellor Schroeder. One last question, please.

Internet

Q. Mr. Clinton, I’d like to ask you, what is your view of how the Internet should be used as a tool for strengthening democracy and for the education of the developing countries and strengthening democracy in countries like China or other countries where this is a problem, instead of being used as a tool to spread destructive information? How should you enforce that

tool? And what is the role for countries that are far ahead in this area, like Sweden and the United States, for example?

President Clinton. Well, first, I think that we should recognize what an enormous potential the Internet has for bridging economic, educational, and social divides, not only in the developing world but in the poorest areas of developed countries, because it collapses time and space and allows access to information that was previously unthinkable for people in difficult situations.

Prime Minister Chretien talked about how he had all the Eskimo villages in northern Canada connected to the Internet. That has enormous health implications, enormous educational implications, and my guess is, economic implications.

So to specifically answer your question, I’ll give you just three examples of things I think we ought to be emphasizing. I believe we ought to try to have Internet connections with printers in all the poorest villages where we’re trying to get children into schools and give them modern education, because—for example, the entire Encyclopedia Britannica is now on the Internet. And if you have a printer and a computer in a poor village, you don’t have to be able to afford textbooks anymore, and it’s a far more efficient way for government to spread universal information. So that’s one example that’s an education example.

For an economic example, I think that all over the world we see economic empowerment initiatives. In Latin America, for example, there has been a lot of work to get native crafts—and also in African villages—out. I think there ought to be a systematic effort to use E-commerce to market these things all over the world and increase the incomes of poor people in villages dramatically by the use of E-commerce.

The third thing, a political usage. In India, where I just visited, in several of the villages in several of the States in India, they’re now providing government services over the Internet. In some places, they’re more advanced than we are in the United States. I was in Hyderabad, where you can get 18 government services over the Internet, including a driver’s license, so no one ever waits in line for it anymore. If anyone did that in America, they could be elected for life. [Laughter]

So I think that—but far more important is, I saw a poor woman in a village who just had a baby go into the only public building in this

village, to the village computer, where there was someone there who helped her operate it. And she called up the health department and got instructions, with very good software, very good visuals, about how she should care for this baby for the first 6 months. And I reviewed it—it's just as good as anything she could get in the wealthiest community in America from the finest obstetrician—so that we're going to keep more babies alive because of the Internet.

So those are three examples of things that I think we should be focused on. And those of us in the wealthier countries should be providing the money and the technical support for

countries to do more of this, because it will move more people more quickly out of poverty, I think, than anything that's ever been out there, if we do it right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the Chancellery. In his remarks, he referred to President Ricardo Lagos of Chile; and Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chancellor Schroeder, President Cardoso, and President de la Rúa.

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Cooperation To Combat Global Warming

June 4, 2000

President of the United States Clinton and President of the Russian Federation Putin reaffirm the commitment of the United States and the Russian Federation to cooperate in taking action to reduce the serious risks of global warming. They take note of the significant contributions to environmental protection made by the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on Economic and Technical Cooperation under the co-chairmanship of Vice President Gore and the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

The Presidents declare their conviction that national and global economic growth can be achieved while continuing to protect the global climate. They note with approval the close cooperation of the two countries in multilateral negotiations to elaborate upon elements of the Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Presidents stress the importance of fully developing the Protocol's flexibility mechanisms, including international emissions trading and joint implementation, which are essential to achieving countries' greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction commitments under the Protocol. They believe transparent rules for these mechanisms must be developed.

The Presidents further note the potential of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms to promote investment in all areas where it is possible to limit or reduce GHG emissions. They reaffirm

the opposition of the U.S. and Russian governments to proposals that limit the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms by placing quantitative restrictions on the transfer of Parties' assigned amounts. The Presidents reiterate the commitment of their governments to work for agreement on these and other issues at the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties taking place in The Hague in November of this year.

Building upon previous joint accomplishments, the U.S. and Russia plan to continue their cooperation on the problem of global climate change.

President Clinton declares the intention of the Government of the United States of America to continue cooperation with Russia in the measurement and reporting of GHG emissions, the development of market-based tools for managing those emissions, and the identification of specific opportunities in Russia to further reduce or sequester those emissions.

President Putin, noting the significant contributions made by the Russian Federation to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, declares the intention of the Russian Federation to expand and strengthen the mutually-beneficial U.S.-Russian cooperation in the area of the fight against global warming, paying special attention to the activities of the Joint Russian-American Climate Policy Working Group.

Through these actions, Presidents Clinton and Putin express their conviction that effective steps can be taken by political leaders, and by leaders in scientific, business, and other circles, to protect the planet that we share from the threat of global warming.

Moscow

June 4, 2000

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Russia-United States Joint Statement Concerning Management and Disposition of Excess Weapon-Grade Plutonium and Related Cooperation

June 4, 2000

The Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation announced today completion of the bilateral Agreement for the management and disposition of weapon-grade plutonium withdrawn from their respective nuclear weapon programs and declared excess to defense purposes. This Agreement will ensure that this plutonium will be changed into forms unusable for nuclear weapons by consumption as fuel in nuclear reactors or by immobilization rendering it suitable for geologic disposal.

Based on the 1998 Summit Joint Statement of Principles for Management and Disposition of Plutonium, this Agreement charts the course and sets the conditions for such activities. It reconfirms our determination to take steps necessary to ensure that it is never again used for nuclear weapons or any other military purpose and is managed and disposed in a way that is safe, secure, ecologically sound, transparent and irreversible. It reaffirms our commitment to nuclear disarmament.

This Agreement will ensure that the management and disposition activities are monitored and, thus, transparent for the international community. It provides for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification once appropriate agreements with the IAEA are concluded.

This Agreement builds on the approaches to such plutonium management and disposition

agreed at the 1996 G-8 Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit. We reaffirm our intentions to continue to work closely with other countries, in particular other G-8 leaders, who have provided strong support over past years for initiation and implementation of these programs. In this regard, we hope that significant progress will be made as well at the G-8 Summit this July in Okinawa.

This Agreement will enable new cooperation to go forward between the United States and the Russian Federation. We note that the United States Congress has appropriated 200 million USD for this cooperation and the U.S. Administration intends to seek additional appropriations.

This Agreement will soon be signed by Vice President Gore and Prime Minister Kasyanov.

Moscow

June 4, 2000

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement, which was formally entitled, "Joint Statement Concerning Management and Disposition of Weapon-Grade Plutonium Designated as No Longer Required for Defense Purposes and Related Cooperation."

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Principles of Strategic Stability *June 4, 2000*

1. The Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation agree on the need to maintain strategic nuclear stability. Agreements between them help accomplish this objective.

2. They are dedicated to the cause of strengthening strategic stability and international security. They agree that capability for deterrence has been and remains a key aspect of stability and predictability in the international security environment.

3. The Presidents, welcoming the ratification of START–II Treaty and related documents by the Russian Federation, look forward to the completion of the ratification process in the United States.

4. They announce that discussions will intensify on further reductions in the strategic forces of the United States and Russia within the framework of a future START–III Treaty, and on ABM issues, in accordance with the Moscow Statement of 1998 and Cologne Statement of 1999 by the Presidents.

5. They agree on the essential contribution of the ABM Treaty to reductions in offensive forces, and reaffirm their commitment to that Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability.

6. They agree that the international community faces a dangerous and growing threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including missiles and missile technologies, and stress their desire to reverse that process, including through existing and possible new international legal mechanisms. They agree that this new threat represents a potentially significant change in the strategic situation and international security environment.

7. They agree that this emerging threat to security should be addressed and resolved through mutual cooperation and mutual respect of each other's security interests.

8. They recall the existing provision of the ABM Treaty to consider possible changes in the strategic situation that have a bearing on the provisions of the Treaty, and, as appropriate, to consider possible proposals for further increasing the viability of the Treaty.

9. The Presidents reaffirm their commitment to continuing efforts to strengthen the ABM Treaty and to enhance its viability and effectiveness in the future, taking into account any changes in the international security environment.

10. In reinforcing the effectiveness of the ABM Treaty under present and prospective conditions the United States of America and the Russian Federation attach great importance to enhancing the viability of the Treaty through measures to promote greater cooperation, openness, and trust between the sides.

11. The United States of America and the Russian Federation note the importance of the consultative process and reaffirm their determination to continue consultations in the future to promote the objectives and implementation of the provisions of the ABM Treaty.

12. The key provisions recorded in our agreements and statements, including at the highest level, create a basis for both countries' activities regarding strategic arms under present-day conditions.

13. Such an approach creates confidence that the further strengthening of strategic stability and further reductions in nuclear forces will be based on a foundation that has been tested over decades and advances both countries' interests and security.

14. The Presidents have directed the development of concrete measures that would allow both sides to take necessary steps to preserve strategic stability in the face of new threats, and called on their Ministers and experts to prepare a report for review by the Presidents.

15. They agree that issues of strategic offensive arms cannot be considered in isolation from issues of strategic defensive arms and vice versa—an interrelationship that is reflected in the ABM Treaty and aims to ensure equally the security of the two countries.

16. The United States of America and the Russian Federation intend to base their activities in the area of strategic offensive and defensive arms on the principles set forth in this document.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement, which was formally entitled, "Joint Statement by the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Principles of Strategic Stability."

Russia-United States Memorandum of Agreement on Establishment of a Joint Center for Early Warning Systems Data Exchange and Missile Launch Notifications

June 4, 2000

The United States of America and the Russian Federation, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, Guided by the Joint Statement of the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Exchange of Information on Missile Launches and Early Warning of September 2, 1998,

Taking into account the need to minimize the consequences of a false missile attack warning and to prevent the possibility of a missile launch caused by such false warning,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

1. In order to set up an uninterrupted exchange of information on launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles from the early warning systems of the United States of America and the Russian Federation, hereinafter, the warning systems of the Parties, as well as to provide for the possible implementation of a multilateral regime for the exchange of notifications of launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, the Parties shall establish, in Moscow, a joint center for the exchange of data from early warning systems and notifications of missile launches, hereinafter, the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC).

2. Each Party shall appoint its representative and deputy representatives, hereinafter, respectively, the JDEC Heads and Deputy Heads, who shall have equal rights in managing the activities of the JDEC.

3. The JDEC Heads shall jointly carry out the daily management of JDEC activities, and shall be jointly responsible for the performance of the tasks assigned to the JDEC.

4. Operations of the JDEC shall be jointly carried out by specially trained operational personnel of the Parties.

Article 2

The JDEC shall provide for the:

a. implementation of an exchange of information on launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles detected by the warning systems of the Parties;

b. efficient resolution of possible ambiguous situations related to information from the warning systems of the Parties;

c. creation of the conditions for the preparation and maintenance of a unified database for a multilateral regime for the exchange of notifications of launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles.

Article 3

1. Information shall be exchanged on the following types of objects detected by the warning systems of the Parties in accordance with Appendices 1 and 2 to this Memorandum, which define the types of objects on which information shall be exchanged and the implementation phases of the information exchange:

a. all launches of ICBMs and SLBMs of the United States of America and the Russian Federation;

b. launches of ballistic missiles, that are not ICBMs or SLBMs, of the United States of America and the Russian Federation;

c. launches of ballistic missiles of third states that could pose a direct threat to the Parties or that could create an ambiguous situation and lead to possible misinterpretation;

d. launches of space launch vehicles.

2. Each Party, at its discretion, in support of the objectives of this Memorandum or Article 3 of the Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of September 30, 1971, may also provide information on other

launches and objects, including de-orbiting spacecraft, and geophysical experiments and other work in near-earth space that are capable of disrupting the normal operation of equipment of the warning systems of the Parties.

Article 4

1. The sources for obtaining information exchanged pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 3 of this Memorandum shall be the equipment of the space- and ground-based warning systems of the Parties. When exchanging information, the sources of the data shall not be specified.

2. Each Party shall provide processed launch information in a time frame that is near real time, if possible.

Article 5

Whenever available, the following information shall be exchanged in accordance with the formats set forth in Appendix 3 to this Memorandum:

a. when a launch of a ballistic missile is detected—the time of launch, generic missile class, geographic area of the launch, geographic area of payload impact, estimated time of payload impact and launch azimuth;

b. when a launch of a space launch vehicle is detected—the time of launch, generic missile class, geographic area of the launch and launch azimuth.

Article 6

The Parties hereby establish a Joint Commission for purposes of overseeing the activities of the JDEC and coordinating the implementation of this Memorandum. The regulations of the Joint Commission are set forth in Appendix 4 to this Memorandum.

Article 7

The Parties shall jointly provide for the:

a. drafting, agreement and updating of documents establishing JDEC operating procedures, including implementation of JDEC joint duty shifts;

b. training of personnel for the performance of the tasks assigned to the JDEC at locations agreed by the Parties;

c. designation of primary and backup communications channels to ensure uninterrupted JDEC operations;

d. confidentiality of the information exchanged between the JDEC and the warning systems of the Parties.

Article 8

1. The Parties intend that the JDEC shall commence operations 365 days after this Memorandum enters into force.

2. Upon commencement of operations, an operational test period lasting up to 100 days shall precede commencement of Phase I of JDEC operations. During this period, the Parties shall test data exchange procedures, equipment and software and shall correct shortcomings that they find. The operational test period shall conclude and Phase I of JDEC operations shall commence upon agreement of the Joint Commission. Acknowledging that the decision of the Joint Commission to transition to subsequent phases is the determining factor, the Parties intend to implement the transition to subsequent phases as soon as practicable.

3. The Executive Agents of the Parties for implementing this Memorandum shall be the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.

4. The JDEC shall consist of the facilities, equipment and individual components listed in Appendix 5 to this Memorandum.

5. The staff and categories of personnel servicing the JDEC are set forth in Appendix 6 to this Memorandum.

6. The working languages of the JDEC shall be English and Russian.

Article 9

1. Funding for establishing the JDEC and funding for its operation shall be shared equally by the Parties.

2. Determination of the application of customs duties and fees, payments, taxes and other charges to the establishment and operation of the JDEC shall be agreed by the Parties once the JDEC architecture has been defined, consistent with the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article and taking into account the provisions of the laws of the Parties.

Article 10

Each Party shall provide its own transportation to and from the JDEC for its personnel listed in Appendix 6 to this Memorandum.

Article 11

Each Party shall provide its own medical services, including medical insurance, for its personnel working at the JDEC listed in Appendix 6 to this Memorandum.

Article 12

1. Each Party shall provide for the delivery of equipment to outfit the JDEC. The list of this equipment and procedures for its assembly, installation and adjustment shall be agreed by the Parties. The assembly, installation and adjustment of this equipment shall be supervised by the JDEC Heads. Maintenance of JDEC equipment shall be performed by specially trained personnel of the Parties under the supervision of and in accordance with the decisions of the JDEC Heads.

2. JDEC communications shall be organized in accordance with procedures agreed by the Parties.

3. The certification of hardware and software installed in the JDEC shall be carried out as agreed by the Parties, taking into account the technical standards of the United States of America and the laws of the Russian Federation.

4. Each Party shall retain ownership of any equipment, software or other materials that it provides for use in the JDEC.

5. Each Party shall not transfer any equipment, software or other materials, hereinafter, materials, received from the other Party pursuant to this Memorandum to any third state or legal or natural person without the written agreement of the Party that provided these materials. Each Party shall use materials received from the other Party only for the purposes of this Memorandum and shall take all reasonable measures within its power to ensure the safe-keeping and security of such materials.

Article 13

1. Information provided by either Party pursuant to this Memorandum shall be considered to be of a confidential and sensitive nature. This information may not be disclosed or transmitted in any form to a third state or any legal or natural person without the written agreement of the Party that provided the information. This information shall be used only for the purposes of this Memorandum.

2. Each Party shall itself determine the necessary measures for the appropriate handling of the information and its required protection in

accordance with its own laws and regulations. Each Party shall ensure the required protection for information exchanged between the JDEC and that Party.

3. The Parties shall agree in the Joint Commission on procedures for handling and exchanging information within the JDEC that ensures the information's required protection.

4. In accordance with paragraph 13 of Appendix 4 to this Memorandum, issues relating to compliance with the provisions of this Article shall be considered by the Parties in the Joint Commission.

Article 14

1. Each Party shall facilitate the entry into and exit from its territory by military and civilian personnel of the other Party engaged in implementing this Memorandum.

2. Upon request from the United States of America, the Russian Federation shall issue the necessary documents required for customs formalities and entry into and exit from the Russian Federation by citizens of the United States of America working at the JDEC and for members of their families. Citizens of the United States of America being sent to work at the JDEC shall be subject to the visa requirements of the Russian Federation.

3. Any issues relating to the provisions of this Article shall be resolved through diplomatic channels. The relevant documents shall be requested ahead of time; as a rule, at least 20 days in advance.

Article 15

The Parties shall work out in the Joint Commission agreements on liability for damages that may arise as the result of activities with respect to the implementation of this Memorandum. Except for pre-construction design work, construction work at the JDEC shall not begin before entry into force of these agreements.

Article 16

Neither Party shall display its state symbols on the exterior of the walled perimeter of the JDEC. All signage on the exterior of this perimeter shall be in Russian. All signage within this perimeter shall be in English and Russian.

June 4 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Article 17

Amendments to this Memorandum shall enter into force upon agreement by the Parties in the Joint Commission.

Article 18

This Memorandum, including its associated appendices, shall not infringe upon the rights and obligations of the Parties under other treaties or agreements.

Article 19

1. This Memorandum, including its associated appendices, all of which form integral parts thereof, shall enter into force on the date of its signature and shall remain in force for ten years.

2. Upon agreement by the Parties, this Memorandum may be extended for successive five-year periods.

3. Either Party, upon six months written notice to the other Party, may terminate this Memorandum.

DONE at Moscow on June 4, 2000, in two copies, each in the English and the Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

NOTE: The text released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included appendices to this joint statement, which was formally entitled, "Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Establishment of a Joint Center for the Exchange of Data From Early Warning Systems and Notifications of Missile Launches." An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum of agreement.

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Funding Procedures

June 4, 2000

In connection with the Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Establishment of a Joint Center for the Exchange of Data from Early Warning Systems and Notifications of Missile Launches, the Parties have agreed that:

- fulfillment of any financial obligations of the United States of America or the Russian Federation is subject to the availability of funds for such purpose;
- transfer for the purpose of this Memorandum by the United States of America or the Russian Federation of any technology or equipment pursuant to this Memorandum is subject to the export laws and regulations of the United States of America or the Russian Federation, respectively; and
- fulfillment of any financial obligations by the United States of America or the Rus-

sian Federation regarding any renovation or improvement of the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) building and grounds or equipping the JDEC with hardware and software is subject to authorization, when required, by the Congress of the United States of America or the Government of the Russian Federation, respectively.

NOTE: The joint statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary in conjunction with the joint statement formally entitled, "Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Establishment of a Joint Center for the Exchange of Data From Early Warning Systems and Notifications of Missile Launches." An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Privileges and Immunities *June 4, 2000*

In connection with the signature of the Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Establishment of a Joint Center for the Exchange of Data From Early Warning Systems and Notifications of Missile Launches, the Parties agree that U.S. citizens working at the JDEC that are placed on the list of administrative and technical personnel of the Embassy of the United States of America in the Russian Federation shall be accorded the corresponding privileges and immunities.

NOTE: The joint statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary in conjunction with the joint statement formally entitled, "Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Establishment of a Joint Center for the Exchange of Data From Early Warning Systems and Notifications of Missile Launches." An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Moscow *June 4, 2000*

President Putin. Good day, ladies and gentlemen. I will allow myself to begin summing up our 2 days of work with our guests and partners, with the President of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, and members of his team. For 2 days now, we worked very intensively. And I have to say right off the bat that both in terms of the spirit and the quality of our talks, as well as the results, the Russian side cannot but express its satisfaction.

We discussed issues of interest in our opinion not only to the United States and the Russian Federation but to the other countries, as well, on global matters—all of mankind's interest really lies here. We discussed in great detail everything that had been done in this very important—issues of interest to both of our sides, and that which have been in the last several years. We agree that we're going to be acting in this direction jointly in the future.

We discussed the issues of new global threats, threats such as terrorism, narcotics, crime. We talked about issues which, to our mind, have a certain solution; in the estimation of our American colleagues, maybe have a different kind of a solution. We exchanged ideas and opinions on issues to which we had different solutions in the past. These talks were very candid, very open, and very topical.

As you know, with my colleague, with the President of the United States, I signed several documents, including statements on security. And many things are determined and defined there, and much is said in these documents. The result I think can be summed up by saying that we not only confirmed the high level of our relations, but we also expressed the trend of the development of our relations between our two countries for the near future.

I wanted to stress here, ladies and gentlemen, the following, that over the last period of time, say a year or even more, the relations between our two countries have been of a varied kind. At one time, we had relations increasing and improving; then they would be falling. But that high level which was reached over the last 8 years by the efforts of the Russian leadership and of the administration of President Clinton allowed us to always find a way out of these crises with honor, not only to reestablish good relations but also to solve problems where we had disagreements. And we really cherish this. I am pleased to note here that in these very tough questions, we observed not only a desire to speak but also to find joint and mutually beneficial solutions.

We discussed also topics that had to do with bilateral economic interests. Here I wanted to

say that the Russian Federation, in the face of your humble servant and the Chairman of the Government, the Prime Minister, Mr. Kasyanov, the leading ministers of the Government who participated and took part in these talks and negotiations, not only informed and described to our American guests what's happening economically in Russia today but also discussed with our partners joint actions, joint activities, both of a bilateral nature as well as within the framework of international financial institutions.

I wanted to stress here as well that the Russian Federation aims not only to go through its transformation, about which many people have so much spoken, but very decisively to do so in a practical way. I mean moving ahead on the tax code and moving ahead on production sharing. Here we have some issues which we have not yet been able to resolve between us and the State Duma, but I think these are rather technical issues. I think, together with the Deputies in the State Duma, we're going to be trying to find solutions and finally get this legislation.

We spoke about the upcoming international events, the Okinawa summit, the Millennium summit in the United Nations in New York, the Brunei meeting. In this way, Mr. Clinton and myself, we have reached an accord on further joint progress along a whole series of issues, which not only we discussed today and yesterday and which we will still have an opportunity to discuss some more tomorrow, to move ahead on these issues at the events that I have listed.

On behalf of the leadership of the Russian Federation, I want to thank the American delegation not only for accepting our invitation and coming to Russia but for a very constructive and businesslike discussion in an attempt to find solutions.

Thank you so much for your attention.

President Clinton. I would like to first thank President Putin and the Russian delegation for making us feel welcome and for these talks.

I have come to Moscow at an important time. Russia, after all, has a new President, new government, new Duma. Its economy is showing encouraging signs of growth. This gives Russia a pivotal opportunity to build on the strong record of engagement between our two countries. It is also an opportunity for the United States.

I welcome President Putin's interest in building a Russia that enjoys the enduring strength

of a stable democracy. President Yeltsin led Russia to freedom. Under President Putin, Russia has the chance to build prosperity and strength, while safeguarding that freedom and the rule of law.

We've had good discussions both last night and today on a range of common interests, including nonproliferation and arms control. We expressed our differences with clarity and candor. And I, for one, appreciate that. The importance of this relationship to ourselves and the world demands that we take every opportunity we can to find common ground and that, where we cannot find it, we express our differences with clarity and candor.

I congratulated President Putin on the key role he played in the Duma's ratification of START II and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The United States ratified START II first, and I hope we will now follow Russia in ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I also look forward to the ratification of the START II protocols by our Senate so that we can get about the business of further reducing the number of nuclear missiles that we have.

I am very pleased today we agreed on two other major steps to reduce the nuclear danger. We reached an important agreement each to destroy 34 tons of military-grade plutonium, enough to make thousands of warheads—this raw weapon material that will now never fall into the wrong hands.

We also agreed to establish a joint data exchange center in Moscow to share early warning information on missile and space launches. This is terribly important. It is the first permanent U.S.-Russia military operation ever. In this new center, Russian and American military officials will be working side by side, 24 hours a day, to monitor missile warning information. It is a milestone in enhancing strategic stability, and I welcome it.

The President and I also discussed our common commitment to prevent the proliferation of missile technology and our determination to exert firm control over exports of sensitive technology and strictly enforce export control laws and regulations.

We discussed our common interest in commercial space cooperation, including the successful joint venture that launches commercial satellites. We agreed that our teams would soon

meet to discuss future cooperation in the commercial space area, with the aim of moving toward eliminating existing constraints on commercial space launches.

We also had a thorough discussion of our work on the START III treaty and the issue of national missile defense. We have agreed to a statement of principles, which I urge you to read carefully. It makes clear that there is an emerging ballistic missile threat that must be addressed, though we have not yet agreed on how best to do so.

We have acknowledged that the ABM Treaty foresees the possibility of changes in the strategic environment that might require it to be updated. We have reaffirmed our commitment to pursue further reduction in offensive arms in parallel with our discussions on defense systems, underscoring the importance of the doctrines of strategic stability and mutual deterrence as the foundation for this work.

We've asked our experts to keep working to narrow the differences and to develop a series of cooperative measures to address the missile threat. And we have agreed that we will continue to discuss it in our next meeting.

We spent a large share of our time discussing economics. I'm encouraged by the economic plan President Putin has outlined and by the current recovery. I look forward to Russia's continuing to implement proposed reforms that will actually make the recovery last, reforms such as tax reform, anti-money-laundering legislation, strong property rights protections.

I look forward to Russia's successful negotiations with the IMF. This is a good economic team with a very good opportunity to increase investment in Russia, both the return of money that Russians have placed outside the country and new investments from other countries.

Later this month, our former Ambassador to Moscow, Bob Strauss, will come to Russia with a delegation of investors, including some of America's best-known chief executive officers, to discuss opportunities in Russia and the steps Russia is taking to improve its investment climate. I think this will be only the beginning of a very successful effort at economic reform, if the intentions that President Putin outlined become reality.

The President and I also discussed another area where we disagree, Chechnya. I have restated the opposition that I have to a policy which is well-known. Essentially, I believe a pol-

icy that causes so many civilian casualties without a political solution ultimately cannot succeed. I also urged President Putin to move forward with transparent and impartial investigations of the stories of human rights violations and to authorize a speedy return of the OSCE to the region.

Finally, I stressed to President Putin the importance the United States places on protecting religious freedom and the rights of an independent media. I strongly agree with what President Putin himself has said, that Russia has no future if it suppresses civic freedoms and the press.

We agreed to advance our technical cooperation on climate change. We believe it's essential to complete work on the Kyoto Protocol, including market mechanisms, to protect the environment, promote clean energy, and reduce costs. I think Russia has a great economic opportunity here as well as a great environmental one.

And on these issues, the President and I are asking the U.S.-Russia binational commission, under the leadership of Vice President Gore and Prime Minister Kasyanov, to carry forward the work.

I was encouraged by our discussion, pleased with our agreements, pleased with the candor and clarity of our disagreements. I am eager for more progress. I'm also looking forward to the chance to talk to the Russian people tonight, in a radio talk show, and tomorrow, as I have the opportunity to speak to the Duma and the Federation Council.

Again, Mr. President, I thank you for this and especially for these two agreements, and I look forward to our continued work together.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. The question to the President of Russia. What is the priority you give to Russian-American relations in the world, and a world that, as we see, is changing and forming in a different way?

Thank you.

President Putin. The history of relations of the former Soviet Union and the United States of America, and now Russian Federation and the United States—its history, as I've said, has many dramatic as well as many positive elements. We were allies. There was a period of time when we suffered through confrontation between our two sides. One would hope that

the very worst in our relations is far, far behind us.

For today, the United States is one of our main partners. And as far as Russia is concerned, it will never make the choice regarding the United States in order to start once again confrontation. Never. We are for cooperation. We are for coming to agreement on problems that might arise.

And naturally, problems like this exist and have existed and probably will exist. That is not important. What's important is that the approach to finding a solution is only one—it's unique—it cannot be aimed at destroying everything positive that has been achieved in the recent past but also looking into the future. And this kind of chance and this intention among the leadership of Russia, as well as I understand it, among the leadership of the United States, the President of the United States, we are going to follow these principles, these kinds of tendencies.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

Q. Mr. President, do you see the chance that the United States would exercise its option to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty if it is not possible to negotiate changes to permit a national missile defense? And was this possibility raised in your discussions with President Putin?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I have not made a decision on the national missile defense stage one. It is premature. The statement of principles that we have agreed to I thought reflected an attempt to bring our positions closer together. I do not believe the decision before me is a threat to strategic stability and mutual deterrence. The Russian side disagrees. But we had a lot of agreement here. And again, let me say, I urge you all to read that.

I do not want the United States to withdraw from the ABM regime, because I think it has contributed to a more stable, more peaceful world. It has already been amended once, and its framers understood that circumstances might change and threats might arise which were outside the context of U.S.-now Russian relations. We acknowledge that there is a threat. It needs to be met, and we're trying to bridge our differences. And I think that's where we ought to leave it.

START Treaties

Q. President Clinton, Mr. President, what do you feel about Russia's continuation of reducing within START III the number of warheads down to 1,500 warheads?

Thank you.

President Clinton. I missed the translation. Would you give it to me again?

Q. What would be the attitude of the United States, Mr. President, on the Russian position of coming down to 1,500 warheads within START III?

President Clinton. Well, we had previously agreed to a range of 2,000 to 2,500 on START III. If we were to come down below that, it would require us to change our strategic plan. And we believe it would be much better if we were going to do that, if we could also know that we were defending ourselves against a new threat, which we believe is real. So we will continue to discuss all these things.

Let me say, I am certain—I am eager to get down to the START II levels, and I am eager to go below the START II levels, but I also want to try to solve the new threat, as well. And I will do whatever I can to achieve both objectives.

Clinton/Putin Relationship

Q. This is for both Presidents. Now that you have met together as Presidents, how would you describe each other's personalities and leadership qualities? And how do you see them affecting relations between the two countries? And in particular, President Clinton, are you any more or less assured about the future of democracy in Russia following your meetings today?

President Clinton. You want to go first?

President Putin. As you know, this is not our first meeting, between myself and President Clinton. President Clinton, now for almost 8 years, heads one of the most powerful countries in the world. He's a very experienced politician. In my mind, we've established now not only good business ties but also personal relations. For me, President Clinton is a person who is a very comfortable and pleasant partner in negotiations.

I think that if everyone behaves the way President Clinton has behaved, not trying to find dead ends and problems but to seek ways of moving ahead, I think, between us in the future our relations really will be successful. Take a look at the ABM Treaty. There are a lot of

problems there. We've written down in our statement, about which Mr. Clinton just spoke, a basis, a principle of basis for maintaining the ABM Treaty as a major key point in the whole strategic balance and for maintaining security.

Now, the starting point for the possibility of seeing new threats arrive, we have a commonality. We're against having a cure which is worse than the disease. We understand that there are ways and a basis that we can build upon in order to solve even this issue, an issue which seems to be one of the most difficult to solve.

So I repeat, we know that today, in the United States, there is a campaign ongoing. We're familiar with the programs of the two main candidates. And if these programs are implemented, and there it says, for instance, the necessity to positively improve relations between Russia and the United States, the time that Mr. Clinton is going to pass on to the next President, no matter who gets to be President, we're willing to go forward on either one of these approaches.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, let me say first, I think President Putin has an enormous opportunity and a great challenge. If you want to know what my personal assessment is, I think he is fully capable of building a prosperous, strong Russia, while preserving freedom and pluralism and the rule of law. It's a big challenge. I think he is fully capable of doing it.

And I want to use the time I have remaining as President not only to further the interests of the United States in meeting our national security threat but also to further our interest in having a good, stable relationship with a Russia that is strong and prosperous and free, respecting pluralism and the rule of law. That's what I'm trying to do. I think he is fully capable of achieving that. And I'm encouraged by the first 2 days of our really serious work.

NOTE: The President's 191st news conference began at 6:55 p.m. in St. George's Hall in the Kremlin. In his remarks, he referred to former President Boris Yeltsin and current Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov of Russia. President Putin and some of the reporters spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Interview With Aleksei Venediktov of Ekho Moskv Radio in Moscow June 4, 2000

Mr. Venediktov. Good evening. Today we have a guest, the President of the United States of America. Good evening, Mr. President.

The President. Good evening.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Mr. Venediktov. Right off the bat, I'd like to say that today we've already had a press conference, which our listeners could see you, and so for that reason, my questions will not be political in nature. Mostly listeners will be asking their questions.

My first question is as follows, Mr. President. The latest public opinion poll in Russia by the Institute of—[inaudible]—had found that 11 percent of Russians see an enemy in the United States. Another 11 percent of Russians do not know how to answer this question. And 78 percent of Russians believe that Russia is more of a friend, rather than an enemy. I would ask

you, since just the ordinary people say this, as to the other 22 percent who feel that Russia is either an enemy or do not know how to answer the question, what would you be able to say directly to those people who are now listening to you and watching you?

The President. Well, first I would say the 78 percent are right. And I would say that the United States has tried to be a friend to Russia and to democracy, prosperity, and strength in Russia.

I have worked hard to help support Russian democracy, Russian economic reform, and a large role for Russia in the world. I supported Russia coming into the G-8, to the Asian-Pacific economic leaders group; having a special partnership with NATO; working on the ground, our troops, Russian troops, side by side in the Balkans. And I intend to support Russia's effort to get a program going with the International

Monetary Fund, with the World Bank. I believe the world needs a strong and prosperous and democratic Russia that respects the rule of law and the differences among its people. And that's what I've worked for.

So I have tried to be a good friend. And I think America wants friendly relations. The American people basically like the Russian people, and they feel better when they think we have good relations and that we have a good future together.

Mr. Venediktov. I believe, Mr. President, you are mistaken, because right in front of me is a Gallup poll from the United States, March of the year 2000, and the "positive" attitude towards Russia, or "mostly positive," is only 40 percent of the American population; and "mostly negative" or "very negative" is 59 percent answers of the Americans who were polled. How could you explain to the Russians now why Americans, a significant part of the citizens, are negative towards United States? Is it fear? Is it unhappiness? Are they angry, or what?

The President. I think it overwhelmingly is the opinion of the American people, and most people in the West, about the situation in Chechnya and the highly publicized other differences we have. But I think if you ask the American people another question, "Would you like to see a good American relationship with a strong, prosperous, democratic Russia," they would say yes. And if you talk to the American people that have actually known Russians and you ask them, "Do you like the Russian people," overwhelmingly they would say yes.

Joint Anti-Ballistic Missile System

Mr. Venediktov. I am finished with asking my questions, Mr. President. Now let's go to the questions that ordinary people have asked. Some questions came over the Internet—[inaudible]—from St. Petersburg—[inaudible]—from Moscow—and they basically all ask the same question. "Why don't you want, together with Mr. Putin, together with Russia, to create a joint system of national anti-ballistic missile system? Why have not you accepted this proposal"—these questions came before the press conference, but it does increase the fear among those people, doesn't it?

The President. Well, let me explain the issue here. And I don't want to take too long on

any questions, because we want to answer as many as possible, but this is very important.

First of all, I have no objection to working with Russia on a joint missile defense that would intercept a missile directed at Russia or the United States from a hostile power in the Middle East or anywhere else, in the so-called boost phase. I have no objection to doing that. I think we should work together on it. The problem is, we think it will take 10 years or more to develop; the technology is not yet available.

Now, by contrast, we expect to face this threat in the United States within 5 years, and we think the other technology for the limited national missile defense will be available within that time. So that's why I haven't agreed to scrap what seems to be a clear way of defending our country for an unclear way. But I think it's important that the Russian people and the American people understand the exact nature of the dispute here.

Mr. Venediktov. But it frightens Russians, obviously.

The President. Yes, I understand. But I think they won't be frightened if they understand the exact nature of the difference, even if we can't resolve the difference.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 enshrined a theory of our security—that is, Russian security and American security—based on strategic stability and mutual deterrence. That is, we would never have so many defensive weapons, and we wouldn't have national missile defenses that could interfere with our offensive weapons, so that neither of us would ever launch nuclear missiles at each other because of that. Okay.

Now, we recognized that things might change and threats might come from other places, even way back then. So there was a possibility of amending the missile defense treaty. Now, we recognize—just today President Putin and I signed a statement of principles that said, "Okay, there is a new threat; the treaty may be able to be amended, but we disagree right now on how to meet the threat." That's what we said.

The narrow issue is this: If the U.S. has a missile defense that can stop a couple of missiles from North Korea, does it have the potential to upset what has kept us safe all these years, which is mutual deterrence and stability? We say, no; they say, the Russians say, it might. So we're trying to work through that.

^oWhite House correction.

But the point is, neither side believes the other side is trying to hurt them directly. There is an honest difference of opinion here. And we closed some of the gaps in our two positions, and we promise to keep working on it.

Believe me, I did not want to scrap the ABM Treaty or the theory of mutual deterrence or strategic stability. Both President Putin and I want to reduce the number of offensive missiles but keep the theory that has kept us safe all these years.

Mr. Venediktov. I think it's time to listen to some phone calls. I would like to say to Mr. President that now the Ekho program also is carrying out electronic voting, and at the end of our discussion, we'd like to comment you on what we get. The question that people are voting on is as follows: Will the situation under President Putin improve towards the United States, or will it get worse, or you don't know? So by the end of the program here we'll get some results.

U.S. Economic Issues

Hello, this is the first call. Please, what is your question to President Clinton? "Do you think financial crisis is possible in the United States? Thank you. I guess the Russian crisis does not bother you, is not a concern to you. What about America? Is there an economic crisis possible in the United States?"

The President. Well, first of all, the Russian condition does concern me. I think when the Russian economy is healthier, the American economy will be healthier. And I intend to support the economic reform program that the President and the Prime Minister have outlined.

I think a financial crisis is unlikely in the United States, as long as we have a good economic program, as long as we keep our budget in surplus, as long as we're continuing to open our markets and compete with other countries, and as long as we're investing in our people. If we have good policies and we work hard, I think a big financial crisis is unlikely.

Political Satire

Mr. Venediktov. The next phone call. "Have you ever seen the puppets program? Have you seen your own puppet? And how do you relate to the fact that there is a program such as this that lampoons Presidents?"

The President. I haven't seen it. Perhaps I can get it on tape and watch it; I would like

to see it. But it doesn't bother me. I have been lampooned in America a lot. There is almost nothing anybody can say to make fun of me that hasn't been said already. And as long as it's said in good spirit and good humor, I don't mind. I think we need people to make fun of us so we don't take ourselves too seriously. And if it's not said in good spirits, then you just have to ignore it and go to work every day.

Freedom of the Press

Mr. Venediktov. Okay, in that case, I have a question, Mr. President. It seems to me, despite the first amendment of the Constitution, any President of the United States, or Argentina or Russia, any other country, has a desire to kind of squash the press, which is not—that follows you all the time, looks for dirty stories, is always trying to hound you. Have you ever had a desire to shake a journalist real strong? And if you've had such feelings, how did you manage to control them? This is the main question. Of course, it refers to just about any—it could be asked for any President, any leader.

The President. Well, of course, from time to time you read something that you believe is either untrue or unfair, or maybe you're afraid it is true, and you just wish it weren't printed. And you can get angry. But I think the important thing—in our country, for example, if you're a public figure, it's almost impossible to even win a lawsuit against somebody who's deliberately lying about you, because we have bent over backwards in favor of the freedom of the press.

Now, why do we do that? Because we think that democracy is more stable and people are more free when the press is free. And we trust the people to understand if the press is either false or unfair. In other words—particularly in this electronic age, when someone says something about me that's not true, I can go on a program like this, and I can say, here's what they say; here's the truth. I can go on television. I can give a speech.

So what we believe is that even though if you have a really free press, that much freedom can carry with it irresponsibility, you still have more stability in society by letting people be free, by letting the debates unfold, and by trusting that the citizens, the voters, in the end, will get it right.

And we've had this first amendment for over 200 years now. And the press has become more

and more and more free. The meaning of it has been broadened. And our country has gotten stronger and stronger. It can become personally painful if someone says something that maybe they shouldn't say, but the society is stronger with a free press. And if you trust the people, then you must believe that if something is said you don't agree with, you go out and disagree. You tell the people your side, and you trust them to make the right decision. That's what I believe gives you the strongest society.

Mr. Venediktov. Have you spoken to President Putin about freedom of the press in Russia?

The President. Yes, we had a discussion about it, and I said in my press conference today—I quoted his statement. President Putin said that without civil society and free press, the Russian democracy couldn't go on. And I think that's a wise statement.

I also believe, though, that this is something that has to be debated and fought for and struggled for. For example, in the beginning of our democracy, around 1800, we had the same Constitution we have today. But there were—people could bring lawsuits against people who printed things in the newspapers, and often win in ways that intimidated them. So we had to keep changing the law to try to preserve the right for totally innocent private citizens to bring suit against people who might use the press to hurt them deliberately and to lie about them deliberately, while still allowing a very broad range for political debate and dispute and dissent.

So we've been working on this a long time. But the trend has always been for more freedom of the press, particularly where public issues and public officials are concerned. And I think it's fair to say that no one in modern history in our country has had either more negative press or more painful press than I have, but I still think on balance as long as you get to answer, the people have a chance to get it right, and you get more stability, because an open press also ensures that all these issues are fully debated and that all sides are fully heard.

So I believe it's an instrument of stability. And if you think it's not free enough here, then what I would urge you to do is to look at the example of America. Read the 200-year history of our country and just work on the issues as they come up. Just keep pushing for more—a broader and broader and broader interpretation of freedom of the press. But as I said,

we've been working on it a long time. But it's served us well.

Mr. Venediktov. But you don't necessarily have to expel journalists. To tell you the truth, I have read the memoirs of your former Press Secretary, Mr. Stephanopoulos. You get upset, not do nothing, answer, or just let it go past you. Or you could ask the tax police, for example, to check on the business of CNN, or you could—

The President. Yes, but I never did that. I would never do that. And, first of all, it's now clearly illegal for a President to do that. It's not lawful. If you're mad at somebody, I think the thing to do is to express your anger, blow off steam, and go on about your business. Or even better, control your anger and think of a way to make sure the public has the impression you believe is the right one.

[At this point, the program paused for station identification.]

International Monetary Fund

Mr. Venediktov. You're live on the air; hello? What is your question? "I'd like to ask what kind of influence does the President have on the International Monetary Fund, and why is it not giving us credits? It seems that we have an economic uprise in our economy, and we're not getting any credits from the International Monetary Fund. I'd like to get an answer to this question. Why?"

The President. Well, first of all, the President can have some influence over the International Monetary Fund, but he doesn't run it. All the various contributors to the Fund have some influence. I have focused a lot on trying to reform the IMF, to make sure that its policies and practices meet the real needs of countries for the 21st century.

Secondly, I do support Russia getting a program with the IMF and getting financial help from the IMF. Your new President, Mr. Putin, and your new Prime Minister have come up with a very good plan, and when they go before the IMF and ask for financial support, the United States will support them. They're putting the plan together now; they're going to make the presentation. I expect to support it.

Next Administration

Mr. Venediktov. Mr. President, I'd like to check to see how ready you are to quick questions, quick answers, we got over the Internet

from Russia, all of Russia. These are private questions. You're a sports person, you know sports—are you ready to answer them?

The President. I'll do my best.

Mr. Venediktov. Mr. President, what kind of slogan would you put on the wall of the Oval Room for the next President?

The President. What should the next President's slogan be? Making the most of our prosperity, meeting the big challenges of the 21st century.

President's Spending Money

Mr. Venediktov. How long has it been since you've held money in your hands, cash?

The President. About an hour.

Mr. Venediktov. What did you buy?

The President. Oh, I didn't buy anything, but I got my—I'm going to dinner after I leave you, and so I brought my money with me. But I try to go out and shop every—buy something every few months, anyway, just so I keep in touch with people. And I talk to people in bookstores, or I go buy something for my wife or my daughter, just to see what things cost and see what people are doing. I think it's important that Presidents not get too isolated.

Mr. Venediktov. A favorite question that we always ask on our radio station programs, Mr. President, do you remember how you made your first dollar, earned your first dollar, and how did you spend it?

The President. Well, I remember how I made it; I don't remember how I spent it. The first thing I did to earn money was cutting lawns and cutting hedges and taking care of the yards of the people who lived in my neighborhood. And I was probably about 9 or 10 years old when I did that.

In my lifetime, I probably had earned money doing 20 or 25 different things. I've built houses. I've cleared land. I've worked in a grocery store. I had a news comic book business. Obviously, I was a musician. I made money as a musician. I've been a teacher. I've done a lot of different things in my life.

Personal Transportation

Mr. Venediktov. This is a question from the city of—[inaudible]. “Mr. President, do you know how to drive a car, an airplane, a submarine, tank?” Maybe President Putin has inspired this question.

The President. Yes, to the car, although I haven't driven one in a while. And, no, to the airplane. I have taken off and landed a small plane—25 years ago my wife gave me airplane lessons—but I never pursued it. I never got my pilot's license. And I have never—the submarine—I've ridden in a tank, but I've never driven a tank or guided a submarine.

President's Family

Mr. Venediktov. Going back to the telephone questions, here's another question from the Internet. “What do you value in this life most of all?”

The President. My family, in this life.

Post-Cold-War Russia

Mr. Venediktov. There will be other questions about your wife and your daughter. And now back to the telephones. Your question, please? Hello? You're live on the air. The question is as follows: In 1995 Mr. President spoke at a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And he very highly praised the role of the United States in the ideological efforts to make the Soviet Union fall apart. And the question was said about disassembling Russia, the falling apart of the military complex, and creating regimes in these republics, which we need, as he said. And so the question: How can you comment on that statement that you made at that time?

The President. Well, first of all, I wish I had exactly the words before me. But if I said that I thought the United States and its allies in the cold war, by staying strong, hastened the end of communism and the end of the Soviet Union and the liberation of all these various states and the rise of democracy—I believed that then; I still believe that.

But that does not mean that I think Russia should be weak. I want Russia to be strong. I have worked for 8 years for a strong Russia. I want Russia to be strong and prosperous. But I also want it to be democratic, to respect the differences of its people—religious, ethnic, and otherwise—and to be governed by the rule of law.

But I do not want a weak Russia. I want Russia to be strong. And I also want Russia, as I said just a couple of days ago in Germany, to have the ability to be fully part of all major international institutions and have its full say there.

Russia's World Status

Mr. Venediktov. And in this connection, there is a question. "Mr. President, could you frankly say for the United States today, is Russia a country of the Third World, a developing nation?"

The President. No. No. Russia was badly hurt by the recent economic crisis and by some problems in the transition from a command-and-control Communist economy to a market economy. You know the problems as well as I do. But it is a country with a vast and impressive array of science and technology achievements, incredibly well-educated people, and the capacity, I believe, to see a big growth in per capita income very quickly.

So it's not fair to say that Russia is a developing or Third World country. It is fair to say, I think, that the incomes of the Russian people are far below where they should be and far below where they will be if the new government implements serious economic reforms and investors from around the world have confidence that their money will be treated in an appropriate way. I think you will see a large growth in jobs and incomes here, because your people are immensely talented. I think you've got good years ahead of you.

Mr. Venediktov. Since we don't have much time left, I would like to once again ask a quick-style question and expect that you could answer quickly. These, like I said, are private questions, private nature, from our listeners. Here's a question from one of our listeners—[inaudible]—who does the Soviet program, they're continuing a live broadcast of this show—maybe you remember, he set up an interview with you—

The President. Yes, he did.

First Lady's Political Future

Mr. Venediktov. "Some say the political career of Hillary Clinton will be so successful that she will become the President of the United States of America. Who knows? Are you ready to return to the White House as a husband of the President, being sort of the First Mister? How do you look at it?" [Laughter]

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, I'm very proud of my wife for running for the Senate. She's running hard, and I think she'll win. And she's promised to serve her full term. Now, when she finishes that service, if she wants to continue in public life, I'll support her any way I can.

But I expect that the Vice President, Al Gore, will be elected President. And I expect he'll run for reelection. And after that, who knows what will happen? But I'll say that I'm very proud of my wife, and I'm going to support her political career any way I can. And I'm going to try to be a good citizen in any way that I can, both of my country and of the world, when I leave office.

Chelsea Clinton

Mr. Venediktov. Mr. President, are you happy with your daughter, how she's studying, how she relates to her relatives, to her parents?

The President. Well, I think when you become the parent of a young man or a young woman, you're always happy when they still want to be around you and spend some time with you. So I'm very happy with her. I'm very proud of her, and I love her very much.

Mr. Venediktov. A Moscow student asks you to convey his greetings to her, and says that the growing generation will correct your mistakes—he and she will improve the mistakes of their parents.

The President. I certainly hope so. I certainly hope so. That's what's supposed to happen in life.

President's View of Russia

Mr. Venediktov. And the last question—I'm asking this one. It's a poll, and I would like for you to comment on the results. Just before your visit, there were questions raised about you—not just about America but you, yourself. What do you think about Russia? That was a question to the Russians. I think the public have come up with very interesting results. One-third, exactly, feels that you, personally—you, not America but you, personally—feel that you're a positively disposed towards America. One-third, exactly, thinks that you are ill-disposed. And one-third thinks that they cannot answer this question. I would like Mr. President, by the end of our discussion agree to say something to the people who have doubts in you.

The President. Well, I think that I made it clear that I'm positively disposed toward Russia, but I understand why a third would question that. That is—why would you question that? Well, because we had differences between the United States and Russia over Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya.

Mr. Venediktov. By the way, there were many questions on Kosovo.

The President. Yes, yes.

Mr. Venediktov. Do you agree with the fact that there was a mistake made?

The President. So we had differences. But I would like to ask you to consider on the other side—I led the way in supporting Russia's entry into the G-8 organization, the prestigious international organization, into the Asian-Pacific leaders organization, into the special partnership agreement with NATO. I have supported every effort to help Russia economically. I have been here five times. No American President has ever been here five times to Moscow. I wouldn't be surprised if no American President ever comes here five times again.

I first came to this city in 1969 when I was 23 years old. And I have been favorably disposed toward Russia and the Russian people ever since—notwithstanding our disagreements, even during the cold war.

And one of the things that I have always tried to do is to help support a free, prosperous, strong Russia that is fully integrated into the international institutions and the Western institutions, so that tomorrow and in all of the tomorrows to come, you will be a great nation. But greatness will be defined not by the dominance of your neighbors but by the dominance of the achievement of your people and the power of your partnerships with other countries. That's what I want, and I've worked very hard for it.

But I am extremely favorably disposed toward the people of Russia. And I am extremely optimistic about the future partnerships between the United States and Russia.

Mr. Venediktov. I thank you, Mr. President, for coming here. Of course, many questions have been left unasked. And I hope that after your return, after your term of office has ended, return back to Russia—perhaps even before that—you will be able to come back to the studio again, because I have many other questions. If you would allow, I would give all these questions to your staff and maybe some of them would interest you.

The President. Yes, do.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Mr. Venediktov. The last one. There were 5,000 of them that came in. You see the results. Forty-eight percent of the viewers—[inaudi-

ble]—believe that the relations between the United States and Russia will improve under Putin. Forty-two percent believe that they will get worse. And the rest don't know. What do you think about this last poll that we just made?

The President. Well, I think that it reflects, first of all, the fact that he's just in office, so people can't know for sure. Secondly, you've got almost 49 percent saying they will, which shows that people appreciate the fact that he's a strong and able man who has been gracious to me in this first meeting of ours in Russia. And then the 42 percent, I think, are focused on the differences we've had and the problems that have been publicized.

The truth is, you can't know for sure. But I think that based on the meeting I had, we've got a better than even chance that our relationship will improve. The relationship between the United States and Russia is profoundly important. It will tend always to be characterized by the disagreements, because they will always get more press coverage, because they will always be more current. But if there is a strong underlying commitment to democracy, to freedom, to mutual prosperity, mutual respect, I think that over time they will get better even if there are disagreements. That's what I believe, and that's what I've worked for.

Future Visit to Ekho Moskvu

Mr. Venediktov. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We will be waiting for your return, so that you could answer—

The President. I'd like to come back.

Mr. Venediktov. —by being in the studio some of the other questions, maybe as a businessman or a lawyer. Thank you very much.

The President. I'd love to come back, because I saw on your wall that the only way I get to sign my picture is if I come twice, you see. So I'd like to come back. And I want to thank all the people who called or who E-mailed in their questions. And I hope you will give me all the questions, and maybe I can write you something about them, too.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:50 p.m. in Ekho Moskvu Studios and was broadcast live. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov of Russia. Mr. Venediktov spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks to the Russian State Duma in Moscow

June 5, 2000

First of all, I thank you for that introduction. And even though it is still in the morning, I am delighted to be here with the Members of the State Duma and the Federation Council.

It is important to me to have this opportunity because the prospects for virtually every important initiative President Putin and I have discussed over the last 2 days will obviously depend upon your advice and your consent, and because through you I can speak to the citizens of Russia directly, those whom you represent.

I have made five trips to Russia in my years as President. I have worked with President Yeltsin and now with President Putin. I have met with the leadership of the Duma on more than one occasion. I have spoken with Russia's religious leaders, with the media, with educators, scientists, and students. I have listened to Russian people tell me about their vision of the future, and I have tried to be quite open about my own vision of the future. I have come here at moments of extraordinary optimism about Russia's march toward prosperity and freedom, and I've been here at moments of great difficulty for you.

I believed very strongly from the first time I came here that Russia's future fundamentally is in the hands of the Russian people. It cannot be determined by others, and it should not be. But Russia's future is very important to others, because it is among the most important journeys the world will witness in my lifetime. A great deal of the 21st century will be strongly influenced by the success of the Russian people in building a modern, strong, democratic nation that is part of the life of the rest of the world. And so, many people across the world have sought to support your efforts, sharing with you a sense of pride when democracy is advanced and sharing your disappointment when difficulties arose.

It is obviously not for me to tell the Russian people how to interpret the last few years. I know your progress has come with unfulfilled expectations and unexpected difficulties. I know there have been moments, especially during the financial crisis in 1998, when some wondered if the new Russia would end up as a grand social experiment gone wrong.

But when we look at Russia today, we do not see an experiment gone wrong. We see an economy that is growing, producing goods and services people want. We see a nation of enterprising citizens who are beginning, despite all of the obstacles, to bring good jobs and a normal life to their communities. We see a society with 65,000 nongovernmental organizations, like Eco-Juris, which is helping citizens defend their rights in court; like Vozrozhdenie, which is aiding families with disabled children; like the local chambers of commerce that have sprung up all across Russia.

We see a country of people taking responsibility for their future, people like those of Gadzhiyev on the Arctic Circle who organized a referendum to protect the environment of their town. We see a country transforming its system of higher education to meet the demands of the modern world, with institutions like the new Law Factory at Novgorod University and the New Economic School in Moscow.

We see a country preserving its magnificent literary heritage, as the Pushkin Library is doing in its efforts to replenish the shelves of libraries all across Russia. We see a country entering the information age, with cutting-edge software companies, with Internet centers at universities from Kazan to Ufa to Yakutsk, with a whole generation of young people more connected to the outside world than any past generation could have imagined.

We see Russian citizens with no illusions about the road ahead, yet voting in extraordinary numbers against a return to the past. We see a Russia that has just completed a democratic transfer of executive power for the first time in 1,000 years.

I would not presume to tell the people you represent how to weigh the gains of freedom against the pain of economic hardship, corruption, crime. I know the people of Russia do not yet have the Russia they were promised in 1991. But I believe you, and they, now have a realistic chance to build that kind of Russia for yourselves in far greater measure than a decade ago, because of the democratic foundations that have been laid and the choices that have been made.

The world faces a very different Russia than it did in 1991. Like all countries, Russia also faces a very different world. Its defining feature is globalization, the tearing down of boundaries between people, nations, and cultures, so that what happens anywhere can have an impact everywhere.

During the 1990's, the volume of international trade almost doubled. Links among businesses, universities, advocacy groups, charities, and churches have multiplied across physical space and cyberspace. In the developing world, some of the poorest villages are beginning to be connected to the information superhighway in ways that are opening up unbelievable opportunities for education and for development.

The Russian people did more than just about anyone else to make possible this new world of globalization by ending the divisions of the cold war. Now Russia, America, and all nations are subject to new rules of the global economy. One of those rules, to adapt a phrase from your history, is that it's no longer possible to build prosperity in one country alone. To prosper, our economies must be competitive in a global marketplace; and to compete, the most important resource we must develop is our own people, giving them the tools and freedom to reach their full potential.

This is the challenge we have tried to meet in America over the last few years. Indeed, the changes we have seen in the global economy pose hard questions that both our nations still must answer. A fundamental question is, how do we define our strength and vitality as a nation today, and what role should government play in building it?

Some people actually believe that government is no longer relevant at all to people's lives in a globalized, interconnected world. Since all of us hold government positions, I presume we disagree. But I believe experience shows that government, while it must be less bureaucratic and more oriented toward the markets and while it should focus on empowering people by investing in education and training rather than simply accruing power for itself, it is still very important.

Above all, a strong state should use its strength to reinforce the rule of law, protect the powerless against the powerful, defend democratic freedoms, including freedom of expression, religion, and the press, and do what-

ever is possible to give everyone a chance to develop his or her innate abilities.

This is true, I believe, for any society seeking to advance in the modern world. For any society in any part of the world that is increasingly small and tied together, the answer to law without order is not order without law.

Another fundamental question is, how shall countries define their strength in relation to the rest of the world today? Shall we define it as the power to dominate our neighbors or the confidence to be a good neighbor? Shall we define it by what we are against or simply in terms of what others are for? Do we join with others in common endeavors to advance common interests, or do we try to bend others to our will?

This federal assembly's ratification of START II and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty suggests you are answering these questions in a way that will make for both a stronger Russia and a better world, defining your strength in terms of the achievements of your people and the power of your partnerships and your role in world affairs.

A related question for both Russia and America is, how should we define our relationship today? Clearly, Russia has entered a phase when what it needs most is outside investment, not aid. What Americans must ask is not so much what can we do for Russia, but what can we do with Russia to advance our common interests and lift people in both nations?

To build that kind of relationship, we Americans have to overcome the temptation to think that we have all the answers. We have to resist the feeling that if only you would see things our way, troubles would go away. Russia will not, and indeed should not, choose a course simply because others wish you to do so. You will choose what your interests clearly demand and what your people democratically embrace.

I think one problem we have is that many Russians still suspect that America does not wish you well. Thus, you tend to see our relationship in what we call zero-sum terms, assuming that every assertion of American power must diminish Russia, and every assertion of Russian strength must threaten America. That is not true. The United States wants a strong Russia, a Russia strong enough to protect its territorial integrity while respecting that of its neighbors, strong enough to meet threats to its security, to help maintain strategic stability, to join with

others to meet common goals, to give its people their chance to live their dreams.

Of course, our interests are not identical, and we will have our inevitable disagreements. But on many issues that matter to our people, our interests coincide. And we have an obligation, it seems to me, to focus on the goals we can and should advance together in our mutual interest and to manage our differences in a responsible and respectful way.

What can we do together in the years to come? Well, one thing we ought to do is to build a normal economic relationship, based on trade and investment between our countries and contact between our people. We have never had a better opportunity, and I hope you will do what you can to seize it.

This is the time, when Russia's economy is growing and oil prices are high, when I hope Russia will create a more diversified economy. The economies that will build power in the 21st century will be built not just on resources from the soil, which are limited, but on the genius and initiative of individual citizens, which are unlimited.

This is a time when I hope you will finish putting in place the institutions of a modern economy, with laws that protect property, that ensure openness and accountability, that establish an efficient, equitable tax code. Such an economy would keep Russian capital in Russia and bring foreign capital to Russia, both necessary for the kind of investment you deserve, to create jobs for your people and new businesses for your future.

This is a time to win the fight against crime and corruption so that investment will not choose safer shores. That is why I hope you will soon pass a strong law against money laundering that meets international standards.

This is also the time I hope Russia will make an all-out effort to take the needed steps to join the World Trade Organization. Membership in the WTO reinforces economic reform. It will give you better access to foreign markets. It will ensure that your trading partners treat you fairly. Russia should not be the only major industrialized country standing outside this global trading system. You should be inside this system, with China, Brazil, Japan, members of the European Union, and the United States, helping to shape those rules for the benefit of all.

We will support you. But you must know, too, that the decision to join the WTO requires

difficult choices that only you can make. I think it is very important. Again I will say, I think you should be part of making the rules of the road for the 21st century economy, in no small measure because I know you believe in the importance of the social contract, and you understand that we cannot have a world economy unless we also have some rules that people in the world respect regarding the living standards of people, the conditions in which our children are raised, whether they have access to education, and whether we do what should be done together to protect the global environment.

A second goal of our partnership should be to meet threats to our security together. The same advances that are bringing the world together are also making the tools of destruction deadlier, cheaper, and more available. As you well know, because of this openness of borders, because of the openness of the Internet, and because of the advances of technology, we are all more vulnerable to terrorism, to organized crime, to the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—which themselves may someday be transferred, soon, in smaller and smaller quantities, across more and more borders, by unscrupulous illegal groups working together. In such a world, to protect our security we must have more cooperation, not more competition, among like-minded nation-states.

Since 1991, we have already cooperated to cut our own nuclear arsenals by 40 percent; in removing nuclear weapons from Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan; in fighting illicit trafficking in deadly technology. Together, we extended the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, banned chemical weapons, agreed to end nuclear testing, urged India and Pakistan to back away from nuclear confrontation.

Yesterday President Putin and I announced two more important steps. Each of us will destroy 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium, enough to build thousands of nuclear weapons. And we will establish a system to give each other early warning of missile tests and space launches to avoid any miscalculation, with a joint center here that will operate out of Moscow 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—the first permanent, joint United States-Russian military cooperation ever. I am proud of this record, and I hope you are, too.

We will continue to reduce our nuclear arsenals by negotiating a START III treaty and to secure the weapons and materials that remain.

But we must be realistic. Despite our best efforts, the possibility exists that nuclear and other deadly weapons will fall into dangerous hands, into hands that could threaten us both—rogue states, terrorists, organized criminal groups. The technology required to launch missiles capable of delivering them over long distances, unfortunately, is still spreading across the world.

The question is not whether this threat is emerging; it is. The question is, what is the best way to deal with it? It is my strong preference that any response to strengthen the strategic stability and arms control regime that has served our two nations so well for decades now—if we can pursue that goal together, we will all be more secure.

Now, as all of you know well, soon I will be required to decide whether the United States should deploy a limited national defense system designed to protect the American people against the most imminent of these threats. I will consider, as I have repeatedly said, many factors, including the nature of threat, the cost of meeting it, the effectiveness of the available technology, and the impact of this decision on our overall security, including our relationship with Russia and other nations, and the need to preserve the ABM Treaty.

The system we are contemplating would not undermine Russia's deterrent or the principles of mutual deterrence and strategic stability. That is not a question just of our intent but of the technical capabilities of the system. But I ask you to think about this, to debate it, as I know you will, to determine for yourselves what the capacity of what we have proposed is. Because I learned on my trip to Russia that the biggest debate is not whether we intend to do something that will undermine mutual deterrence; I think most people who have worked with us, not just me and others, over the years know that we find any future apart from cooperation with you in the nuclear area inconceivable. The real question is a debate over what the impact of this will be, because of the capacity of the technology involved.

And I believe that is a question of fact which people of good will ought to be able to determine. And I believe we ought to be able to reach an agreement about how we should proceed at each step along the way here, in a way that preserves mutual deterrence, preserves strategic stability, and preserves the ABM Treaty. That is my goal. And if we can reach an

agreement about how we're going forward, then it is something we ought to take in good faith to the Chinese, to the Japanese, to others who are interested in this, to try to make sure that this makes a safer world, not a more unstable world.

I think we've made some progress, and I would urge all of you who are interested in this to carefully read the Statement of Principles to which President Putin and I agreed yesterday.

Let me say that this whole debate on missile defense and the nature of the threat reflects a larger and, I think, more basic truth. As we and other nation-states look out on the world today, increasingly we find that the fundamental threat to our security is not the threat that we pose to each other, but instead, threats we face in common—threats from terrorist and rogue states, from biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons which may be able to be produced in increasingly smaller and more sophisticated ways; public health threats, like AIDS and tuberculosis, which are now claiming millions of lives around the world and which literally are on the verge of ruining economies and threatening the survival of some nations. The world needs our leadership in this fight, as well. And when President Putin and I go to the G-8 meeting in July, I hope we can support a global strategy against infectious disease.

There is a global security threat caused by environmental pollution and global warming. We must meet it with strong institutions at home and with leadership abroad.

Fortunately, one of the benefits of the globalized information age is that it is now possible to grow an economy without destroying the environment. Thanks to incredible advances in science and technology over the last 10 years, a whole new aspect in economic growth has opened up. It only remains to see whether we are wise enough to work together to do this, because the United States does not have the right to ask any nation—not Russia, not China, not India—to give up future economic growth to combat the problem of climate change. What we do have is the opportunity to persuade every nation, including people in our own country who don't yet believe it, that we can grow together in the 21st century and actually reduce greenhouse gases at the same time.

I think a big part of making that transition benefits Russia, because of your great stores of

natural gas. And so I hope we will be working closely together on this in the years ahead.

In the Kyoto climate change treaty, we committed ourselves to tie market forces to the fight against global warming. And today, on this World Environment Day, I'm pleased that President Putin and I have agreed to deepen our own cooperation on climate change.

This is a huge problem. If we don't deal with this within just a few years, you will have island nations flooded; you will have the agricultural balance of most countries completely changed; you will have a dramatic increase in the number of severe, unmanageable weather events. And the good news is that we can now deal with this problem—again I say—and strengthen our economic growth, not weaken it.

A third challenge that demands our engagement is the need to build a world that is less divided along ethnic, racial, and religious lines. It is truly ironic, I think, that we can go anywhere in the world and have the same kinds of conversations about the nature of the global information society. Not long ago, I was in India in a poor village, meeting with a women's milk cooperative. And the thing they wanted me to see was that they had computerized all their records. And then I met with the local village council, and the thing they wanted me to see in this remote village, in a nation with a per capita income of only \$450 a year, was that all the information that the federal and state government had that any citizen could ever want was on a computer in the public building in this little village. And I watched a mother that had just given birth to a baby come into this little public building and call up the information about how to care for the child and then print it out on her computer, so that she took home with her information every bit as good as a well-to-do American mother could get from her doctor about how to care for a child in the first 6 months.

It is truly ironic that at a time when we're living in this sort of world with all these modern potentials, that we are grappling with our oldest problems of human society—our tendency to fear and then to hate people who are different from us. We see it from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the tribal conflicts of Africa to the Balkans and many other places on this Earth.

Russia and America should be concerned about this because the stability of both of our

societies depends upon people of very different ethnic, racial, and religious groups learning to live together under a common framework of rules. And history teaches us that harmony that lasts among such different people cannot be maintained by force alone.

I know when trying to come to grips with these problems, these old problems of the modern world, the United States and Russia have faced some of our greatest difficulties in the last few years. I know you disagreed with what I did in Kosovo, and you know that I disagreed with what you did in Chechnya. I have always said that the Russian people and every other people have a right to combat terrorism and to preserve the integrity of their nations. I still believe it, and I reaffirmed that today. My question in Chechnya was an honest one and the question of a friend, and that is whether any war can be won that requires large numbers of civilian casualties and has no political component bringing about a solution.

Let me say, in Kosovo my position was whether we could ever preserve a democratic and free Europe unless southeastern Europe were a part of it, and whether any people could ever say that everyone is entitled to live in peace if 800,000 people were driven out of a place they had lived in for centuries solely because of their religion.

None of these questions will be easy, but I think we ought to ask ourselves whether we are trying to resolve them. I remember going to Kosovo after the conflict, after Russians and Americans had agreed to serve there together as we have served in Bosnia effectively together, and sitting down with all the people who represented the conflict around the table. They would hardly speak to each other. They were still angry; they were still thinking about their family members that had been dislocated and killed.

So I said to them that I had just been involved in negotiating the end of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and that I was very close to the Irish conflict because all of my relatives came from a little village in Ireland that was right on the border between the north and the south, and therefore had lived through all these years of conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants.

And I said, "Now here's the deal we've got. The deal is: majority rule, minority rights, guaranteed participation in decisionmaking, shared

economic and other benefits." Majority rule, minority rights, guaranteed participation in decisionmaking, shared economic and other benefits. I said, "Now, it's a good deal, but what I would like to tell you is that if they had ever stopped fighting, they could have gotten this deal years ago."

And so I told the people of Kosovo, I said, "You know, everybody around this table has got a legitimate grievance. People on all sides, you can tell some story that is true and is legitimately true. Now, you can make up your mind to bear this legitimate grievance with a grudge for 20 or 30 years. And 20 or 30 years from now, someone else will be sitting in these chairs, and they will make a deal: majority rule, minority rights, shared decisionmaking, shared economic and other benefits. You can make the deal now, or you can wait."

Those of us who are in a position of strong and stable societies, we have to say this to people. We have to get people—not just the people who have been wronged; everybody has got a legitimate grievance in these caldrons of ethnic and racial and religious turmoil. But it's something we have to think about. And as we see a success story, it's something I think we ought to look for other opportunities to advance.

Real peace in life comes not when you give up the feelings you have that are wrong, but when you give up the feelings you have that are right, in terms of having been wronged in the past. That's how people finally come together and go on. And those of us who lead big countries should take that position and try to work through it.

Let me say, finally, a final security goal that I have, related to all the others, is to help Europe build a community that is democratic, at peace, and without divisions—one that includes Russia and strengthens our ability to advance our common interest. We have never had that kind of Europe before in all of history, so building it will require changing old patterns of thinking. I was in Germany a couple of days ago in the historic old town of Aachen, where Charlemagne had his European empire in the late 8th and early 9th centuries, to talk about that.

There are, I know, people who resist the idea that Russia should be part of Europe and who insist that Russia is fundamentally different from the other nations that are building a united Europe. Of course, there are historical and cultural arguments that support that position. And it's

a good thing that you are different and that we are different; it makes life more interesting. But the differences between Russia and France, for example, may not be any greater than those between Sweden and Spain, or England and Greece, or even between America and Europe. Integration within Europe and then the transatlantic alliance came about because people who are different came together, not because people who are the same came together.

Estrangement between Russia and the West, which lasted too long, was not because of our inherent differences but because we made choices in how we defined our interests and our belief systems. We now have the power to choose a different and a better future. We can do that by integrating our economies, making common cause against common threats, promoting ethnic and religious tolerance and human rights. We can do it by making sure that none of the institutions of European and transatlantic unity, not any of them, are closed to Russia.

You can decide whether you want to be a part of these institutions. It should be entirely your decision. And we can have the right kind of constructive partnership, whatever decision we make, as long as you know that no doors to Europe's future are closed to you, and you can then feel free to decide how best to pursue your own interests. If you choose not to pursue full membership in these institutions, then we must make sure that their eastern borders become gateways for Russia instead of barriers to travel, trade, and security cooperation.

We also should work with others to help those in Europe who still fear violence and are afraid they will not have a stable, secure future. I am proud that together we have made the OSCE into an effective champion of human rights in Europe. I am pleased that President Putin and I recommitted ourselves yesterday to helping find a settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I am proud we have together adapted the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, to reduce conventional arms in Europe and eliminate the division of the continent into military blocs. I believe it is a hopeful thing that despite our different outlook on the war in the former Yugoslavia, that our armed forces have worked there together in both Bosnia and Kosovo to keep the peace.

We may still disagree about Kosovo, but now that the war is over, let me say one other thing

about Yugoslavia. I believe the people of Serbia deserve to live in a normal country with the same freedoms the people of Russia and America enjoy, with relationships with their neighbors, including Russia, that will not constantly be interrupted by vast flows of innocent people being forced out of their country or threatened with their very lives.

The struggle in Belgrade now is not between Serbia and NATO. It is between the Serbian people and their leaders. The Serbian people are asking the world to back democracy and freedom. Our response to their request does not have to be identical, but Russia and America should both be on the side of the people of Serbia.

In the relationship we are building, we should try to stand abroad for the values each of us has been building at home. I know the kind of relationship that we would both like cannot be built overnight. Russia's history, like America's, teaches us well that there are no shortcuts to great achievements. But we have laid strong foundations. It has helped a great deal that so many Members of our Congress have visited you here, and that a number of Duma committee chairmen visited our Congress last month, that members of the Federation Council have been invited to come to Washington.

I want to urge you, as many of you as can, to visit our country and invite Members of our Congress to visit you. Let them understand how the world looks from your perspective. Let them see how you do your jobs. Tell them what you're worried about and where you disagree with us. And give us a chance to build that base of common experience and mutual trust that is so important to our future together. All of you are always welcome to come and work with us in the United States. We have to find a mutual understanding.

I also would say that the most important Russian-American relationship still should be the relationship between our peoples, the student exchanges, the business partnerships, the collaboration among universities and foundations and hospitals, the sister-city links, the growing family ties. Many of the Russians and Americans involved in these exchanges are very young. They don't even have any adult memories of the cold war. They don't carry the burdens and baggage of the past, just the universal, normal desire to build a good future with those who share

their hopes and dreams. We should do everything we can to increase these exchanges, as well.

And finally, we must have a sense of responsibility for the future. We are not destined to be adversaries, but it is not guaranteed that we will be allies. For us, there is no fate waiting to be revealed, only a future waiting to be created by the actions we take, the choices we make, and the genuine views we have of one another and of our own future.

I leave you today looking to the future with the realistic hope that we will choose wisely; that we will continue to build a relationship of mutual respect and mutual endeavor; that we will tell each other the truth with clarity and candor as we see it, always striving to find common ground, always remembering that the world we seek to bring into being can come only if America and Russia are on the same side of history.

I believe we will do this, not because I know everything always turns out well but because I know our partnership, our relationship, is fundamentally the right course for both nations. We have to learn to identify and manage our disagreements because the relationship is profoundly important to the future.

The governments our people elect will do what they think is right for their own people. But they know that one thing that is right is continuing to strengthen the relationship between Russia and the United States. Our children will see the result, a result that is more prosperous and free and at peace than the world has ever known. That is what I believe we can do.

I don't believe any American President has ever come to Russia five times before. I came twice before that, once when I was a very young man and our relations were very different than they are now. All my life, I have wanted the people of my country and the people of your country to be friends and allies, to lead the world away from war toward the dreams of children. I have done my best to do that.

I hope you will believe that that is the best course for both our countries and for our children's future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in Plenary Hall at the Duma. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin and former President

Boris Yeltsin of Russia. The President also referred to OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One

June 5, 2000

Sightseeing

The President. Did you guys go see Lenin?

Q. We tried; we couldn't get in.

The President. I'll tell you something, if you've never been to Kiev and you have time while we're there—if you don't all have to cover me all the time, when we're just having meetings and stuff—you should go to the monastery, all these beautiful buildings where they have all the historical treasures of Ukraine, all these—these metal artifacts going back over 1,000 years, fabulous stuff—2,000, 3,000 years.

And underground—they have this underground network of tunnels that the priests still run. And the tunnels are perfectly preserved atmospherically, and there are mummies there where the priests have been buried for 500, 600, 700 years, and they're like that, and you can see the skin on their hands, just like Lenin, except not treated. No, no, they were just buried there. It is the most astonishing thing.

Remember how that Peruvian—wasn't it a Peruvian girl—looked when they found her after 500 years in the ice?

Q. Yes.

The President. That's the way the atmosphere is. And you're walking through these tunnels, and you just come up and there's a little grave. They just cut a thing into the tunnel and they lay the priests there. I mean, there they are. It is the most astonishing thing. Who did it? Weren't you amazed? Weren't they all buried 500, 600, 700 years ago?

Q. Yes.

The President. And you hold the little candle down there. And the atmosphere is stunning. But like a group of you, if you can, whatever, swap off—because a lot of this stuff is just meetings, until we do the rally; there's no press conference or anything—as many of you as can be spared. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world that I'm aware of.

Q. Would you write a note for our bosses?
[Laughter]

Former President Boris Yeltsin of Russia

The President. Yes, I'll give you an excused absence. But no kidding, if there is any way any of you can go, you should go. It is a truly extraordinary thing. It's amazing.

Yeltsin looked good today.

Q. Did he?

The President. Yes. He's in good spirits, happy. He's got a beautiful place.

Q. Which spirits, exactly?

The President. No spirits. [Laughter] He and his wife and his daughter were there. We all just had a nice visit. It was like old times. But he's in good shape.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:17 p.m. en route from Moscow, Russia, to Kiev, Ukraine. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Yeltsin's wife, Naina, and his daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing a Ukraine-United States Joint Statement in Kiev, Ukraine

June 5, 2000

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, leaders of the government, lead-

ers and Members of the Rada, leaders of the court, distinguished citizens. I am delighted to

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be back in Ukraine and delighted to be again with President Kuchma to work on our strategic partnership, because the success of Ukraine as a free and prosperous nation is very important to the United States.

Of course, succeeding in the future requires learning from the past. I am very proud and moved to be here today—this is World Environment Day—for this historic announcement by President Kuchma that the final reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant will be shut down and the entire plant closed forever on December the 15th. This is a hopeful moment. It is also a moment when we remember those who suffered as a result of the accident there.

The President and I agreed that we can grow our economies and protect the environment and public health at the same time, and so we must. I am pleased to announce that the United States will pledge \$78 million for the Chernobyl Shelter Fund to contain radiation from the destroyed reactor, and another \$2 million to expand efforts to improve safety at Ukraine's other nuclear powerplants.

The President and I also discussed his plan for economic reform. He and his team have an economic plan that can put Ukraine on a path towards sustainable growth and much higher living standards. President Kuchma has moved to give his people their own land, to reduce government bureaucracy, to promote entrepreneurship. He has taken recent steps to enhance Ukraine's protection of intellectual

property rights and the rule of law. And these things improve the climate for investment in Ukraine and will attract more investment dollars from the United States and other places across the world.

In that spirit, I am pleased to announce a new 5-year, \$25-million business development program for small and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine to help them participate in the growing economy.

Finally, I want to take another important step today. Because of Ukraine's strong efforts to prevent missile proliferation, I am announcing our decision to eliminate commercial space quotas and open the door to expanded U.S. cooperation with Ukraine's space program. This decision will have a positive, long-term impact on Ukraine's economic prospects, creating more high-tech jobs and positioning Ukraine to be a leader in a cutting-edge area of 21st century commerce. It will also enhance the ability of American companies to compete in space. This represents the kind of high-level partnership our countries can look forward to as we enter the new century together.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's been a good day.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the White Room at Mariinskiy Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine.

Statement on Termination of the Ukraine-United States Commercial Space Launch Agreement

June 5, 2000

I am pleased to announce that today the United States has terminated the commercial space launch trade agreement with Ukraine. This decision eliminates launch quotas and gives U.S. firms greater opportunity to enter into

commercial space launch joint ventures with Ukrainian partners without limit and reflects Ukraine's steadfast commitment to international nonproliferation norms.

Remarks to the People of Ukraine in Kiev June 5, 2000

I believe we should give a round of applause to Natalia and Kateryna. They were fabulous. Didn't they give a good—[*applause*—]—they are a great representative of the young people of Ukraine. Let me also thank the representatives of your government who came here with me today, Deputy Head of Presidential Administration Rohovyi, Foreign Minister Tarasyuk. I'd like to thank Mayor Omelchenko and Patriarch Filaret and all the other distinguished representatives of the Ukraine Government who have joined me and the Secretary of Energy and my National Security Adviser and our two Ambassadors for a good day of meetings.

I thank all of you for coming out here on this beautiful day. I am honored to be in Kiev again, to come to the cradle of Ukrainian culture, to pay respects to Ukraine's ancient and glorious past, and to tell you, America will stand by you as you fight for a free and prosperous future.

Here in this historic and beautiful square, you can see for a thousand years: before me, the magnificent Saint Sophia's Cathedral, built by Prince Yaroslav in the 11th century; and behind me, the beautiful and reborn Saint Michael's Monastery, built by his grandson, with a stunning cathedral built since the last time I was here; between them, statues of Saints Olga and Andrew, Cyril and Methodius, all proof of your extraordinary artistic and cultural accomplishments.

Sadly, the people who created and cherished these treasures suffered deeply. I am honored to have laid a wreath of flowers at the memorial to the millions who perished in the forced famine of the 1930's. Ukraine has endured oppressors who carved up your lands, banned your books, starved your children, purged your writers, enslaved your workers, plundered your art, stole your rich soil, and forbade you even to talk about the tragedy of the famine.

Today, the oppressors are gone. Stalin is gone. The Nazis are gone. The Soviet Union is gone. Russia is working to build a new society. But you, the people of Ukraine, you are still here, stronger than ever. You are reclaiming your land, uniting your people, restoring your culture, and raising your children in freedom and de-

mocracy. You are fulfilling the longing of your ancestors. You are building a free, sovereign, and independent Ukraine.

I know you have faced disappointments, and your dream is not complete. You have your vote, but you may ask, will it lead to have a real, positive impact? You have your freedom, but you may ask, will it lead to a better future?

I ask you to look around you. From Lithuania to Poland to the Czech Republic, those who chose open societies and open markets like you started out with sacrifice, but they ended up with success. I have not lived what you have lived. I am an American, not an Ukrainian. I cannot tell you how to build your future. But I do believe this: I believe Ukraine has the best opportunity in 1,000 years to achieve both freedom and prosperity.

You are on your way. President Kuchma has helped to pass a strong budget. He has moved to give people their own land, to reform the old government bureaucracy, to privatize new businesses in accord with international standards, and he has appointed a strong Prime Minister. But my friends, you too must be strong leaders. You must encourage the government. You must exhort the Rada. You must build a free and prosperous Ukraine. Do not give up. Keep on fighting. *Boritesya poborete.*

There will be obstacles. I know some in Ukraine want to discourage foreign investment; they oppose free markets. But that thinking is lost in the past. But I ask you, look around the world today. The nations with the highest standards of living, the greatest security, the lowest poverty are free market democracies, people who trade and invest in one another.

Communism has lost in Ukraine, but a full commitment to free market democracy has not yet won. If your children are to live their dreams, it must win. So again I ask you, do not give up. Keep on fighting. *Boritesya poborete.*

America needs a strong, prosperous, and democratic Ukraine as a partner. Together we have made the whole world safer from the risk of nuclear war. Our soldiers are serving together with courage and pride in missions of peace. There is so much more we can do together.

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We can explore the frontiers of science and space, increase our efforts to protect the environment, fight disease, defeat terrorism, and promote democracy, prosperity, and peace. These are challenges all nations face and no nation can meet alone. And so I say again, let us meet them together. We must not give up. We must keep on fighting. *Boritesya poborete.*

America believes Ukraine has a right to a place among the nations of Europe. No one must take that right away from you. We reject the idea that the eastern border of Europe is the western border of Ukraine. Of course, your future is your own choice. But we can, and we will, keep the door to the transatlantic community of democracies open to Ukraine.

Ukraine has so much of what it takes to succeed in the global information age—strong universities, an educated society, and partners willing to stand with you. All you need now is to stay on course and pick up speed, open the economy, strengthen the rule of law, promote civil society, protect the free press, break the grip of corruption.

In Ukraine, I understand you have a saying, “He who is an hour late will spend a year catching up.” People of Ukraine, seize this moment now for your nation and your children. And so I say for the last time, *Boritesya poborete.*

In the cathedrals around me, I see Ukraine’s past. In the faces of all the young people before me, I see Ukraine’s future. It is a promising future. You have kept alive your language, your unity, your dream of independence for 1,000 years. You have what it takes to build the future of your dreams. Your parents battled tyranny to help you win your freedom. Now, you must use your freedom to make sure you and your children prosper in peace. America is your friend and your partner.

Again, I thank you for coming to be with me today. Again I say, America will be with you all the way.

God bless you. *Slava Ukrainiy.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. in St. Michael’s Square. In his remarks, he referred to students Natalia Voinorovska and Kateryna Yasko, who introduced the President; Deputy Head of Presidential Administration Vasyl Rohovyi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Borys Tarasyuk, Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, and President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine; Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Konstantin Hryshchenko; Mayor Oleksandr Omelchenko of Kiev; U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Steven K. Pifer; and Ukraine Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarch Filaret. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan

June 6, 2000

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, are you encouraged that the talks will be moving back to Washington now, sir?

President Clinton. Yes. And Secretary Albright, I think, has had a good trip out there. I mean, we’re working at it, and I’m encouraged. You know it’s not going to be easy, but I’m encouraged.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to His Majesty for the commitment he’s shown to peace and also to reform within his own country and rebuilding the economy of Jordan. I have enormous respect for his leadership and great gratitude for the strength of our partner-

ship, which he has continued. So I am delighted that he is here. And he’s coming at a good time. We have a lot to discuss today.

Jordan-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Q. Mr. President, will you announce a free trade agreement with Jordan or the beginning of negotiations towards that end?

President Clinton. I think we’ll have a good announcement on the trade issue, and I think it’s important. I’m excited about—we have to discuss it, and we want to make sure that we’re clear and in agreement on all the essential points. I think we are, and I’m encouraged. I think it’s a very good thing to do.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what's the outlook for a Camp David-style summit?

President Clinton. Well, I want to wait until Secretary Albright gets back. As you know, I saw Prime Minister Barak when I was in Europe, and I'm going to see Mr. Arafat, Chairman Arafat—I think about a week from tomorrow, something like that—soon, anyway. And of course, His Majesty and I are going to talk today. So after that, we'll make some decisions about what to do next.

But you know, we're down now to the difficult issues and to the difficult decisions. And those of us who are not charged with making them but are charged with helping them get made just have to try to create the best possible environment. I'll do whatever I can. I have for over 7 years, and I'll continue to do that.

Q. Your Majesty, do you foresee any possibility for resuming talks between Israel and Syria?

King Abdullah II. Well, we have a series of discussions about the peace process in the next half an hour, so we'll see what comes out of that.

Q. Your Majesty, would you say that both parties, both the Palestinians and the Israelis, need to maybe limit their expectations in these talks? There's a lot of talk now on the Palestinian side; people are recommending to the Palestinians to go for it all and get everything, 100 percent, the same way that Lebanon did.

King Abdullah II. There are healthy discussions between President Arafat and the Prime Minister, and we have to give them the benefit

of the doubt and see what unfolds in the next week or so.

Q. But do you expect either side to get everything they want, or will—would you suggest that maybe the Palestinians will only get 90 percent, or 90-something percent, of the West Bank? Or do you expect them to get everything?

King Abdullah II. Well, I've been told by an old friend of mine that the best solution is one that both sides are a bit unhappy with, which means that both sides have had to give up something. And I think that when we look at final status, both sides have to be very open-minded about the other people's positions.

Q. Mr. President, Jordan will face several challenges from final status peace talks, including refugees and water. Will the U.S. offer support—financial, moral support, et cetera—towards us?

President Clinton. Well, I think to have any kind of complete agreement on this, there has to be a provision made for dealing with the refugee problems, including some sort of fund, international fund, which would deal with the financial burdens of the displaced refugees everywhere, including Jordan. That's what I'm in favor of.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:40 a.m. in the Colonnade at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

June 6, 2000

The President. Today is the first full day back to work for Members of Congress since Memorial Day. Three weeks from now they leave again for the Fourth of July recess. Those 3 weeks provide a critical window of opportunity for Congress to make real progress on some of our Nation's most vital priorities. I urge congressional leaders to seize that opportunity.

They can get off to a strong start by passing without delay the emergency budget supplemental request I sent to Congress back in February. This is funding for pressing national needs, where delay means putting American families in hardship and our national interests at risk.

The legislation includes funding for crucial safety maintenance on the air traffic control system. Without this funding, we could see more flight delays as we enter the peak summer tourist season.

It includes housing assistance for victims of Hurricane Floyd, many of whom still are living in temporary shelters. These families will have to spend yet another winter there if they cannot begin rebuilding their homes during this summer's construction season.

It includes money to battle the record number of forest fires that have been burning across America last year, especially out West. Delaying this funding could erode our capacity to fight further blazes this summer.

It includes emergency assistance for families who have struggled all winter with high heating oil costs and who now face a scorching summer. Without this assistance, these low income Americans, many of them elderly and infirm, may not be able to afford the fans and air conditioning that can literally save their lives.

It includes funding to keep illegal drugs out of our Nation by supporting the Colombian Government's courageous fight against drug traffickers. Delays in this funding come at a time when cocaine production is increasing in Colombia, where more than 80 percent of the cocaine on United States streets comes from. It also comes at a time when Colombia, Latin America's oldest democracy, is fighting to preserve its very system of government and way of life in the face of intense pressure.

It includes funding to lift crippling debt burdens from the world's poorest nations, funding for our troops in Kosovo and for building civilian institutions there. Delaying this funding may force the Army to put off regular maintenance of tanks and other weaponry or even to cancel combat exercises crucial to the readiness of our troops around the world. It will also delay the day when we can bring our troops home from Kosovo.

Each and every one of these investments is urgently needed, and the package as a whole enjoys strong bipartisan support. Leaders in the House clearly understand that. That's why they put the emergency spending bill on a fast track for passage. But in the Senate, instead of taking swift action, the emergency spending bill has been attached to next year's spending bills. The Senate weighed them down with further unrelated provisions, such as one that would block

our efforts to get the tobacco companies to pay back the Government for health costs caused by tobacco products.

This process is not the right thing to do when the needs of the country covered by the bills are so urgent. The emergency spending bill should have been passed months ago. Let's do it now, so that we can move on to other pressing business that we can and should pass this summer.

That includes the Senate following quickly the House's example in providing normal trade relations with China. It also, I hope, will include raising the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years; passing a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights; reforming Medicare and adding a voluntary prescription drug benefit; passing commonsense gun legislation to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks, ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

I hope it will include education reform, demanding more from our schools and investing more in them, including modernizing 6,000 of our schools that are now falling apart. I hope it will include strong, fair hate crimes legislation. And I hope it will include clean spending bills that I can sign, not those loaded down with anti-environmental riders, special interest provisions for the tobacco industry, and other add-ons I have vetoed in the past and would have no choice other than to veto in the future.

Now, we can do all of this in short order if congressional leaders will stop delaying and start voting. Almost every one of these issues has been thoroughly debated, and almost every one of them enjoys strong bipartisan support. We could pass them if they could just be brought up for a vote. It's time to put progress ahead of partisanship.

When Congress adjourns this summer, we ought to be able to look back and say we took real steps to make our country better. We ought to be able to say we made the most of this historic moment of unparalleled prosperity. That's what the American people sent us here to do, and they deserve no less. As I have said repeatedly, the fact that this is an election year should not have an impact on that. If we just pass the things that there is strong bipartisan majority support for, there will still be plenty of matters over which there are honest disagreements that can be presented to the American people to resolve. All I'm asking for is a vote on the things that are urgently needed in the

national interest and those things that clearly the majority of Congress supports.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, could you explain a little more about the urgency for the Colombia funds? And why not ask for that money as part of a foreign ops bill?

The President. Well, we asked for it in an emergency supplemental bill. And that's where we think—we think it should be passed on an emergency basis because the Colombian Government is under great stress now, and because they can't begin to deal with the challenges posed by the drug traffickers in Colombia without extra support—not only to build up their forces, their police forces in the country but also to give alternatives to those who are growing the plants, the coca plants, to find another way to make a living, and to do other things that will deal with some of the border problems we have in the countries that border Colombia.

But I think most of us have seen that democracy itself is under great stress throughout the Andean region, in no small measure because of the power of the drug traffickers. And I say again, Colombia is the oldest democracy in Latin America, and I believe their very way of life is under stress because of this. And I think that if we were to pass this quickly, and then send a clear signal to the Colombians that we support democracy and we support their efforts against the drug traffickers, you would see a big response from other countries of the world to help them. The world would rally behind them. It would, I believe, change the entire psychology of the drama that is unfolding down there.

And if it's a battle that we lose to the drug traffickers, the price would not only be more drugs on the streets of America but also potentially destabilizing the entire Andean region and the whole move we've seen these last 15 or 20 years toward democracy in South America and throughout Latin America. It's very troubling to me. And I think there are people in the Congress—I know there are, in both parties—who strongly agree.

We all know that the Senate operates differently, on different rules, than the House. We

all know there are all kinds of problems and conflicting interests. But this is something we really ought to put beyond that. And I think that what happened is that this emergency supplemental got caught up in a whole lot of conflicting pressures in the Senate and the ability of those who disagree with one thing or another to use the rules to delay it. But somehow we've got to cut through all this. The national interest in Colombia and in the other things that I itemized just cries out for action. It's just imperative that we get it as quickly as possible.

Q. Mr. President, have you talked to Senator Lott directly about this, in trying to move some of these things? And what —

The President. I have, I have. I've talked to him on more than one occasion. I have not talked to him since I've been back, because I haven't had a chance to this morning; I've been working all day. But I will talk to him.

Q. What—what is his counterargument?

The President. I believe that on the merits, I think he wants to do it. And you know, it's a difficult situation. I think what is required is for everybody in the Senate to recognize that this is something we ought to just put beyond whatever the other squabbles are, and get it done and put it behind us. And so—I believe he wants to do that, and I hope we can find a way to do that.

Peruvian Elections

Q. Mr. President, would you like to see the U.S. take any action toward Peru—possible sanctions, or anything—regarding irregularities in their recent election?

The President. Well, we just got back from my trip. I think I ought to have a chance to talk about all that. I haven't—I don't feel—I may not know enough to answer that. I'm disappointed, obviously, that the election didn't unfold as we thought it would after the first round. And I have to figure out exactly what all the reasons are and get a briefing before I can make a comment beyond that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

June 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on the Earthquake in Indonesia

June 6, 2000

I was saddened to learn of the earthquakes that shook the island of Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses and injuries.

The United States is providing emergency assistance to support relief efforts and stands ready to provide further help to meet the needs of those affected by the earthquake.

Remarks on Increasing Participation in Clinical Trials and an Exchange With Reporters

June 7, 2000

The President. Good morning everyone. We are here at this early hour to talk about a vitally important issue to the health of America's senior citizens—indeed, eventually, to the health of all of us.

We must help more seniors participate in clinical trials that test new therapies for illnesses, from cancer to heart disease to Alzheimer's. These trials may prolong lives, and they are central to finding cures for deadly diseases.

Today, America's seniors are badly under-represented in clinical trials, yet they bear the heaviest share of illness. More than half of our cancer patients are over 65, but only a third of those in clinical trials are seniors. For breast cancer, the statistics are even worse.

Today, thousands of important clinical trials don't have enough patients because so few seniors are able to take part, and that means slower progress towards curing or treating illness. One major factor keeping seniors out of clinical trials is patients' lack of certainty that their expenses will be covered by insurance. Because Medicare's policies on payment for clinical trials have been unclear, seniors cannot be sure of coverage if they volunteer for experimental care. Many assume they'll be saddled with thousands of dollars in routine medical costs if they participate, and they clearly cannot bear such a heavy burden.

For several years, Vice President Gore has led our efforts to clean up the confusion and help seniors and people with disabilities into clinical trials. We've had bipartisan support in Congress, led by Senators Rockefeller and Mack

and Congresswoman Johnson and Congressman Bentsen and Congressman Cardin.

Today, after careful study, I am signing an executive memorandum directing Medicare to change its policy and remove a major barrier to seniors' participation in these trials. Within a week, Medicare will begin to cover all the routine medical costs of participation in a clinical trial.

The Department of Health and Human Services and the Health Care Financing Administration will begin outreach programs so that patients, as well as doctors, researchers, and administrators, all are aware of the change. We'll ask for the help of advocates for patients and research who have done so much to publicize this issue. We believe that with good outreach, thousands of seniors could join trials this year and make a dramatic contribution to the progress of medicine, as well as to the health of older Americans.

I am also directing today the Department of Health and Human Services to report back to me on ways we can provide additional support to clinical trials that are especially relevant to senior citizens, and am requesting that the National Institutes of Health look for ways we can encourage even more seniors to speed science's progress by participating in new clinical trials.

As America ages, we must provide all our seniors affordable, quality health care, and we should be using our cutting-edge science to meet that challenge. Simply put, the more seniors we enroll in trials, the faster we'll be able to use these advances to save American lives.

We've done this successfully with cancer in children. For decades now, more than half of all the children with cancer have joined clinical trials, giving us a wealth of evidence about how the disease works and how best to fight it. Now we can cure three-quarters of childhood cancers. That could never have happened without the participation of children in these trials. We should be doing the same for Americans of every age.

Today I've authorized Medicare to help seniors participate. Private health care plans should be doing the same for their members. But it won't happen also unless Congress takes the next step and passes a strong Patients' Bill of Rights. Congress has had that on its agenda for 6 months now in the Norwood-Dingell bill, which includes a requirement that every private insurer cover the cost of participation in clinical trials.

This month, before the summer recess, Congress has a window of opportunity to take another real step to make our country stronger and safer and healthier. I hope that window will be used, because we need this. If we do the Medicare participation in clinical trials and pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, then all our citizens will be able to participate in these trials, and that will hasten the day when all age groups will be more likely to recover from the most serious illnesses.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, could you disabuse us of the notion that this is an attempt by the Vice President to curry favor among a group of individuals which have been, in recent years, starting to move away from the Democratic Party during an election year?

The President. Well, I think the only way I can disabuse you of the notion is 7½ years of activity on this and the fact that it has been well known that I have been working on this issue, and so has he, for several months now, trying to work through all the legal and administrative issues necessary to get this done. It's not as if this is just an issue that popped up on the radar screen. We've been working this clinical trial issue alone for years, not only the seniors but with children. This is by no means the first action we've taken in this area.

And indeed, there has been a strong bipartisan interest in this with all the people involved. I mentioned Senator Connie Mack, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson; they are the two most visible Republicans who have been working on this. But we've been—all of us have been working on this for some time now trying to get this done. And if I could have gotten it done a month ago, 2 months ago, 6 months ago, I would have done that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Tokyo, Japan.

Memorandum on Increasing Participation of Medicare Beneficiaries in Clinical Trials

June 7, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Subject: Increasing Participation of Medicare Beneficiaries in Clinical Trials

Promoting biomedical research and ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries receive the highest quality care possible are longstanding priorities of my Administration. Over the past 3 years, with the invaluable assistance of the Vice President, my Administration has advocated and secured funding for a budget proposal that explic-

itly provides for Medicare coverage of services associated with cancer clinical trials, assuring that seniors and disabled persons with cancer have access to cutting-edge treatments and helping promote the research necessary to find new treatments and cures.

Research shows that only about 1 percent of American seniors participate in clinical trials, although the elderly bear the majority of the disease burden in the United States. For example, although 63 percent of cancer patients are over 65, these older cancer patients constitute only

33 percent of all those enrolled in clinical trials. The disparity is greater for breast cancer patients—elderly women comprise 44 percent of breast cancer patients, but only 1.6 percent of women over the age of 65 are in clinical trials for the disease. These low participation rates hinder efforts to develop new therapies, because they mean that scientists often need between 3 and 5 years to enroll enough participants in a clinical trial to generate scientifically valid and statistically meaningful results.

Experts believe that coverage of all clinical trials—not just those for cancer—can lead to breakthroughs in diagnostics, treatments, and cures for many of the most devastating diseases afflicting millions of Americans of all ages. For example, we have made striking progress in treating and curing pediatric cancers, largely because of widespread participation in clinical trials. For decades now, well over 50 percent of pediatric cancer patients were enrolled in clinical trials, and today, 75 percent of cancers in children are curable.

One factor contributing to seniors' low participation rate in clinical trials is the Medicare program's failure to guarantee Medicare payment for the care associated with participation. This uncertainty regarding reimbursement often deters patients from participating in these trials, and deters physicians and other clinicians from recruiting patients, contributing to low participation rates and slowing the development of new medical treatments and diagnostic tests that could benefit the entire Medicare population.

Last December, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report entitled "Extending Medicare Reimbursement in Clinical Trials," which recommended that Medicare explicitly cover routine patient care costs for participants in clinical trials. This and other recommendations by IOM, combined with your ongoing efforts to modernize Medicare's process to ensure coverage of new technology, prompted a review of Medicare's administrative flexibility to independently remove barriers to participation in clinical trials. Following this review, you concluded that Medicare could exercise its administrative authority to provide reimbursement for routine patient care costs associated with clinical trials.

Based on the results of your Department's review and your recommendations, as well as our shared commitment to promoting critical biomedical research and to assuring that older

Americans and millions of people with disabilities have access to cutting edge medical treatments, I hereby direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to:

- *Revise Medicare program guidance to explicitly authorize payment for routine patient care costs associated with clinical trials.* The HCFA should inform all claims-processing contractors that Medicare will immediately begin to reimburse routine patient care costs and costs due to medical complications associated with participation in clinical trials.
- *Launch activities to increase beneficiary awareness of the new coverage option.* The HHS should educate beneficiaries and providers about this policy change, including developing an easy-to-read brochure, adding information on clinical trial coverage to future Medicare handbooks, and posting information on the HHS website.
- *Establish a tracking system for Medicare payments.* The HCFA should implement a system to track clinical trial spending to which Medicare contributes financial support.
- *Ensure that the information gained from important clinical trials is used to inform Medicare coverage decisions.* The HCFA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) should work with researchers prior to clinical trials designed to test the efficacy of devices or therapies that have significant implications for the Medicare program to structure those trials to produce information to inform subsequent Medicare coverage decisions.
- *Review and report back to me within 90 days on the feasibility and advisability of additional actions to promote research on issues of importance to the Medicare population, including:*
 - as recommended by IOM, supporting certain clinical trials of particular importance to the Medicare population, including certain health care interventions unique to the Medicare population and clinical trials that could lead to more effective and/or less costly treatments. HHS should review IOM's recommendation to provide additional financial support for monitoring and evaluation, device implantation, and other non-covered costs for trials researching

- methods of care of particular importance to Medicare beneficiaries;
- increasing the participation of seniors in clinical trials. Specifically, the NIH should evaluate additional action to increase seniors' participation in clinical trials to ensure that researchers can determine the best therapies for older as well as younger patients; and
- developing a registry of all ongoing clinical trials receiving Medicare reimbursement,

using the information contained in current NIH and FDA clinical trial registries. This new registry would provide a comprehensive picture of ongoing trials, participation rates, and ways patients can access the trials and facilitate the HCFA's ongoing review and oversight activities to ensure that only covered services are billed and reimbursed.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks Following a Memorial Service for Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan in Tokyo

June 8, 2000

I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador and Mrs. Foley for welcoming me back to the American Embassy and the Ambassador's residence, along with our American party.

I came here today to pay my respects to a friend. And on behalf of the American people, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the Prime Minister's family, especially to his wife and his three children, as well as to the people of Japan.

Two years ago Prime Minister Obuchi took office in a difficult time for Japan and the world. There were many who wondered if any person could meet the tremendous challenges brought on by the global economic crisis we faced. I think history will record that Keizo Obuchi rose to the challenge with courage and confidence.

Thirty-seven years ago he was the youngest person ever elected to the Japanese Parliament. Over time, it's clear that he learned a profoundly important lesson, how to reach out to all sides and bring people together. As Prime Minister, he became known for imitating the art and skill of an orchestra conductor, in finding harmony among people of different views.

From his first days in office, he took swift steps to put Japan on firmer economic ground, and he gave strong support to the cause of peace, from East Timor to Kosovo. He worked to strengthen our alliance and to place it on a solid foundation for the 21st century. He believed in a U.S.-Japanese partnership built upon mutual respect and shared values of democracy and human rights, economic freedom and secu-

rity, and that this partnership must remain the cornerstone of stability in East Asia.

Prime Minister Obuchi touched hearts around the world in simple, human ways. His telephone calls are legendary. I remember his human touch when he came to America last spring; when he threw out an unhittable pitch to the Chicago slugger, Sammy Sosa; when he told us of the honor he felt in meeting Robert Kennedy as a young man; and how much he appreciated the dinner we hosted in his honor when he shared a table with Mrs. Robert Kennedy.

Early in his career, Prime Minister Obuchi competed for votes in the same district as two former Prime Ministers. He used to describe himself as a "noodle shop sandwiched between two skyscrapers." As usual, he was being modest. Prime Minister Obuchi represented to the whole world the Japanese virtues of honor and loyalty, vision and determination, love for and commitment to ordinary people. Our world is a better place thanks to the life that he lived and the work that he did.

On his last day in Washington, Prime Minister Obuchi gave me a beautiful painting of Mount Fuji. I will cherish it always. And whenever I look at it, it will always remind me of him. I hope very much that, in his memory, Japan and the United States can work together as partners and friends to lift humanity to a new mountaintop in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

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NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:05 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Thomas S. Foley, and his wife, Heather; Prime Minister

Obuchi's widow, Chizuko, his son, Go, and his daughters, Yuko and Akiko; and Ethel Kennedy, widow of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Statement on the Entertainment and Media Industry's Parental Media Guide Website

June 8, 2000

I applaud the media and the entertainment industry for announcing that they have answered our call to action to develop a one-stop website for parents to learn more about how to monitor and understand their children's interaction with the media. This website is a positive step, but not the only one we need to take, to give parents the tools they urgently need to help them choose what media is appropriate for their children. The First Lady challenged the industry to develop this website, as part of the White House Conference on Teenagers, to give parents more and better information about how to use the current media rating systems and parent advisory guidelines voluntarily put in place by the

movie, television, music, and computer/video game industries. Hillary and I will continue to call on the industry to take the next step of voluntarily creating a uniform rating system that would apply to movies, television, music, and video games.

The parental media guide can be found at www.parentalguide.org. This website was jointly developed and produced by the Motion Picture Association of America, the National Cable Television Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, the Recording Industry Association of America, and the Interactive Digital Software Association.

Statement on Congressional Action on Electronic Signatures Legislation

June 8, 2000

I am pleased that House and Senate conferees have reached bipartisan agreement on important electronic commerce legislation, the "Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act." This legislation will remove legal barriers to doing business on-line while preserving consumer protections. Congress should quickly send the bill to my desk.

E-commerce offers substantial benefits for businesses and consumers in terms of efficiency, convenience, and lower costs and is a vital source of dynamism for the American economy. If we are to achieve the full potential of electronic business-to-business and business-to-consumer commerce, however, some minimal ground rules are necessary. Business needs legal certainty that a contract formed and executed on-line will be no less valid than its pen-and-ink counterpart. Consumers need confidence

that they are as safe doing business in the electronic world as they are on paper.

The bipartisan agreement reached by conferees is a responsible and balanced approach to accomplishing both of these goals. The legislation would remove barriers to E-commerce by establishing technology-neutral legal standards for electronic contracts and signatures. It would ensure that consumer protections on-line will be equivalent to those in the paper world.

I applaud the leadership of Chairmen Bliley and McCain who reached across party lines and built a bipartisan consensus. I am also grateful to the Democrats who worked so constructively to reach bipartisan agreement in conference, including Senators Hollings, Leahy, Sarbanes, and Wyden and Congressmen Dingell and Markey.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Science and Engineering Indicators

June 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by 42 U.S.C. 1863(j)(1), I am pleased to submit to the Congress a report of the National Science Board entitled, "Science and Engineering Indicators—2000." This report represents the fourteenth in a series examining

key aspects of the status of American science and engineering in a global environment.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 8, 2000.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Estate Tax Legislation

June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I recognize that some small businesses and family farms struggle with the estate tax and am committed to working with you to relieve this burden. I am supportive of targeted, fiscally responsible legislation to make the estate tax fairer, simpler, and more efficient. I believe the alternative proposed by Representatives Rangel, Cardin, and Stenholm, which would exempt most small businesses and family farms from the estate tax entirely, promotes these objectives in a fiscally responsible manner.

We should not, however, turn our backs on fiscal discipline by passing a regressive, poorly targeted, and expensive repeal of the estate tax. If you send me a bill to completely repeal the estate tax, I will veto it rather than risk the fiscal progress that has contributed to the longest economic expansion in history.

The cost of the estate tax repeal would explode just as the baby boom generation begins to retire, putting at risk our ability to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security, pay down the debt, and meet other important national priorities. The full cost of this legislation is hidden because the repeal is phased in over ten years. Although it would cost about \$100 billion from 2001–10, the drain on the surplus

would increase seven-fold to over \$750 billion over the following ten years.

Repealing the estate tax would undermine the progressivity, fairness, and integrity of the tax system. In 2010, the repeal of the estate and gift taxes would provide a \$50 billion tax break. But this estate tax repeal would benefit only 54,000 estates—about 2 percent of decedents—providing an average tax cut of \$800,000. Small businesses and family farms would receive a tiny fraction of the benefits of this proposal, while the largest estates would enjoy enormous windfalls. In addition, studies indicate that, without the estate tax, charitable donations and bequests would fall by \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year.

I would like to work with the bipartisan Congressional leadership to enact legislation to reduce the burden of the estate tax on small businesses and family farms, provided it is done in an overall framework of fiscal discipline that strengthens Social Security and Medicare, invests in key priorities, and pays down the debt by 2013. I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

June 8 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Letter to the Senate Democratic Leader on the Patients' Bill of Rights June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am writing to express my strong support for your effort to give the Senate its first opportunity to vote for the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights. It is long past time that the Congress acted to deliver real patient protections for all Americans in all health plans.

It is my understanding that the members of the Senate/House Conference who support a strong, enforceable, Patients' Bill of Rights have reluctantly concluded that the likelihood of an acceptable bill emerging from the conference is remote. After 8 months of inaction since the House passed the Norwood-Dingell Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act, and with very few scheduled legislative days remaining, it is time for the Congress to act to pass this legislation and give Americans the patient protections they deserve.

Congress has failed to pass this measure for years, and this delay has real consequences. According to a recent study, each day without a strong Patients' Bill of Rights results in harm to thousands of patients because insurance companies refused a patient a diagnostic test, a necessary procedure, or a referral to a specialist.

It is my hope that the Senate will approve this legislation today and take the next important step toward the enactment of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. I urge the Senate to put the interests of patients before those of the special interests and replicate last fall's bipartisan achievement by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Statement on Senate Action on the Patients' Bill of Rights June 8, 2000

I am disappointed that today's vote in the Senate means that the American people will continue to wait for the long overdue patient protections that they deserve. However, we continue to enjoy overwhelming bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and are now

within a single vote of a bipartisan majority in the Senate. I am encouraged by this progress and urge the supporters of a real Patients' Bill of Rights to redouble their efforts to pass this critically important legislation.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico

June 9, 2000

Mexican Economy

Q. President Clinton, do you want to say something about the Mexican economy? How do you see the development of the last 5½ years under President Zedillo?

President Clinton. I think President Zedillo has done a truly remarkable job. Mexico has

had 5 years of growth, in excess of 5 percent a year, after the very difficult financial crisis in '94. And I think it's a real tribute to him and to the people he put on his team, as well as to the hard work and industry of the people of Mexico.

But I hope the partnership that we have enjoyed together after NAFTA and through the crisis has played some role. But I think the great credit goes to the President and his team and the people of Mexico.

Mexican Election

Q. What do you think about the Mexican election?

President Clinton. I think the Mexican people will vote and make their own decision. It's interesting to observe. It's just like this election. I'm just an observer now. I'm not running for anything.

[At this point, a question was asked and answered in Spanish, and a translation was not provided.]

Organization of American States

Q. [Inaudible]—just failed to get the support of the Latin American countries to get the OAS as a mediator in Peru. What do you think could be the role of the OAS supervising elections

in Latin America without the support of key countries like Mexico?

President Clinton. Well, I think the real question that we all have to come to terms with is, what is the right thing to do now? And that's what we've been discussing. But over the long run, I think that the OAS still has a good future and a critical future. And I don't think there's any difference between the United States and Mexico in our determination to do whatever we can to keep democracy strong throughout the region.

And so we talked about it today, and it's a difficult problem. But I think the trend is good. You can't look back on the last 20 years and not believe that. And so we'll need some mechanism to monitor these elections and to be involved in an ongoing basis, and I think the OAS still has a pretty good future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Estate Tax Legislation June 9, 2000

The House has jeopardized our fiscal discipline by passing a costly, irresponsible, and regressive plan to eliminate the estate tax. If this bill were presented to me in its current form, I would veto it without hesitation.

Repealing the estate tax would undermine our record of fiscal discipline as well as the progressivity, fairness, and integrity of the tax system. The cost of this bill explodes from \$100 billion this decade to over \$750 billion in the following decade, just as the baby boom generation is retiring and Medicare and Social Security are coming under strain. This bill gives the largest estates a windfall while steering only a tiny fraction of the benefits to small businesses and family farms. By the end of the decade, the bill would provide a \$50 billion tax break that would

provide only 54,000 estates—about 2 percent of all decedents—with an average tax cut of \$800,000. Furthermore, studies by economists have found that repealing the estate tax would reduce charitable donations by \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year.

I am supportive of targeted, fiscally responsible legislation, such as the Democratic alternative, to make the estate tax fairer, simpler, and more efficient. I urge the congressional leadership to work with me to relieve the burden of estate taxes for small businesses and family farms in a fiscally responsible manner this year. We can do this while strengthening Social Security and Medicare, investing in key priorities, and paying down the debt by 2013.

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Memorandum on the Hanford Reach National Monument

June 9, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Energy

Subject: Hanford Reach National Monument

The area being designated as the Hanford Reach National Monument forms an arc surrounding much of what is known as the central Hanford area. While a portion of the central area is needed for Department of Energy missions, much of the area contains the same shrub-steppe habitat and other objects of scientific and historic interest that I am today permanently protecting in the monument. Therefore, I am

directing you to manage the central area to protect these important values where practical. I further direct you to consult with the Secretary of the Interior on how best to permanently protect these objects, including the possibility of adding lands to the monument as they are remediated.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: The proclamation of June 9 on establishment of the Hanford Reach National Monument is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bankruptcy Reform Legislation

June 9, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I write to urge a fair resolution of the open issues in discussions on bankruptcy reform. I have long made clear my support for legislation that would encourage responsibility and reduce abuses of the bankruptcy system on the part of debtors and creditors alike. We also must ensure that a reasonable fresh start is available for those who turn to bankruptcy as a last resort when facing divorce, unemployment, illness, and uninsured medical expenses. Bankruptcy reform legislation should strike the right balance.

The House-passed bill was so one-sided that I would have vetoed it. The Senate-passed bill's bankruptcy provisions represented a better attempt to balance legitimate debtor and creditor interests, although I had serious concerns about some aspects. My Administration has watched carefully as the staff and informal conferees have sought to reconcile these two bills. While there appears to be some informal progress on some outstanding issues, it is very important that the resolution of these issues be fair and that we ensure that we do not erode protections for all debtors—when targeting the few who abuse the system. The outcome will help determine whether the final bill tips the scales. I am concerned, for example, that the final bill:

- may not adequately address the problem of wealthy debtors who use overly broad

homestead exemptions to shield assets from their creditors;

- may weaken important credit card disclosure provisions that will help ensure consumers understand the implications of the debt they are incurring;
- may eliminate protections for reasonable retirement pensions that reflect years of contributions by workers and their employers; and
- may include an anti-consumer provision eliminating existing law protections against inappropriate collection practices when collecting from people who bounce a check.

Finally, I am deeply disturbed that some in Congress still object to a reasonable provision that would end demonstrated abuse of the bankruptcy system. We cannot tolerate abusive bankruptcy filings to avoid the legal consequences of violence, vandalism, and harassment used to deny access to legal health services. An effective approach, such as the one offered by Senator Schumer's amendment, should be included in the final legislation.

I sincerely hope that balanced, bipartisan bankruptcy reform will be completed this year,

but I will not hesitate to veto unfair legislation that fails the test of balance.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address *June 10, 2000*

Good morning. As we enter the new century, opportunity is abundant. We're in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history, with 22 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment in 30 years. Yet we know some Americans are finding it harder and harder to balance the demands of work and family. People are working more jobs and longer hours than ever before, forcing many of them to make the unacceptable choice between being good workers and the best parents or caregivers.

Today I want to speak with you about important new steps we're taking to give working Americans the time off they need to care for their families without losing the income they need to support them.

According to a recent Federal study, parents in the average family now have 22 fewer hours per week to spend at home than they did just a generation ago. That's the loss of nearly a full day to spend time with their families. And the percentage of married mothers working outside the home has nearly doubled, from 38 to 68 percent, over the last three decades.

We also know that many of them are working weekends or on the night shift, times they've traditionally spent at home caring for their families. In our round-the-clock economy, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours during the day for working Americans to do everything they need to.

For more than 7 years now, our administration has taken action to give families the flexibility they need to balance the demands of work and home. We've helped make child care safer, better, and more affordable for millions of families. We've greatly expanded preschool and after-school programs. We fought to give generous tax credits to help the growing number

of families who provide care for aging and ailing loved ones at home.

I'm especially proud that the very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. Since 1993, more than 20 million Americans have used it to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or sick relative without fear of losing their jobs. Still there are too many families that aren't making use of the law because they simply can't afford to take the time off if it means sacrificing a paycheck.

Today I'm announcing two new steps that will allow working Americans to take time off they need to care for their families without giving up the pay they need to support them.

First, I'm pleased to announce that States will soon have the option to use funds from their unemployment insurance programs to provide paid leave to new parents following the birth or adoption of a child. While this initiative is totally voluntary, there are already 15 States considering legislation to provide paid leave through unemployment insurance or other means. In fact, Massachusetts may vote on such a bill in the next few weeks.

In this strong economy, I hope more States will take advantage of this new option, and I believe those which do can provide this new benefit while still preserving the fiscal soundness of their unemployment insurance programs. The first few months with a newborn are precious ones, and no parent should have to miss them.

Second, we all know record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving but potentially very expensive choice. That's why, beginning later this month, all Federal employees will be able to take up to 12 weeks paid sick leave that they've earned to nurse an ailing child or parent

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back to health. If every company in America followed this example, half of all our workers would have this important benefit for their families.

There are further steps we should take right away to help more parents balance work and family. Again, I call on Congress to extend the benefits of family and medical leave to employees of smaller companies, so we can reach another 12 million American families. And I urge Congress to pass my comprehensive long-term care initiative, which includes a \$3,000 tax credit to meet the growing needs of the elderly and their families.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The greatest prizes of life are

those connected to the home." Today, more than a century later, our families still are our most valued treasures. That's why I think no American should ever have to choose between the job they need and the parent or child they love. The actions we take today will help to ensure that they won't have to make that choice.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:25 p.m. on June 9 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Commencement Address at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota June 10, 2000

Thank you very much, President Lewis. It's nice to be around someone who is not terminated. *[Laughter]* To the trustees and faculty members, including your longtime faculty member and now your United States Senator, Senator Paul Wellstone. It's nice to see you and Sheila. Thank you for being here, both of you.

I congratulate Bruno Nettel and George Dixon on their degrees, and I thank the Carleton community for making me welcome. I congratulate the student speakers, Katy and Sachin and Faisal. They were really, really, I thought, very good. I'm glad there was some break between when they spoke and when I had to speak. *[Laughter]* Maybe you won't remember how good they were, and I'll be able to get through this. *[Laughter]*

I want to congratulate all the members of the class of 2000, your families, and your friends, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share this with you.

I've been hearing about Carleton for years. I have a staff member and adviser, Tom Freedman, who is here with me today, class of '85, and his college roommate, John Harris, who—he's on the other side in Washington. He writes for the Washington Post. They're both here, over here to the left. So there is life after college, and they have proved it.

And they told me about the motto, "You are part of Carleton, and Carleton is part of you." They also told me that Carleton is my kind of place, a school that celebrates diversity, a school whose students and faculty exemplify excellence without elitism, a school where the president of the college gets to sing like Elvis. *[Laughter]*

I'm also very proud that someone painted my portrait on the water tower, and I thank you for that. Now, I heard it wasn't the greatest likeness in the world, but I still kind of wish you hadn't painted it over. *[Laughter]*

I also got a souvenir from my stay here, and I want to show it to you. Thank you. And someone asked me if I would give this fellow a ride on Air Force One, to sort of add to the legend, you know? *[Laughter]* And I thought, why not? He looks more like me than that guy on the water tower did. I think I'll do that. *[Laughter]*

I do want to say I love the message that Faisal and Sachin gave about building on our common humanity, and I wrote down what I thought was the best line from Katy Beebe's talk, "Use clichés like they were meant to be used." I think that's pretty good, because we all have them. *[Laughter]*

The truth is, I have been paying attention now to graduations for quite some time. And you are graduating at a time which is different.

Yes, there are a lot of common elements in this ceremony. Yes, there are a lot of common elements in your feelings. Yes, you're a remarkably diverse group. I could tell that just by shaking hands with you and exchanging a few words. One of you even asked me to change a Government policy. [Laughter] Good job. You have to ask Senator Wellstone. It's an act of Congress now. I can't change it. [Laughter]

But the truth is, this year marked more than a millennial turning of the calendar. This country and the world have entered an era that is different, in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world.

For us, it's a time of unparalleled promise. We have the strongest economy we've ever had and the longest expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. And yet, it's also a time of increasing social cohesion: the poverty rate at a 20-year low; the welfare rolls at a 32-year low; the crime rate at a 25-year low. It is—in my lifetime, anyway—the only time we have ever had at once so much economic prosperity and social progress and at the same time so little internal crisis or external threat to our existence. We have an opportunity to shape a world, therefore, that is more free and more decent than ever before.

I can't help noting that this is the one-year anniversary of the day when the Serbian troops accepted NATO's terms and began to withdraw from Kosovo,* and we reversed the tide of ethnic cleansing and religious cleansing that was present when almost a million people were driven from their homes. We still have 5,500 Americans there with troops from 39 nations. Almost all of the refugees have gone home. They're going to the polls for the first time in history this fall. So I'm very proud of that.

But it shows that it's a very different world. Not so many years ago, it would have been unthinkable that America would be part of a multinational force deployed just to stop people from being murdered or uprooted because of their race or ethnic background or religion, and I'm glad we did it.

The world is moving to the beat of two great forces: globalization and the revolution and knowledge of information technology, the biological, environmental, and material sciences. And our whole pulse is quickening with all this new discovery and interaction.

* White House correction.

I have worked very hard to prepare this country for the 21st century, and now it belongs to you, and it's up to you to decide what to do with it. I hope very much that you will use this moment to deal with the big challenges and the big opportunities that are still out there for us: to bring prosperity to people and places that are still poor and haven't been caught up in this recovery; to end child poverty and give all our children access to a good education; to give families the time and tools they need to balance their work at home and their work at work; to deal with the challenge of the aging of America; to reverse the tide of climate change; to put a human face on a global economy; to maximize the potential of science and technology and minimize its new risks; to build one America across all the lines that divide us; and to build a world where the forces of peace and prosperity and humanity are stronger than the old demons of war and disease and poverty.

Now, you have a chance to do that, in no small measure because you spent the last 4 years here. And I want to talk just very briefly today about one specific subject, our common obligation to give all young people the chance you've had to develop the abilities, the understanding, the feelings, the outlook that you have developed here in your years at Carleton.

It's important because in the world we live in, it's the only way to guarantee our Founders' dreams of opportunity for all, so it's important individually. But from my point of view, it's even more important because unless we can more generally spread the benefits of education, your generation will not be able to build a future of your dreams.

Two centuries ago, opportunity meant having a chance to carve out a farm on the forest frontier. A century ago, it meant a chance to work in a factory with reasonably decent conditions and give your children a chance to get a high school education. Today, opportunity requires the constant ability to learn and relearn, to master new tools and new technologies, to think broadly, to adjust quickly, to put things in context. It means every American needs more than a high school education. It means a college education is not a luxury.

In the coming years, the number of new jobs requiring at least a bachelor's degree will grow twice as fast—more than twice as fast—as those that don't. The three fastest growing occupations

require at least a bachelor's degree, and their pay, of course, is much better than average.

So I have a simple message today, which is that our country cannot afford to leave any students behind simply because they can't afford to pay for college.

I came from a family where nobody had ever gone to college before, and yet, from the time I was a little boy, I never had any doubt I was going, because that's what my family told me I was going to do. And thanks to my family and scholarships and loans and jobs, I got opportunities that eluded all my parents' generation and, unfortunately, eluded all too many of my contemporaries in high school. When I became President, I was determined to do what I could to give every student that chance. I am well aware, if it hadn't been for that chance that I had so long ago now, to go to school, I wouldn't be standing here today.

So, what does it mean to give every young person the chance to go to college? First, we have to begin at the beginning. We've worked on education reforms to make sure all of our kids start school ready to learn, finish high school ready to succeed. We've expanded early childhood education; supported higher standards, more choice, and greater accountability for results in our schools; extra help for kids who need it, from after-school to summer school to mentoring programs; new efforts to attract talented teachers, reduce class size, modernize classrooms, connect all of them to the Internet. That's the first part of this.

But the second thing we've tried to do is to open the doors of college to every American. In 1993 we created something called the Direct Student Loan Program. It has lowered the cost of all borrowing and all loan programs and saved America's students, in lower interest costs and charges, \$9 billion over 7 years. That program also allows students to pay back their loans as a percentage of their income.

In 7 years, we expanded Pell grants more than 40 percent and increased the work-study program so that now a million young college students are in work-study. On a thousand campuses, a lot of them are earning money by teaching young children to read in elementary schools. AmeriCorps is now giving 150,000 young people a chance to earn money for college and serving in their communities. Education IRA's now let families put savings in

IRA's and then withdraw them for college expenses tax-free.

We created the \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tax credit to make the first 2 years of college as universal as high school and to help families afford the last 2 years, as well as graduate school and job training. We set out to launch a lifetime learning tax credit which provides a 20 percent credit against tuition and fees. Now, this year alone—those things were done in '97—well over 10 million Americans will use HOPE scholarships and lifetime learning credits to open the doors of college and opportunity.

In the past 7 years, most of which we spent trying to get rid of the deficit, America has more than doubled college aid, the greatest expansion since the GI bill 50 years ago. It has proved to be a great investment. Today, coincident with this speech, I am releasing a report which demonstrates that as student aid has increased, so has college attendance, now to record levels. Fully two-thirds of our high graduates go straight to college. That's an all-time high. And for the first time in history, a majority of young African-Americans are enrolling in higher education.

The report also documents what you already know: The value of a college education in sheer economic terms is going up. The earnings gap between those who have a degree and those who don't is growing dramatically. Over the course of a career, a person with a bachelor's degree will earn, on average, \$600,000 more than a person who has a high school diploma. The return on a college investment is now nearly double the stock market's historical rate of return.

Now, this report, on balance, is good news. But it has some sobering information. With all the new financial aid and even though the rise in tuition costs have slowed over the past few years, most families still have to stretch to pay the college bills. Over the past 20 years, the cost of college has quadrupled. I'll bet there are a lot of parents here who have taken second mortgages or second jobs to help pay those tuition bills.

So I'd like to do one other thing in this area before I go, and I hope the Congress will do it this year. I would like to build on the success of the HOPE scholarship and the lifetime learning credits with a \$30 billion college opportunity tax cut. It would allow families, whether they're in the 15 percent or the 28 percent tax bracket,

to claim a tax deduction worth up to \$2,800 for up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs. It would make a big difference to a lot of families in this audience today, and I think it ought to be done.

Again I say, I know it's important for individual opportunity, but we have to recognize that we're living in a time when investment in human capital is even more important than investment in physical capital. This would be some of the best money this country ever spent.

I also hope we'll do more this year to help young people out there who are still, believe it or not, unaware of how important and how possible college is. Maybe nobody is pushing them to take the classes they need, or they don't know how to get the financial aid. I have asked, and I ask again, the Congress to work with us to expand our initiatives, called GEAR UP and TRIO, to reach out to students as early as the sixth grade to give them the dream that they can go to college and to determine to do what it takes to succeed once they get there.

Now, if we do these things, we can provide more students with the support they need, give more families the relief they need, give our economy the skilled work force we all need, and give our Nation more active, informed citizens. At long last, we've got the money to do it. The only question is whether we have the vision and will to do it. We owe it to your generation to do that.

Think about this. A hundred years from now, the Carleton class of 2100 will be sitting where you are. They'll look up at this podium, and perhaps they'll see a President reflecting on the 21st century, the good old days. I hope that he or she can say that we began this century in the right way.

I offer all of you my congratulations for the challenges you've conquered, the projects you've completed, the goals you've reached. You should be very proud. And as you embark here, I hope you'll never forget one other thing, implicit in what all other speakers have said. All your individual lives will unfold in the context of community, your local community, your national community, and increasingly, the global community. If you want to make the most of your own lives, you have to give something to all of your communities.

As the years pass, I am convinced that your generation will be judged most, and you will tend to judge yourselves most, on the ways in which, large and small, you give something back to the whole. If you do that, then you will be more than leaders in arts and science, business and industry. You will be great citizens of our Nation and the world.

I honestly believe the next 50 years can bring the greatest period of peace, prosperity, and humanity the world has ever known. It depends upon whether we do the right thing for the future and whether we understand that our common humanity is far, far more important than all the things that divide us.

May Carleton always be with you. Good luck, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the Bald Spot Quad. In his remarks, he referred to Carleton College president Stephen R. Lewis, Jr., honorary degree recipients Bruno Nettl and George H. Dixon, and students Katherine Beebe, Sachin Patel, and Faisal Mohyuddin; and Senator Paul Wellstone's wife, Sheila.

Remarks in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on the Death of President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and an Exchange With Reporters

June 10, 2000

The President. As all of you know, I received word not very long ago of President Asad's death in Syria today. I was very saddened by it, and I want to offer my condolences to his son, his family, and to the people of Syria.

You know, over the last 7 years, I had the occasion to meet with President Asad many times, and I believe I got to know him well. And while we had our disagreements, I always respected him because I felt that he was open and straightforward with me and because I felt

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he meant it when he said he had made a strategic choice for peace. I regret that that peace was not achieved in his lifetime, and I hope that it can still be achieved, in no small measure because of the commitment he made.

I think today, rather than speculating about the future, it would be best for all of us just to send our condolences and our best thoughts to his family and to the people of Syria.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, since he was such an integral link in the process, is this going to delay the future of the process? How is it going to affect the expediency of the process that you've been trying to jump-start recently?

The President. Peter, [Peter Maer, CBS News] I think it's premature to say. There will be a period of mourning in Syria. There will be a period of sorting out, and the Syrian people will make some decisions, and then we'll see what happens. But you know, we've been at this now for years because of the decision that he made to go back to negotiations and try to move away from conflict, and it's certainly a path that I hope the country will stay on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. on his arrival at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President's al-Asad's son, Bashur Asad.

Statement on the Death of President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

June 10, 2000

I am saddened by the news of President Asad's death and want to offer my condolences to his family and to the Syrian people.

Over the past 7 years, I have met him many times and gotten to know him very well. We had our differences, but I always respected him. Since the Madrid Conference, he made a stra-

tegic choice for peace, and we worked together to achieve that goal. Throughout my contacts with him, including our last meeting, he made clear Syria's continued commitment to the path of peace.

We look forward to working with Syria to achieve the goal of a comprehensive peace.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Minneapolis

June 10, 2000

Thank you very much, Vance. Thank you, Darin. And thanks for being my friend for such a long time, and thank you for giving us a little walk through memory lane. [Laughter] I'm still proud I was a child of the sixties. [Laughter]

I never have known what I was supposed to be embarrassed about. I remember President Bush used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. I was so dumb, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] I still feel that way.

I want to thank my friend of more than two decades, Joan Mondale, for being here, and for all the years that we've shared together. I'd also like to thank your former secretary of state, Joan Grove, for being here. Thank you, Joan. Sandy Novak, thank you. And I'd like to thank the

people here from the Minnesota Teachers Group for their leadership in this event and for sticking with the Democratic Party and for their support of education reform.

Let me say, first of all, I am glad to be standing here, because in the last week I have been to Portugal, Germany, Russia, Ukraine. I came back to the United States to meet with the King of Jordan, and then I flew to Japan to the funeral of Prime Minister Obuchi, then came back to meet with the President of Mexico. And now I'm here. [Laughter] I feel like a character in that H.G. Wells novel, "The Time Machine." [Laughter] But if by some chance I should slip a word or two here, you'll just have to make some allowances for me. [Laughter]

I would also like to thank Mayor Rendell. He didn't really plan on leaving the mayoralty of Philadelphia and taking this little part-time job that I talked him into.

One other, just—thing I want to say preliminarily, I've been to Minnesota three times in the last 5 weeks—[laughter]—and it's really funny, because I was screaming to the point of irritability at my scheduling staff for months before that. I said, "Look, here's three places that I have not been in 2 years, and I'm really upset," and one of them was Minnesota. I said, "I really want to go." [Laughter]

So then, they said, all right, you know. So Fritz Mondale and I went to a farm in David Minge's district to talk about the China vote. And then I went to St. Paul on my education tour, to the first charter school in the United States. There are now over 1,700, thanks to our administration pushing that, and they're working well. And today I got to speak at Carleton about the importance of opening the doors of college to everyone. It's been a really rewarding thing.

The people of Minnesota have been so good to me and to Al Gore and to Hillary and to Tipper. You know, I still remember when we rolled into Minneapolis on the bus tour in '92, we were about an hour and a half or 2 hours late, and there were over 25,000 people in the streets. And I think Vice President Mondale kept the crowd there—[laughter]—by hook or crook. So I'm very grateful to you.

I just want to say a couple of things briefly—one other thing. I want to thank Vance for helping Hillary, too. She's doing well. You'd be proud of her. I think she's going to win that race, and I'm very, very proud of her.

When we took office 7½ years ago—Al Gore and I and our whole team—we were animated by some fairly basic ideas. One is that we could have good economics and good social policy, but to do it, we'd have to get rid of the deficit and have to go through the fire of doing that. The second was that we could grow the economy and improve the environment. The third was that we had to stop the politics of personal destruction and the kind of old rhetoric that had paralyzed Washington and try to find some way to bring the American people together as a community. And the fourth was that we had to abolish the distinction between domestic and foreign policy, that in the 21st century in a globalized society, it really wasn't going to be as—there are some things that are clearly, dis-

cretely foreign policy-oriented, like what we did—this is the one-year anniversary of our victory in Kosovo over ethnic cleansing, something I'm very proud of. But by and large, we needed to begin to look at the world more in terms of how it affected us here at home and look at how we were—what we were doing at home in terms of its impact around the world.

So, for example, I think that it helps America that we're trying to relieve the debts of the poorest people in the world, that we now treat AIDS as a national security problem. I know Senator Lott made fun of me the other day when our administration announced that we considered the AIDS problem to be a national security problem, but I think it is. Seventy percent of the AIDS cases are in sub-Saharan Africa. There are countries there that are now routinely hiring two people when there is a job vacancy because they expect one of them to die within a few months. And this could wreck whole societies, wreak havoc on the continent, just at the very time when Africa offers the promise of new partnership to so many of us.

Anyway, we had these ideas, and so we set about trying to make them work. And lo and behold, they did. And I'm grateful for that, and I thank you. But I just want to make a couple of points very briefly, because somebody might ask you why you were here. And if you say, "Well, I wanted to shake hands with Bill Clinton," that's a good answer, but that won't get any votes for us.

The first thing I would like to say is that ideas matter in politics, and they have consequences. And while we have had our fair share of good fortune, it flowed from a set of ideas and policies that we implemented. The second thing I want to say is, there was, 8 years ago, there was, 4 years ago, and there is today a significant and honest difference between the two parties. It is not necessary for us to do to them what they worked so hard to do to us, to convince the American people they're bad people, and they're no good, and we should tar and feather them and run them out of town. There are differences.

The previous administration vetoed the family and medical leave law as being bad for the small business economy. I signed it and said it would be good for the small business economy if parents weren't all agitated all day every day about whether their kids were sick at home. And now, in each of the last 7 years, we've

set new records for small business formation. The debate's over, but the American people may not know it.

The previous administration vetoed the Brady bill on the grounds that it was an infringement on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms and wouldn't do any good because crooks didn't buy guns at gun stores, they bought them at gun shows. That's what they said. Now they say they don't buy them at gun shows, but anyway—[laughter]—back then they said they did, and that it was an incredibly burdensome thing, and so they vetoed it.

We passed it and signed it, and it turned out 500,000 people who were felons, fugitives, and stalkers did buy guns in gun stores, and we stopped them. And gun crime is down 35 percent; homicide is at a 30-year low; overall crime is at a 25-year low, and not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods. So the debate is over. We won that debate. We were right, and they weren't.

And we raised the standards for air quality, for water quality, for land conservation. We set aside more land permanently in protected areas than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts. And I think we've proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time.

I say that not to be self-serving but to say that they are ideas; they have consequences. We need to tell people this. And if you look at the debate today, you see the same sort of debate unfold. That's the first thing I want to say.

So what are the issues today? Well, first of all, there's a big issue, huge issue: What do you think we ought to do with this situation we've got in America today?

Now, in my lifetime, we have never had at the same time an economy this strong, so much progress on the social issues, and the absence of domestic crisis or external threat. The last time we had an economy this strong and a lot of the social indicators were beginning to look good was in the 1960's, and it came apart because of the civil rights challenge at home and the Vietnam war abroad. So I'm not sure it's ever happened in the history of America, but in our lifetimes, it had never happened before.

The last longest economic expansion in history, the one that consumed the 1960's from '61 to '69, and it ended because we couldn't reconcile our external problems over Vietnam,

our internal problems over civil rights, the economics associated with it, and the social fabric came apart, and I remember how it ended. I graduated from high school 9 weeks after Martin Luther King was killed, 2 days after Bobby Kennedy was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore because the country was too divided. A few months after I graduated from college, the last longest economic expansion in history ended.

So these things don't last forever. This is highly unusual. So the big question in this election year is, overshadowing everything else, is: What do you propose to do with this? I have done everything I could do to turn this country around, to prepare this country for a new century, a new millennium. And it's your turn now. You get to decide. That's what this election is about: What are we going to do with all this prosperity? Ideas have consequences. It matters.

What I think we should be doing is taking on the big challenges and the big opportunities. I think we ought to say, "If we could create the future of our dreams for our kids, what will we do?" I can only tell you what I think. I think we ought to extend opportunity to the people and places that aren't part of the recovery. I think we ought to make a commitment to ending child poverty and giving every family the time and tools it needs to succeed at home and at work.

I think we ought to make a commitment to giving every kid a world-class education in the public schools and opening the doors of college to all Americans. I think we ought to have a commitment to roll back the tide of climate change and the environment, and to deal with the challenge of the aging of America, so we baby boomers don't burden our children and our grandchildren.

I think we ought to commit to stay on the cutting edge of science and technology not only to reap the benefits but to deal with the most troubling potential burdens that are coming up, including the invasion of our privacy by the explosion of information technology.

I think we ought to commit to continuing to work for one America across all the lines that divide us, and I think we ought to be more involved, not less involved, in all kinds of non-military ways with the rest of the world. I think the trade agreements we made with Africa, with the Caribbean Basin, with China, trying to alleviate the debt of poor countries, the money

we're trying to raise to develop vaccines for AIDS, TB, and malaria—these things are all good, and they would directly benefit the United States by giving us a more peaceful, more free, more decent world to live in. That's what I think we ought to be doing.

Now, how do you tell what to do in an election, if you've decided that? So you've got to decide what you think of it, that's what I think. Because I don't know if this will ever happen again in my lifetime, and I'd like to see America not relax, not lay down but say, "This is an unbelievable gift, and we're going to make the most of it."

So what does that mean? That means that you've got to decide who's going to be the President, who's going to get elected to these Senate seats, who's going to get elected to the House seats. What are you going to do if you decide that that's what you want?

Now, there are the following almost certain consequences to the election, based on the differences and ideas. And you don't have to believe that the two candidates for President are anything other than good people. Yes, I think you should believe they're both going to do what they say they're going to do. But you have to believe they're going to do what they said they would do in the primary as well as the general election. *[Laughter]*

But there's a lot of studies on this, by the way, which show that by and large, even though our friends in the press try to convince you that we're all a bunch of slugs in politics, that Presidents historically have a pretty good record of doing what they say they're going to do. And when they don't, we're usually glad they didn't. *[Laughter]* I mean, aren't we glad Franklin Roosevelt didn't balance the budget in the Depression? Aren't we glad Abraham Lincoln didn't keep his promise not to free the slaves? I mean, once in a while, it doesn't happen. But, mostly, people do. An historian did an analysis that said I'd kept a higher percentage of my commitments than the last five Presidents. I was proud of that. But people do that.

Okay, so what will happen? What is the difference in the economic policy? Well, there will be a difference. Al Gore will be for a tax cut that still enables us to invest in education and health care and science and technology and keep paying the debt down to take care of the aging of America. And if you both have a big tax cut and privatize a part of Social Security and

guarantee the benefits to all the people that are older, you spend all the surplus and then some right there, before you spend a nickel on anything else. So we're going to have a different economic policy; we're going to go back to see if we can do without these surpluses and balanced budgets. And if you believe both candidates are honorable, that's what's going to happen. And I do.

There will be a dramatic difference in environmental policy, if you believe that both candidates will do what they've been doing. In the primary, the nominee of the other party promised to reverse my designation of over 40 million acres of roadless areas in the national forests, which the Audubon Society says is the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. So there will be a real difference there in their attitudes, in clean air, clean water, how do you reconcile these conflicts.

There will be a huge difference in the crime policy. You saw what Mr. LaPierre at the NRA convention said, that if they could just get us out of the White House and the Republicans won, they'd have an office in the White House. Now, I don't know if literally he will; they would probably be a little too red-faced to do that. But that's what will happen. You can book it; that will happen.

And it's not like we don't have any evidence here. You've got evidence. You put more police on the street. You do things to keep kids off the street. You keep the economy strong. You try to keep going into these neighborhoods that are in trouble trying to change the texture of them, and do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. The crime rate goes down, and more people live. This is not complicated.

And they keep talking to me about gun control. I get tickled—I asked one of these—I was at a debate the other day. I said, "You know, there was a constitutional right to keep and bear arms." I said, "I don't think you interpreted it right, but let's just assume you did." I said, "There's also a constitutional right to travel." And I've exercised it. *[Laughter]* I said, "Now, when I travel around, I look, and I see there's speed limit laws, seatbelt laws, child safety restraint laws. I never hear anybody talking about car control. Do you? Now, if I go get your car and put it in my garage, that's car control." *[Laughter]* "But otherwise, it's highway safety."

There's a huge consequence here. You've got to think about this. There are consequences.

In health care there are consequences. We're for the Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're not. And I've been for managed care. My record on this is pretty clear. I've said that we couldn't sustain what we were doing in the health care system; we'd have to manage the system better. But I still think the critical decisions ought to be made by the professionals and the patients.

And the court system will change dramatically, because there will be somewhere between two and four appointments to the Supreme Court. And if you think *Roe* against *Wade* should be repealed and that's an important issue for you, then you should vote for them, because that's what's going to happen. And if you don't, and that's an important issue for you, then you should vote for us. So there are consequences.

The last thing I want to say is this, to follow up on what Vance said. I know Al Gore better than anybody but his wife, I believe—maybe his mother, who will chide me if I claim to know him better than her. [Laughter] She is an astonishing woman, once practiced law in Arkansas, 70 years ago—an amazing woman. Here are some facts you need to know.

He supported me on every hard decision I ever had to make, whether it was going into Bosnia or Kosovo or Haiti or helping Mexico when they were about to go bankrupt. And we had a poll that morning that said by 81 to 15, the American people didn't want me to do it. There was a real winner. [Laughter] But I knew it was the right thing to do. We had to do it.

He cast the deciding vote on the economic program, without which we wouldn't all be standing around here today. Then he cast the tie-breaking vote on the—to close the gun show loophole and put child safety locks and ban large capacity ammunition clips when the Senate voted on that. And in between, he's done a lot of other things.

He ran our reinventing Government program, giving us the smallest Federal establishment since 1958. The Democrats did that, not the Republicans—eliminated more positions and more programs. And I'll give anybody here \$5 who can name three of the programs I eliminated. [Laughter] There are hundreds of them. We put the money—and we doubled investment in education with the money.

He's managed our environmental programs, including our Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. He ran our very successful program to establish empowerment zones in poor areas which have created thousands and thousands of jobs. Ask Mayor Rendell; one of them is in Philadelphia.

He managed a big part of our foreign relations with Russia, with South Africa, with Egypt, with a number of other countries.

And you heard what Ed said about the Vice Presidency; I've actually done a study of this. Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale were the first two people that ever took the office systematically seriously, in the whole history of America. I love Franklin Roosevelt, but as sick as he was, it's unbelievable he didn't take any more time picking Harry Truman and didn't tell him anything. Harry Truman didn't even know about the bomb when he became President. Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale were the first two people who ever took the job systematically seriously.

If you look at the whole history of the office, Vice President Nixon and Vice President Johnson had more influence than their predecessors. And then here's Mondale up here. And to President Reagan's credit, he gave Vice President Bush a lot to do, and they had more of a systematic relationship. And then when—and Al Gore and I actually made a study of this, what had happened throughout history. And I decided that this was crazy; that, first of all, this guy might be President any day now, especially with the kind of mail I've been getting the last—[laughter]—and secondly, why have a person with a lot of energy and intelligence just hanging around waiting to go cut ribbons?

And so, I put him to work. And I nearly broke him a couple times. I never saw anybody work any harder; he's the only guy I ever met who worked harder than me. But you need to know that there has never been anybody in that job who had more of an impact on more issues across a broader range of areas, and that a lot of the success we enjoy today would not have been possible if it hadn't been for him. So there's nobody that's any better prepared, not only by virtue of past service but by virtue of future orientation.

So I realize this is not a big campaign speech, but you need to think about this. If somebody says tomorrow, "Why did you go there?" say, "Well, but first, I'm really concerned about what

we're going to do with this prosperity. It's just as stern a test of the country's character, what you do with good times, as what you do with bad times. It's not as if you've got a lot of options when your back is against the wall. Second, ideas matter, and there are honest differences between the candidates and the parties. Third, I think based on the evidence and the argument, I agree with the Democrats, and here are some examples."

Now, I hope you can all do that, because this is going to be a close election. And part of it—in a funny way, we're almost disadvantaged by how well things have gone. There are young people who are voting in this election who can never remember a bad stock market, never remember high unemployment, never remember the kind of social discord and rising crime and those kinds of things. They just think it happened. It didn't just happen.

And I don't mean by any stretch that I am solely responsible; that's not what I mean. America changed in the nineties. We became more community-oriented; we became more civically responsible; we became more interested in op-

portunity for other people as well as for ourselves; and we began to think about tomorrow as well as today. It wasn't just me. I was just a part of it.

But you need to really keep that in your mind between now and November. This is a big election. It's about what we're going to do with our prosperity. It's a stern test, ideas matter, and you think we're right—if you can sell that, I'll feel pretty good about the outcome.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Atrium Room at Key Investment, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Vance K. and Darin Opperman; Joan Mondale, wife of former Vice President Walter Mondale; State Senator Steven G. (Sandy) Novak; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; and Vice President Gore's mother, Pauline.

Remarks at a New Leadership Network Reception in Minneapolis June 10, 2000

Thank you. Wow! [*Laughter*] I started off today at 5 o'clock this morning in Washington—that's 4 o'clock your time—and I came out to Carleton to give the commencement address. And I came here, and I went to another event. It's just getting rowdier as I go on. You guys are doing great.

I would like to thank my friend and partner Mayor Rendell from Philadelphia, the chairman of our party, for coming out here with us. And I want to thank Mike; you and Mary and all the people have done a great job with this party—all the sponsors. This is just fabulous. And I'm delighted to be here.

And I want to thank the Fine Line Music Cafe folks and all the people who provided the music. And I want to thank Senator Paul Wellstone and Sheila and their kids and grandkids—the whole Wellstone family is here today; and Representative Martin Sabo, whose daughter is also a candidate here today. Your

State auditor, Judi Dutcher, I want to thank her for being here.

Look, this is a good way to spend Saturday afternoon. [*Laughter*] And I realize I, in a way, don't need to give a speech because I'm sort of preaching to the saved here. [*Laughter*] But I would like to say a couple of things anyway, if it's all the same to you. I mean, since I'm the only one in my administration or in my house who is not running for anything this year—[*laughter*]—I'm afraid I'll get out of practice if I don't get to kind of work out a little. So you all just relax; I want to give you a little bit.

First of all, I want to thank the State of Minnesota for voting for Bill Clinton and Al Gore twice and giving—[*applause*]. Secondly, I want to thank you for fielding competitive candidates for the House and the Senate to help us win back the majority in the United States Congress which we—we could do.

You know, I think Minnesota is a place where people know ideas matter. I was here on my education tour not very long ago, and I went to St. Paul to the first charter school in the history of the country. And you know, since then, since we got in, there was one when I became President, and there are now over 1,700 because we have worked so hard to get the point out across the country and get the word out that our public schools can succeed and they can educate our kids. Even the kids from the most difficult circumstances can learn if we had the right kind of educational opportunities for them. And that to me sort of symbolizes what Minnesota is all about, high ideals—high ideals, high standards, practical approaches to problems involving everybody.

And I just want to say to all of you that I think the election we're about to have is every bit as important as the two we just had. Now, in 1992 the country was in trouble, and everybody knew it. The economy was in bad shape. The society was growing more divided. The political rhetoric in Washington was paralyzed and seemed irrelevant to the way most of us live.

And we've tried to turn that around. We've tried to create a society in which there was opportunity for every responsible person and in which we were coming together in a more closely knit community, in which we were looking outward to the rest of the world and trying to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity and decency. And we tried to avoid—[applause]—thank you. What I wanted to say is—and there's been a lot of success. We've got the strongest economy in history, and we've got a society that's coming together. Crime rate's down; poverty is down; the welfare rolls have been cut in half. We have the highest rate of minority business ownership in history and the lowest minority unemployment in history in America. We have a lot of things that are moving in the right direction.

So, you say, "Well, how can the 2000 elections possibly be as important as the '92 election was when we were in the tank, or the '96 election was when people were trying to decide whether to ratify the direction we were taking?" I'll tell you why: because once in a lifetime do you find a situation like this in America where the economy is strong, where the society is coming together, where we've got a lot of self-confidence. We're not paralyzed by a crisis at home. We don't feel immediately threatened by a crisis

overseas, even though there are dangers out there. This has never happened before in my lifetime, and I'm older than nearly everybody in this room. [Laughter]

Now, and I can tell you this—how a country deals with its good moments is just as stern a test of its character as how it deals with its crises. So what do you think we ought to do?

I'll tell you what I think we ought to do. I think we ought to bring jobs to all the people and places that have been left behind. I think we ought to get rid of child poverty. I think we ought to give every working family the time and the tools they need to take care of their kids, as well as work.

I think we ought to deal with the fact that when the baby boomers retire, it's going to impose new burdens on our society. We ought to figure out how to save Social Security and Medicare, provide prescription drug benefits to seniors that need it. I think this.

I think we ought to prove that we can have excellence in every school building in America. I think we ought to open the doors of college to every American. That's what I talked about at Carleton today. I think we ought to roll back the tide of climate change and prove we can create jobs and clean up the environment at the same time.

I think we ought to prove we can create a global economy where there's more trade and there's higher labor standards and environmental standards and we put a more human face on it. I think we ought to keep working to get rid of all the hatred that still exists in this country, based on race or sexual orientation or religion or ethnic background.

And I think we ought to maintain our involvement with the rest of the world for peace and freedom. This is the one-year anniversary, today, of our formal victory in the conflict in Kosovo, where we stood up against ethnic and religious cleansing and let a million people go home.

But this is way more than military; it's mostly not military. I was ridiculed the other day by one of the leaders of the other party because we said that AIDS was an international security crisis for the United States. Seventy percent of those cases are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Now, you tell me—we've got a lot of allies there for freedom and democracy, and you have people actually hiring two people for every job opening because they assume one of them will die in a few months. We have armies where

the infection rate is 30 to 40 percent, where a country can collapse on us, people that we believe in, that we're trying to help. So I'm proud of the fact that I think we ought to be investing some of your money to find vaccines for AIDS, for TB, for malaria, for people overseas that need these things. I think that's right.

So here's the deal. I'm not running, but I know a little something about this election. [Laughter] It's just as important as the other two were. If somebody asks you why you're here and why you're doing this, you tell them that. It's a big election. It's a big test of a country, how you deal with all these good times. And we've finally got the chance, a chance that we have not had maybe in my lifetime, to deal with the big problems out there facing America, to deal with the big opportunities out there. And there's a huge difference between what our party believes and what our nominee for President believes, and what they believe.

You know, whether it is a big issue like maintaining our present economic policy or going for a tax cut so big that we'll go back to deficits, or a more discrete issue like raising the minimum wage by a dollar over the next few years or not doing it, there's a huge difference. And I'm telling you, everything from the appointment of Justices to the Supreme Court to our economic and environmental and health care and educational policies, there is a profound difference.

And it's not like it was in 1992. In 1992, we made an argument, and you gave us a chance. Now, you've got running for President in the Democratic Party the most experienced, effective Vice President in history, who cast the tie-breaking vote on the economic plan in '93 that got us to where we are today; who cast the tie-breaking vote the other day to close the gun show loophole and require child trigger locks; who has run our empowerment program which has brought thousands of jobs to some of the poorest communities in America; who has managed a big part of our relations with Russia, with South Africa, with Egypt, with other countries; who ran our reinventing Government program and helped to reduce the size of Government, without putting anybody in the streets, to its smallest size in 40 years so we could double education funding while we were cutting the deficit.

Now, there has never been anybody that had that kind of impact in that job, who understands

the future better. Along the way, he continued with his wife to hold every single year a family conference in Nashville, Tennessee, that dealt with things like family leave, health care for poor children, mental health parity in health insurance policies. The kinds of things that families come to grips with all the time, Al and Tipper Gore have been working on for 8 years on their own, in a way that has changed the future of America and what we've been able to do.

Now, here's the thing about elections. Somebody besides those of us in this room today get to vote. [Laughter] And most people who get to vote don't ever come to an event like this. And most people who get to vote may never hear me make this case for Vice President Gore or for our candidates for the Senate and the House or for the fact that we have honest differences.

Then you get these elections where everybody is trying to convince you that anybody that's not in their party, there's something wrong with them; there's something bad. That's not true. We just have honest differences. Most people do what they say they're going to do when they get elected. And I'm just telling you, there are huge differences in economics, in health care policy, in environmental policy, in the constitution of the courts. I could go through every issue.

And it's not like '92, when we had an argument. You have evidence. We have tested what we believe against what they believe, in ways large and small. None of them support our economic policy. They said it was going to drive the country in a ditch. We now know it drove the country to 22 million jobs and the longest economic expansion.

Most of them were against our crime policy, the Brady bill and putting 100,000 police on the streets. They said it wouldn't do any good. They said that all the criminals bought guns at gun shows. Now that we're trying to do a background check at gun shows, they say they don't buy them there. But back then they said they did. [Laughter] So we tested it, and 500,000 guns later, not in the hands of felons, fugitives, and stalkers; 100,000 more police on the street; more after-school programs for our kids—we've got the lowest crime rate in over 30 years. This is the right thing to do.

So go out there and tell people you're supporting the Vice President and the Democratic

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Party, number one, because they believe in opportunity for everybody and a community of all Americans, they've got good ideas, and they work; number two, because he had a pivotal role in it; and number three, because looking to the future, you agree with us. Whether it's the Patients' Bill of Rights or getting working families access to health care or raising the minimum wage or reversing global warming or just continuing to grow the economy in a responsible way and reaching out to all kinds of Americans to make them part of our family, you agree with us.

And you tell those people that haven't made up their mind, "Look, there is not an argument

now. You've got 8 years of evidence. Go with the evidence. Go with the future. Stick with us, and America will be in a good place."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. at the Fine Line Music Cafe. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mike Erlandson, chair, and Mary McEvoy, associate chair, Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party; Senator Wellstone's wife, Sheila; and Julie Sabo, candidate for Minnesota State Senate.

Memorandum on Actions To Further Improve the Management of Federal Human Resources

June 9, 2000

Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Actions to Further Improve the Management of Federal Human Resources

The Federal Government's most valuable resource is the talented and diverse group of men and women who work every day to make a difference in the lives of the American people they serve. Effective management of this workforce is critically important to accomplishing your agencies' varied missions and continuing to improve service.

My Administration has made a significant commitment to achieving the highest standards of human resources management and accountability for the American people—but more can be done. To continue to improve Government services, we must (1) recognize and reinforce the critical role human resources management plays in achieving each agency's mission and strategic planning goals, and (2) maintain and strengthen our vision of a diverse Federal workforce that is skilled, flexible, and focused on results and service.

To achieve these goals, I direct the heads of each executive department and agency to take appropriate action to:

- fully integrate human resources management into your agency's planning, budg-

eting, and mission evaluation processes, and clearly state specific human resources management goals and objectives in your organization's strategic and annual performance plans;

- renew your commitment to recruit, develop, and manage your workforce to ensure high performance;
- provide for the continued development of a highly competent corps of human resources management professionals to assist agency line managers in ensuring the most effective use of their workforce to accomplish the agency mission.

To reflect the essential role of effective human resources management in achieving agency missions, the Interagency Advisory Group of Federal Personnel Directors, established in 1954, will be redesignated as the Human Resources Management Council. This Council will continue to:

- provide a forum for communicating and evaluating Government-wide human resources management policies and sharing best practices;
- promote collaboration across agency lines and with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to foster policies and actions to achieve our vision of a diverse Federal

workforce that is skilled, flexible, and focused on results and service to the Nation; and

- collaborate with OPM to identify and address emerging human resources management issues.

The Council shall continue to be chaired by the Director of OPM or the Director's designee and shall continue to include the senior human resources management official (or designee) from each executive department or agency, including military departments and defense agencies, and other members as proposed by the Chair. Within 30 days of the issuance of this memorandum, the Director of OPM shall officially redesignate the Interagency Advisory

Group of Personnel Directors as the Human Resources Management Council.

Beginning on October 1, 2000, and annually thereafter, agency heads shall ensure that human resources management objectives and means to accomplish these objectives are incorporated in their Annual Performance Plans. The Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with OPM, will provide the guidance for this requirement as part of its overall guidance on Annual Performance Plans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 12.

Remarks at a Millennium Matinee at the White House

June 12, 2000

[The First Lady opened the program and introduced the event's featured speakers: Marcia McNutt, president and chief executive officer, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute; and Neil de Grasse Tyson, associate astronomer and Frederick P. Rose director, Hayden Planetarium. Dr. McNutt then discussed ocean exploration, and Dr. Tyson discussed space exploration.]

The President. Well. *[Laughter]* I have a hundred questions. Before I open the floor to questions, I just would like to make a couple of points.

First, I want to thank Dr. Tyson and Dr. McNutt for truly fulfilling the spirit of this wonderful old room. It was in this room, on this floor, with maps and books on animal skins, that Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis planned the Lewis and Clark expedition. They were exploring the far reaches of North America, looking for an ocean no one believed at that time you could reach by land. Today our speakers have taken us on a very different journey of discovery. They have shown us that new evidence is emerging from both the seas and space about so many things but, as you have heard, among other things, about the challenge of global climate change.

Just this morning some of our leading scientists released a draft report that provides some of the most detailed information yet about the

potential impacts of global warming on our Nation. Some of its findings, because it's a draft, may be revised, but essentially this report pulls together an enormous amount of scientific analysis, and as our previous speakers have done, it paints quite a sobering picture of the future. It suggests that changes in climate could mean more extreme weather, more floods, more droughts, disrupted water supplies, loss of species, dangerously rising sea levels.

Now, I have tried for several years to get the United States to respond to do our part. We are the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. In the next couple of decades, China and India will surpass us, unless we all take advantage of the fundamental changes in the nature of the economy to prove that we can have economic growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

So it is—if you'll forgive me, I want to make one earthly plea, which is that the Congress stop blocking our commonsense efforts to combat global warming. We need a climate change on Capitol Hill on this issue. And it should not be a partisan issue. This is about science. This is about evidence. This is about things that are bigger than all of us and very much about our obligation to these children here to give them a future on this planet. We are not yet

prepared to live under the sea, as we have just been told.

I'd also like to make one other announcement about ocean exploration. In spite of all that we learn today and all that is known, more than 95 percent of the underwater world remains unknown and unseen. And what remains to be explored could hold clues to the origins of life on Earth, to links to our maritime history, to cures for diseases. The blood of the horseshoe crab, for example, provides a vital antibacterial agent. A potential anticancer drug may come from a deep sea sponge.

Two years ago today we held the first National Oceans Conference in Monterey, to bring experts together to chart a common agenda for the 21st century. Among the key recommendations that grew out of that Conference was the need to establish a national ocean exploration strategy.

One of the success stories that has come out so far occurred half a world away on the Navy vessel, the *Trieste*, which you saw in the video. In 1960 the *Trieste* went to an area called the Challenger Deep in the Pacific, the deepest spot in any ocean, nearly 7 miles down. Only two people have been there. One of those brave explorers was a young officer named Don Walsh. President Eisenhower gave him the Legion of Merit here in the White House more than 40 years ago. He's here today, and I'd like to ask him to stand up. Mr. Walsh. [Applause] I might say, he looks fit enough to make the journey again. [Laughter]

I would also like to recognize the man who discovered the wreckage of the *Titanic* is here, Dr. Bob Ballard. Can you stand up? [Applause]

I want to announce some new steps we're taking. First, three new, first-of-their-kind expeditions off the Atlantic, Pacific, and gulf coasts, voyages led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in partnership with major research institutions. These expeditions will allow the first detailed exploration of the Hudson Canyon off New York—it's an underwater version of the Grand Canyon, only larger; the Middle Grounds and Big Bend areas off Florida, which include some of the oldest life forms on Earth, giant tube worms—you saw some on the film—up to 250 years old; and the Davidson Seamount, an inactive ocean floor volcano off Monterey. In each expedition, researchers will use cutting-edge deep sea diving technologies

and share their discoveries with schools and the public through the Internet.

Second, to ensure that these voyages are the start of the new era of ocean exploration, I'm directing the Secretary of Commerce to assemble a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists to develop recommendations for a national ocean exploration strategy and to report back to me in 120 days. These steps could bring about, quite literally, a sea change in our understanding of the oceans.

We must continue as a nation to set out for new frontiers, whether under the sea or into the heavens. We must continue to try to conquer the seemingly impossible, to discover the unimaginable, to find out more about what's out there and, in the process, about ourselves and what's here.

I would like to ask the first question, and then we'll turn it over to the regular process and the many thousands of questions that must be out there in this room and beyond here. I'd like to ask Dr. McNutt and Dr. Tyson what they think the most likely discovery in the next 10 years in their field is that would have a significant impact on how we live on Earth or what our understanding of our system is.

Thank you.

You go first. [Laughter]

[Dr. McNutt responded that the most important discovery within the next decade, hopefully, would be to learn to preserve the oceans, keeping them healthy and productive rather than depleting them.]

The President. If I could just emphasize one thing. The point you just made is related not only to pollution, to additional pollution of the ocean and overfishing but also to climate change. When I was in Monterey Bay, I saw small creatures right in the bay that just 20 years ago were 20 miles south. They had made their way 20 miles in 20 years, these minuscule creatures, because before that it was too cold in Monterey for the creatures to exist.

This is real, and we have got—I hate to keep beating on this, but you know what kids used to say several years ago, that denial is not just a river in Egypt. [Laughter] We have got to come to grips with this. And you were terrific, what you said about it in your presentation. Thank you.

Dr. Tyson.

[Dr. Tyson responded that possibly within the next decade, exploration on Mars or Europa might produce confirmable evidence of extra-terrestrial life. White House Millennium Council Director Ellen Lovell then led the question-and-answer portion of the program. The First Lady read an Internet question asking the President if sending a manned mission to Mars before 2030 would be an appropriate national priority.]

The President. Well, let me say, one of the interesting things to me was—about the previous discussion—were the comments that were made by both our speakers about the importance of robotic exploration of the deep sea and outer space and about what could be done now with the technology.

So I would leave the question of that first to the space program. But if Dan Goldin told me that we needed to send a man to Mars to find out what we need to know, then I would strongly support it, because I think the United States would make a terrible mistake to weaken either its space exploration or its undersea exploration. I think we should accelerate it. I think we should invest more money in it, and I think we should keep pushing the frontiers of knowledge.

We just went through a very wrenching period where NASA had to basically learn to do more with less. We were trying to get rid of this terrible deficit. Now we've got a surplus. We're paying down our national debt. We're investing in our future. And I think a big part of that investment ought to be the broadest possible commitment to science and technology, including vigorous, vigorous exploration of outer space and the depths of the ocean.

That's what I believe, and I hope that that will be a commitment the American people will extract from their candidates in this election season and in every one for the foreseeable future, because it's very, very important.

[Dr. Sylvia Earle, explorer in residence, National Geographic Society, and director, Sustainable Seas Expedition, asked about the possibilities for a 21st century focus on further ocean exploration in contrast to the 20th century focus on space exploration. Dr. McNutt responded that the ocean budget was a tenth of the space budget and could not sustain much of an exploration program at its present level.]

The President. If I could just say one word to complement that. My Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, is here. We have tried very hard to increase the entire budget for science and technology and especially the research budgets. And basically, what happens is, we get in this debate with Congress. They are more than happy to invest more money in the National Institutes of Health, and that's good. We all want to live forever, even though we're not. [Laughter] But there is a—one of the things that I think needs to be addressed, and we're trying to right it a little here in this last budget process I'll be a part of—but I've been fighting this for 3 years now. It's a terrible mistake to think that the only kind of scientific research we need to be healthy on this planet is in biomedical research. It's very important, but to have just that and to neglect what we should be doing in space, what we should be doing in the oceans, what we should be doing with nanotechnology, what we should be doing with a whole range of other technology-related issues, all of which in the end have to be developed if we're going to know as much as we can about how to live as long and well as we'd like to on this Earth—it's a huge debate. So if any of you can make any contribution to righting that balance, I for one would be very grateful. It's a major, major intellectual challenge that we face in the congressional debate.

Again, I say this should not be a partisan issue. This is a question of what is the right way to do the most for our people in the new century.

[The question-and-answer portion of the program continued. After a final question about the possibility of discovering Earth-like planets associated with other solar systems, Ms. Lovell asked the President to conclude the program.]

The President. Well, I don't know what to say. [Laughter] You know, if they're all out there, I hope they have the best of what we have and fewer headaches. [Laughter]

Let me say, Hillary and I have enjoyed every one of these, but this has been very, very special. I think our guests were both terrific and all of you who asked questions. Albert Einstein once said, "The important thing is to not stop questioning," which is just what they said. So you don't have to stop questioning, but you do have to stop doing it right here because we're out of time.

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And I would like to invite all of you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception in honor of our guests and all the students and everyone else who is here. Let's go in there, and you can continue your questions. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Matinee, entitled "Exploration: Under the Sea, Beyond the

Stars," the ninth in a series of Millennium programs, began at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Dr. Tyson, Dr. McNutt, Ms. Lovell, and the participants in the question-and-answer portion of the program. The program was cybercast on the Internet.

Memorandum on a New Era of Ocean Exploration

June 12, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: A New Era of Ocean Exploration

Two years ago, the Vice President and I joined you, other members of my Cabinet, and hundreds of others from across the country at the National Ocean Conference in Monterey. This historic gathering drew together for the first time representatives from government, industry, and the scientific and conservation communities to begin charting a common oceans agenda for the 21st century.

At the Conference, I directed my Cabinet to report back with recommendations for a coordinated, disciplined, long-term Federal ocean policy. In its report to me last year, *Turning to the Sea: America's Ocean Future*, the Cabinet outlined an ambitious and detailed strategy to ensure the protection and sustainable use of our ocean resources. I am proud of the actions my Administration is taking to begin implementing this strategy, including the Executive Order I issued last month to strengthen our national network of marine protected areas.

One of the Cabinet's key recommendations was that the Federal Government establish a national strategy to expand exploration of the oceans. Although we have learned more about our oceans in the past 25 years than during any other period in history, over 95 percent of the underwater world is still unknown and unseen. What remains to be explored may hold clues to the origins of life on Earth, cures for human diseases, answers to how to achieve sustainable use of our oceans, links to our maritime history, and information to protect the endangered species of the sea.

Today, I am announcing steps to immediately enhance our ocean exploration efforts and to develop the long-term exploration strategy recommended by you and the rest of the Cabinet. Together, these actions represent the start of a new era of ocean exploration.

First, I am announcing the launch of three new expeditions off the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts. As you know, these expeditions, led by the Department of Commerce in collaboration with private partners, will allow the first detailed exploration of the Hudson River Canyon off New York, the Middle Grounds and Big Bend areas off central Florida, and the Davidson Seamount off central California. Researchers will employ the latest submersible technologies and will share their discoveries with schoolchildren and the public via the Internet and satellite communications.

Second, to ensure that these new expeditions are only the start of a new era of ocean exploration, I am directing you to convene a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists and to report back to me within 120 days with recommendations for a national oceans exploration strategy. In implementing this directive, you shall consult with the National Science Foundation, the National Atmospheric and Space Administration, the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies, as appropriate. The strategy should consider the full array of benefits that our oceans provide, and should support our efforts to conserve and ensure the sustainable use of valuable ocean resources. Specifically, the strategy should:

1. Define objectives and priorities to guide ocean exploration, including the identification of key sites of scientific, historic, and cultural importance;
2. Recommend ways of creating new partnerships to draw on the tools and talents of educational, research, private-sector, and government organizations, including opportunities for Federal agencies to provide in-kind support for private ocean exploration initiatives;
3. Examine the potential for new technologies—including manned and unmanned vehicles and undersea platforms—to observe and explore the oceans from surface to seafloor and recommend ways to explore the oceans remotely using new observatories and sensors and other innovative uses of technology; and
4. Recommend mechanisms to ensure that information about newly explored areas warranting additional protection is referred

to the newly established Marine Protected Area Center, and that newly discovered organisms or other resources with medicinal or commercial potential are identified for possible research and development.

In the early years of the 19th century, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Captain Meriwether Lewis to explore the American West. What followed was the most important exploration in this country's history. As America prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, we have an opportunity to set our sights on a much broader horizon. The time has come to take exploration farther west, and east, and south, to our submerged continents. In so doing, we can challenge and rekindle American's spirit of exploration, open up a whole new underwater world of possibilities, and help preserve our extraordinary marine heritage for future generations.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on the Death of Frank Patterson

June 12, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of one of Ireland's greatest ambassadors of music, Frank Patterson. A world-class tenor, Frank brought the joy of classical and popular music as well as Irish culture into the hearts

of millions around the world. Hillary and I will never forget hearing him perform at the White House. On behalf of the American people, we offer our sympathies to his family and friends and to the people of Ireland.

Statement on the German Negotiations To Compensate Victims of Nazi Slave and Forced Labor

June 12, 2000

I am very pleased that a major hurdle to agreement on the historic German initiative dealing with wrongs arising from World War II has now been overcome. I am pleased to announce that there is now agreement on the mechanism for providing enduring and all-encompassing legal peace for German companies. This is an important day for those victims of Nazi-era wrongs who have waited 50 years for justice. It is also an important day for Chancellor Schroeder and German companies. They have

shown remarkable leadership in trying to rectify the wrongs committed during the Nazi era.

I hope the German Parliament, whose leaders have been involved in these negotiations, will be able to complete their work on legislation expeditiously so that payments to the victims can begin this year.

German-American relations are based on our common commitment to human dignity coming from a shared history of democracy for over

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50 years. This unique German initiative, reaching out to victims of the 20th century's most horrible tragedy, will convey dramatically to the entire world Germany's commitment to justice

and human rights. Our countries are entering the new millennium together determined to protect the inviolability of human dignity.

Remarks at a Gala for Senator Christopher J. Dodd

June 12, 2000

Thank you very much, Rosa. I want to thank you and Stan for your friendship, and I want to thank you for being graceful enough not to say that in 1980, when Chris Dodd got elected, I became the youngest ex-Governor in the history of America. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Chris and Jackie for trusting me to get up here at the podium tonight. And Senator Daschle and Senator Lieberman, thank you for what you said and for your friendship. Boy, ol' Bob Dole was great, wasn't he? *[Laughter]* He owes me a lot, Bob Dole does. *[Laughter]* I mean, if it weren't for me, he'd be just like all us gray-haired 50-year-olds; he'd have to pay for his Viagra. *[Laughter]* We've had a lot of fun, Senator Dole and I have, in the last 3½ years. And we had a little fun before. But I appreciate his coming tonight.

And I want to thank Father Fluet for his prayer and his remarks, quoting that wonderful chapter from Matthew. It so captures the political philosophy of Chris Dodd. He did ask me, he said, "You know, Mr. President, they say I only have 3 minutes, and I need more than 3 minutes. Can I have more than 3 minutes?" I said, "You're Chris Dodd's priest. If I could do it, I'd make you a cardinal." I said, "Take whatever you want." *[Laughter]*

It's an amazing crowd of people here tonight, and not all of them want to be Vice President. *[Laughter]* But a lot do. I just want to say, this really says something about Chris Dodd. In addition to Senator Lieberman and Senator Daschle and Representative DeLauro here, we either have now, or we have had—because some of them had to leave and go vote—listen to this: Senator Lautenberg from New Jersey; Senator Reed from Rhode Island; Senator Reid from Nevada; Senator Akaka from Hawaii; Senator Wellstone from Minnesota; Representatives Larson, Maloney, and Gejdenson, obviously from Connecticut; Representative Pelosi from

California, who just came in; Representative Chet Edwards from Texas; Representative Sherrod Brown from Ohio. Those are just the ones I saw.

Now, what does that tell you? They want Chris Dodd's contributor list. *[Laughter]*

I want to say a couple of things very briefly. First, I would like to associate myself with every good thing that's been said about Chris Dodd tonight. I want to thank, on behalf of myself and Hillary, Chris and Jackie for being such good friends, for the private time we've spent together—time playing golf, time just having dinner, time talking about our family, our friends, our dreams.

I want to thank Chris Dodd for making it possible for the first bill I signed as President, over 7 years ago now, to be the family and medical leave law. He introduced me tonight to the woman who, with her child, inspired that law in his mind and heart. I like a person who believes politics is about flesh-and-blood people and how they live, their hopes, their dreams, what they try to make of themselves and their children.

And you may remember that the Democrats had passed that law in the previous administration, and it had been vetoed. And I promised and made it an issue in the '92 campaign. I said, "I want to sign this bill. I want it to be the first bill I sign." And I listened to all that whining about how, you know, this is going to be a terrible burden on small business, and we were going to bankrupt the economy, and how awful it would be.

And 7½ years later and 22-plus million jobs later, we've set records for small business formation in every year, and over 20 million of our fellow citizens—over 20 million—have been able to take a little time off when a baby was born or a parent was sick, thanks to the fact that Chris Dodd didn't give up in the face of a

veto, an opposition, and all that rhetoric. It changed America.

And I believe that one of the things we ought to be doing with our prosperity now is building on the work he did with the child care tax credit and the family and medical leave law, because the idea behind it is a very simple but powerful one, which is that we ought not to ever ask an American to choose between succeeding at work and succeeding at the most important work of all in life, raising your children. Thank you, Chris, for giving us that—[inaudible].

I want to thank Secretary Daley and Secretary Richardson for coming. I don't know if they want to be Vice President or if they just want Chris to take care of them after the next election. [Laughter] But they love you, too.

I want to thank you for agreeing to become chairman of the Democratic Party after the Republicans won the Congress in '94 and everyone said we were dead—we, generically, and me, specifically—and you didn't believe it. And you went around and gave hope and cheer and energy and fight and courage to people when all the pundits said we were history. I thank you for that. A lot of good things have happened in this country in the last 4 years because of what you did.

And lastly, I think someone ought to remark more explicitly on one of the reasons for your remarkable blend of quality. You are, to the very core of your being—and notwithstanding the fact that you know more about Latin America than anybody in the Congress—completely, irrevocably Irish. [Laughter]

Now, as an apostate Irish Protestant, whose people come from Fermanagh, just across the Republic's border into Northern Ireland, it has been my great good fortune to involve the United States in the Irish peace process. You will never know how many times along—[ap-

plause]—thank you. You will never know how many times along the way, including sometimes calling me from the west of Ireland, where he has a place, at all hours of the day or night, Chris Dodd and I have talked about Ireland—all the things we have said in good times and sometimes the unprintable things we said in the difficult times; how many times I've called him just to sort of check, just to make sure I had it right, that I wasn't misreading the tea leaves and the incredible, emotional complexity of Irish politics.

I say that because any Irish person with any sense knows that the only things that count in life are affairs of the heart and that if you're blessed by God with a pretty good mind, it's only supposed to be used to have a better understanding of the human heart and what counts.

So for all your gifts, my friend, for all the things you've learned in life with its ups and downs, the thing which brings you to this night with your optimism intact, with your energy still high, with your wonderful wife and this legion of friends, is that in the very best sense you were faithful to the idea of the Irish. You have followed your heart, and the world is a better place, and your friends are all richer. We love you very much, and we thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Rosa L. DeLauro, who introduced the President; Representative DeLauro's husband, Stan; Senator Dodd's wife, Jackie Marie Clegg; former Senator Bob Dole; and Father Gregoir Fluet, who gave the invocation. The evening's program was entitled, "A Salute to 25 Years of Service—An Anniversary Gala Honoring Senator Christopher J. Dodd."

Remarks on Proposed Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation June 13, 2000

Well, Ruth, this is the most laughs we've had in this room in a long time. [Laughter] You can come back tomorrow and the next day and the next day. [Laughter]

She made the trip all the way from Idaho here. She had bad weather in Chicago last night. This is hard. She went to a lot of trouble to

come here. Let's give her another hand. Let's thank her very much. [Applause]

I want to thank Secretary Shalala for her work on this. And Congressman Strickland, thank you, sir. And I especially want to thank Senator Max Baucus, who has been on this issue of the particular impact of the prescription drug problem on rural seniors for a very long time now.

I'd also like to introduce the other Members of Congress who are here from rural America: behind me, Congressman John Baldacci from Maine, Congressman Marion Berry from Arkansas, Congressman Leonard Boswell from Iowa, Congressman Chris John from Louisiana, Representative Paul Kanjorski from Pennsylvania, Representative David Minge from Minnesota, Representative Ciro Rodriguez from Texas, Representative John Tanner from Tennessee, Representative Jim Turner from Texas, and Representative Bud Cramer from Alabama. I think that's everybody. Let's give them a hand. They're all on our side. [Applause]

Patients' Bill of Rights

We're involved in two or three great health care issues here in this millennial year, and I want to talk about, obviously, the one that we came to talk about, but there was a very important decision yesterday by the Supreme Court on HMO's that I would like to just mention briefly.

We—those of us that have been pushing a strong Patients' Bill of Rights—believe Americans should have the right, even if they're in HMO's, to see a specialist, to go to the nearest emergency room, to maintain continuity of care if they change jobs—if they're in a cancer treatment, for example, or in the process of having a baby—and they have a right to hold their health plans accountable.

But yesterday the Supreme Court—I've got this headline here that's in all the papers—"HMO Ruling Passes Debate Back to Congress." The Supreme Court ruled yesterday, I believe unanimously, what we all knew, which is that only Congress can provide to the American people in HMO's a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights.

Now, we've been fighting this battle a long time. And there's, obviously, I think—there's a clear majority in the House for a good bill, and we failed by only one vote in the Senate this week. We think there's a majority there, if we can ever get a clean shot. So we're going

to keep working. But I just want to emphasize, the Supreme Court now has removed any doubt that this can be handled anywhere but Congress.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Now, the same is true about dealing with this prescription drug issue. They have become an indispensable part of modern medicine. But more than three in five seniors in America on Medicare now lack dependable insurance coverage for the drugs that could lengthen and enrich their lives. And as the report we're releasing today shows, the situation of rural seniors is even worse.

Now, you heard Ruth talk about her situation. We know that rural seniors have a harder time getting to a doctor or a pharmacy. They're just further away. We know they're much less likely to have HMO's or other insurers willing to offer reasonably priced coverage; they don't have economies of scale. Yet, more often they are in poor health and in need of prescription drugs than their urban and suburban counterparts.

As a result, rural seniors and rural people with disabilities spend 25 percent more out-of-pocket for the prescriptions they need. They are 60 percent more likely not to get those drugs at all. You remember what Ruth said, that she knew people who could not afford to fill the prescriptions their doctors had ordered them to take. And it is important to emphasize that, depending upon the size of the monthly bill, this could be true not only for low income seniors but also for middle income seniors.

This report could not be more timely, because we—you can't go vote yet; I'm nearly done. [Laughter] This is amazing to me that we're even having this debate. We've got a strong economy. We've got a big projected surplus. We know that the surplus will be revised upward by some amount in the so-called midsession review that's coming just a few days from now. Now, there is no excuse not to do this right, not to provide prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

If we were starting Medicare all over again, everybody knows we'd do it. It's just that it was created in 1965 as basically a problem for serious medical emergencies and for doctors, for hospitals. In the last 35 years there's been a sea change in what pharmaceuticals can do to keep people healthy, to keep people living, to keep people out of the hospital. So the real question is, are we going to do now what we

would have done in 1965 if we'd have the tools then that we have now, and are we going to do it in the right way and provide it as an optional benefit to all the people on Medicare? That's what we think we ought to do.

And I believe it's very important that we not provide a prescription drug benefit that is some sort of faint hint at doing what needs to be done and that would wind up being nothing more than a broken promise to a lot of our seniors. I think we need a bottom-line, simple, straightforward plan that all seniors have a chance to buy into. You heard Ruth say she didn't mind paying a little bit of a co-pay, making a contribution. But people like her need access to this plan.

Now, my budget proposal would extend the lifeline of optional prescription drug coverage to all seniors by allowing them to sign up for drug coverage through Medicare. No matter where they live, how sick they are, they would pay the same premiums. The plan would use price competition, not price controls, to give seniors everywhere the best prescription prices. It would help cover the expenses of seniors who face catastrophic costs and is part of an overall plan that would strengthen and modernize Medicare to keep it efficient and solvent, to add more years to the Trust Fund so that we can begin to absorb the baby boom generation.

There's growing bipartisan support for prescription drug action this year, and that's good. But I'm quite concerned that the proposals the House Republicans intend to put forward today won't help the Americans who need it the most. Today—and let me just describe why, and think about the story you just heard Ruth Westfall tell. Today's report on the special needs of rural seniors makes it clear that we need a benefit that's available for all older Americans. My understanding is that the latest Republican proposal relies on a private insurance model that has already failed rural Americans.

You just heard her say that she couldn't afford Medigap. And there are tons of people in this country who can't afford the Medigap insurance policy. Most people with gray hair out in this audience are now nodding their head vigorously; I hope the press has picked that up. Rural Americans, by and large, can't afford Medigap insurance. It makes no sense to use something that's failing today as our model for tomorrow, especially when we do not have to do it.

We ought to ensure that any plan benefits the people who need prescription drugs as much as it benefits the companies who sell the drugs. We have reached across party lines before. We passed the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill to allow people to take their health insurance with them when they change jobs. We passed the Children's Health Insurance Program as part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, which has provided millions of children in lower income working families access to health insurance. We can do this.

But there's no point in telling the American people we're doing something that turns out to be a fraud. And there's no point in pretending that only poor seniors need this help. That is not true. This is a need that's out there for people, based on the size of their medical bills as much as on the size of their monthly income check. And to say, well, we're going to spend a little bit of money and take care of the very poorest seniors, but anybody else we're going to put in some private insurance market that is already a proven failure—that the insurance companies themselves, to their credit, say will not work—is a bad mistake.

I think we ought to be helping people like Ruth Westfall. I sat there listening to her talk. She said she was proud of the life that she and her husband built. They worked hard so that they wouldn't have to depend on other people, so they wouldn't be a burden on other people. I can tell you that that story is a story that the baby boom generation wants to tell when we all get retired. And as the oldest of the baby boomers, I can tell you it's a story that we worry about all the time not being able to tell, because there are so many of us.

Now, there's no point in letting politics or ideology get in the way of the manifest need of the seniors of this country and the disabled Americans who have access to Medicare to get these prescription drugs. And we're not broke now. I've worked real hard for 7½ years to make sure I didn't leave us broke when I finished. We've got a good surplus. And if we were in deficit and trying to do this, I could understand why we would say, "Well, we can't help everybody, so we'll just help a few." But that's not the situation. We can afford to do this right. And we must not pass a plan that claims to offer something to everybody and is a false hope to most and, therefore, inadequate.

June 13 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

So I want to ask you all to remember this fine woman that hauled herself all the way here from Idaho. And she's still vigorous. She's still got a lot to give, and there's millions like her out there, and we owe it to them to do the right thing. And I want you to stick with these Members of Congress behind me. I thank them for being here. Let's get this done this year.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Ruth Westfall, who introduced the President.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Establish a National Drunk Driving Standard

June 13, 2000

I applaud the Senate Appropriations Committee for passing an important amendment that will help put the brakes on drunk driving across the country. I strongly support Senator Lautenberg's amendment that would help create a national standard for impaired driving of .08 blood alcohol content (BAC). This is a reasonable, commonsense standard that could save an estimated 500 lives a year, while still permitting adults to drink responsibly and moderately.

Together, we have made great progress on reducing drunk driving in America. In 1999 the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes hit a record low. But we still lose far too many American lives to drunk drivers: one American is killed in an alcohol-related crash

every 33 minutes. Over 15,700 Americans lost their lives in alcohol-related crashes in 1999 alone. We simply must do more.

Senator Lautenberg's .08 BAC legislation will help build on our efforts to keep drunk drivers off our streets. I commend Senator Lautenberg for his continued leadership in this area, and Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Shelby for including this bipartisan, life-saving amendment in the FY 2001 Transportation Appropriations bill that passed in the full Appropriations Committee today. I urge the Congress to act quickly to pass this legislation to save more lives by making .08 BAC the legal limit across the country and without further delay.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Wekiva River and Tributaries in Florida

June 13, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I take pleasure in transmitting the enclosed report for the Wekiva River and several tributaries in Florida. The report and my recommendations are in response to the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542, as amended. The Wekiva study was authorized by Public Law 104-311.

The National Park Service conducted the study with assistance from the Wekiva River Basin Working Group, a committee established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to represent a broad spectrum of en-

vironmental and developmental interests. The study found that 45.5 miles of river are eligible for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (the "System") based on free-flowing character, good water quality, and "outstandingly remarkable" scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, and historic/cultural values.

Almost all the land adjacent to the eligible rivers is in public ownership and managed by State and county governments for conservation purposes. The exception to this pattern is the 3.9-mile-long Seminole Creek that is in private ownership. The public land managers strongly

support designation while the private landowner opposes designation of his land. Therefore, I recommend that the 41.6 miles of river abutted by public lands and as described in the enclosed report be designated a component of the System. Seminole Creek could be added if the adjacent landowner should change his mind or if this land is ever purchased by an individual or conservation agency who does not object. The tributary is not centrally located in the area proposed for designation.

I further recommend that legislation designating the Wekiva and eligible tributaries specify that on-the-ground management responsibilities remain with the existing land manager and not the Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

This is in accordance with expressed State wishes and is logical. Responsibilities of the Secretary should be limited to working with State and local partners in developing a comprehensive river management plan, providing technical assistance, and reviewing effects of water resource development proposals in accordance with section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

We look forward to working with the Congress to designate this worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 13, 2000.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Hispanic Caucus Reception

June 13, 2000

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your support for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. I want to thank Patrick Kennedy for his heroic work in raising money for all our congressional candidates. Thank you, Lucille, for your leadership.

Unlike Congressman Kennedy, I am going to introduce the Members of the Hispanic Caucus here because, unlike Congressman Kennedy, I need them to vote for me several more times this year. [Laughter] So since we're all standing up already, I'd like to ask them to raise their hands as I call their names. If I miss anyone, don't be bashful: Solomon Ortiz from Texas, there he is; Xavier Becerra from Los Angeles—[inaudible]—Ed Pastor from Arizona; Nydia Velázquez from New York; Bob Menendez from New Jersey, Bob; Carlos Romero-Barceló from Puerto Rico—[inaudible]—Rubén Hinojosa from South Texas, there he is; Silvestre Reyes from El Paso, there he is; Ciro Rodriguez from Texas—Ciro, where are you?—Charlie Gonzalez from San Antonio; Grace Napolitano from California, there she is back there; and for me, at this particular moment, most important of all, because day before yesterday he had his first hole in one, Representative Joe Baca from California. And he is so shameless about it that,

if you doubt it, he is carrying the authentic certificate proving that he is. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I will be brief. Members have to go to a vote in a few minutes. I want to first of all thank all of them, because without them, nothing that we have accomplished, the Vice President and I, in our administration would have been possible. We carried an economic plan in 1993 by one vote, which set off this economic explosion we've enjoyed in the last 8 years. It would not have been possible without the Hispanic Caucus.

And whether it was on our welfare policy, where we said, we are for work, but we're also for family; require people to work who can work, but don't take the food stamps and the medical care away from the poor children—the Hispanic Caucus made it possible for us to hammer out that compromise. On crime, on education, on every single issue, they were there. And we do—we have the lowest Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest poverty rate among Hispanics in a generation, a 250 percent increase in SBA loans to Hispanic-owned businesses, and as it's already been said, the largest number of Hispanics in high positions in our administration and in our courts in history.

Now, what I want to say to you is, elections are always about tomorrow, not about yesterday.

If we did a good job, after all, it's just what you hired us to do. I remember once I was asking a guy to vote for me for reelection as Governor of Arkansas. And I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Sure you have, but you got a paycheck every 2 weeks too, didn't you?" He said, "That's what I hired you to do." [Laughter]

What I want to say to you is that I think the outcome of these elections for Congress and the outcome of the election for the President are every bit as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996. I worked very hard when this country was in trouble to turn it around; to put the economy, to put the people of this country first; to, in the words of my '96 campaign, build a bridge to the 21st century. Now the great test the American people face is, what is it we intend to do with our good fortune, with this moment of possibility?

I think we ought to use it to meet the big challenges of the country. I think we ought to use it to keep paying down the debt, to keep the prosperity going but to extend the prosperity to people and places who have been left behind. I think we ought to give tax incentives to investors who invest in the poor areas of America the same incentives we give them to invest in poor areas in Africa and Asia and Latin America. I think that's important. I think we ought to make after-school care and preschool universal for all of our children who need it. I think we ought to have—I think we ought to modernize our schools and ensure they're all hooked up to the Internet. I think we ought to provide more options for working families to get health care. We ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We ought to allow working families whose children are in our Children's Health Insurance Program to buy into it themselves. We ought to have middle class tax relief for long-term care, for child care, and to help all families pay for a college education. I think we ought to take on these big challenges.

And while it is now fashionable for both parties to court the Hispanic vote—indeed, both candidates speak Spanish and love to do it—I hope very much that I am the last President in American history who can't speak Spanish. I think from now on everyone will have to speak Spanish. [Laughter] And within a year or two, when I get a little private time, I may be able to speak Spanish, too. I'm going to work on it. [Laughter]

But what I want to say to you is, there is a difference. There is a difference in the Congress, and there is a difference in the race for the White House. One party supports the Patients' Bill of Rights, and the other opposes it. One party is for raising the minimum wage, and the other is not. One party is trying to expand health insurance coverage to poor working families, and the other has not endorsed it. One party wants a big tax cut that will keep us from paying down the debt; the other party—ours—we want an affordable, middle class tax cut that will enable us to continue to pay down the debt and invest in the education and health care and future of our children.

We all say that we favor broad participation, but I'll just give you one example. I named an Hispanic lawyer from El Paso, named Enrique Moreno, to the Federal Court of Appeals. He graduated summa cum laude from his university. He graduated near the top of his class in law school. A panel of State judges in Texas said he was one of the three best lawyers in his part of the State. He got the highest rating from the American Bar Association. But the two Republican judges from Texas—Senators from Texas said he wasn't qualified to sit on the Court of Appeals. And I haven't heard a peep, I might add, out of any of the other elected Republicans in Texas about this.

So I say to you, there's a difference. There is a difference. And sometimes it can be as stern a test of a country's character and judgment, how it handles its prosperity, as how it handles its adversity. After all, when the American people took a chance on me in 1992, we had our backs to the wall; we were in trouble. And people were willing to let us make a few changes. Now, the danger is that people will think, "Oh well, this economy has been so good, so long, nobody can mess it up"—[laughter]—or that everybody seems so nice, nobody can do anything too bad. There is a difference. These people should be in the majority in the House. We should hold the White House. We should win the Senate.

And you can go and tell people, look, it's not as if they're taking a big chance. You've got evidence now. We were divided all the way along on economic policy, on crime policy, on welfare policy, on education policy, on environmental policy, and the evidence is in. And the

ideas are out there. The best days of this country are still ahead. The best days for Hispanic America are still ahead. But we have got to make the right choices.

You made a good investment coming here tonight, and I want you now to make your investment good by taking every opportunity, every day, between now and November, to make

the same arguments, in your own way, I made to you tonight.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:50 p.m. in the Chinese Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard.

Remarks at a Reception for Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton June 13, 2000

Thank you. Well, if I had any sense, I wouldn't say a word. *[Laughter]* Thank you.

Let me say, first of all, I want to thank Vernon and Ann for once again proving one of their most endearing and enduring virtues: They stick with their friends. And Eleanor is their friend. We have all been friends a long time, and Hillary and I have known Vernon for a long time. When I was a 32-year-old Governor, I went to Vernon Jordan's Urban League banquet speech in Little Rock, stayed up half the night talking to him. Hillary had already known him for years. In fact, she never lets me forget. *[Laughter]*

And I would be less charitable, however, than Eleanor was. I think Ann actually saved Vernon's life. *[Laughter]* I was delighted when they got married because I needed him around for the rest of my life. *[Laughter]* And they have been so wonderful to all of us who are their friends, and I thank them for doing this.

Mr. Mayor, I'm glad to see you. And Councilwoman, I'm glad to see you. And Secretary Herman, I'm glad to see you. Secretary Herman and Eleanor and I, we sort of, in our different ways, tried to help the administration of Jimmy Carter. So we go back a long, long time.

I just want to say a few words tonight about Washington. First of all, I'm very proud of our Mayor, who was, in his previous life, a member of my administration. I have always loved Washington. You know, I've had a lot of homes in my life. I grew up in Arkansas, and I went to law school in Connecticut. Everybody knows now I've got a home in New York, which I'm very proud of. It's getting better every day. *[Laughter]* Fixing a 111-year-old farmhouse is almost as challenging as winning a Senate seat.

[Laughter] But I hope and pray we'll be successful at both.

But when I was a young man, I went to college in Washington. And I worked on the Hill every day. I lived in the District all 4 years I was in college. I love this city. I saw it burn after Dr. King was killed. I used to drive up and down those avenues, and I saw those empty storefronts. You know, I didn't know then, obviously, I would ever be President. Eleanor says she knew a long time ago. I really think when I announced for President my mother was the only person who thought I could win. *[Laughter]*

But I always promised myself, if I could ever do anything for this city I would, because it was plainly, in some ways, the most beautiful capital in the entire world. It was full of people from all over the world. It had a rich and textured history that deserved to be nourished, a lot of things people don't even know about. You know, we have a national historic site here in Anacostia that is Frederick Douglass' home, that he lived in from after the Civil War until he died, that I urge all of you to go see, if you haven't. I'll flack for the National Park Service a little.

So when I became President, before I was inaugurated, I took a walk down Georgia Avenue. And I talked to the merchants there, and I talked to the people on the street. I was always looking for things I could do. Eleanor and I were joking today—she went jogging in a campaign event for me in 1992. In the pouring rain, we were running up Pennsylvania Avenue together. I never will forget that. And because she's been where she's been, it's been possible for me, I think, to be a pretty good friend and a pretty good citizen of Washington, DC.

But if she hadn't been there, if she didn't have the enormous credibility she has in the Congress, among both Republicans and Democrats, and if she didn't have an idea a minute—[*laughter*—then all these things that I have been able to do, I could not have done. Someone could write a whole chapter on my service as President to Washington, DC, in two words: Yes, Eleanor. [*Laughter*] And if it were to be four words, it would have to be: Yes, Eleanor; yes, Eleanor. [*Laughter*]

We had a great time together, and it's been a joy. Now we've got this great Mayor who is inspiring so much confidence and broadening the base of support for the city, and there's so much more to be done. But I would hope that every American would want the United States Congress and the private sector and everybody else to do whatever we can for Washington. It ought to be the greatest city in America. It ought to be the greatest capital in the world. It's full of wonderful people and wonderful neighborhoods and wonderful possibilities, and we have really just begun to do what we ought to do.

I hope someday that she'll actually have a real vote in the Congress, too, and that we'll have representation in the other House of the Congress. I hope that will happen.

But I just want all of you to know that I'm grateful to you for helping her, but I know, I think I know that your presence here means you're also committed to helping make DC an even greater city, an even better place to live, an even more admirable National Capital. And believe me, for those of you who were here, like me, in the early and mid-sixties, it's stunning, the difference. But if you know the city, if you know all its neighborhoods, if you know all its schools, if you know every little nook and cranny of it, you know we've only scratched the surface of what we can do to make this the city it ought to be.

I keep telling the American people, as I travel around the country now, that in so many ways the election of 2000 is as important as the elections of '92 and '96, and in some ways, a sterner test of our judgment and character. Because

when I got elected, the country was against a wall, and it didn't take too much for them to take a chance on me. You remember me; President Bush referred to me as the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And I was so dumb, I thought it was a compliment. [*Laughter*] And I still do. [*Laughter*]

But anyway, we knew we had to do some things that were different. We knew we had to take a chance. We knew we had to kind of break out of the mold of the way business was conducted in the city. But now the test is, what is it that we propose as a nation to do with this prosperity of ours? Anybody that's over 30 years old has got sense enough to know that nothing goes on forever. And anybody over 30 years old can remember at least one time in your life when you made a mistake not because things were so bad but because things were so good you thought there were no consequences to the failure to concentrate.

So I hope one of the things that we will think about—those of us in this room, at least—in this election season, is how important it is to use this moment to finish the job for Washington, DC, and to make it the greatest city of any national capital in the world. We can do this. We have the local leadership now. We have the idea machine—[*laughter*—beloved of all Members of Congress. If as many Republicans liked me as liked her, they'd repeal the 22d amendment. [*Laughter*]

We can do this. But remember, you don't want to be sitting around in somebody's living room 10 years from now and thinking, "Gosh, I wish I had done this, that, or the other thing for Washington." So let's make sure we truly honor Eleanor by having no regrets about how we use this magic moment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Vernon and Ann Jordan; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; and Linda W. Cropp, chair, Council of the District of Columbia.

Remarks on Proposed Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters June 14, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. Senator Daschle, Representative Gephardt, Secretary Shalala, and I have just met with these leaders of organizations representing America's seniors, people with disabilities, and community pharmacists. We spoke about the great need for Congress to give all Medicare beneficiaries an affordable prescription drug option. We spoke about the merits and the shortfalls of new legislative proposals on prescription drugs now emerging in the House.

Funding for Enforcement of Gun Laws

Before I go into the details of the discussions this morning, I want to briefly touch on another pressing priority before the House, funding for enforcement of our gun laws.

For years, the Republican leadership has emphasized the importance of enforcing our gun laws as a reason for opposing other commonsense gun safety measures. Yet they have failed so far to put their money where their words are. Today a House appropriations committee appears to be on the verge of approving a bill that absolutely guts our administration's proposal for the largest gun enforcement initiative in history.

Incomprehensible though it may be, their bill fails to provide any funding at all to hire 1,000 new State and local gun prosecutors to help take gun criminals out of our communities and put them behind bars. It undermines our efforts to replicate the success of Richmond's Project Exile, another key initiative the Republicans have always said they support. And it fails to provide funding to expand research and development of smart gun technology.

I ask the Republican leadership to reverse the current course, to live up to the rhetoric, to fully fund the national gun enforcement initiative.

Of course, no society can prevent every tragedy or outrage, but we can save lives with a combination of new commonsense gun laws and enhanced enforcement of the laws already on the books. We're going to have to do this in a bipartisan manner, if it's going to get done,

and to recognize the American people want both strong enforcement and strong prevention.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Now, back to prescription drugs. The American people here have also made their intentions clear. Our seniors want affordable, dependable coverage for the prescription medications that lengthen their lives and improve its quality. That's the message we heard yesterday from Ruth Westfall, a retired teacher from rural Idaho, the message I heard from leaders I met with a few moments ago. That's certainly what Senator Daschle and Representative Gephardt are hearing from their constituents and what they're fighting hard for up on the Hill.

All the leaders here today recognize that adding a voluntary prescription drug benefit is not just the right thing to do; medically speaking, it's the smart thing to do. No one creating the Medicare program today would think of doing so without prescription drug coverage. Prescription drugs now can accomplish what once could be done only with surgery.

That's why we have proposed the comprehensive plan to provide a prescription drug benefit that is optional and accessible to all our seniors; a plan that ensures that all older Americans, no matter where they live or how sick they are, will pay the same affordable premiums; a plan that uses price competition, not price controls, to guarantee that seniors will get the best prices; a plan that would cover catastrophic drug costs, as well as regular drug bills; a plan that is part of an overall effort to strengthen and modernize Medicare, so we won't have to ask our children to shoulder the burden when the baby boomers retire.

There is growing bipartisan support for prescription drug action this year, and that's good. But the leaders and advocates here today are still concerned that the proposals the House Republicans are putting forward later this week will not ensure that all seniors have an affordable prescription drug option.

We have grave concerns because the Republican plan builds on the already flawed private

Medigap insurance market. As recently as yesterday, the insurance industry reiterated its belief that a Medigap insurance model simply will not work for prescription drug coverage—the insurance industry, itself, has said this repeatedly—and that private insurers will not willingly participate in such a program. Even if some private insurers do participate, the premiums inevitably will be higher than those under a Medicare drug plan. Yesterday you heard Ruth Westfall say what I have heard countless seniors say, that they can't afford the Medigap coverage that presently is offered.

We have grave concerns because the Republican plan relies on a trickle-down scheme that would provide a subsidy for insurers and not a single dollar of direct premium assistance for middle class seniors. We have grave concerns because the so-called choice model offered by the Republicans breaks up the pooled power of seniors to purchase drugs at the most affordable prices, forcing insurers to constrain costs by restricting seniors' choice of drugs and choice of pharmacies.

Republicans and Democrats alike say they support an affordable drug benefit for our seniors. But let's be clear. A private insurance model simply cannot guarantee affordable coverage for all. To make the promise of affordable coverage real for all older Americans, there must be a true Medicare drug option.

If the proposal the Republicans release later this week gives all seniors the ability to choose an affordable, defined, fee-for-service drug benefit under Medicare, even if it's just one of several options, that could certainly serve as a foundation for a bipartisan agreement on this issue. But anything less would be an empty promise.

Working together, reaching across the aisle, we can use this time of unparalleled prosperity to do the right thing by our seniors. We should do it this year for their sake and for the sake of the future of Medicare.

Now, I would like to introduce Martha McStein, the incoming chair of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, the president of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. Ms. McStein was Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration during the Reagan administration, after a very distinguished 39-year career with the agency. In 1965 she served as one of the first regional administrators of the Nation's then new

Medicare program. Today she's here to speak about why it is so important that we modernize Medicare with an affordable prescription drug benefit for all.

Martha.

[At this point, Ms. McStein, Representative Richard A. Gephardt, and Senator Thomas A. Daschle made brief remarks.]

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Q. Mr. President, let me ask you about Los Alamos, sir. Are you satisfied with the explanations you've had to date about the missing computer disks?

The President. First of all, this is a very serious issue, and I think what we have to do is to get an answer. I'm gratified that Senator Baker and former House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Hamilton are going to look into this. The FBI is looking into it. And I think it's very important that it be treated as a serious matter and that the investigation continue.

Trofimoff Espionage Case

Q. Mr. President, what have you been told about this arrest in Florida today in this new espionage case and the extent of the damage alleged to U.S. national security interests?

The President. Nothing yet.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Q. Mr. President, on prescription drugs, you announced a couple weeks ago, with Mr. Hastert, an urban renewal bill that you said had worked out in a very bipartisan manner. Have you made any effort to address prescription drugs in a bipartisan manner to bring to the table?

The President. Sure. Sure. And I've talked to them, and I still have some hope we can do it. But so far, they're philosophically opposed, apparently, to a program that's run through Medicare, number one, and number two, that is made available to all seniors. And the problem is, if you only make it available to seniors below a certain income ceiling, like 150 percent of poverty, you leave about half the seniors out who really need it, number one. And number two, as I said, the Medigap programs that are out there now are not particularly affected. There are lots of Americans that cannot afford the private Medigap insurance that's offered now.

So if you go back and look at my statement carefully, I tried to offer another olive branch. I said, if we would have—if they want to offer a number of options to people, and one of those options is a true Medicare program that is available at the same price to all seniors, then we could talk and we could do some business. And I still hope we can have a compromise. I don't want to be uncompromising, but neither do I want to hold out a false hope to the seniors. I don't want to tell them we're doing something when we're not doing it.

So part of this is perhaps a philosophical difference, but what I suggested in my remarks is that maybe we could come up with an agreement where they let our plan be available, and we let some other plans be available, and we just see which one worked better.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, you're meeting tomorrow with Chairman Arafat. Has anything in the talks this week led you to believe that the Israelis and Palestinians may be closer to a Camp-David-style summit, and will that be on the agenda tomorrow?

The President. Well, obviously, I've never ruled that out, but I think we need to get the parties a little closer before we can go there. We don't have a lot of time. We're down to all the hard issues now, and we're working on it. I'm hopeful, but I don't want to hold out false hopes. I don't know that I can tell you anything other than that I think we are making steady progress. We've seen the narrowing of some of the gaps, but I don't know that we're ready to have the final meeting yet.

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Q. One more on Los Alamos. Are you still confident in Secretary Richardson's leadership in the Energy Department?

The President. Yes. I think since the review was done before the general security problems, that the Energy Department has done a lot to improve the overall procedures. But we don't have the answers we need on this issue. This is a very serious issue, and that's why the FBI's looking into it and why I have asked Senator Baker and Representative Hamilton to look into it, as well. I think they're both widely respected as experts in the area and also as being fair-minded.

So I think we'll get some more indications there. We've just got to see this through. It's a serious matter, and I don't think any of us need to be characterizing anything until we know what happened.

Korean Summit

Q. What did you think of the Korean summit, sir?

The President. I'm very, very pleased. You know, for years—as long as I've been here, anyway—I've tried to get the North Koreans to speak with the South Koreans without an intermediary, including the United States. So I'm very pleased by this, and I think the communique is hopeful.

Now, they've got a lot of work to do, and it's just a first step, but it's clearly a move in the right direction. And everyone else in the world should be encouraged by this. This is a good thing.

Q. [*Inaudible*—think it's significant that the two heads—

Q. Does this arrest in Moscow, sir, raise questions about Mr. Putin and his commitment to press freedom?

The President. Excuse me, I'm sorry. On that, I think we can't know yet. They talked about family reunifications. That's a huge first step. That's a good thing.

Now, go ahead.

Freedom of the Press in Russia

Q. The arrest in Moscow, sir, of the media critic of Mr. Putin—does that raise questions in your mind about his commitment to press freedoms?

The President. Well, I made a very strong statement when I was in Moscow about this, and I think, in a way, if anybody ought to have credibility to defend the freedom of the press, I should. [*Laughter*] So I did, and I will continue to.

If there is some other reason for the arrest—I don't know what the facts are, I don't think we necessarily know all the facts, but I do not believe people should be arrested solely because of what they say in exercising their role as members of the press. I don't believe that. And I think the United States has to take a very firm position on that. I do not believe democracy is weakened by dissent, even if it is unfair and sometimes even if it's false, because I think in

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the end, if the debate is open, the people usually get it right. That's why our democracy is still around here after over 200 years.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., and former Representative Lee H. Hamilton, appointed to lead a Presidential Com-

mission to investigate possible security breaches at the Los Alamos National Laboratory; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. Reporters referred to Col. George Trofimoff, USA (Ret.), who was arrested in Florida on June 14 and charged with espionage; Vladimir Gusinsky, head of Russian holding company Media-Most, owner of Ekho Moskvyy radio, who was arrested on June 13 and charged with embezzlement; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Electronic Signatures Legislation

June 14, 2000

I am pleased that the House today adopted the electronic signatures conference report by an overwhelming vote. I expect similar support in the Senate for this bipartisan agreement and look forward to signing this key legislation into law.

This historic legislation will ensure that our consumer protections apply when Americans do business on-line. It will encourage the information technology revolution that has helped lower

inflation, raise productivity, and spur new research and development. By marrying one of our oldest values—our commitment to consumer protection—with the newest technologies, we can achieve the full measure of the benefits that E-commerce has to offer. My congratulations to the Democratic and Republican leaders of the conference committee who worked together to forge this landmark legislation.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Legislation

June 14, 2000

Today the House of Representatives narrowly passed on a partisan vote the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies appropriations bill. This legislation fails to address critical needs of the American people and shortchanges our efforts to help our students achieve higher standards in the classroom.

The House bill invests too little in our schools and demands too little from them. It fails to strengthen accountability and turn around failing schools, reduce class size, provide funds for emergency repairs and renovating aging schools, sufficiently expand after-school opportunities, help prepare low income students for college through GEAR UP and programs to improve teacher quality, and help bridge the digital di-

vide. It underfunds child care and fails to adequately invest in Head Start. This bill also cuts funding for public health priorities, including mental health and substance abuse services, family planning, health care access for the uninsured, nursing home quality, family care-giver support, and infectious diseases.

In addition, the bill makes deep cuts in worker training programs and cuts programs that ensure safe and healthy workplaces, enforce domestic labor laws, and help address child labor abuses at home and abroad. Regrettably, the bill also includes language prohibiting the Department of Labor from finalizing its standard to protect the Nation's workers from ergonomic injuries.

A bill that fails to provide key resources for education, child care, worker training, and other priorities is unacceptable. If it were presented to me in its current form, I would veto it. I continue to hope my administration can work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to develop

a bill that strengthens our country's education system, adequately funds public health priorities, addresses the needs of our Nation's workers, and provides for other important national priorities.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

June 14, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Enclosed is a report to the Congress on Executive Order 12938, as required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c)

of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 14, 2000.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

June 14, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with

the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 14, 2000.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

June 15, 2000

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Good morning, everyone. I'm delighted to have Chairman Arafat and his team back here again, and I'm looking forward to our conversation.

Q. Do you fear that the Palestinian track is in danger of collapse, Mr. President?

The President. No, I think it's an important moment, and we just have to keep working on it.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to put any pressure on the Palestinians concerning the third redeployment, which is supposed to happen on the 23d of this month?

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The President. What I would like to do today is just get on to our business and our conversation and not say very much. If we're going to make peace, we're going to have to deal with the difficult issues, and the less we say now, the better, I think.

Q. Mr. President, President Arafat was reported to be very upset with the way the Israelis are handling the negotiation. What is your assessment now, especially as time is running out before the deadline of September 13th?

The President. I don't think I should characterize what's going on. I can only tell you that I want to finish the job, and I'd like to see it finished on time.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the White House Strategy Session on Improving Hispanic Student Achievement

June 15, 2000

Thank you very much, and good afternoon. I have received a good report on what you have done so far, and I want to get right into our program, but I would like to make a few remarks first. I'd like to thank Governor Glendening and Senator Bingaman and Congressman Hinojosa and Guillermo Linares and Secretary Riley for joining us, along with our other panel members.

And I'd like to thank Congressman Joe Baca, Carlos Romero-Barceló for being here. I think Congressman Reyes from Texas is on the way. And I want to welcome Mayor Beverly O'Neill from Long Beach, and especially Lieutenant Governor of California Cruz Bustamante, who is here. And I'd like to thank Maria Echaveste and Mickey Ibarra from the White House for the work they have done on this, along with all the others who have worked so hard.

This is very important to me. One of the things that I have learned traveling America is just how diverse Hispanic America is, something that a lot of Americans don't really know yet. I think there is a common core of values around family and community and work and faith, but Hispanic America is growing more diverse every day with different challenges and, unfortunately, still different opportunities. There are still a lot of gaps that we all want to close. Most of them are narrowing, but we've still got a lot of work to do.

Last August the First Lady hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Hispanic Children and Youth. And today we're following up

on that Conference by setting forth specific goals and an agenda for closing the student achievement gap over the next 10 years in ways that we can all be held accountable for.

The first step to closing that gap is to believe, as I do, that high expectations are for all students. I believe intelligence is equally distributed throughout the world, but opportunity is not. And the same is true within our own country.

For over 7 years now, we've pushed hard for higher standards, for more choice, for greater accountability, and for more support for children and teachers and parents and schools who need it. We have hired nearly 30,000 new, highly trained teachers now, on the way to our goal of 100,000 more teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. We've connected about three-quarters of our classrooms to the Internet; that's up from 3 percent in 1994, when we started in northern California, the Vice President and I did, with our first NetDay.

We've made it possible for over 90 percent of our schools in very low income areas to have at least one Internet connection because of the E-rate program that the Vice President and I fought very hard for in the Telecommunications Act in 1996. And we have more than doubled college aid in the last 7 years, the biggest expansion since the GI bill 50 years ago. In all these areas, I actually believe we have more to do.

We also, as all of you know, put in place a Hispanic Education Action Plan that includes, this year, a \$436 million increase for programs

to improve Latino student outcomes. And I want to double that investment. This strategy of investing more and demanding more is working. Test scores are up across the country; more students than ever are going to college. If we just keep it up, we'll really take this country and all its children where we want to go.

Unfortunately, that progress is threatened by the education bill that the House Committee passed yesterday—or that the House passed yesterday. I think it demands too little accountability, and I know it puts in too few resources. It, in my judgment, underinvests in everything from after-school programs, which we have taken from \$1 million to over \$400 million in just 3½ years. And if that bill were to come to my desk, I would have to veto it. But I hope we can work with Congress on a bipartisan education bill. We've had some success in recent years, and I am confident we will this year.

I'd like to talk just a moment about what many of you already know, which is that Hispanic students are sharing in this academic success, but still too many are lagging behind in ways that I find deeply troubling.

Today I'm releasing a study by my Council of Economic Advisers, which shows that the average educational level of native-born Hispanics has increased substantially over the last several decades, and the gap between Hispanics and whites has declined. Compared to 1993, Hispanic students are scoring higher on math tests; greater percentages are completing high school, graduating from college, and getting advanced degrees.

However, there's some bad news in this report, because the need for education is growing even faster. For example, since 1993, the percentage of Hispanics with 4 or more years of college has increased but only by about 2 percent. Over the next decade, the number of jobs requiring at least 4 years of college will more than double.

The study shows that Hispanics, who represent 11 percent of our work force, hold down just 4 percent of the jobs in information technology, jobs that pay much more than average in the area where jobs are growing most rapidly. Every American should be concerned about that gap. When the fastest growing demographic group in our country is underrepresented in the fastest growing employment sector, it means less opportunity and a violation of the values that we all share. It also means that, sooner or later,

our economy will have a shortage of highly skilled workers where we really need them.

One other finding in the report bears mentioning because it will inform the debate we're going to have today. The problem is not that Hispanics are not choosing careers in key industries like information technology. In fact, according to the report, Hispanics who graduate from college enter the information technology industry at about the same rate as non-Hispanics and earn about as much. The problem, therefore, quite simply, is that not enough Hispanics are getting college degrees. That can be remedied only by raising the educational achievements of Hispanic students in schools, beginning in preschool years, continuing into adulthood, and by making sure that no person is ever denied access to college because of cost.

We know that the achievement levels can be raised. The question is whether we have the will to do what we know works. If we're going to set high expectations of students, we must have high expectations of ourselves to do what it takes to make sure all of our students can make the grade.

We know that we can make college more accessible. That's what the HOPE scholarships do, the Direct Student Loan Program, the lifetime learning tax credit. But I think we ought to do more. I have got a proposal before Congress to give up to \$10,000 of tuition tax-deductible status every year and to do it at a 28 percent income tax rate, even for people in the 15 percent income tax bracket, which is a very, very important proposal. And it could make it possible for even more of our young people to go to college and for more of our families to afford it.

So today, we know what we have to do, and we know we can do it. And what I think is always helpful is to translate what we wish to do into specific goals. So I think we ought to adopt five specific goals to close the Hispanic student achievement gap over the next 10 years.

First, let's make sure that in 10 years, young Latino children are enrolled in quality early childhood programs at the same rate as other Americans. Second, let's make sure that in 10 years, every Hispanic student graduating from high school will have demonstrable proficiency in English. Third, let's make sure that in 10 years, there is no gap in test scores and other assessments between Hispanic students and their peers. Fourth, let's make sure in 10 years,

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90 percent of Latino students complete high school. And fifth, let's make sure that over the next decade, the percentage of Hispanic students who earn college degrees will double what it is today.

Now, these goals are specific and ambitious but clearly achievable. If we are serious, we have to do something about meeting them. This morning the Secretary of Education released the first of what will be annual reports measuring progress in Hispanic student achievement. We also need an entity outside electoral politics to keep a national spotlight on these goals, because they should be the Nation's goals, without regard to party.

Today I'm happy to announce the creation of such an entity: the 2010 Alliance, a partnership among a wide variety of Hispanic organizations, including La Raza and the National Association for Bilingual Education, and corporate and non-profit groups, from the Ford, Irvine, Kellogg, and Hazen Foundations to AT&T, GM, Univision, and State Farm.

The alliance will be, as they say, in your face. [*Laughter*] It is designed to remind the Nation of these goals and to spur commitments, specific ones, at every level of government and the private sector to help to meet them. I'm happy that a number of organizations have already committed to taking specific steps to help achieve the goals.

The Discovery Channel will publicize the goals in public service announcements to run

on its Discovery and Espanol Network. The educational software firm Lightspan is teaming up with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide special software and Internet access for computers in HUD neighborhood centers in Hispanic communities. Many other organizations, from the American Library Association to the Hispanic Radio Network, also are contributing.

Closing this achievement gap is a challenge that may seem daunting now, but it will seem inevitable once we do it. And when we do it, if we work hard, stay together, and stay focused on the goal, America will be a better, stronger place in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

I'd like now to introduce Governor Parris Glendening of Maryland, who increased his State's investment in education by \$600 million and doubled funds to build and modernize schools in his first term in office. In more ways than I can count right now, since he's been Governor, Maryland has been on the forefront of change in our Nation. And I wish every State would follow Maryland's lead.

Governor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Guillermo Linares, Chairman, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Statement on the Korean Summit

June 15, 2000

The historic summit between President Kim Dae-jung and Chairman Kim Chong-il marks an initial, hopeful step toward peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. I welcome the agreements the two leaders reached on humanitarian and economic cooperation and on a future summit in Seoul, and hope that both sides will continue down this promising path.

I applaud Kim Dae-jung's persistence and wisdom as he has moved, soberly and realistically, to improve relations with the North. President Kim and I have consulted very closely on this issue, and I look forward to supporting his future initiatives toward lasting peace and full reconciliation.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Establish a National Drunk Driving Standard

June 15, 2000

Today the Senate took an important step forward to keep drunk drivers off our Nation's streets. I congratulate the Senate for including a lifesaving measure championed by Senators Lautenberg and Shelby to set a national standard for impaired driving at .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) in the Transportation appropriations bill that passed today. This reasonable standard will save hundreds of lives and prevent

countless injuries each year—and it should be put in place across the country without further delay. I strongly urge the Congress to pass a final Transportation spending bill that includes this important initiative. Working together, we can help put the brakes on drunk drivers and make our streets safer for Americans across the Nation.

Remarks to United States Dream Academy Participants

June 15, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, good afternoon.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. First, I want to say, Principal Jones, thank you for having us here. My great friend Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton—there is not a better Member of Congress than Eleanor Holmes Norton; you should be very proud of her. I thank all the representatives of the DC government that are here.

Can you hear me? Is this on?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. No, it's not on, but you can hear me anyway? [*Laughter*] Whoever controls this, turn it up! [*Laughter*] Turn the sound up. That's a little better.

Let me say a special word of appreciation to my long-time friend Wintley Phipps. You heard the story of how I met him. I'm glad his family is here today. And I guess you're all his family, in a way. But when I met him in Alabama a long time ago, he may not have known who I was, but once I heard him sing and I saw the expression on his face, I knew I'd never forget him again for the rest of my life.

I want to thank the U.S. Dream Academy and all of you who are its partners; a special word of appreciation to the staff, the students, the teachers at the Ferebee Hope Community Services Center and Elementary School. I thank you all for helping these children through this

wonderful program to realize their dreams and their God-given potential.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said this: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." We are here today because Wintley Phipps believed in the beauty of his dream, believed that all children, given the right support, could realize their dream. That's why he founded the Dream Academy, to give children who have fallen behind a chance to catch up and soar ahead and to pay special attention to children whose parents were incarcerated.

You know, I used to tell people all the time, when they said to me when I was a Governor, "Why are you for all these education programs in the prisons and all these training programs and all these treatment programs?" And I said, "Well, first of all, 90 percent of those folks are going to get out some day, and we want them to be good citizens. And secondly, if they'd had these things in the first place, a lot of them wouldn't be in there."

And so I want to thank the people associated with this Academy for helping give nearly three-quarters of the students at Ferebee a chance to live their dreams. I want to thank the parents who are involved. I want to thank everybody who give these children the learning environment, the personal attention, the academic tools they need. I want to thank you for teaching

not only academic subjects but character building and the importance of maintaining good health.

I worry about how many kids in our schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods never get a chance just to learn about the basics of good health. I've seen all these physical education programs and music programs and art programs cut out of our schools over the last decade because of financial problems they've seen, and I thank you for giving these kids a whole education and a chance to be whole people.

And of course, I want to say a special word of thanks for having an Internet-based curriculum. These children need to be part of the information society. I have seen the power of the Internet in the poorest villages of Africa and India and Latin America. I have talked to children all over the world on the Internet, and no child in America should be without its blessing.

You know, the entire Encyclopedia Britannica is now on the Internet. In schools in the poorest parts of this country, schools where they have no building as nice as this one, if they have an Internet connection and a printer, they can have textbooks as good as anyone else, thanks to the miracles of modern technology. These children deserve it, and all of the children of America deserve it. And so I thank you.

Now, what I would like to say, especially for the benefit of the members of the press who are here covering this, is that this is not just a feel-good program. It works. In the last year, math and reading scores are up sharply. Suspensions are down. Class attendance is up, which shows that more and more of these young people understand the importance of going to school, staying in school, and doing well in school. This works.

I thank Wintley for pointing out that this program receives funding from the Department of Labor. And I'm happy to report that another \$200,000 will be granted over the next 2 years because of what you're doing. I know you've gotten money from energy companies, from the NFL, from other places, and I want to thank all the people who have given you private money, as well.

I think we ought to be thinking about how we can make sure these kinds of opportunities are available to all of our children. I think that means that, as Wintley goes national, the National Government ought to go with him and

help him all across the country. But it also means that we have to continue our efforts for smaller classes, for better school buildings, to make sure all our classrooms are hooked up to the Internet, to make sure every child who needs it has access to an after-school or a summer school program, to make sure that all kids have access to preschool programs, to make sure every low-performing school has the resources it needs to turn around. Because I believe that intelligence is evenly distributed throughout the human race, opportunity is not, and we need to give them a chance to do it.

I believe every child from a disadvantaged neighborhood should have access to a mentor who can say to that child, "Look, if you take these courses and do this well, you can go to college. Here's the proof of it. Here's the money. Here's the scholarships. Here's the loan. Here's the aid." We need to make sure that all kids can do it, and then when they're of age, we need to make sure the doors of college are open to all of our people. Money should never keep anybody from going to school.

One of the things that I'm proudest of is that since I've been President, we've had the biggest expansion of college aid since the GI bill 50 years ago. And if we get the provision passed that I've asked this Congress to adopt, we'll allow every family to deduct up to \$10,000 of college tuition from their income tax every year, and that will be good.

One other thing I'd like to say: I'm sure you never have it here, but I've noticed in my own home that the children sometimes know more than the adults, even the teachers, about the technology. I'm sure you've never seen that here. [Laughter] But we just have provided over \$120 million to make sure that nearly 600,000 teachers are properly trained to make the most of this Internet technology, because I think that's important.

What I came here today to say is this: Number one, I am grateful to God that somehow 10 years ago I ran into Wintley Phipps, who didn't know who I was, but I determined I'd never forget who he was. Number two, I am grateful to him and to all of you who have done the U.S. Dream Academy. Number three, I want to support you, but I believe what you do for these children, somebody should do for every child in the United States.

And finally, again, I want to say to the American people through our friends in the press,

this is not just a feel-good program; this works. Every person who ever amounted to anything in life did so with a dream. We need to make all of our kids believe they can dream and that their dreams are just as worthy as anybody else's dreams and that, if they're willing to work at it, their dreams are just as possible as anyone else's dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in Mitchell Hall Auditorium at Ferebee Hope Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Lester Jones, principal, Ferebee Hope Elementary School; and gospel singer Wintley Phipps, founder and director, United States Dream Academy, a pilot program designed to help children of imprisoned parents acquire basic learning skills, incorporating mentoring and on-line academic support. The President also referred to NFL, the National Football League.

Remarks at a Reception for Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia

June 15, 2000

Thank you. You know, when the Mayor said he was going to run for Mayor, he was absolutely terrified about making a political speech. I think he's about got the hang of it, don't you? [*Laughter*] I thought it was great.

I want to thank him and Diane for their willingness to serve. I want to thank Greg and Kathy and the others who put on this event tonight, and Ron and Beth for opening their home once again for an eminently worthy cause. I want to thank Senator Dole or President Dole or Bob—[*laughter*]—for being here and for speaking, and Jack Kemp, who came and left. And Judge Webster, thank you for being here.

I'd like to thank all the Republicans and Democrats and the independents who are here in support of our Nation's Capital tonight. I will be very brief but, I hope, to the point, because I'll be moving out of Washington in a few months. But when I moved here, I had very rich memories because I had gone to school in Washington, and I lived in Washington for 4 years in the mid-sixties. So I was here when the city burned. I was here when the city's main thoroughfares were often full of empty stores. I've seen it at its best, at its worst, and at its in-between.

When I came back here and Hillary and Chelsea and I moved into Blair House in the 3 weeks before I took office, one of the first things I did was to walk down Georgia Avenue and meet with the merchants and talk to them. And I always wanted to have a chance to be a good citizen of Washington, DC.

I worked with Senator Moynihan and others who were rebuilding Pennsylvania Avenue and was proud to be there at the dedication of the Reagan Building, which I think has been a wonderful addition to this great city. I went with Steve Case not very long ago to a high school here to talk about how we could improve the quality of education with technology.

I was just today with Reverend Wintley Phipps, whom a lot of you know, at the U.S. Dream Academy here in Washington, doing wonderful work giving kids from very tough backgrounds a chance to have a better life.

I love this place. And I was honored that we had a bipartisan big block of support for the legislation to revitalize DC. Essentially, what we did was, we took—the Federal Government assumed the functions that the DC government was having to pay for, that no other city in America had to pay for because all the other cities had a State to pay for it. We've also provided big tuition support for DC students to go out of State to school as in-State students and tried to provide some initiatives to encourage more private investment here, as well as to have the Government do more directly. And we've got a lot more to do, and I hope in the next 6 months, working with Speaker Hastert and others, you will see a big bipartisan initiative which will lead to more investment in the District of Columbia. So I hope that will happen.

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But you know, it has been my great honor on your behalf to travel to over 60 other countries. Senator Dole and I did an event the other night, and he said he was glad that the event could be scheduled on a night when I was visiting America. [Laughter] And I took it pretty well, considering I was jet lagged. Actually, I thought it was pretty funny.

But I've been to all these other capitals. You know, I've been to Paris. I've been to London. I've been to Moscow. I've seen the billion-dollar restoration of the Kremlin, which is breathtaking, if any of you ever get a chance to see it. But there is no capital city in the world as beautiful as Washington. And there is no city now that is any more diverse.

Yes, we've still got a lot of these problems, but what Tony Williams did was to prove that the Mayor's Office was a job, a very important job, a job that required vision and leadership as well as management skills, but a job where arithmetic still counted, a job where it still mattered if you showed up for work and really worked hard, all day, every day, a job where it mattered if you treated everybody just the same, whatever their race or political affiliation. And because all of us love the District of Columbia, he enlisted in an overwhelming response by being extraordinarily good at doing what he'd be the first to tell you he simply should have done.

And now that we have the kind of leadership that he has given our city, I want to ask all of you: When I'm gone from here and I'm no longer a citizen of this city, it will always be a big part of my childhood, always be obviously the major part of my adult life and service. But we can make this city in every way the finest capital in the world and a good place for all the children who live in it. And ironically, in order to do one, we have to do the other. We owe it to this man to help him, not just with contributions but every day. No one could ask for more from a Mayor than he is giving us. We have to be willing to give whatever he asks from us.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:39 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Williams' wife, Diane Simmons Williams; event cochairs Greg Earls and Kathy Kemper; reception hosts Ronald I. Dozoretz and Beth Dozoretz; former Senator Bob Dole; former Representative Jack F. Kemp; former Judge William H. Webster, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit; Steve Case, president and chief executive officer, America On-Line; and gospel singer Wintley Phipps, founder and director, United States Dream Academy.

Interview With Matt Lauer of NBC's "Today" Show in New York City June 16, 2000

"VH1 Save The Music Today" Campaign

Mr. Lauer. Mr. President, good morning; nice to have you here.

The President. Good morning, Matt. Thank you.

Mr. Lauer. I don't think I'm betraying any confidence when I say that I checked with the VH1 people and I said, "How did you get the President involved in this campaign?" And they threw their arms up and they said, "He kind of volunteered" —

The President. That's true.

Mr. Lauer. — "I mean, he's called many times and said, 'What can I do?'" Why is this so important to you?

The President. Well, Hillary and I both spent a lot of time on this, and it's important for two reasons. One is, I was in music when I was the age of these children, and I know what it can do. And secondly, I've been very disturbed over the years—over the last 20 years, more and more, as schools have come under financial pressure, they have tended to drop their music programs. You know, the principals have a lot of problems. They have a lot of challenges they have to meet, and many times the money is not there. And the school districts have cut a lot of these music programs out all over the country.

And when I heard what VH1 was doing, I did kind of volunteer to get involved. I wrote John Sykes a letter and said, "Look, I'm for this, and I think we've got to get music back into these schools." A lot of young children—we know that a lot of our young children learn better if they have access to music education. Not everyone learns in the same way. Not everyone's brain is stimulated in the same way. And the schools that have vigorous music programs tend to have higher academic performance.

Mr. Lauer. What do you say, though—I mean, let's say, devil's-advocate it for a second—I'm a member of the local school board, and I sit down, and I look at the budget, and it's shrinking. And I say, "I've got choices. I have to make cuts. I've got school lunches over here. I have books for the library here. I have music education over here." How do you stop me from cutting music education?

The President. It depends on what your options are. But very often there are some options. And that's what that wonderful movie about music education here in New York City, "Music of the Heart," was about. But what this program tries to do is to encourage the schools to put some money into music education by giving them extra help with instruments and sometimes with other support.

And what we've tried to do at the national level, with the National Endowment for the Arts and the President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities that Hillary's the honorary chair of, is to constantly support music education, to emphasize that the schools that have good music education programs see positive other academic advancements as a result of it, and of course, try to get some more funds for the lower income schools out there.

Mr. Lauer. But is the message getting out? I mean, you had music education as a kid; so did I. We took it for granted. We're now in a time of unprecedented economic prosperity, and still today, only 25 percent of schools across this country offer music education as a basic part of the curriculum.

The President. See, what a lot of people don't know is, over the last 20 years and particularly in the last decade or so, while our school populations have been growing again, a smaller percentage of property-tax payers have kids in the schools. And an awful lot of our schools are funded primarily through the property tax. So the schools have had all kinds of financial prob-

lems. Their energy bills go up. A lot of them have substandard physical facilities. They have the need to hire more teachers to teach various academic requirements that may have come in. And they don't want to stop any of their competitive athletic proposals. So the two things that have suffered most in the schools are the music programs and the art programs, on the one hand, and the physical education programs for people who aren't in competitive team sports.

Mr. Lauer. But is this the way it's going to be? I mean, when people like VH1 come in and they donate money like this, it's great, but it's private and public partnership. Why can't we find a way, even through the Federal Government's assistance, to make sure that this is a basic part of education?

The President. I think we should do that. But the main thing we have to do is to build broader public support for doing it. Let me say, interestingly enough, you asked me the budget question. That's the first question: Well, what would you do if you had all these tough budget decisions? Our research indicates that the number one factor in whether music education programs stay or come back to schools is strong community involvement pushing for it. In other words, where people at the grassroots want it, the people who make the budget decisions tend to find a way to provide it.

And so, what we can best do, I think, is to point out consistently what the overall educational benefits are, number one, and number two, to try to get more Federal assistance out there to the schools to help deal with their big problems. That's why I'm trying to get the Federal Government to help with school construction and school repair, to help the school districts hire teachers to lower class sizes so they don't have to cut out music to hire that extra teacher when the population goes up, and to get the overall aid to low income schools up. So if we do those things and we get the kind of grassroots support we need, then what VH1 will be doing is supplementing a growing trend, instead of trying to fill a huge hole.

Mr. Lauer. Is it possible to take it a step further? From what I understand now, the Federal Government supplies about 9 percent of funding for schools; local and States provide the rest. Can you offer States incentives? Can you say to them, "Look, we'll provide more funding if you take it upon yourselves to make music education part of your basic curriculum?"

The President. We could do that. I hadn't thought of that, exactly in that way. What we tried to do—let me just say this. What we've tried to do for the last 7 years, since I've been President, is to say, "Look, here are the Nation's education goals. They include music and the arts. And if you come up with a plan to meet those goals, we will give you some help to implement the plan, which included music and the arts."

Basically, the specific targeted dollars we have for schools go to schools that have greater financial need, because they've got a higher percentage of low income kids, or to hire more teachers, generally, because the school population is going up.

I think if we will stay with the position that we're going to help all the schools that have these goals, which include music and the arts, and then we come in with the big ticket items, which are personnel and school building and repair, and we can build the kind of grassroots support we need, then these music programs will be able to survive.

But one of the things that really happened is a lot of folks just took the music programs for granted. A lot of people who were making tough budget decisions assumed nobody would care if they were eliminated. And it was tragic, what happened. So I think what's going to happen—you'll see a big infusion of public money going back into these programs because of what VH1 has done and because more and more parents will insist on the music being there. And I'll be glad to do whatever I can to help.

Mr. Lauer. We're going to take a little break. When we come back, I understand we're joined by another special guest, and we'll talk more about music education.

The President. Thank you.

[At this point, the network took a commercial break.]

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Mr. Lauer. And we're back with President Bill Clinton at P.S. 96 in East Harlem. Let me ask for a couple of quick answers to some questions in the news. Los Alamos: Congress is holding hearings on security breaches there. Two hard drives containing nuclear secrets disappeared. Do you think national security was jeopardized?

The President. It's not clear, but I think it's very important to get to the bottom of it. The FBI is investigating it, and we've got Senator Baker and Congressman Hamilton, who have agreed to take an independent look. It's a serious issue, and I think what we ought to do is just see the investigation through and see where the facts lead us.

But we need to do what we can to find out what happened, whether there was a security breach, and if so, how we can change it so it will never happen again.

Gasoline Prices

Mr. Lauer. You and I were both watching the news earlier about gas prices.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Lauer. People in Chicago, Milwaukee, in particular, paying 40 cents a gallon more than the rest of us.

The President. Than anybody else in the country. It's been very frustrating to me. I'm quite concerned about it.

Let me tell you what we know. We know that the prices were affected by the shutdown of a refinery, which is coming back up, a leak in a pipeline, which is the cheapest way to transport gas, and an unusual increase in demand in the Chicago-Milwaukee area. And all that affected it. Also, they used the cleaner gasoline, which is more expensive to produce, but that's only about 5 or 6 cents a gallon. So we know that it would be more expensive for a little while until the transportation and the refinery problems are solved.

What we don't know is whether there was any price gouging. So we've got the Federal Trade Commission looking into that, and we've also had the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency looking into it. I'm very worried about it. But I'm hoping that we can break the logjam on it soon.

"VH1 Save The Music Today"

[*Mr. Lauer introduced musician Billy Joel, who offered his advice to the young musicians present.*]

The President. The only thing I would say is, don't get discouraged early. If you'll stay with it long enough, until you like to hear yourself play, then it will be easier for you to keep practicing. But if you play one of these reed instruments, you'll squeak a lot. If you play a string

instrument, it'll hurt your ears in the beginning. Just stay with it; be patient. And when you reach the point where you like to hear yourself play, then it's all downhill from there. You just keep working.

Mr. Lauer. Maybe it's a good time for you to relate to them also. You had a music teacher in your early life who had a pretty strong impact on your life.

The President. Oh, absolutely I did. I had a—well, my high school band director, Virgil Spurlin, is still a friend of mine, still writes me to this day. My grade school band director was a man named George Grey, who had a big impact on me. My vocal—my choir teacher when I was in elementary school, I still remember vividly. Her name was Lillian Rutherford. All the kids I knew had access to choir and could be in the band if they wanted to. And I'm so glad that John Sykes and VH1 and all these people are trying to make it possible for you to do this, because it's something—you don't have to—I was not as good as Billy Joel, see, so I didn't get to be a professional musician. But I had a wonderful time. It changed my life for the better. And it still benefits me, and I still play.

President's Legacy

Mr. Lauer. I'm sure at this point in your Presidency, you have to be thinking a lot about legacy. And you look at young people in the third and fourth grade—how do you want them to be a part of your legacy?

The President. Well, I want them to have more opportunity, more educational opportunity,

than they had when I became President. And I want them to grow up in a country that is a more just and decent country, where there is less discrimination and where people work together more. And I think that that will be the case. But it's really important that kids are not deprived of opportunities like music, just because of where they happen to live and whether their parents have money or not. That shouldn't be what determines this.

Mr. Lauer. Just a suggestion: You've got some free time coming up in January, and Billy, you've got a little free time. I'm thinking, you go to the garage in Chappaqua; you get a little amplifier like you used to do in high school—*[laughter]*—aggravate the neighbors, and put together a little band here.

The President. I accept.

Billy Joel. How close is the next house over, because—*[laughter]*.

Mr. Lauer. Thank you so much for coming in. Billy Joel, it's always good to see you. President Clinton, nice to see you, as well.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:08 a.m. at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School in East Harlem. In his remarks, the President referred to John Sykes, president, VH1; and former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., and former Representative Lee H. Hamilton, appointed to lead a Presidential Commission to investigate possible security breaches at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Joel.

Interview With Rebecca Rankin of VH1 in New York City June 16, 2000

"VH1 Save The Music"

Ms. Rankin. "VH1 Save The Music," you've been involved for a while. When did you first hear about the program, and why did it draw you?

The President. Well, I'm trying to remember whether I first heard about it from my wife or whether I read something about it. But I actually wrote a letter to John Sykes because I was so excited about what they were doing,

I had been in school music when I was a young person, starting at the age of 9. And I had been really, really upset about all these schools dropping their music programs when I was Governor. And Hillary and I redid the school standards in Arkansas. We tried very hard to protect the music programs and the arts programs and the physical education programs for the people who weren't in team sports. And so I realized that all over the country these schools were under more and more financial pressure, and

they thought that maybe the path of least resistance was just to get rid of the music programs. And so here was someone trying to do something about it. I was just thrilled, and I wanted to help.

Music in the President's Life

Ms. Rankin. Very cool. Growing up—I know, I've watched a lot of tapes on you. We did "Rock and Roll President" a while back with you.

The President. Yes, in 1992. I loved it.

Ms. Rankin. Exactly. They gave me a copy of that. Music education was really important to you, obviously, growing up—

The President. Really important.

Ms. Rankin. —and music was really important. Looking at where you are now, arguably one of the most important people on the planet, what did music education do for you, and how has it come to play in your life now?

The President. Well, first of all, it gave me an outlet for all this energy I had. It gave me a constructive way to be creative. It also taught me discipline, and it taught me that to create something beautiful required hard work and discipline. It taught me how to be—to create alone and also how to work with a group, in a band, a jazz band or a combo. And it made me happy. I mean, it just made me happy. It's such a wonderful—when I was a kid and I'd have a tough time, as long as I could play, I could always be okay. I could just be in a private place. And it fueled my imagination. And it gave me an appreciation of things in life that has stayed with me to the present day.

I can still go in my music room that Hillary built me upstairs in the White House and play for 15 or 20 minutes, and all the cares of the world go away.

Congressional Resolution on Music Education

Ms. Rankin. Very nice. So you guys have got to remember that when you're playing. Mr. Clinton said it.

Let's talk about, there was a resolution passed in Congress a few days ago, unanimous resolution, saying that music education was extremely important. Why is it so important that this was passed, and what's it going to do in the future?

The President. Well, I think it was important that it was passed because it shows that the representatives of the people of both parties have now—are acknowledging that it's important

and it's a problem because there are so many schools that don't offer it anymore. And I think it will tend to increase public awareness of this, public support for maintaining the music programs.

The President's Advisory Commission on Music and the Arts did a study a couple of years ago, and Hillary was the honorary chair of the committee. They found that local pressure, parental involvement, community involvement was the single most important factor in either keeping or restoring music programs to the schools. And so I think that's why it matters.

I think also, though, the Congress and the President have a responsibility to keep putting as much money out there to the schools to pay for their other expenses as possible—the buildings, the teachers, to have smaller classes—so the schools will have the money they need for the music programs.

But you know, there's lots and lots of research on this now which shows that if a good school music program increases academic performance, that a lot of young people learn in different ways and are dramatically stimulated by music. So that's another reason we ought to be for this. It actually will help the overall learning enterprise.

"VH1 Save The Music"

Ms. Rankin. Yes. That's an important point because I think everybody thinks of it as just an art, and it stops there—

The President. Not true.

Ms. Rankin. —and it's culture, and it carries through.

We've had a lot of artists helping us this week with "VH1 Save The Music" week and the "Today Show." Mariah Carey was out yesterday; A.J. McLean from the Backstreet Boys; the Goo Goo Dolls. Today we have Bon Jovi playing at the "Today Show" in Rockefeller Center. Are you a Bon Jovi fan?

The President. He's great. I love Bon Jovi. I really—I think he's great. I'm a music fan of his. I like his acting. He's doing very well in the movies now. And he's a marvelous young man. He's been to the White House to visit Hillary and me on several occasions. He's really—he's a very nice man. And I'm pleased for his success, and I'm grateful that he's helping today.

Ms. Rankin. What does it say to the public to have such important sort of star power behind a program like “VH1 Save The Music?”

The President. Well, I hope that it increases the public’s awareness. I hope it says, hey, this is really important. I mean, these people could all be doing something else. And I hope it says to them, if all these people who do music for a living think it’s important for all our kids to have access to music, maybe it is.

New York City Schools

Ms. Rankin. All right. These guys—do you go to this school, P.S. 96?

Audience members. Yes.

Ms. Rankin. All right, so the program and what’s happening with the New York City school boards and public education and music and what’s going on here today—can you talk a little bit about what’s being presented today and what’s going to—

The President. Yes. If you look at these students here, VH1 has given them these instruments, so they’re going to start a music program. Now, just a couple of years ago, this school had one of the worst performances in New York. And they’ve gone from having 80 percent of their kids not read at grade level to having three-quarters of their kids read at or above grade level in only 2 years. So they want this school to be one of the best schools in New York.

They have a school uniform policy, as you see, which is a very positive thing, I think. And now they want a music program. And what they

know is not only will these children learn music and they’ll enjoy it; it will further increase the academic performance of this school.

So I think they’re all excited about it, and they’re all proud of their school. Aren’t you?

Audience members. Yes.

Ms. Rankin. It’s just kind of exciting to have President Clinton here, too, right?

Audience members. Yes.

Ms. Rankin. Oh, yes, just a little.

Audience member. An honor.

Music in the President’s Life

Ms. Rankin. An honor. A big honor.

One last thing. TV moments, music moments on television—what stands out in your mind as a huge one growing up, present day?

The President. When the Beatles were on Ed Sullivan. When Elvis Presley was on Ed Sullivan. I think those two things, when I was very young, made a big impression on me.

Ms. Rankin. Cool. All right. Thank you very much. I think you have to go back downstairs, so—[laughter]. These are things—I can’t see what’s going on, but I think my 5 minutes are up.

Thank you so much. It was such an honor.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 8:40 a.m. in Classroom 200 at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to John Sykes, president, VH1; and musician Jon Bon Jovi.

Remarks on the “VH1 Save The Music Today” Campaign in New York City

June 16, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. I’d like to begin by thanking Barry Rosenblum and Time Warner; Sumner Redstone. Thank you, my long-time friend Billy Joel; and Brian McKnight, whom I admire so much. Thank you, Chancellor Levy.

I’d like to thank the student band over here from Dr. Susan McKinney Junior High School.

Thank you for being here. I see Comptroller Green, President Fields, Senator; thank you all for being here.

I’d like to thank Randi Weingarten and the people from the United Federation of Teachers who are here. I don’t know if any Members of the Congress are here. I think they’re still voting—[laughter]—which is not a bad thing.

So what I would like to do now is to begin with the important things. First, my long-time

friend John Sykes—I say “long-time friend”; we’ve only really known each other about 4 years, but I’ve spent more time with him in the last 4 years than anybody but Hillary, I think—[laughter]—because of our love for music and because of this project, which—there have been only a few days when I wondered if I made a mistake volunteering to help, because he took it seriously.

But I do love this, and I’ll say a little more about it in a moment. I love it because of the potential it has to transform the lives of these young people. And I would like to say, first of all, Kelvin, I thought you did a great job speaking up here. One of the reasons I like music is it gives young people self-confidence and a sense of the reward you get for disciplined effort, so more of them would be able to speak like you in public. That was good.

And I would like to say especially and most of all how much I appreciate the remarkable work that Victor Lopez, the principal, and the teachers and the parents have done on this school in the last few years. I can’t thank you enough.

This school, a couple of years ago, was identified by everybody as a low-performing school. Eighty percent of the kids weren’t reading at grade level. Enter Mr. Lopez and his team and the supportive parents: smaller classes; after-school programs; parental involvement; school uniforms; and now a commitment to music education.

In the last year alone, the number of P.S. 96 third graders reading at or above grade level has gone up more than 300 percent; in 2 years, student performance from 20 percent at or above grade level to 74 percent—in 2 years. This is astonishing for the school. And now they want music education. Why? Because it’s also good for academics, as you’ve already heard.

But I want to just—everybody stop and take a deep breath. Look at these kids. All children can learn, and all children deserve a chance to learn. And the teachers and the principal and the parents here have done this, so give them another hand. This is unbelievable. Bravo! [Applause]

You know, I often say that I might not have been President if it hadn’t been for school music. And it’s really true. I started playing an instrument when I was 9. I started singing in the school chorus when I was younger than that. And then when aging took my voice from three

octaves to about three notes—[laughter]—which, thankfully, didn’t happen to my buddies over here—I just had to concentrate more on my saxophone.

And I want to say to all of you who are fixing to start this program, the first music I made was not very nice to hear. But my mother tolerated it, and I just kept on working at it. And what I learned was that if you’re willing to have patience and discipline and you practice, pretty soon you can make something really beautiful, and it can help you be a better member of the team; it can help you be a happier person; it can make you a better person; and it can also be an awful lot of fun.

I still play my saxophone. A couple of years ago, Hillary made a music room for me in a little room on the top floor of the White House that we weren’t using, that was way at the end of a hall, and it had two doors, so no one could hear me when I was playing. [Laughter] And I still go in there.

I have musical instruments now I’ve collected from all over the world. I have saxophones from all over the world now, made in China and Russia and Japan and Poland and the Czech Republic and Germany and France and, of course, the United States. And I have lots of other instruments from every continent. And I just go in there, and I play. And no matter what else is going on, I can go in and play for 15 or 20 minutes, and I’m full of energy and ready to start again. That’s what you can have if you get into this music program.

But the other thing I want to emphasize is, one of the things that we know—and John Sykes mentioned this—is that learning improves in school environments where there are comprehensive music programs. It increases the ability of young people to do math. There is a lot of math in music. It increases the ability of young people to read, and as I said, most important of all, it’s a lot of fun.

The great scientist Albert Einstein once said—it might surprise you—“I get the most joy out of my violin. I often think in music. I see my life in terms of music.” Albert Einstein was the greatest scientist of the 20th century. Some people nominated him for Man of the Century and thought he should have been determined to be the Man of the Century. No one believes he was a great violin player. He didn’t care if he wasn’t a great violin player. I don’t care if I’m not a great saxophone player. It’s

enough to be able to do it and to get the benefits of it.

So that's what VHI has done, getting contributions, getting these musical instruments. Now, I want to say—John Sykes made a joke about the warm environment on Capitol Hill—it's not as warm as it is up on this stage, under these lights. *[Laughter]* This is a good preparation to go back to Congress. *[Laughter]* But what he didn't tell you is that he and others developed a congressional resolution to stress the importance of music education, and just this week the House of Representatives passed it unanimously. I think he should start giving me lobbying advice. They passed it unanimously.

Now, what does that mean? Well, a couple of years ago, Hillary chaired this Commission on Arts and the Humanities, and they found that the most important factor in keeping music in the schools or getting music back into the schools was not a Federal program but whether the local people whose kids were in the schools wanted music in the schools. So we need to keep trying to provide money to the schools to hire teachers, to build or remodel buildings, to give more money to schools with a lot of low income students at the national level. And we need to keep supporting the "Save The Music" program.

But one of the things that John wants is for the "Save The Music" program to lead people at the community level to insist that music ought to be in all the schools, whether he gives them the instruments or not. And that's what I—that's the last point I want to make today. You have got to help us help all of our schools keep these music programs. Over the last 20 years, we've gotten rid of music, art, and physical education. The consequence is that in the places that don't have it, student achievement is lower than it ought to be, and the kids are not as healthy as they should be. We need to bring these things back to our schools, and I want you to help them. That's one of the reasons I came here.

I'll leave you with this thought: You are living in a world where all kinds of different people live in America and where Americans, through the Internet and travel, are going to have to relate to all kinds of different people around the world.

I just got back from Russia, where I had a dinner with the Russian President. And afterward he said, "We're going to go in to entertainment," so I thought they would have someone dancing Russian ballet. I thought they would have someone playing Rachmaninoff. But instead, because he knew what I liked, the President of Russia gave me a private concert from the biggest jazz band in Russia, the best student musicians in Russia, the age of some of the people here, who were unbelievable, and the man who may be the greatest living jazz saxophone player, who happens to be a Russian, who played for me.

It is a universal language. It is the music of the heart and the language of the heart. Thanks to John Sykes and all of his partners and all of you, maybe next year and the year after and the year after, there will be more and more children with the chance that you're going to have next year, until all of our kids have it again.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. in the Auditorium at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in East Harlem. In his remarks, he referred to Barry Rosenblum, president, Time Warner Cable of New York; Sumner M. Redstone, chairman and chief executive officer, Viacom; musicians Billy Joel and Brian McKnight; Harold O. Levy, chancellor, New York City Public Schools; C. Virginia Fields, president, Borough of Manhattan; Randi Weingarten, president, United Federation of Teachers; John Sykes, president, VHI; Victor Lopez, principal, and Kelvin Eusebio, student, Joseph C. Lanzetta School; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

June 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Remarks at Abigail Adams Elementary School in New York City June 16, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. I think we ought to give Mary Minnick another hand. She did a great job. [Applause] And I want to thank her, the other faculty members, the staff members of P.S. 131 and their families, and your principal, Walter O'Brien. Thank you for making us feel welcome today.

And I want to thank Zahra Mohamed and Andrew Wood, the coaledictorians of the sixth grade. They remind us of what this is all about. And you can see from the student cheers who has the votes here. [Laughter]

Chancellor Levy, thank you very much. Representative Lowey, Representative Meeks, Representative Crowley, thank you all for your leadership for this worthy cause. To all the local officials who are out there, but especially my long-time friend, the Queens borough president, Claire Schulman; Superintendent Michael Johnson; School Board President Bill Johnson. And I'd like to recognize Randi Weingarten again, the president of the United Federation of Teachers—the teachers are helping us so much here—along with Ed Malloy, the president of New York Building and Trades Union, and Denis Hughes, the president of the New York AFL-CIO. They're also trying to help us get our kids in world-class buildings.

Let me say to all of you, as so often happens when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has already been said. But I want to say a couple of things to put this in perspective from my point of view. First of all, I want to thank you. Thank you, New York; thank you, New York City; thank you, Queens, for being so good to me and to Al Gore, to Hillary and Tipper, for these last 8 years. Thank you for giving us the chance to serve.

For 7½ years now, we've worked hard to turn the economy around, to get the crime rate down, to help people move from welfare to work, to help people balance work and family, to clean up the environment as we grow the economy, to make this country one America across all these incredible racial and ethnic and religious and other lines that divide us, to make our country a force for peace and freedom around the world. And we're in good shape today. We're having the longest economic expan-

sion in our history. We have the lowest minority unemployment in our history. We're going to have 3 years of back-to-back surpluses for the first time in anybody's memory.

And here's the point I want to make. What are we going to do with these good times? I've got a simple question. What is it that you as citizens propose to do? I've done everything I could do to turn our country around, to build that bridge to the 21st century that all of us can walk across together, to leave our country in good shape so that you, the American people, could decide, what are you going to do for the future? And I think the answer is simple. Look at these kids here. Just look at them. Look at all the different ethnic groups they come from. Look at their different heritages. Look at the different countries their parents come from. This is America's future. This is America's future.

Now, if I had come to you 8 years ago and said, "In 5 years, we're going to have the largest number of kids in our schools in history, and we've got a lot of them in old buildings, a lot of them in overcrowded buildings, a lot of them in downright unsafe buildings, a lot of them in buildings that can't be hooked up to the Internet, and I want to do something about it," you might have said then, "Well, Mr. President, that's very nice, but the country is in too much trouble, and the Government is broke." But that's not true anymore. We have the money to give all our kids a world-class education. The only issue is, do we have the vision; do we have the will; do we have the compassion to give our children a world-class education?

Randi was telling me right before we came up here—and Chancellor Levy confirmed it—we've got a program now to put 100,000 more teachers out there for smaller classes in the early grades. We've only finished a third of it, and New York can't take any more. Queens certainly can't take any more because you don't have any classrooms to put the teachers in, in the smaller classes.

We've got a program now that would provide after-school programs for every kid who needs it in America, but if you don't have the facilities, where are they going to go to the programs?

The Vice President persuaded Congress to enact something called the E-rate, which allows you to have discounts at schools with a lot of poor kids in it so every child in America can afford to be in a classroom that's hooked up to the Internet. But if you don't have the space—and some schools can't even be wired for the Internet—so what good is the program?

Now, I am proud of the progress that's been made in education in this city, in this State, and in this Nation. But if we think that we're going to build the future of our dreams, making these kids go to school in places where they don't have computer labs, they don't have music rooms, they're suffocating, their buildings are being heated with coal, and their teachers are trying to teach 40 kids when they ought to be teaching 20, we're living in a dream world, and we need to do something about it to give them a better future.

Now, here's what I've tried to do for 2 years. This is the third year I've proposed this. I want the Congress to pass a bill that would provide tax breaks so that we could help communities build, from scratch, 6,000 schools. I want the Congress to pass money every year for the next 5 years so that every year we can do major repairs on 5,000 more schools every year. It's not very complicated. But what you have to understand is, we can afford it. We can afford it. It's just a question of whether we think it's important enough to do.

Now, Nita is for it. Greg is for it. Joe Crowley is for it. Charlie Rangel is for it. We even have a few Republicans for it. Representative Nancy Johnson from Connecticut is for it, and I thank Nancy Johnson. This ought to be a bipartisan issue. When the kids show up there at school, they don't have to put their party affiliation down. We just know they need an education. We don't care whether they're Republicans or Democrats or Greens or Reforms or no affiliation.

So I want to tell you that we have a bipartisan majority actually ready to pass the bill in the House of Representatives. So you might wonder: Well, this is a democracy; if a majority of the people want it and a majority of their elected representatives want it, where is the bill, and show me the money? [Laughter] Well, unfortunately, the people who control the rules and when bills come up don't want it. That's what this is about. We have not been able to persuade the leadership in the House and the Senate,

the other party, to bring this up in a way that will enable us to pass it.

What I want you to know—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. That's not a bad idea, thank you. What I want you to know is that the leadership of the House is trying to keep these good people from having a vote on school construction. They don't want their Members to have to vote against it for the obvious reasons that you might notice, but they don't want it to pass.

We have too many bills where we've got a majority for it, like the Patients' Bill of Rights, that we can't get up. So I am asking you, by your voices today, over the media, to the American people, and every day from now on as long as the Congress is here, by your support for your Representatives to say, "Hey, we love this school, but it's not enough. And we love our kids, and you have our money. Spend it on their future. Spend it on their future."

Again, I say, this is not complicated. It's about political will and vision. And I want you to know, folks, I get really frustrated when Washington plays politics just because they think times are good and there are no consequences. But these kids will grow up before you know it.

My little girl just got home from college—going to be a senior next year. I remember when she was that size. It doesn't take long for a child to live a childhood. And we don't have a child to waste. And you've got all these dedicated teachers and all these dedicated parents and all these dedicated school people out there, and we keep trying to put them in smaller and smaller and smaller boxes. This is wrong.

Now, we have genuine philosophical differences over some things in Washington, but this shouldn't be a philosophical issue. Are we going to build these buildings or not? We've got the money. Some people say, let them do it at the local level. Well, you know as well as I do that we've got more kids in schools than ever before, but we've got a smaller percentage of property-tax payers with kids in schools than ever before, and it's hard, if not impossible, to raise the money to build and repair the schools only at the local level. The National Government has the resources. This is a limited program. These children deserve it.

So I implore you all, by your voices today, and every day, say, "Thank you, Nita Lowey.

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Thank you, Greg Meeks. Thank you, Joe Crowley. Thank you, Charlie Rangel. Congress, give our kids the future they deserve. The whole country's riding on it, we can afford it, and we owe it to them. And we'll be awful glad we did."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. in the school courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Minnick, teacher, Abigail Adams Elementary School (Public School 131); Harold O. Levy, chancellor, New York City Public Schools; and Michael A. Johnson, district administrator, Community School District No. 29.

Statement on Senate Action on Electronic Signatures Legislation

June 16, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate today adopted the electronic signatures conference report by an overwhelming bipartisan vote. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law as soon as possible.

This landmark legislation will ensure that consumer protections remain strong in the technology age. It will help create new rules of the road for America's hi-tech economy. E-commerce helps strengthen our economy by low-

ering inflation, raising productivity, and spurring new research and development. By marrying one of our oldest values—our commitment to consumer protection—with the newest technologies, we can achieve the full measure of the benefits that E-commerce has to offer.

My congratulations to the Democratic and Republican leaders of the conference committee for their hard work on this legislation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Military Personnel as Part of the Kosovo International Security Force

June 16, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of December 15, 1999, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led security force (KFOR) in Kosovo. Additional U.S. personnel are also deployed in countries in the region and serve as support for our forces in Kosovo. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish the international security presence in Kosovo in U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 of June 10, 1999, for an initial period of 12 months, to continue thereafter unless the Security Council decides otherwise. The mission of KFOR is to provide

a military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the agreement of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to demilitarize and reintegrate itself into civil society; provide operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by providing, until UNMIK or appropriate local organizations assume these functions, for public safety and order and border monitoring.

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 7,500 U.S. military personnel. This number once again will decrease to approximately 6,000 U.S. military personnel when ongoing troop rotations are completed. In

the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 20 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment is the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately one-half of KFOR's total available personnel is directly committed to protection tasks, including protection of the ethnic minorities. The KFOR forces are under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

In addition, other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region to serve in administrative and logistics support roles for the U.S. forces in KFOR. Specifically, approximately 1,000 U.S. military personnel are operating in support of KFOR in Macedonia, Greece, and Albania.

Since my report to the Congress of December 15, in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and the MTA, FRY military, paramilitary, and police forces have not reentered Kosovo. The KLA agreed on June 21, 1999, to a cease fire, to withdraw from the zones of conflict in Kosovo, and to demilitarize itself. On September 20, 1999, KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted the KLA's certification that the KLA had completed its demilitarization in accordance with the June 21 agreement. The UNMIK thereafter established a civil emergency services entity known as the Kosovo Protection Corps that is intended to provide civic assistance in emergencies and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

The UNMIK has made progress in establishing an interim administration for the people

of Kosovo. The KFOR, within its means and capabilities, is providing broad support to UNMIK. As UNMIK is still developing its structures in Kosovo, KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels, including public administration, and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the Joint Civil Commissions. The KFOR personnel provide a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas in Kosovo to provide security, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence. In addition, KFOR is helping to provide assistance in the areas of humanitarian relief, international civil police training, and the maintenance of civic works resources.

Ethnic tensions in Kosovo, however, remain a concern, particularly in areas where Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians live in close proximity.

NATO has planned for KFOR's mission to be formally reviewed at 6-month intervals with a view to progressively reducing the force's presence and, eventually, withdrawing. Over time, KFOR will incrementally transfer its security and policing responsibilities as appropriate to the international civil administration, local institutions, and other organizations.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Edolphus Towns in New York City

June 16, 2000

Well, thank you very much. I, too, want to thank LaDane and Ed Bergassi and the McGoverns for making this possible. And Bronx

Borough President Freddy Ferrer, I'm delighted to see you in here. We've been friends a long time now. And I'm very glad to be here for

Ed and Gwen. You know, he was asking for that empowerment zone. I started to tell him, "Ed, that's what fundraisers are, empowerment zones for politicians." [Laughter]

We also have Jim McManus here, who is the president of the Manhattan Democratic Club, thank you for coming; and a lot of other people who have been active in public affairs in New York a long time. Let me just say, I'm honored to be here for Ed. I like this guy, and he has been with me for a very long time. I just reminded him that in January of 1992, when I had been a candidate for President for about 3 months, 90 days, at a time when only my mother felt I could be elected—[laughter]—I spent Martin Luther King's birthday in his district going to Thomas Jefferson High School.

And I remember what it was like. There was the sense that these kids really weren't sure anybody cared about them. A young person had just been shot in the school a week before; the circumstances were heartbreaking and tragic. He took me there. He wanted me to see those kids. He wanted me to hear their stories. He wanted me to talk to the people. He thought it would be good for me, and he thought I needed to represent his people if I intended to be President. And I thought I needed to go.

Do you remember—at the time, I was terribly naive. President Bush was still referring to me as the Governor of a small southern State. And I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] Truth is, I still do. [Laughter] And what do you know? Now I'm a New Yorker—[laughter]—and I like that.

I want to thank you, Ed, for what you said about the empowerment zones. It's one of the things we did in our economic plan in 1993. It passed by one vote. As Vice President Gore says, whenever he votes, we win. So we had a tie vote. He broke the tie; we passed the economic plan. The deficit came down. Interest rates came down. The economy took off. The rest is history.

But one of the things that was in that economic plan—that, I might add, got no votes from the other party—was the provision for empowerment zones, to give incentives for people to invest in poor areas and neighborhoods that weren't participating in the mainstream economy. I want to say more about that in a moment.

But tonight I want you to think about this election, just for a minute. Let's be serious just for a minute. I won't talk long, but I want you to think about it because somebody might ask you why you came here. And you ought to have an answer.

I think the election of 2000 is just as important as the elections of '96 and '92. It's hard for me to say, since it's the first time I won't be on the ballot in over 25 years. [Laughter] Why is that? Why do I believe that? Because I think what a country does with its great times can be as stern a test of its judgment and character as what a country does in the face of adversity.

You know, in '92—I'm very grateful—the State of New York gave me and Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore an enormous vote in '92, an even bigger one in '96, and I'm very gratified. But after all, the country was in trouble in '92. So people said, "Well, you know, maybe this kid is a Governor of a small southern State, but we're in trouble. Let's take a chance."

Now, I've done everything I could for 7½ years to turn this country around, to move it in the right direction, to get the economy going, to build one America, to reach across the racial and other lines that divide us, to deal with the crime issue, the welfare issue, the environmental issue, the health care issue, to do these things seriously, to make America a good friend and neighbor to the rest of the world.

So what are we going to do with the longest expansion in history? What are we going to do with the first 3 years of back-to-back surpluses in anybody's memory? What are we going to do with the virtual certainty that we'll have surpluses for another 10 or 15 years now? What do you want to do with that? That's really what this election is all about.

And the person who wins the Presidency and the party that wins the House and makes progress in the Senate races will depend upon what the American people think the election is about. Very often the answer to a question depends on what the question is.

Now, what I think we ought to be doing is saying, "Hey, this won't last forever, and we're not going to blow it. We're going to make the most of it, to build the future of our dreams for our children. We're going to take on the big problems that are still out there. We're going to seize the biggest opportunity that is

there before us. We're going to do big, important things." That's what I think we ought to do.

I think we ought to make a commitment to keep the economy going, to keep paying down the debt, and to give economic opportunity to all the neighborhoods that have been left behind. That's what my new markets initiative is all about. I want to give people like you, who can afford to come to this fundraiser, the same financial incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Africa and Asia today.

I think we ought to make a commitment to eliminate poverty among children in working families, and to do more to help families balance work and family, with child care and with health care initiatives that working people can afford for their families. I think we ought to do more to guarantee excellence in education to all of our kids and access to college to everybody who gets out of high school. That's what I think. You may not agree with any of this. You have to decide.

I think we ought to do more to roll back the tide of climate change—it's going to change life for New Yorkers dramatically in the next 30 years if we don't do it—for all Americans—and to prove that you can keep cleaning up the environment and growing the economy. I think we ought to do more to build one America across all the lines that divide us. I think we ought to pass hate crimes legislation. I think we ought to pass employment nondiscrimination legislation. I think that we ought to do these things.

I think we ought to do more to be a force for peace and freedom and decency around the world. I don't think we ought to make the U.N. practically beg us just to pay our dues that we owe. We're honored to have the U.N. It's headquartered in New York. We get a lot out of it. It's a great source of prestige for our country. Every time the U.N. sends a peace-keeping mission somewhere, it's a place we don't have to send American soldiers. And I think it's awful that some in our Congress act like they're doing the world a favor when they pay what we owe to the United Nations. That's what I think. And I think we ought to be a better partner and look for more opportunities to work with and through other people in the years ahead. But you've got to decide what you think.

I think we ought to do more to meet the challenge of the aging of America. I'm the oldest baby boomer. When all of us baby boomers retire, there will only be two people working—[laughter]—for every one person on Social Security. Now, there will be more than two people working—[laughter]—but there will only be two people working for every one person on Social Security. So what are we going to do?

Well, we can have more people on Social Security working; that's why we lifted the earnings limit on Social Security this year—a good thing we all did together, with the Republicans and the Democrats.

I think we ought to preserve Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. If we started a Medicare program today for seniors, we would never have one without drugs—ever. But in 1965, when Medicare was established, being old was a very different thing. First of all, everybody who lives to be 65 in America today has got a life expectancy of 83. Some of you younger people here, who are still having children, will give birth to children whose life expectancy, once we decode the human gene, will be nearly 100.

And I think when we know that pharmaceuticals more and more will keep us alive, let us live longer, and let us live better, to have a Medicare program without a program that is affordable for all of our seniors I think is crazy. So I think it's a big deal. Now, that's what I think it's about.

The other point I want to make to you is, there are big differences between the parties—legitimate—second point. All the Republicans opposed my economic plan in '93. They said it would be bad. Well, 22 million jobs later—and we've got the longest economic expansion in history—this is not an argument. We were right, and they were wrong. Now, their argument is, "Okay, we've got a good economy; let's go give all this money away in a big tax cut again." You have to decide. It's very appealing. You might think this thing is so strong, nobody can mess it up, and you'd like to have the extra cash. Our position is harder to take. Our position is, we want a tax cut, but not as big as theirs because we think we still need money to educate our kids, and we think we need money to meet our other commitments, and we think we ought to keep paying this debt down.

We're for a minimum wage; they're against it. We think we ought to have a more aggressive environmental program; they think we ought to relax our environmental efforts. There are real differences.

We think we ought to do more to help the cities; by and large, they disagree. The only area where we've got just a chance to have a bipartisan agreement is to give incentives for people who invest in the poor areas of urban and rural America, and I'm hoping and praying we get it. There are big differences.

So number one, the stakes are high. Number two, there are big differences. Here is the third, most important point: They hope you won't think there are very big differences on election day. So there's a lot of nice talk and kind of bumping and hugging going along here in these elections.

For example, there was a big story in the press today about how the Republicans had hired pollsters to teach them how to talk about the importance of providing prescription drugs, to teach them the words—say, you know, “We could lose the Congress over this, because we're not really for giving all these seniors prescription drugs.” So they hired pollsters to tell them the words to say to convince you that they are for it. And they're nice words. I would like to say some of those words. I have said some of those words.

But there is a big difference. They don't believe that all seniors should get the help. They believe that we should subsidize, with tax money, insurance policies that even the insurance companies—I've got to give them this; I fought with them for 7 years—but even the health insurance companies say they cannot offer policies at affordable prices that real people will buy.

So the Republican plan does not offer our seniors a chance to get prescription drug coverage—like he wants—Ed Towns—badly.

Now, you need to think about this. I mean, you're here for him, and we couldn't beat him with a stick of dynamite with this one. But it's important that you understand that every one of these elections matters. And I'm not on the ballot. I've done everything I could do to turn this country around.

I talked to a gentleman the other day who said, for a lame duck, I was still quacking pretty loudly. [*Laughter*] I'm doing all I know to do. But I want you to think about this.

I want you to remember, number one, we've got the chance of a lifetime; what are we going to do with it? I think we ought to be dealing with the big issues, big opportunities, big challenges. Number two, there are real differences between the two parties—honest. We don't have to say anything bad about the Republicans. I don't like all this. They're just differences. But number three, they hope you won't understand how deep those differences are, because most folks agree with us.

Now, those are the things I want you to remember. So if somebody asks you how come you came, say, “I like Ed Towns. He's been a good Congressman. He's fighting to deal with the things that we ought to deal with, and I'm determined not to blow the greatest chance America has ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I know there are differences, and I'm going to go vote based on what I think is right.”

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at Trump Towers. In his remarks, he referred to event co-chairs LaDane Williamson, Ed Bergassi, and Kevin and Lisa McGovern; James R. McManus, district leader, McManus Midtown Democratic Association; and Representative Towns' wife, Gwendolyn.

Memorandum on Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

June 16, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education

Subject: Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

One of the fundamental goals of my Administration has been to strengthen fathers' involvement in their children's lives. In support of that goal, I directed all executive departments and agencies to review their policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure that they supported men in their role as fathers. The review concluded that the Federal Government can play an important role by providing coordinated guidance and resources that support responsible fatherhood to individuals and State and local governments.

Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, my Administration has made significant progress in promoting greater father involvement, within the Federal workforce as well as through Federal programs and resources, and through partnerships with States and communities, foundations, and the research community.

As you know, my Budget for Fiscal Year 2001 substantially expands our efforts to promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen families. The Budget proposes \$255 million for the first year of a new "Fathers Work/Families Win" initiative to promote responsible fatherhood and support working families, allows States to simplify child support distribution rules, provides incentives to States that pass through more child support payments directly to families, and extends Welfare-to-Work grants to help noncustodial parents move into lasting unsubsidized jobs. In addition, my Budget proposes to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit by nearly \$24 billion over 10 years, providing an additional work incentive of as much as \$1,200 in tax relief to an estimated 6.8 million hardworking mothers and fathers.

Recent research indicates that promoting and rewarding work for low-income families can support marital stability, increase employment and earnings, reduce domestic violence, and improve

children's behavior and school performance. In addition, research confirms that child support is an important factor in lifting children out of poverty. There is also evidence that a large proportion of unmarried fathers are involved with their children at birth, but that these relationships tend to weaken over time. And employed fathers are more likely to be able to support their children financially and emotionally.

These results, as well as the 1995 review, show the importance of providing Federal guidance and resources to States that can support responsible fatherhood, work, and family. Therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretaries of Labor, Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and the Attorney General, to develop and provide, within 90 days of the date of this memorandum, coordinated guidance on Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

This guidance should:

- (1) clearly identify existing resources available, including Federal welfare reform block grant funds, Welfare-to-Work and workforce development resources, educational resources, paternity establishment and child support, Food Stamp Employment and Training, and low-income housing and community development funds;
- (2) help States, local governments, community- and faith-based organizations, fatherhood practitioners, and families, identify and use Federal resources and opportunities to strengthen the many roles of fathers in families;
- (3) clarify the extent to which existing policies and practices, including child support policies, can be modified to help ensure available resources effectively serve lower-income fathers;
- (4) identify opportunities to build on and sustain the involvement of fathers in low-income, unmarried parent, "fragile families"; and

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- (5) list contact information to help interested parties access information on a regular basis.

This guidance should be accessible, and made available through the websites of Federal agencies, as well as in printed form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on June 17. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Radio Address

June 17, 2000

Good morning. Tomorrow America pauses to honor the countless contributions and obligations of fatherhood. When I think back on all the titles I've held, from attorney general of Arkansas to Governor to President, none of them comes close in importance and in fulfillment to the simple title of father.

Fatherhood is one of the great blessings of life and also one of the greatest challenges any man can have, especially at a time when it's becoming more and more difficult to balance the pressures of work and family.

Today I want to share some evidence with you about the critical role fathers play in their children's lives, and I want to talk about our obligation as a nation to help more fathers provide both the emotional and the financial support their children need.

We've known for a long time now that students do better in school and later in life when their parents are more actively involved in their learning. But over the years, parent involvement often has meant mothers' involvement. This assumption misses the importance of fathers. Research now confirms that involvement of both parents in a child's education makes a positive difference, and that father involvement during infancy and early childhood also contributes to a child's emotional security and enhances problem-solving in math and verbal skills.

In fact, one study showed that the chances of a child getting mostly A's increased by over 40 percent in two-parent families where the father was highly involved. Even in families where the father isn't living with his child but remains actively involved, those odds of getting A's increased by a full third.

Clearly, fathers matter when it comes to early childhood development and education. And

while there is now a growing understanding of that fact, it was Vice President Al Gore who put a national spotlight on this issue during his 1994 Family Re-Union Conference, and he's worked tirelessly on it ever since.

Our combined efforts are paying off. I'm pleased to release a report today from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services that offers educators and early childhood providers information, strategies, and tools to successfully involve more fathers in their children's learning—from encouraging more fathers to read with their kids at home to inviting more of them to volunteer in schools and child care centers.

The report highlights model programs around the country and provides resource information for practitioners. We also know that noncustodial parents who continue to be involved with their children are more likely to pay child support. The sad fact is that one in three children in America today lives without his or her father. They shouldn't be punished, either emotionally or financially, because of that. That's why for 7½ years now we've made child support enforcement a top priority.

And today we've got some further evidence that our efforts are paying off. Child support collections increased 10 percent during the past year, reaching a record of nearly \$16 billion. That's double what it was in 1992. This means fewer women on welfare, fewer children in poverty, more families living in dignity.

When it comes to protecting children and building strong families and strong communities, all of us have a role to play. But first and foremost, it's about caring mothers and fathers and then about supporting community. But Government also must do its part. And we mustn't

forget that most fathers out there really do want to do a good job. That's why today I'm also directing a number of departments to develop coordinated, interagency guidance to help States and communities identify and use available Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

The research and the results are clear: Supporting responsible fatherhood is good for children, good for families, good for our Nation. It's why we propose building on our progress with a \$255 million responsible fatherhood initiative called "Fathers Work/ Families Win." The fact is, many fathers can't provide financial and emotional support to their children, not because they're deadbeat but because they're dead-broke.

Our initiative would help at least 40,000 more low income fathers work and support their children. Unfortunately, in the spending bill passed in the House this week, the Congress turned its back on this challenge by not including any

money for this important initiative. So I ask Congress to work with me across party lines to pass a budget that makes sure more fathers can live up to their responsibility. Working together, we can help fathers better fulfill the emotional, educational, and financial needs of their children.

As we prepare to celebrate the first Father's Day of the new century, let's do all we can to help more fathers live up to that title, not just through their financial support but also by becoming more active, loving participants in their children's lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:15 a.m. on June 16 in Classroom 230 at Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Geneva Protocol of 1925

June 17, 2000

Seventy-five years ago today, June 17, 1925, the international community took a major step toward protecting the world from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction by concluding the Geneva Protocol of 1925. In the aftermath of the terrible casualties caused by poison gas in World War I, the Geneva Protocol banned the use in war of chemical and biological weapons.

More recently, the international community has worked to build on this achievement. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) banned the development, production, and possession of biological and toxin weapons, and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) did the same for chemical weapons. Today, 135 countries are parties to the CWC, and 143 are parties to the BWC. The United States has ratified both agreements, and our commitment to them has enjoyed strong bipartisan support.

Today, one of the greatest threats to American and global security is the danger that adversary nations or terrorist groups will obtain and use chemical or biological weapons. The inter-

national agreements we have reached banning these weapons are a critical component of our effort to protect against this threat.

In my 1998 State of the Union Address, I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva at the Ad Hoc Group of BWC States Parties toward achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC Protocol that will further strengthen international security.

On this 75th anniversary of the Geneva Protocol, I call on the countries of the world who have not yet done so to join the Geneva Protocol, CWC, and BWC. I call on all parties to strictly adhere to these agreements and to work to strengthen them. It is more urgent than ever that, true to the words of the Geneva Protocol, their prohibitions "shall be universally accepted . . . binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations."

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Statement on the Ethiopia-Eritrea Cease-Fire Agreement

June 18, 2000

Today in Algiers, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an agreement to cease hostilities. This is a breakthrough which can and should end the tragic conflict in the Horn of Africa. It can and should permit these two countries to realize their potential in peace, instead of squandering it in war.

I commend the Organization of African Unity, and especially its chair, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, for leading the negotiation of this agreement. I am grateful to my envoy, former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, to Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, and to my senior adviser on African affairs, Gayle Smith, for their tireless pursuit of a peaceful resolution to this conflict. The United States

has supported the OAU in this effort, and we will continue to do so. I have asked Tony Lake to return to Algiers to work with the OAU as we enter the next round of negotiations.

I hope this commitment by Ethiopia and Eritrea to stop the fighting also signals their commitment to build the peace. I urge them to use the next round of talks to produce a final, comprehensive, lasting agreement, so they can get on with the work of pursuing democracy and development for their people. Ethiopia and Eritrea are America's friends. If they are ready to take the next step, we and our partners in the international community will walk with them.

Remarks at a Southwest Voter Registration Education Project Reception in Houston, Texas

June 19, 2000

Thank you very, very much. Well, I think Representative Noriega did his family proud, don't you? I thought it was great. Thank you. *[Applause]*

I would like to thank all of you who are here, including the folks behind me: my good friend Bill White and my long-time friend Representative Al Edwards and Carlos Truan, whom I've known for nearly 30 years. And Antonio Gonzalez, thank you very much. And Billie Carr is still working her cell phone after all these years. *[Laughter]* Tell whoever it is I said hello, Billie. *[Laughter]* I love this.

I want to thank Representative Sheila Jackson Lee for being here. And Mickey Ibarra, who is my special assistant who works with State and local government around the country, I thank him for coming down here, along with Steve Ricchetti, my Deputy Chief of Staff.

I'm delighted to be with Southwest Voter Registration Project, and I want to thank you for all the work that you have done with me and the Vice President over the years, the work you have done to advance democracy, to bring

Latino voters into the process, to promote education and economic development.

I also appreciate the solidarity you have shown with others who also deserve to be empowered and to have a full portion of the American dream. And I want to acknowledge, again, Representative Al Edwards, who is here, because today is June 19th, which is known in the African-American community in the South as "Juneteenth." It's the holiday that celebrates the emancipation of the slaves in Texas.

And for those of you who don't know, basically, Abraham Lincoln, in what is now the Lincoln Bedroom, signed the Emancipation Proclamation in September of 1862. It became effective January 1, 1863. But most of the slaves who were freed did not find out until after the Civil War, because the proclamation ran to the States that had seceded. And formal notice came on June 19th in Texas, and it became known as Juneteenth. In the western part of the Southern States, it's still not uncommon to see these "Juneteenth" celebrations all across the South, particularly in little towns who have family ties going back to that period. And Al

made it a holiday in Texas. We congratulate him. Thank you, old friend.

And let me sort of pivot off of that to say that this day should be a day for rejoicing but also for reflection and for reminding ourselves that there's still a lot of hardship out there and still a lot of discrimination against people because of their race or their sexual orientation or something else that makes them different and therefore makes other people afraid of them or believe that they can look down on them and do things that aren't right.

On the way in here, I met with Louvon Harris and Darrell Verrett, the sister and the nephew of James Byrd. They're right here. Stand up. [Applause] It was 2 years ago this month that James Byrd was killed here in Texas, in a heinous act that shocked Americans in every corner of the country, including all the good people of Texas. It reminds us that crimes that are motivated by hate really are fundamentally different and, I believe, should be treated differently under the law.

In the Federal Government we have Federal hate crimes legislation on the books that I believe should be stronger. But we have prosecuted a number of the cases. We have substantially increased the number of FBI agents working them; we have formed local hate crimes working groups; and for 3 years we've tried to pass a stronger Federal bill and to support similar actions in States across the country.

I know you were disappointed when the State hate crimes legislation didn't pass here. But I am pleased to be able to tell you that the United States Senate has finally agreed, the leadership of the Senate, to allow a vote, up or down, on hate crimes legislation that has now been held up since November of 1997,* when I had the first White House Conference on Hate Crimes. But it's now going to be voted on.

And I want to tell you about it. The bill has been strengthened. The version of the bill that is now going to be voted on will be introduced by Senator Kennedy today on the Senate floor. It strengthens the Federal hate crimes legislation and also gives State and local officials more Federal resources to help to prosecute these crimes.

Now, we believe that most hate crimes should be prosecuted—investigated and prosecuted by State and local officials, with the Federal Gov-

ernment being a partner. But too often Federal officials have literally been prevented from teaming up with local law enforcement, and that has kept communities from being able to do what needed to be done to work these offenses.

Senator Kennedy's bill takes steps to change that by giving State and local officials the assistance they need. It also requires the Attorney General to confer with them before bringing a case in Federal court. So we have actually strengthened the original bill, put some more resources in it, and done it in a way that I hope and pray will get us enough Republican votes to actually pass the bill. And I ask all of you to stand with this fine family. They've been out here working for this for 2 years now. They have worked through their grief and through their pain. They've been willing to stand up and be counted.

And we have a chance now to pass this at the Federal level. And I know that Representative Sheila Jackson Lee cares very deeply about this. I brought two United States Senators down to Texas with me today, Ron Wyden and Bob Torricelli, who are profoundly committed to it. And I just want to ask you to help us. You have shown your solidarity on all these human rights issues. We have people here from the Human Rights Campaign Fund in this room today. I want to ask you to help us. We've got a chance now. We have to pass this legislation.

I'd like to mention one or two other things, if I might. Congress, I hope, will pass some legislation to correct two long-standing injustices that affect immigrants in our country. First, we need to amend our immigration laws to provide equitable treatment for all Central American immigrants. In that connection, we should give migrants with longstanding ties to our country the chance to legalize their status.

As all of you know, we had a huge amount of turmoil in Central America right through the 1980's, into the early nineties. The Federal law actually discriminates against Central Americans who came here for the same reasons, depending on what country they came from and what the nature of the conflict was back home. And I don't think any of us think that is right. And a lot of these folks have been here a long time. They've established families; they've married people from other countries or from our country; they've got kids in our schools. And we need to do this.

* White House correction.

The third thing I'd like to ask your help on is to continue working with us to see that our Federal courts reflect America's growing diversity. [Applause] I appreciate you clapping, but I want you to really help us do something about this.

Representative Noriega said that I had appointed and nominated the most diverse group of Federal judges in history. We've appointed more Hispanic-Americans to the Federal bench than any administration before. Twenty-four of my judicial appointees have been Hispanic-Americans, more than the previous two Republican administrations combined. I'm proud of that. But—yes, but—[laughter]—and the “but” is important—several eminently qualified minority nominees have become casualties of a highly politicized confirmation process.

Let me back up and say that, generally, if you—there have been lots and lots of scholarly articles pointing out that my nominees are the most highly regarded by the American Bar Association professional evaluation in 40 years, that they have by and large not been political, that they have not been on one ideological extreme. They have been mainstream appointees. And they have constantly been attacked in the Senate, because they didn't fit the ideological mold that the Republican majority wanted.

For example, Ricardo Morado, my candidate for the Southern District here in Texas, his nomination has been put on hold. Kathleen McCree Lewis in Detroit—her father, Wade McCree, was one of the two or three most important lawyers in the entire civil rights movement—highly regarded lawyer. Never been an African-American woman on the Court of Appeals there. Can't get a hearing for her.

And perhaps the most egregious case in the entire country, I think, is the case of Enrique Moreno, who I nominated to the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He has been waiting more than 275 days, without even receiving a Judiciary Committee hearing. And last month Senator Gramm and Senator Hutchison said they were going to oppose his nomination because he wasn't qualified. They said he wasn't experienced. Well, you be the judge. From humble beginnings in El Paso, he established, first of all, an utterly brilliant academic career—I might add, more brilliant than that of virtually everyone who'd be voting on his confirmation. [Laughter] The State judges in Texas said he was one of the top three trial attorneys in El

Paso. The American Bar Association gave him their highest rating—not just a good rating, their highest rating. But this State's Republican Senator said he's not qualified. And apparently everybody else is going along with it, because there's been no voice to the contrary. Now, I don't know about you, but if he's not qualified, who is?

This is the kind of thing—we've been going through this—I can give you lots of other examples. The first African-American ever to serve on the Missouri Supreme Court was defeated in the Senate by a blatant partisan misrepresentation of his record. And we can't have this kind of thing in our country.

It wasn't as if I said, “Well, I want a quota here, and I'm going to appoint this guy because he's Hispanic.” This guy has a brilliant academic record, a brilliant record as a lawyer. The American Bar Association says they give him their highest rating. And the Senators here say he's not qualified. And this is part of a distinctive pattern.

This should not be partisan. I went out of my way because we'd had 20 years of partisan fights in judgeships. I went out of my way to try to pick people that would not raise partisan hackles, to be totally bipartisan in this. And in spite of that, because there are those in the other party who see the courts as an instrument of partisan policy and want it to be that—not because I've made it there but because neutral is not good enough, fair is not good enough, unbiased is not good enough—that's what's going on here. And if you feel strongly about it, you better be heard.

And the device is always to deny these people a hearing or to deny them a vote. Why? Because they don't want them on the court, but they don't want the people you're trying to register to vote to know they don't want them on the court. Right? So the answer is, blur everything, shift, kind of just sort of waver around here, and let it all die and hope nobody will know what really happened.

So I'm here to tell you this is a good man. If he was involved with me politically, I don't know it. Maybe that's—I don't. I appointed him because the people came to me and said, “We've got a chance to appoint a guy who's superbly qualified, who can get the highest ABA rating and be a good thing for Texas, a good thing for the fifth circuit,” and so I did it. And I think for him to be denied, not because he's

political but because he's not political enough in the right way, is wrong.

Now, let me just say a couple of things in closing. We've got to get everybody to vote in this election, and then they need to know what the stakes are. You want people to register to vote and to make intelligent choices. And I think we're actually quite fortunate in this millennial election, because we don't have to engage in a kind of personal, negative histrionics. I think you've got two good people running for President who have profound disagreements. But it's important people know what the differences are. I think you've got good people running for the Senate all over America, and running for the House. There's one Senate race I'm especially interested in. [*Laughter*] But anyway, you've got all these good people. We don't have to run an election where anybody badmouths anybody else. Just everybody stand up and say where they disagree, and let the voters make up their mind.

But it is important not to think that there are no disagreements and that there aren't any consequences, because there are. Just because we have a bunch of good people doesn't mean there are no consequences to the decisions the voters will make. So people have to make up their mind. And first, they have to register; then they have to vote. And when they go, they need to actually have a clear view of, "If I vote for this set of candidates, this is what I get; these are the decisions I get; this is the direction I get. If I vote for this section, this group, this is what I get."

And I've done everything I could to try to turn the country around. And I'm very proud of the fact that we're paying down the debt instead of running it up, that we've got the longest economic expansion in history and over 22 million jobs and the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded and the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the highest Hispanic homeownership and 2½ times as many SBA loans and all that.

But the truth is, all that matters is, what are we going to do with it? What is it that you propose to do with it?

I'm glad we had a successful empowerment zone in south Texas. I'm glad that we've been able to do these things. But the issue is, what are you going to do with it? What should the economic policy of the country be? Should we continue paying down the debt and protecting

Social Security and Medicare and investing in education? Or should we give all the projected surplus back to you in a tax cut and just hope that we won't run a deficit and hope somehow we'll find the money to invest in education?

What should we do in education? Should we modernize our schools and make sure we hire enough teachers and identify schools that aren't succeeding and turn them around, or change the leadership? Or should we adopt a voucher program and say that public schools probably can't be made to work, so let's go to a voucher system?

I was in a school in New York City this week—let me just give you one example, one example. Two years ago, Public School 96 in Spanish Harlem—2 years ago, 80 percent of those kids in this grade school were reading below grade level—2 years ago. Today, 74 percent of them are reading at or above grade level, and doing math at or above level—in 2 years.

I was in a school in Kentucky the other day that was one of the worst performing schools in the State—elementary schools. There were 5 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level 4 years ago; today, 57 percent of them are. There were 12 percent of the kids doing math at or above grade level; today, 70 percent are. There were zero percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level; today, two-thirds are—basically, in 3 years. It's the 19th best elementary school in the State of Kentucky. And way over half the kids are on free or reduced school lunches.

So what I want you to know is that without regard to income or background, intelligence is equally distributed, and schools can be made to work if we just do what we know works. And that's what I think we ought to make a commitment to do. You know, when I started this school reform business 20 years ago in Arkansas, when I was trying to do it, we didn't really know what worked. But we do now. And it would be a terrible mistake for us to turn away from what works toward something that we don't have any idea whether it works or not but would drain a lot of money off—I think.

What about the economy? Well, I think it's important that we do more to bring the benefits of the economy to people and places that haven't fully participated. That's why I want to increase the earned-income tax credit, something you helped me do before—lifted over a

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million Hispanics out of poverty in the years that I've been in office. That's why I think we ought to raise the minimum wage again. That's why I think we ought to adopt this new markets initiative. It's the only really good bipartisan thing we've got going up in Washington now. We are working really well in the House in a bipartisan way. It's really quite touching, and I thank the Speaker of the House for doing it. And I hope we can do it in the Senate. It's why I think we ought to implement a lot of the recommendations of the Southwest Border Initiative Task Force that I got. A lot of you have been involved in that in one way or the other.

What are we going to do about health care? Are we going to have a Patients' Bill of Rights or not? Are we going to let all the seniors on Medicare have access to affordable prescription drugs or not? Are we going to do more to let working families have access to affordable health insurance or not? I've got a big proposal on that. I think Houston has one of the highest percentages of working people without access to health insurance in the entire United States, a lot of them Latino. This is a big issue.

So that's the last thing I leave you with. The country is moving in the right direction. Things are better than they were 8 years ago. But how a nation deals with its prosperity is as stern a test of its character and judgment as how it deals with adversity. And those of us that are old enough to remember different times know that nothing lasts forever. And when you're in the bad times, you can thank God

for that. But when you're in great times, you should be humble and grateful and make up your mind to make the most of them.

We've got the best chance in my lifetime to deal with the big challenges still out there, to seize the big opportunities out there. And that's why it's important that you empower people. They can't take good times for granted. And if they're still in trouble, they shouldn't take that for granted, either. The vote is the voice, just like your sign says.

And it's been a great honor for me to serve. It's been a great honor for me to work with you. I've had the time of my life. This is the first election in 25 years I'm not part of; most days I'm okay about it. [Laughter] But as a noncandidate, the only thing I ask everybody to do is to vote and to be intelligent about it, to make up your mind what you think we ought to do with this moment of prosperity, and then to clearly understand the choices before you and go out and make yours. If we do that, America will be in good hands.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Austin Room at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Texas State Representatives Rick Noriega and Al Edwards; Bill White, former chair, and Billie Carr, executive council member, Texas State Democratic Party; Texas State Senator Carlos F. Truan; and Antonio Gonzalez, president, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Luncheon in Houston

June 19, 2000

Thank you very much. Senator Torricelli, Senator Wyden, Mayor Lanier and Elise, and Secretary Bentsen and B.A.; Mr. White, we miss you in the administration. I told Lloyd Bentsen when he and B.A. came through the line, I said, "Well, your economy is still humming along pretty good, Lloyd." And I want all of you to know that if he hadn't been my first Treasury Secretary, might not any of us be sitting here

today celebrating the strongest economy in American history, and I thank you very much.

I am here today primarily on behalf of our Democratic candidates for the Senate and those who are presently serving. I suppose that every American who is a reasonably good citizen understands, in general, what the Senate does, and thinks on balance it would be a good thing if good people were there who more or less agree with you.

But because of the unique vantage point that I have occupied in the last 7½ years, I probably feel that more passionately than any other person. I know what a difference it makes in the confirmation process of judges, in the weighing of the decisions about confirming people for other important positions, and how legislation is shaped and how the whole direction of foreign policy is controlled. And these things are very important. And I think what I would like to do today, recognizing that, as all of you know, I have a special interest in one particular Senate race—which, thank goodness, does not disqualify me from speaking here today. [Laughter]

I want to leave you with three thoughts. Somebody's liable to ask you why you showed up here today, and you need to be able to give an answer. And the three points I want to make is, number one, this is a big election. And it's just as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996, which enabled us to turn this country around and move it in the right direction and get a lot going.

The second thing I want to say is, there are real differences between the candidates of the two parties. And I hope this will be an immensely positive election. It is no longer necessary for us to engage in the politics of personal destruction. I hope we've beat that back for a long time to come. But that means you can have an honest debate on the real differences. And from the White House to the Senate to the House, there are real differences. And we ought to have a good time debating them—in a good humor, be happy our country's in good shape, and just have an old-fashioned citizenship lesson in what the differences are. So it's a big election; there are real differences.

The third point, however, I want you to know is that for the only time, I think, in my adult lifetime, one party—the Republican Party—doesn't really want you to understand what the differences are. Which is a dead giveaway that, at least, they think if the American people knew what the differences were, they'd vote with us. And from my perspective, I'm—first, let me say I'm grateful that I had the chance to serve as President and determined to get everything done I can do in the next 6 months, 7 months I have to serve. I had a very distinguished man call me a couple of days ago, and he said, "You know, Mr. President, for a lame duck, you're still quacking rather loudly." [Laughter] So I

do think there's a lot that we're going to get done in the next 6 months.

But what I want to say to you is I've done what I could to turn the country around, to build that bridge to the 21st century, to bring people involved—all different kinds of people in the political process. My Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti, is here. "Look around this room," he said—and Steve grew up in Ohio—and he looked at me, and he said, "This is not your typical Texas cowboy crowd, is it?" And I said, "You know, Texas has changed. Houston has changed. America has changed. This is a different world out there. And we want everybody involved."

And so what I hope for my country now is that we will say to ourselves, this is a very important election; here's what we want to accomplish; here's where the candidates stand, from the White House to the Senate to the House; here's what we're going to do. I mean, I hope that democracy, in short, will work the way it's supposed to work. And then none of us can have any complaints.

But a lot of people seem to think it really doesn't make much difference because the economy is so prosperous; we've got the longest economic expansion in history and the 22 million new jobs and the lowest African-American, Hispanic unemployment rate we ever had, the lowest crime rate in a quarter century, and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years—they're half what they were when I took office. And there is no apparent threat to our security, and our country is able to be a force for peace and freedom around the world. So they say, "Could there be any differences?" And the answer is yes. Are there consequences? Yes.

Anybody who has lived more than 25 or 30 years, anyway, knows that nothing lasts forever. Now, if you're in the middle of a terrible time, that's immensely reassuring. [Laughter] But if you're in the middle of good times, it ought to be humbling and sobering. You get a time like this maybe once in a lifetime as a nation, where you really have it within your power to shape the future of your dreams for your children.

And to do that you have to ask, what are the great challenges; what are the great opportunities here before us? And then, how should we go about meeting them? And I think you can really argue that how we handle prosperity is as stern a test of our judgment, our vision,

our character, as how we handle adversity. There is not anybody in here over a certain age who can't remember at least one time in your life when you made a mistake not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well. You thought there were no consequences to the failure to concentrate. It's just part of human nature.

So that's the first thing. This is a big, big election. The second thing is, what are the questions? Bob Torricelli said I always try to ask the right question. I think that the outcome of these elections will be determined, in no small measure, by what people think the question is. So I can only tell you what I think the big questions are.

Number one, how do we keep the economy going? It's projected that we're going to have a very large surplus over the next 12 years—10 years. We can actually get this country out of debt in the next 12 years. Should we do it, or not? I think we should. And we can do that, still have a decent-size tax cut, invest in the education of our children, invest in science and technology, and health care and preserving the environment and keep paying the debt down.

And in the process, we will then prepare for what I think the next big challenge is, the aging of America. How are we going to handle it when there are only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? We should be saving today against that eventuality and preparing for it.

How are we going to extend this economic prosperity to people in places who have been left behind? Now this is something Vice President Gore and I have worked on very hard for the last 8 years. We have this empowerment zone program that he's done a brilliant job of running. We've got one quite successful one down in south Texas, which is now the third fastest growing area of America—interestingly enough, Secretary Bentsen's backyard down there.

But I think we ought to give Americans the same incentives to invest in poor areas here we give them to invest in poor areas around the world, in Latin America or Africa or Asia. And I'm working with the Speaker of the House. I'm trying to make this a totally bipartisan issue. But this is a big deal, because there are still a lot of people in places who aren't part of this prosperity.

The next big question—I think a big ethical question for our society—how are we going to permit people to do a better job of balancing their responsibilities as parents and their responsibilities at work? A higher and higher percentage of people with young children are in the work force. If they have to choose between succeeding at raising their children and succeeding in the work force, society has lost from the beginning, because the most important work of all is raising children. And so, obviously, if you make people choose, we're going to lose. There's a lot more we can do there.

We have an enormous percentage of families who are racked with worry because they don't have access to health insurance. Houston, the greater Houston area, one of the highest percentages in the country of working families who don't have access to health insurance—what do we propose to do with that?

How are we going to grow the economy and continue to improve the environment and deal with the challenge of global warming, which now virtually everybody acknowledges is real? Can it be done? The answer to that is, yes, it can be. How are we going to give all of our kids a world-class education and open the doors of college and university to everybody? How are we going to stay on the cutting edge of science and technology? How are we going to continue to be a force for peace?

Now, what are the specifics here? Are there differences? Yeah. The Democrats, for example, believe that America should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty—we're trying to get India and Pakistan to do it—the Republicans don't. They believe we should walk away from a generation of leading the world toward less dangers from nuclear weapons. This is a huge issue, and it falls right on the Senate.

So if you agree with them, that you think it would be a good idea if America withdrew from all these global arms control regimes and stop trying to reduce the danger of nuclear weapons and say, "We'll just have bigger weapons; we don't care what anybody else does"—then you should support the Republicans for the Senate. But if you are proud of the fact that America has tried to lead the world away from the nuclear brink and reduce the nuclear threat, and that we—you should be, I hope, proud of the fact that I was the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty, and you would like to see it ratified—then you should support the Democrats.

I'll give you just another. If you believe that we should pay down the debt and have a modest tax cut we can afford, and that we can't possibly assume we're going to have all this money that people now say we'll have over the next decade, so we should take a more prudent course, then you have to vote for our side. If you think that it's an absolute lock-cinch that nothing bad will happen in the next decade and you want to get all the money out there right now in a tax cut and just hope to goodness it will all work out all right, you should vote for them, because that's what they want to do and they really believe it.

They don't believe there's any way anything bad can go wrong, and so they want to spend the surplus right now, all of it, before it materializes. And they think it will make the economy stronger. I think it will cause interest rates to go up. I think it will bring back the deficits, and I think it will make it weaker. But you have to decide. It's not like you don't have a choice here. And I could go through issue after issue after issue.

Now obviously, you've made your choice, or you wouldn't be here. But the point I'm making is, you need to go out across the State, across the community, across the country, to your friends, and say, whether you agree with me or not, this is an important election. The country is being tested. This is the election where we will say, "This is what we propose to do with our prosperity." That's what this election is about.

Nineteen ninety-two was about, "We're in a mess here; how are we going to get out of it?" Nineteen ninety-six was about, "Can we really build a bridge to the new century by keeping this going?" Two thousand is about, "What do we propose to do with our prosperity?" And then I want you to say, "There are differences between the candidates at all levels, and it is not necessary, as we too often have done in the last 20 years, to criticize them personally. It is better to say, here are their honest differences." And then, of course, I hope you'll—[*applause*]. Thank you. And then, of

course, I hope you'll say why you agree with our side. But even if someone disagrees with you, that's what an election is about. That's what democracy is supposed to be.

And this is the last point I want to make. The most important thing of all, which is why I like looking around this crowd today, is that we find a way to live together with all of our differences, that we find a way not just to tolerate them but to celebrate them, to say we are glad these Muslims from South Asia are part of 21st century America. We think they look very nice in their garb, and they're probably more comfortable than we are in the summertime. And we might have something to learn from them about the way life is organized and lived and thought about. And who knows, maybe they've got something to learn from us.

And this makes us stronger, that we have Sikhs and maybe Hindus and we've got Jews and we've got Christians and we've got Baha'is and we've got people from every different racial and ethnic group. And there has to be a way for us to celebrate this and yet reaffirm the primary importance of our common, shared humanity. Everything I have done as President for 7½ years, when you strip away all the details of the policy, has been designed to achieve that.

If I could have one wish for America, I would wish for us to be one America in that sense, because we're very smart. We're very industrious. We're very clever, and we'd figure out how to solve all our other problems. If we can keep the human heart in proper balance as we relate to others, we're going to be okay. And one of the things I'm proudest about my party and my Senate candidates is that that's the America we believe in.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. in Salon A at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Robert G. Torricelli, chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; former Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston and his wife, Elise; former Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, Beryl Ann (B.A.); and Bill White, former Deputy Secretary of Energy and former chair, Texas State Democratic Party.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in
Austin, Texas
June 19, 2000

I'm glad to see this place in the daytime. [Laughter] Well, first, I want to thank Roy and Mary for letting me come back to their home. I love this place. And it's exhibit A for the proposition that if you want to live like a Republican, you should vote Democrat. [Laughter]

Mr. Benson, thanks for the music. And I want to thank Governor Richards for being here, because now I know I'll get at least one new joke before I get on the plane tonight to go home. [Laughter] And Governor Briscoe, thank you, sir, and thanks for being so nice to Hillary all these years. And my good friend Jake Pickle, I miss you, and I'm delighted to see you.

I want to say to all of you who had anything to do with this, I'm very grateful. I was looking tonight at Roy and Judy and Garry Mauro, and we all started out together 28 years ago. They don't have any gray hair; I'm practically broken down. [Laughter] I don't know how this happened. But Mauro and Spence and I, we were 30 percent of the white male vote McGovern got in Texas. [Laughter] We could dominate the whole—it was kind of a kick; it was the ultimate case of being a big fish in a small pond. That's not quite fair, there's several of you in here I met 28 years ago. And I've loved my relationships with this State and with these people a long time.

And I want to thank Senator Torricelli for all the hard work he's done for the Democrats in the Senate. And Senator Wyden, thank you for coming all the way from Oregon.

And my great long-time friend Chuck Robb, who in many ways would qualify for the title of the bravest person in the Senate. He's the guy that always stands up and votes exactly what he thinks is right and to heck with the consequences, and then goes out and really believes he can convince the people of Virginia he's right. He had to run for reelection against Ollie North in 1994, the worst year the Democrats have had in 40 years. And he survived. And now he's got to run against a man who's a very popular former Governor, and he's going to win again. And he's going to win again because he's brave and good, and you should be very proud

of him and his Texas ties. And I thank you very much.

Now, I also want to thank those of you who helped Hillary when she was down here. She was also here with us in Texas in 1972, and I just talked to her before I came here. And she spoke to the Merchant Marine Academy commencement on Long Island today. And she was regaling me with tales of the merchant marine—it made me want to join again. I wish I was 20 years old, and I could start—when you said, “I was your 28-year-old friend,” I thought, you know, if somebody would let me be 28, I'd let them be President, and take my chances. [Laughter] I could do it again. I'd take my chances. I'd do it all over again. [Laughter]

Let me—I'll be brief. I always wonder whether I'm preaching to the saved at these meetings, but I want to say just a couple of words here. First of all, I'm grateful for the chance I've had to serve, and I've loved it. Secondly, I've had a good team. And I say this, and I want to say a little more about this in a minute, but there's never been, in the history of America—and I'm a pretty good student of American history—a Vice President who's had remotely the positive impact on this country as Vice President that Al Gore has had. I've had a great Cabinet; I've had a great staff. My wife has played a marvelous role in a lot of different ways in helping move the country forward. And we've had a good time. And lo and behold, it worked out pretty well.

And what I would like to say—I'd just like to make a couple of points, because somebody might ask you why you came tomorrow, and I don't want you to say you just wanted to see Roy's house one more time. [Laughter] A lot of the things that happened that were good, I think, happened because we had a set of ideas about how the country should be run and how we should work that is much more like you work in your daily lives than the way Washington worked when I got there and the way, unfortunately, it still works too much today.

I basically believed that there was something wrong when you had a political system where everybody said, “It's just terrible; we're up to

our ears in debt,” and then kept voting to run the debt up every year. I thought there was something wrong with a system that said that if you were pro-labor, you couldn’t be pro-business; if you wanted a clean environment, you couldn’t be pro-growth; and that the Republicans and the Democrats just spend all their time trading insults instead of figuring out how to get work done. Because I can tell you—and I think we’re going to get a lot of stuff done in the 7 months I’ve got left to be President. And if we do everything we could conceivably get done, as the Senators here will tell you, there will still be plenty that we disagree about in the election.

And so we began to work on getting the economy together and on trying to figure out how to pull people together to actually solve problems. And we had an economic strategy that said, get the debt down; invest more in education, even if you have to cut out a lot of other things the Government is doing, and in science and technology; figure out a way to deal with a lot of these big, long-term challenges; and try to pull the country together across all the lines that divide us, because we’re growing ever more diverse.

Steve Ricchetti is here with me. He’s my Deputy Chief of Staff. He grew up in Ohio. We went to Houston; we were at a lunch in Houston today. We had Muslims, Sikhs, east Asians, obviously, African-Americans, Hispanics, the old rednecks like me there. It was an amazing thing. Ricchetti looked around this crowd, he said, “This is not your typical Houston cowboy crowd, is it?” [*Laughter*] And I said, “No, but it’s tomorrow’s Texas.” It is tomorrow’s Texas, and it’s tomorrow’s America. So it’s working.

Now, I think the way elections come out often depend on what people think the question is. So what do you think the issue is in this election, in the President’s race, in the Congress races, in the Senate and the House? I think it is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity?

Eight years ago the country took a chance on me, but we were in trouble. Everybody felt like we were in trouble. They thought we were drifting; they thought there was too much fighting going on; they thought we needed to take a new direction. And they decided to take a chance on us.

So now we’ve got the ship of state turned around. We’ve got the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest crime rate in a quarter century, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the relative absence of crisis at home and abroad. Our country has been a real force for peace and freedom throughout the world. So what are we going to do with it?

And if you think that’s the question, then you have to answer it. My belief is, since I’m now old enough to remember the last time we had the longest economic expansion in history, is that we’ve got to work like crazy to deal with the big challenges and seize the big opportunities our country has, because nothing lasts forever. If you’ve been through any tough times in your life, you thank God it doesn’t last forever. But nothing lasts forever. The world is not static; it’s changing very rapidly. And we have this little moment in time, and we can make something really big and beautiful and wonderful out of it.

I’ve done everything I could to leave this country in good shape. And my only desire now is that when I’m not President anymore, that everybody is trying to make the most of it, instead of just squandering it.

So for me, what does that mean? It means we ought to keep the economy going. We ought to extend its benefits to everybody that’s willing to work for it. We ought to help families meet the challenge of the new world, like how to balance work and childrearing. And we ought to think about the major issues of the future: putting a human face on the global economy; expanding trade and lifting people’s lives; dealing with this problem of climate change, which the young people here may find to be one of the three biggest problems they’ll face in the next 20 to 30 years unless we face it now. How are we going to deal with all this diversity at home? Unless we can deal with it at home, we can’t really, over the long run, deal with all the problems around the world. It’s a big deal. How are we going to deal with the aging of America?

So, number one, I think this election is as important as the ones in ’92 and ’96. It’s just different. And I think it ought to be about, what are we going to do with our prosperity, first one. Number two, this does not have to be one of these elections—and we’ve had all too many over the last 20 years—where the candidates just try to bludgeon each other about,

you know, this one's a crook, and this one's no good, and all this kind of stuff. We don't need any politics of personal destruction here. We just need an honest debate on the honest differences.

But pointing out the differences is not negative; it's healthy. You've got to understand, there are choices, and all your choices have consequences, whether it's in the Presidential race, the Senate races, or the House race. And so, point one, it's an important election; point two, there are big differences.

Point three—and this is very important; you watch this—the most interesting thing about this election is, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] It's very interesting this year. And I suppose I should take that as a compliment. [Laughter]

But, I can tell you, if you just go through—let me just—and this is why the Senate's so important. And you know, everybody that has studied civics 101 knows that the Congress is important. But I think no one—I think maybe a President understands more than anyone else how profoundly important it is, every single Senate seat. They vote on who goes on the Supreme Court—big deal, huge consequences in the next election; there will be two to four new members of the Supreme Court in the next 4 years. They vote on treaties. They vote on other important appointments. And the way their system works, one Senator can virtually either shut the whole show down or change the whole future of the country, for good or ill. And unless you've actually been there and seen it, you can minimize it.

So I'll just give you a few examples. And again, I feel this way about the President's race. I think we ought to say, okay, we got two good people here. There's no point in running anybody down. They have real differences; here they are; here are the consequences of your decision. Just don't pretend that there aren't any consequences, and be willing to live with them, whichever you do. Because there's a lot of surveys which show that, notwithstanding people's tendency to believe that all of us politicians never keep our word, that most Presidents pretty much do what they say. And when they don't, we're glad they didn't. Like Abraham Lincoln promised not to free the slaves. Franklin Roosevelt said he'd balance the budget, and with 25 percent of the people out of work, it would

have been the worst thing he could have possibly done.

But people normally do what they say they're going to do when they run for the Senate, when they run for the House, and when they run for President. Now in the Senate—I'll just give you a couple of examples—we're going to face a big question early next year. And I'm battling the preliminaries now. You'll see the skirmishes unfolding over the next 7 months. What's the best way to keep the economy going? Our side says, the best way to keep the economy going—when there's so much growth and unemployment is so low, when everybody is looking at inflation, the Federal Reserve has already raised interest rates—the best thing we can do is keep paying this debt down to keep interest rates as low as possible.

We can afford a reasonable tax cut that helps people educate their kids, pay for child care expenses, gives people with money the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we now give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Asia and Africa. But we've got to have a—there's got to be a limit to it, because we've got to keep paying the debt down and because we've got to save enough money to deal with Social Security and Medicare when the baby boomers retire.

The Republicans believe that because the estimates of the surplus are so large over the next 10 years, we should go ahead and plan to spend it all on a tax cut and the other commitments that have been made. Well, it would be self-serving for me to say that the surplus would materialize, because it happened on my watch. But I don't really believe you can bank on \$2 trillion showing up over the next 10 years. There are lots of turns in the road between here and there.

So I think we're right, and I don't think they are. But you have to make a decision. And the Senate elections will have a lot to do with that. I'll give you another example.

We're going to be more and more involved with the rest of the world, whether we like it or not. I'm trying to pass this bill to normalize trade relations with China. I think it's very important. I think it may keep us out of another war in east Asia in the 21st century. It's important. It's more important than the money involved, to me—and it's a good economic deal for us—is that we fought three wars in Asia in the last 50 years, and I don't want my kids

or my grandkids to be involved in one in the next 50 if there's anything I can do to help it. It's not a guarantee, but we'll dramatically increase the chances of a peaceful future if we have a constructive relationship and try to bring Chinese society into a rule-based, law-abiding, get-along-with-your-neighbors, try-to-find-some-way-to-work-it-out system.

So what are the differences there? Well, I've worked real hard to work with other countries to reduce the threat of nuclear, chemical, and biological war. I was the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The Republicans voted it down—the first time an arms treaty has been voted down, an international treaty like that, since the Republican Senate voted against the League of Nations in 1919—and Governor Bush said he agreed with that. They just don't believe that. They think we don't have to be part of that; we should just take care of our own defense, and if we've got to keep testing—if 25 other countries start nuclear tests, that's okay.

So we have big differences there. And you have to decide whether you think the Democratic Senators are right or the Republican Senators are right. And it could have real consequences for how these children have to live. And you should hear their argument. I think they're wrong, but they can tell you why they think it's time for us to change 50 years of our efforts to work with others to reduce the arms issue.

On climate change, I think that it's finally possible in this high-tech age, that Austin is one of the centers of, to grow the economy and reduce damage to the environment. Basically, most of the folks in their party don't believe that. They still think if you want to get rich and stay rich, you've got to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. You need to decide whether you think they're right or we're right.

And I could just go through issue after issue after issue. On health care, we're for the Patients' Bill of Rights; they're not. We want a Medicare program that has prescription drugs that seniors can buy, because I think if we were creating Medicare again today, we'd never have a Medicare program without a drug component. Thirty-five years ago, it was about hospitals and doctors; now it's about keeping people out of the hospital. Anybody who lives to be 65 today has a life expectancy of 82. These children here

have got a better than 50 percent chance of living to be 90, once the human genome is completely mapped. And you see all of these things are going to come forward.

You have to just decide. And they have their arguments. They say, "Well, it might cost too much." My argument is, it won't cost near as much as giving the surplus away on a tax cut. But you ought to listen to them.

But I'm just telling you, I think that—the thing that bothers me is that things are going along so well in the country, people might be too casual about this election. And what you do with the good times is as stern a test of your judgment, your vision, and maybe even our national character, as what we do in adversity. And there are real differences with real consequences.

Obviously, I think a lot of these ideas have been tested, and we turned out to be right. We're in this huge fight over what I think is self-evident. I don't think I'm going to keep anybody out of the deer woods by passing legislation that says if a crook tries to buy a gun at a gun show, we ought to have time to do a background check and stop the crook from getting the gun. That's what we did with the Brady bill. Half a million criminals didn't get guns. We've got the lowest gun crime in a decade or 20 years—dropped 35 percent since I've been in office; hasn't been a single hunter missed a day in the woods.

And every time I say this, oh, they all squalled, and Charlton Heston looks like I'm trying to end the American way of life. [*Laughter*] And the Republicans agree with them, and the Democrats in the Senate basically agree with me. And I come from a—I had my first .22 when I was 12. But I think there's evidence here, in the lower crime rate and the less violence, and I don't think this country is safe enough. But I just want you to remember that.

It's a big election, just as important as '92 and '96. I think the question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? There are real differences with real consequences. But only one party really wants you to know what the differences are. I think that's a pretty good argument for our side.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Roy M. Spence, Jr., and his wife,

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Mary; musician Ray Benson; former Governors Ann Richards and Dolph Briscoe, Jr., of Texas; former Representative J. J. (Jake) Pickle; former Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro and his

wife, Judith; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; George Allen, candidate for U.S. Senate in Virginia; and Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association.

Statement on Congressional Action on Tobacco Litigation Legislation

June 19, 2000

Last year the Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit against the tobacco companies to recover the billions of dollars the Federal Government spends each year on tobacco-related health care costs. Tobacco-caused diseases kill more than 400,000 Americans each year and cost billions in health care costs, including more than \$20 billion in Federal payments under Medicare and other programs. The Justice Department's suit would simply hold the tobacco industry financially responsible for reimbursement of these costs.

The suit is based on overwhelming evidence, much of it from the tobacco industry's own documents. This evidence shows that the tobacco companies have conspired over the past 50 years to defraud and mislead the American public and to conceal information about the effects of smoking.

The Congress, in its appropriations bills, is undermining this lawsuit by preventing the agencies that have been harmed and that could recover billions—the Defense Department, the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Health and Human Services—from providing any support. If Congress cuts off funding for this lawsuit or interferes with the Justice Department's pursuit of the lawsuit, Congress will be capitulating to the tobacco industry once again at the expense of taxpayers and their children.

It would be wrong for Congress to undermine the authority of the Department of Justice and block this lawsuit rather than allow it to be decided on its merits in court. I call on Congress to support rather than undermine these efforts and allow the Justice Department to keep working to give taxpayers their day in court.

Statement on Greece's Entry Into the Economic and Monetary Union

June 19, 2000

I congratulate Prime Minister Simitis and the Greek people on the decision today at the EU Summit in Portugal to bring Greece into the EU's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), effective January 1, 2001. Reaching agreement to become a full member of the EMU a year before the euro currency is introduced demonstrates Greece's remarkable economic progress in recent years. This economic success complements Greece's increasingly active political role within the EU.

Through determination and hard work, Greece succeeded in meeting all the Maastricht Treaty economic criteria. Entry into the EMU is not the end of the race but the start of a challenging new phase of economic reform. We wish the Hellenic Republic every success as it moves ahead and hope this will usher in a new era of increased trade and investment between our two nations.

Statement on Easing Sanctions Against North Korea June 19, 2000

Since last September, when I announced the measures being implemented today to ease sanctions against North Korea, North Korea has maintained its moratorium on missile tests. These measures are supported by our close allies in the region and are part of the process of close coordination between the United States,

Japan, and South Korea recommended by former Secretary of Defense William Perry. We will continue to build on these efforts and on the recent North-South summit to achieve additional progress in addressing our common proliferation concerns.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Austin June 19, 2000

Thank you. I feel—first of all, I feel a little sorry for all of you. You have to look at me, and I'm looking at all this, behind you. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Lynn and Tom for making us feel so welcome in this beautiful, beautiful place. And I want to thank them and Ben and Melanie and everyone else who worked on this dinner tonight, for its success. I want to thank Roy and Mary Spence, who hosted me earlier, for the Democratic Senate candidates and for what they did.

Thank you, Mayor Watson; we're glad to be here. Thank you, Governor Richards. Thank you, Garry Mauro. Thank you, Liz Carpenter, my old friend. Thank you, B. and Audre Rapoport and Dan Morales and John Sharp. Thank you all. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Luci Johnson and, through her, to her mother and her entire family for what they have meant to the United States.

And I want to thank Lyle Lovett for being a good Democrat and a good friend to me and always being there when I've needed him over the years. He made me think that even on my bad-hair days, I could still be President. [*Laughter*] That was probably the last song he'll ever sing for me. [*Laughter*]

I also want to tell you how much I admire and appreciate the work that I've had the chance to do with Tom Daschle and Bob Torricelli and Chuck Robb and Pat Leahy and Ron Wyden. We really do have a big percentage—over 10 percent of our caucus here to-

night. And maybe Ann is right; maybe it's because Texas needs Senators and we need money, but for whatever reason, they're here. And I hope you'll take advantage of it.

Let me say, as is usually the case when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has already been said, but not everyone has said it. [*Laughter*] But I'd like to just make a comment or two, if I might.

First of all, I've had a lot of friends here in Texas, and especially in Austin. And as I look back on the last 7½ years and I look forward to the next approximately 7 months I have to serve, I would just like to say thank you. Thank you for your help. Thank you for staying with us. Thank you for giving me and Al Gore and Hillary and Tipper and our entire administration the chance to do what we've done for the last 7½ years. I've had a wonderful time doing it, and I am very grateful that the results turned out to be pretty good for you, as well as for us. It's been a joy.

Now, I also want to say to you that I thought a lot back in 1992 about what I would like America to be like in 2000, if I should be fortunate enough to be elected and to be reelected. And I believe that one of the reasons that we had some success is that I'd worked as a Governor for a dozen years, through very difficult economic times. I had had a chance to try to come to grips with the major economic and educational and other challenges of the day. And I had a pretty clear idea about what I wanted to do if I got elected. And it turned out that

the ideas that I and many others who worked with me over a decade developed worked pretty well.

I say that to make this point. I'm glad that we've got the longest economic expansion in history. I'm very glad that we have the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. I am profoundly grateful that we have a 20-year low in poverty and a 40-year low in female unemployment and a 32-year low in the welfare rates and a 25-year low in the crime rate. I'm glad the country is at peace and America has been a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. But the question I want to ask you is, what do you intend to do with it?

Our host mentioned the great work that President Johnson and the Congress did 30 years ago-plus, with the civil rights legislation. I would like to remind you that 1961 to 1969 was, until this period, the longest economic expansion in American history. And with that expansion, we got not only the civil rights legislation under of President Johnson, we got Federal aid to education, and we got Medicare, among other things.

So what I want to ask you again is, to me, this election for the Senate and the House and the Presidency will be determined largely by what people think it's about, because times are good and the candidates are presentable, to say the least, from top to bottom. So who you're for depends in large measure on what you think the election is about.

And I just want to make three points tonight, briefly. Number one, this is a big deal. This election is every bit as important as the elections of '92 and '96. Why? Because I've done everything I could to turn this country around and move it in the right direction. And now we have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children.

But what a country does with its prosperity is sometimes just as stern a test of its judgment, its wisdom, and its character as what a country does when its back is against the wall. There is not a person here tonight over 30 years old who cannot recall at least one time in your life when you made some sort of a mistake, a personal or a business mistake, not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well you thought you did not have to concentrate. And one of the things that you learn as you get older is that nothing ever lasts. And for those of us that have been through

a few tough times, we say thank God for that. But when you're going through these good times, it's well to be humble and not to engage in too much self-congratulation and not to break your concentration.

So I will say again, I think this election will be determined by what the American people think it is about. And I believe it should be about building the future of our dreams for our children. I believe it should be about what we propose to do with our prosperity. And if you start from that premise, then you have to say, well, what do you think we ought to do with it?

I think the most important thing we can do is to keep it going and spread its benefits to the people and places that still aren't part of it. I think we need to make sure that all of our families have a chance to make the most of it. That means we have educational and health care and environmental challenges we need to meet. I think it's important that we continue to keep our eyes on the future and not be satisfied with where we are. I'm glad we've got a crime rate that's at a 25-year low. I think we ought to make America the safest big country in the world. I'm glad the air and the water are cleaner. I think we ought to turn back the tide of global warming. I'm glad that more people than ever are going to college. I think we ought to open the doors to every child who is qualified to go to college, and money should never be a bar to anybody going ever again.

Then, if you think that's the subject, then the second point I want to make to you is this. It's an important election; it ought to be about what we're going to do with our prosperity. Point number two, there are real and profound differences between the parties. This does not have to be an election where, like all too many in the past, we see one exercise after another in character assassination, where you think you don't really have a campaign unless you can convince the people that your opponent is just one step above being a bank robber. That is not true. You can start with the Presidency and go to the Senate races and the House races and say, "You know, we've got perfectly presentable candidates here, but there are real differences." That's my second point. It's a big election; there are real differences.

Now, here's my third point. We're the only party who wants you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] And I suppose I should take that as a great compliment. But you need to understand, and you need to talk to people. That's why these Senators are here. You wouldn't be here if you didn't understand that. But there are profound consequences. The next President is going to appoint somewhere between two and four Justices of the Supreme Court. And both of them bring commitments to the Presidency about those appointments, and they are different. And the Congress will have to ratify or reject those decisions—the Senate, alone. That's just one example.

I'll give you another example. I was the first leader of any nation in the world to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a dream of President Eisenhower and President Kennedy and President Johnson. Every President for the last 50 years has longed for the day when we could ban nuclear testing, so we could keep other countries from becoming nuclear powers. And it now happens at a time when our own experts tell us, because of those of you in the high-tech business who are involved in weapons, we can simulate testing, and we don't have to test anymore. So banning nuclear testing makes the world a lot safer place. That's what I believe.

The Republican Senate voted against the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They made us the only major country in the world to reject the Test Ban Treaty—America, alone. Everybody else said it's the right thing to do—except India and Pakistan haven't come along yet, and I went over there to try to stop a conflict that could go into a nuclear war, pleading with them to stop it, when our own Senate said, "Oh, let's go on and test. Who cares?"

Now, this affects the lives your children are going to lead. In the future, you're going to have to worry about, when I'm long gone, not just the United States and Russia but whether terrorists in other states are going to use the tools of modern technology, which make everything smaller, to bring many weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological—around. I think we missed a terrific opportunity not to lead the world toward a safer place. We turned around and walked away from 50 years of Republican and Democratic history. And we better reverse it. We ought to ratify the Test Ban Treaty. Your decisions on the White House

and the Senate will determine whether we do. And you need to make up your—[inaudible].

I'll give you a few other examples. We're for a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights. Some of us—I'm strongly supportive of the right kind of managed care, but I think that the patients ought to come first. They're against the Patients' Bill of Rights. We believe we ought to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare that all of our seniors can afford and have a chance to buy. They don't favor that. I could just go on and on and on.

We believe we ought to tackle the problem of climate change. Some of their Members still think it's some sort of subversive plot to wreck the American economy. In the digital economy, much of which is represented on this porch tonight, it is now no longer necessary to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere around Austin, Texas, for people to grow wealthier. In fact, for the first time in history we can grow wealthier by improving the environment instead of polluting it. That's what we believe. They don't agree with us about that.

Now, you may think that's a pretty esoteric subject. I don't. The children in this audience tonight will find in 20 to 30 years that will be one of the two or three most important issues they have to face, unless we turn it around right now. It's a big issue. There are consequences in this election.

On the matter of public safety, I think you all know that I am not the favorite person of Charlton Heston or his executive director, Wayne LaPierre. [Laughter] But all they can do is shout generalities, because there hasn't been a single hunter miss a day in the deer woods because of me in 7½ years. [Laughter] I listened to all that when I signed the Brady bill, when I signed the assault weapons ban.

And now, we believe that there should be no guns around children, that don't have trigger locks. We believe that large ammunition clips ought not to be imported into America to evade our assault weapons ban. We believe that a crook shouldn't be able to get a gun at a gun show that the crook can't get at the gun store without a background check.

Now, these are not radical things, but what I want to tell you—this is an interesting argument, because it's not like there's no evidence here. The same crowd that's against this told me 7 years ago, when I signed the Brady bill, that all it would do is inconvenience legitimate

gun owners and be a terrible burden, and it wouldn't help anything. Well, a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers later who didn't get handguns because of what the Brady bill required in the background check, we have a 35 percent decline in gun crime. And I'll say again, not a single Texas hunter has missed a day in the deer woods. They are wrong about this, and there's a difference about this.

And I don't care how low the crime rate has gone; anybody that thinks this country is safe enough has not spent enough time where the crime rate is high. We ought to keep going until this is the safest big country in the world. We owe it to our kids.

We think—I'll just say one other thing. I believe that one of the reasons America has done so well is that our prosperity has been broadly shared, that we've had over 22 million new jobs, that we've got the lowest minority unemployment rate among Hispanics and African-Americans ever recorded. We favor raising the minimum wage, because we need it; and they don't. We favor dramatically increasing what's called the earned-income tax credit, which is an income tax refund to poor working people with children, especially those with three or more kids; and they don't.

Now, this is not negative. You should listen to them and let them tell you why they're against what we're for. But we should not be under any illusions that there are no consequences to this election. If you want the prosperity to continue, you should know that there are two different approaches. If you want us to be sure we can guarantee excellence in education to every young person, you should know there are two different approaches. If you want working people to have a chance to succeed at work and raising their kids, whether they work at one of your wonderful companies or

whether they work in this hot weather serving your food tonight, there are two different approaches.

And so I say, all I can ask you to do between now and the election is to help our people, but talk to other people. And don't let the American people—I don't mean just here in Austin or in Texas, but I mean all over the country where you have friends—people must understand. All I want to know is that, when I walk out the door on January 20th, the American people took this election seriously. They understood that we turned this country around, that we had the chance of a lifetime, that there were differences, and they understood what the differences were. And in their own heart and mind, they voted to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I know if that happens, everything's going to be all right.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:12 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Tom and Lynn Meredith; former Lt. Gov. Ben F. Barnes of Texas and his wife, Melanie; Roy M. Spence, Jr., founder and president, GSD&M ad agency, and his wife, Mary; Mayor Kirk P. Watson of Austin; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; former Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro; author Liz Carpenter, co-founder, National Women's Political Caucus; Bernard (B.) Rapoport, chairman emeritus and founder, American Income Life Insurance Co., and his wife, Audre; former Texas State Attorney General Dan Morales; former State Comptroller John Sharp; Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of Lady Bird and former President Lyndon B. Johnson; musician Lyle Lovett; and Charlton Heston, president, and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Memorandum on United States-Israel Cooperation on Affordable Housing and Community Development

June 19, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Subject: U.S.-Israel Cooperation on Affordable Housing and Community Development

In order to enlarge the framework for policy research studies on affordable housing and related community development, one of our most pressing domestic problems, and to strengthen relations with the State of Israel for the mutual benefit of the citizens of both countries, I hereby direct the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to begin discussions with the Government of Israel on issues pertaining to affordable housing and community development, with the aim of establishing a binational commission to structure a cooperative exchange program in

this field. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall convene and chair the American side of this binational commission, and the membership should be composed of experts active in housing policy, mortgage markets, residential construction technology, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and related fields of research and practice vital to the health and well-being of towns and cities. All activity undertaken pursuant to this memorandum shall be coordinated with the Department of State.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for King Mohamed VI of Morocco

June 20, 2000

Your Majesty, members of the Moroccan delegation, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the United States, I am delighted to welcome the King of Morocco to America.

Your Majesty, as we were just discussing, it was 22 years ago when the people of the United States first welcomed you to this House, when you came as Crown Prince with your father, His Majesty King Hassan II. Today we welcome you back in the same spirit of friendship that has joined our two nations since the beginning of the American Republic.

Your Majesty, America will never forget that in 1777, the first nation in the world to recognize the United States was the Kingdom of Morocco. Ten years later, our two countries approved a treaty of peace and friendship, which today remains the longest unbroken treaty of its kind in all history. In the days since, we have stood together to live up to that treaty's ideals and to secure its blessings for others.

During the Second World War, more than 300,000 Moroccans fought alongside the Allies

against Nazi tyranny. Today, Moroccan soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder with Americans as we keep the peace in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Morocco's location has made it a bridge between east and west. Morocco's leadership has made it a bridge between peoples.

During the Second World War, King Mohamed V resisted efforts to target and capture Moroccan Jews. In our time, King Hassan worked hard to bring people together to secure a comprehensive peace for the people of the Middle East. He reminded us of the ancient wisdom of the Koran that if two groups of believers fight each other, we should endeavor to reconcile them. He helped bring us closer than we have ever been to a real and lasting peace.

Your Majesty, I was proud to walk with the people of Morocco on that sad day last July, when we crossed the city of Rabat to lay your father to rest. Providence called upon you to be one of the voices of a new generation of Arab leaders, and you have responded with courage and conviction, healing old wounds,

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promoting democracy, lifting those left behind, touching the hearts of your people. Morocco is a sterling example of Islamic tolerance, a force for peace, rooted in the common values of humanity.

In the 20th century, Morocco helped to make the world safe for democracy. In the 21st century, let us, together, make it also safe for diversity.

On the day that he died, His Majesty King Hassan, had a letter sitting on his desk ready to be signed, a letter he had asked to be drafted, that reaffirmed what he called "our shared principles of freedom and solidarity, and our unshakable belief in the values of democracy, peace, prosperity, and progress." That letter was written on the very same kind of parchment as the letter passed between Sultan Mohammed

III and President George Washington, more than two centuries ago. Your Majesty, in the days ahead, may we affirm that letter and our old, old friendship with deeds as well as words. May the partnership between our nations continue to show the way for the rest of the world.

Your Majesty, we are honored that you are here. We are honored by the way you represent your nation and the potential we have to build on our rich, long partnership. Welcome to the White House. Welcome to America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where King Mohamed VI was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the King.

Remarks on the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999

June 20, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, this is a very happy day. Welcome. I'd like to thank Representatives Eleanor Holmes Norton, Tom Davis, and Jim Moran for their role in this day; and Secretary Riley; OMB Director Lew, especially for his role as the Chair of the Federal DC Interagency Task Force. And I'd like to thank Grant Stockdale, who first proposed this idea several years ago.

I am sorry that Mayor Williams couldn't be with us today, but the city is very well represented. And I want to welcome the university presidents from George Mason, Trinity, Bowie State, and Delaware State who are here today, as well as students they'll be welcoming because of the DC College Access Act. We also have some of the educators and parents who helped get these children to college and the leaders of the DC College Access program who are raising private funds to help local students meet all the costs of a university education.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

I want to talk in a moment about all that you have done together, but because this is my only opportunity to be with the press today, I want to say just a few words about another issue where your example of bipartisanship

could stand us in good stead, and that is our stewardship of the Medicare program.

This week the House is preparing to vote on a proposal for a prescription drug benefit for older Americans and people with disabilities. Unfortunately, in my opinion at least, the private insurance drug plan does not achieve that objective of giving affordable, dependable coverage to every senior who needs it. At the same time, we have to face the challenge of making sure we pay the Medicare providers enough so they can give our seniors the high quality care they deserve. Payments are too low in important areas, and Medicare patients are at risk. Some think we have to choose between the prescription drug benefit and adequate quality care. But because of our remarkable prosperity, I believe we can do both, especially given the present strength of the Medicare Trust Fund. And I think we should do it right.

Today I am proposing to dedicate \$40 billion over the next 10 years to ensure that our providers can continue to provide quality care. I think all of us recognize, and I do think this is a bipartisan recognition, that when we passed the Balanced Budget Act of '97, we did not provide adequate funding for the medical providers of the country. And this will help, by

increasing Medicare payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, nursing homes, and the home health care programs, so that Medicare patients can get what they need.

My proposal also endorses Vice President Gore's initiatives to say for the very first time, the Medicare surplus will be off-budget, like the Social Security surplus, and therefore can no longer be diverted for other purposes. Under the Vice President's plan, Medicare must be saved for paying down the debt in order to strengthen the life of the Medicare program.

Today the House is voting on a proposal that embraces this concept and takes an important step toward achieving the goal. And I'm very pleased, and again, I think it will have strong bipartisan support. I hope it will be strengthened in the Senate, so there will be absolutely no question that any loophole can allow the money to be spent in other ways.

District of Columbia College Access Act

Now, just as we bear a heavy responsibility to our seniors, we also have perhaps an even heavier one to our young people, to do all we can to prepare them for the future. More and more, that requires that we offer every student the chance to go to college. In the coming years, the number of new jobs requiring a bachelor's degree will actually grow twice as fast as the jobs that require only a high school diploma. Over the course of a career, someone with a college degree today will earn, on average, \$600,000 more than someone with a high school diploma.

I have often said that I was the first person to go to college in my family, and I couldn't have done it without not only help from my family but without loans, scholarships, and jobs. Those things enabled me to have opportunities my parents' generation did not have, and without them, clearly, I wouldn't be standing here today making these remarks. So I think, like everyone in Congress who's been through the same experience, we want to make sure that the next generation has the same opportunity.

For years, too many of this city—our Capital City's young people have been left behind, not because they didn't have the ability but because they didn't have the resources to go on to college. This fall things will be different. Thanks to a remarkable coalition of business leaders, city and Federal officials, Republicans and Democrats, working together, many of them

here today, the children of Washington will have the chance to go to public colleges around the country at in-State rates or get some help to go to a private school close to home.

The District of Columbia College Access Act makes the playing field a little more level for the children of Washington, DC. More students and parents will know that if they study hard and believe in themselves, the doors of college and the opportunity college brings will be open to them. And more middle income families will find that our great Nation's Capital is also a great place to live and raise their own children.

This fall more than 1,000 young people, many of whom might never have had the chance, will get the help to go to college. We're paying the difference between in-State and out-of-State tuition, sometimes as high as \$10,000 a year. And we're providing \$2,500 for young people who have chosen to attend local private colleges.

Washington businesses are helping many of these children pay for the costs of college—the other costs—and they've helped increase funding for the University of the District of Columbia, as well. This is a great example of what we can do if we put aside our differences to work toward a common goal. It is one of the best investments we could ever make.

One of the things that I am proudest of in my service as President is that we've had the opportunity to have the biggest expansion in college aid since the GI bill 50 years ago: expanded Pell grants, which many young Washingtonians use, education IRA's, the \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tax credit, and the lifetime learning tax credit for the third and fourth years of college and graduate school and adult education. And now I've asked Congress to pass a college opportunity tax cut that would allow every family to deduct up to \$10,000 of college tuition from their income tax every year.

We have the resources now. The question is whether we have the vision and will to give all our children a shot at living their dreams. This bill indicates that we do. And again, I want to thank these Representatives here who played a leading role and all of you who helped to pass this bill.

I'd like to now ask Dr. Alan Merten, the president of George Mason University; Zack Gamble; Secretary Riley; and Representatives Norton, Davis, Moran; and Jack Lew to come forward. I want to tell you that Zack Gamble is a young man who did well in college and

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was acceptable—accepted—acceptable and accepted—[laughter]—into several colleges. The DC College Access Act is making it possible for him to go to George Mason this fall to study computer science. We're going to present his tuition check now. It is just the first of many.

Zack, congratulations. And to all the other young people here, congratulations to you. Good luck to you. God bless you. And now, in the

immortal words of that great movie, we're going to show you the money. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia; Evan S. Dobbelle, president, Trinity College; Calvin W. Lowe, president, Bowie State University; and William B. DeLauder, president, Delaware State University.

Radio Remarks on Signing the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000

June 20, 2000

Today I'm signing into law the Agriculture Risk Protection Act, which makes the Federal crop insurance system more inclusive and affordable. The bill also includes \$7.2 billion in emergency farm assistance to help farmers suffering from plummeting crop prices.

While this bill is important, it still fails to fix what is plainly an unsuccessful farm policy. We should be targeting assistance where it's truly needed instead of making payments to farmers who haven't planted a crop and don't need our help. That's why we need to revise, revamp, and improve the 1996 freedom to farm

bill—to build a safety net that adequately protects our Nation's farmers.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on June 19 in Room 200 at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in New York City for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. H.R. 2559, approved June 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106–224.

Statement on Signing the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000

June 20, 2000

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2559, the "Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000," which authorizes permanent reforms to the crop insurance program, provides temporary farm income assistance in FY 2000, and provides funding and authorities for other agricultural and nutrition programs for FY 2001.

I support the reform of the crop insurance program that is included in this bill, because it is generally consistent with principles my Administration has advocated over the last 2 years. I have heard many farmers say that the crop insurance program was simply not a good value for them, providing too little coverage for too much money. My FY 2001 budget proposal and this bill directly address that problem by making

higher insurance coverage more affordable, which should also mitigate the need for ad hoc crop loss disaster assistance such as we have seen for the last 3 years. The reforms in this bill will put risk management where it belongs: in the hands of producers. The bill will also expand coverage to more crops and provide incentives for new insurance product development, which will extend risk management to more producers and foster innovation in the risk management marketplace.

The bill includes a number of other provisions that I also support. The bill expands research authorities and funding for biomass and bioproducts, including next-generation ethanol, which will benefit producers by increasing the demand

for agricultural products, and will diversify rural economies while cleaning our air and fighting global warming. The bill also provides income assistance to producers of a number of different crops, such as fruit and vegetable growers, and producers whose crop and pasture land has been flooded. In addition, the bill includes important reforms I requested to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and allows the use of school lunch application data to identify more children eligible for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

However, I am signing H.R. 2559 with reservations because its income assistance component is not targeted, is counter-cyclical, and does not require recipients to enroll in crop insurance. If there was any doubt that the 1996 Farm Bill failed to provide an adequate farm safety net, it should be dispelled by this bill that provides significant supplemental farm income assistance for the third year in a row.

As I said when I signed the 1996 bill, the fixed Agricultural Marketing Transition Act (AMTA) payments simply do not adjust to changes in crop prices or revenues, and the prolonged financial stress in the farm sector has required the Congress to repeatedly step in on an ad hoc basis to supplement farm bill assistance. To respond to the needs of producers suffering from continuing low crop prices and inadequate farm bill assistance, and to provide a sensible approach for the reauthorization of the farm bill in 2002, I proposed counter-cyclical farm income assistance in my FY 2001 Budget, which would provide higher payments on those crops with the most depressed prices and revenues. I am disappointed that the Congress did not adopt this proposal, and instead chose again simply to double the AMTA payments without regard to the hardships facing individual producers this year. Payments in this bill will be based on what producers grew prior to 1996,

not what they are growing now, and some payment recipients may not even be growing covered crops anymore, having switched to other commodities or livestock production. We need to move beyond this kind of untargeted, patchwork fix to secure a stronger, more reliable farm safety net that provides dependable assistance to family farmers based on their current farm income.

Another crucial component of my farm safety net proposal is to significantly increase funds for conservation programs, such as the Conservation and Wetlands Reserve Programs, and a new Conservation Security Program. These programs can boost farm income to a wide range of producers, while providing environmental benefits for all Americans. I am disappointed that virtually no funds were included for these programs, and I will continue to seek substantially increased funding for them this year. Additionally, we want to work with the Congress to prevent an unintended sequester.

This bill's farm income assistance will help many producers get through what is shaping up to be another tough year, and the crop insurance reforms should enhance producers' ability to survive natural disasters for years to come. But I would hope that the experience of the last 3 years has taught those who shape farm policy on Capitol Hill—as farm families across the country have learned first-hand the hard way—that we need to build a stronger, better farm safety net on which American producers, their families, and communities can depend.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 20, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 2559, approved June 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-224.

Statement on Senate Action on Hate Crimes Legislation *June 20, 2000*

Today the Senate held a historic and long-overdue vote on hate crimes legislation. I applaud the Senate for passing this crucial measure, and recognize the efforts of Senator

Kennedy on this important issue. This amendment recognizes that hate crimes are different from other crimes. When Americans are targeted just because of who they are—whether

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because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability—they hurt more. These crimes affect entire communities and strike at the heart of our American system of values. This important legislation sends a message that everyone is protected under the law.

This legislation also recognizes that State and local law enforcement still have primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. It provides much needed assistance for State and local law enforcement agencies. It provides financial assistance through grants and

help with investigations and prosecutions so that Federal, State, and local law enforcement can work together to ensure that perpetrators of hate crimes are brought to justice. In addition, the legislation ensures that Federal law enforcement officers confer with State and local law enforcement before bringing a case in Federal court.

Today a majority of the Senate has spoken. We must all work together to ensure that this amendment is not removed during conference. I urge all Members of Congress to send me this legislation to sign into law.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Tobacco Litigation Legislation

June 20, 2000

I am very pleased that the House of Representatives reversed its position in favor of tobacco companies and today passed an amendment to advance public health by siding with American veterans and taxpayers.

The House decision today to reconsider its support of tobacco companies clears the path for the Veterans Administration to help support tobacco litigation, which could mean billions of dollars to improve veterans medical care. I applaud the perseverance of a bipartisan group, led by Representative Henry Waxman, Representative Lane Evans, Representative Jim Hansen, Representative Martin Meehan, Rep-

resentative Debbie Stabenow, Representative David Obey, and Representative Lloyd Doggett, whose efforts in past days have resulted in this significant victory.

In the coming days and weeks, there will be other attempts by Congress to block the Federal Government's tobacco litigation with riders supported by tobacco companies. This bipartisan victory should be a model for Congress. The legal responsibility of the tobacco companies should be decided in the courts by the judicial process. I call upon Congress to reject the interests of big tobacco and permit justice to run its course.

Statement on European Security and Defense Policy

June 20, 2000

I welcome the progress the European Union made at the Feira Summit to develop a common European security and defense policy. It will strengthen Europe's ability—and responsibility—to act in times of crisis. It will improve cooperation between the European Union and NATO. It will advance European unity while maintaining the vitality of the transatlantic alliance. I look forward to early implementation of the agreed steps, including the establishment of

NATO–EU working groups and regular meetings with non-EU allies.

I also welcome the EU's commitment to create a standing roster of police officers who can be deployed to support peacekeeping missions. As we have seen in Bosnia and Kosovo, there is a critical need for international civilian police who can fill the gap between local police and military peacekeepers in countries emerging from conflict. We will continue to work with

Europe to ensure such forces can deploy rapidly when they are needed.

Statement on the Death of Former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita of Japan

June 20, 2000

I was saddened to learn of the death of former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita and wish to extend my condolences to his wife, Naoko, his daughters, and the Japanese people.

Mr. Takeshita was a strong supporter of close U.S.-Japan relations and a good friend of the United States.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring King Mohamed VI of Morocco

June 20, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, Your Majesty, members of the Moroccan delegation, welcome all of you to the White House this evening. No foreign guest is more deserving of a warm welcome here than King Mohamed.

Your Majesty, as I said this morning, it is well known that when the 13 separate States of America declared themselves the United States, your ancestor, Sultan Sidi Mohamed, was the very first sovereign to recognize our new Nation.

The greatest heroes of our early history were the strongest proponents of friendship with Morocco. The treaty of friendship between our Nations was urged on Congress by Benjamin Franklin, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, signed by John Adams, and affirmed by George Washington in a letter to the Sultan. Our treaty of friendship is the oldest American treaty of its kind still enforced today.

In the two centuries since it was first signed, we have seen much to admire and be grateful for in our friendship. As the Arab nation which lies closest to the West, you have been a bridge across cultures. You have a proud tradition of independence, known the world over for your generosity and hospitality. The oldest property owned by America on foreign soil is one of the most beautiful buildings in Tangier, a gift to our country from yours.

Your Majesty, Hillary and Chelsea have visited your country three times now. They have been

charmed again and again by the special character of Morocco, the warmth and hospitality of your people, the beauty of the mountains and the Madinahs, and especially your generosity of spirit.

For centuries, your land has been a model of religious tolerance. When she was there, Hillary asked people throughout your country, "Where did you learn this tolerance?" And over and over again they said, "We learned it from our parents." In Morocco, Your Majesty, that appears to be especially true of kings.

During World War II, your wise and courageous grandfather blocked efforts of the Vichy government to identify and label Moroccan Jews. Decades later, your father bravely opened a dialog with Israel, paved the way for the Camp David accords, and proved it is possible to be commander of the faithful and a bridge between faiths.

I was honored and humbled to represent the United States in Rabat last year to show our respect and affection for your father. I will never forget setting forth on foot from the Royal Palace to the mausoleum and seeing hundreds of thousands, indeed, millions of mourners on rooftops and treetops and along the side streets, surging toward the cortege, expressing their deep devotion to him.

I am pleased to tell you tonight that we are establishing, in honor of your father, the King

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Hassan II Memorial Scholarship Program to enable students from Morocco to study here in America and to study subjects close to the King's heart, international affairs and conflict resolution.

The people of Morocco also have immense devotion to you, Your Majesty. You have emphasized the need to improve schools for children and create jobs for their parents. You have moved to heal old wounds, promote political freedoms, protect human rights, and reach out to your people.

You have shown the courage and vision to elevate Morocco as a model of openness, prosperity, and inclusion. This is vital, not only for Morocco but also for people far beyond your borders. Friends of peace and tolerance are needed now, perhaps more than ever, as we

approach the moment of truth in the Middle East peace process.

Your Majesty, America is eager to continue and to deepen our two-century-old friendship. We are eager to work with you toward a world of greater hope and understanding across cultures and continents. In that spirit, we welcome you again to the land shown such favor by your forefathers.

Welcome to America. Thank you for your friendship, and may it last forever.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:24 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of King Mohamed VI.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to Asian-American Heroes of World War II

June 21, 2000

Chaplain Hicks; distinguished Members of the Senate and the House who are here in large numbers; Secretary and Mrs. Cohen; Secretary and Mrs. West; Secretary Shalala; other members of the administration who are here, I thank all of you for being here on this profoundly important day.

In early 1945 a young Japanese-American of the 442d Regimental Combat Team lay dead on a hill in southern France—the casualty of fierce fighting with the Germans. A chaplain went up to pray over him, to bless him, to bring him back down. As the chaplain later said, "I found a letter in his pocket. The soldier had just learned that some vandals in California had burned down his father's home and barn in the name of patriotism. And yet, this young man had volunteered for every patrol he could go on."

In a few moments I will ask the military aides to read individual citations detailing the extraordinary bravery of 22 Asian-American soldiers—some still with us, some to be represented by family members. We recognize them today with our Nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. They risked their lives, above and beyond the call of duty. And in so doing, they

did more than defend America. In the face of painful prejudice, they helped to define America at its best.

We have many distinguished Americans here today: Members of the Senate and House, including at least one Medal of Honor winner, Senator Kerrey; we have former Senators and House Members here. But there is one person I would like to introduce and ask to stand because, in a profound and fundamental way, he stands on the shoulders of these whom we honor today, and all those who have worked for 50 years to set the record straight. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to recognize the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Eric Shinseki.

Immediately following Pearl Harbor, Japanese-Americans in the United States military were forced to surrender their weapons. National Guardsmen were dismissed; volunteers were rejected; draft-age youth were classified as, quote, "enemy aliens." Executive Order 9066 authorized military commanders to force more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans from their homes and farms and businesses onto trains and buses and into camps, where they were placed behind barbed wire in tar-paper barracks, in

places like Manzanar, Heart Mountain, Topaz. I am sad to say that one of the most compelling marks of my youth is that one of those was in my home State.

One resident of the camps remembers his 85-year-old grandmother standing in line for food with her tin cup and plate. Another remembers only watchtowers, guards, guilt, and fear. Another has spent years telling her children, "No, grandfather was not a spy."

The astonishing fact is that young men of Japanese descent, both in Hawaii and on the mainland, were still willing, even eager, to take up arms to defend America.

In 1942 a committee of the Army recommended against forming a combat unit of Japanese-Americans, citing, and I quote, "the universal distrust in which they are held." Yet, Americans of Japanese ancestry, joined by others of good faith, pressed the issue, and a few months later President Roosevelt authorized a combat team of Japanese-American volunteers.

In approving the unit, FDR said, "Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart. Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry." That statement from President Roosevelt, so different from the Executive order of just a year before, showed a nation pulled between its highest ideals and its darkest fears. We were not only fighting for freedom and equality abroad, we were also in a struggle here at home over whether America would be defined narrowly, on the basis of race, or broadly, on the basis of shared values and ideals.

When young Japanese-American men volunteered enthusiastically, some Americans were puzzled. But those who volunteered knew why. Their own country had dared to question their patriotism, and they would not rest until they had proved their loyalty.

As sons set off to war, so many mothers and fathers told them, "Live if you can; die if you must; but fight always with honor, and never, ever, bring shame on your family or your country."

Rarely has a nation been so well served by a people it had so ill-treated. For their numbers and length of service, the Japanese-Americans of the 442d Regimental Combat Team, including the 100th Infantry Battalion, became the most decorated unit in American military history. By the end of the war, America's military leaders in Europe all wanted these men under

their command. Their motto was "Go for Broke." They risked it all to win it all.

They created a custom of reverse AWOL—wounded soldiers left their hospital beds against doctors' order to return to battle. They were veterans of seven brutal campaigns. They fought in Italy to overwhelm entrenched German positions that blocked the path north. They fought in France and liberated towns that still remember them with memorials. They took 800 casualties in just 5 days of continuous combat in southern France to rescue the lost battalion of Texas which had been surrounded by German troops.

As their heroic efforts forced back the Nazis in Europe, news of their patriotism began to beat back prejudice in America. But prejudice is a stubborn foe. Captain Daniel Inouye, back from the war, in full uniform, decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, Purple Heart with cluster, and 12 other medals and citations, tried to get a haircut and was told, "We don't cut Jap hair." As Captain Inouye said later, "I was tempted to break up the place," but he had already done all the fighting he needed to do.

People across the country had learned of his heroism and that of his colleagues, and loyal Americans were eager to teach others the difference between patriotism and prejudice. A group of Army veterans, who knew firsthand the heroism of Japanese-American soldiers, attacked prejudice in a letter to the Des Moines Register. It said, "When you have seen these boys blown to bits, going through shellfire that others refused to go through, that is the time to voice your opinion, not before."

In Los Angeles, a Japanese-American soldier boarded a bus in full uniform, as a passenger hurled a racial slur. The driver heard the remark, stopped the bus, and said, "Lady, apologize to this American soldier or get off my bus." This defense of our ideals here at home was inspired by the courage of Japanese-Americans in battle.

Senator Inouye, you wrote that your father told you, as you left at age 18 to join the Army and fight a war, that the Inouyes owe an unrepayable debt to America. If I may say so, sir, more than half a century later, America owes an unrepayable debt to you and your colleagues.

Fifty-four summers ago, just a few steps from this very spot, President Truman greeted the returning members of the 442d and told them,

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“You fought, not only the enemy but you fought prejudice, and you have won.” Let us not also forget that Americans of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Filipino descent, along with Alaskan natives, all faced the same blind prejudice.

That is why we are proud to honor here today the service of Second Lieutenant Rudolph B. Davila, an American of Filipino and Spanish descent, who risked his life to help break through the German lines near Anzio; and Captain Francis Wai, an American of Chinese descent, who gave his life securing an important beachhead in the Philippine Islands.

Americans of Asian descent did much more than prove they were Americans. They made our Nation more American. They pushed us toward that more perfect Union of our Founders’ dreams.

The report of the Presidential Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, some 20 years ago now, called internment an injustice, based on “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.” It prescribed several steps for redress, including an apology from the Congress and the President.

Some years later, many leaders backed legislation sponsored by Senator Daniel Akaka to review the combat records of Asian-Americans in World War II to determine if any deserving service members had been passed over for the Medal of Honor. The review found, indeed, that some extraordinarily brave soldiers never did receive the honors they clearly had earned.

So today America awards 22 of them the Medal of Honor. They risked their lives on their own initiative, sometimes even against orders, to take out machine guns, give aid to wounded soldiers, draw fire, pinpoint the enemy, protect their own. People who can agree on nothing else fall silent before that kind of courage.

But it is long past time to break the silence about their courage, to put faces and names with the courage, and to honor it by name: Davila, Hajiro, Hayashi, Inouye, Kobashigawa, Okutsu, Sakato, Hasemoto, Hayashi, Kuroda, Moto, Muranaga, Nakae, Nakamine, Nakamura, Nishimoto, Ohata, Okubo, Ono, Otani, Tanouye, Wai. These American soldiers, with names we at long last recognize as American names, made an impact that soars beyond the force of any battle. They left a lasting imprint on the meaning of America. They didn’t give up on our country, even when too many of their countrymen and women had given up on them. They deserve, at the least, the most we can give—the Medal of Honor.

I would like now to ask the military aides to read the citations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. David H. Hicks, chaplain, USA, who gave the invocation; Secretary Cohen’s wife, Janet Langhart Cohen; and Secretary West’s wife, Gail.

Videotaped Remarks to Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee Participants *June 21, 2000*

I’m glad to have this opportunity to welcome all of you to Washington and to the 73d annual National Spelling Bee.

In 1961, when I was about your age, President Kennedy said we should think of education as a private hope and dream, which fulfilled can benefit everyone and strengthen our Nation. That’s even more true today. Your long list of accomplishments, uncommon dedication, and commitment to learning will serve as a lifelong asset to you and to your communities.

Regardless of who wins today, you should all be proud of your achievements. You’ve come

a long way. So I join your parents and your teachers in congratulating you. Your commitment to excellence spells success in the years ahead, not just for you but for all America.

Thank you, and good luck today.

NOTE: The remarks were videotaped at approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 11 in the Map Room for later broadcast. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Report June 21, 2000

Today's report by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) demonstrates that our administration is tough on gun traffickers who peddle guns to criminals and young people. Between July 1996 and December 1998, ATF initiated more than 1,500 firearms trafficking investigations, resulting in Federal convictions of 812 criminals to a total of 7,420 years in prison—with an average sentence of 9 years.

Gun trafficking puts thousands of guns onto our Nation's streets and contributes significantly to our Nation's gun violence problem. The investigations documented in today's report involved the diversion of more than 84,000 firearms from the legal to illegal market. The report shows that loopholes in our laws help make gun shows and corrupt gun dealers major channels for gun trafficking. Many of the diverted weapons supplied by traffickers were later used to commit serious crimes, including homicides,

robberies, and assaults. Each gun put into the hand of a criminal represents the possibility of one more life lost, one more family destroyed.

Through tough enforcement and smart prevention, we have reduced gun crime by 35 percent and increased Federal gun prosecutions 16 percent since 1992. There is more we can do to keep guns out of the wrong hands. I will continue to press the Congress to fully fund my \$280 million gun enforcement initiative, to add more ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on gun traffickers, corrupt gun dealers, and armed gun criminals, as well as hire more Federal, State, and local gun prosecutors to put more gun criminals behind bars. But Congress must also close the deadly loopholes in our laws that make guns accessible to criminals and children in the first place. Congress should move forward to close the deadly gun show loophole once and for all and pass other stalled common-sense gun measures without further delay.

Remarks at an Irish-American Democrats Dinner for Terence McAuliffe June 21, 2000

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me say, I had to rush over here from another event, and I didn't have time to go change my tie. *[Laughter]* I thank you for letting me come anyway.

Thank you, Stella, for everything you said and for everything you've done these last 4 years. Thank you, Chris Dodd, for being willing to take the chairmanship of the Democratic Party when they said our party and its President were dead as a doornail, and we proved that we had a little Irish left. *[Laughter]* And you've been great, and I'll never be able to thank you enough.

We have some other people here I want to acknowledge: the best Secretary of Education in the history of this country, Dick Riley, is here; Congressman Joe Crowley from Queens; Congressman Jim Maloney from Connecticut is here, I think. Where are you, Jim? *[Applause]* Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy

Townsend from Maryland. Let me say—I'm going to do a little pander here—I'll be bad fooled if someday we're not out here campaigning for her on the national ticket.

And now we come to the would-be, want-to-be Irish—*[laughter]*—and some very good friends of Ireland. Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia—I've said this every place I could, but one of the things the Irish admire are people of conscience who do what they think is right against all the odds. I could make you a very compelling case that based on his constituency and the people arrayed against him, that Chuck Robb is the bravest person in the United States Senate. He needs your help to be reelected, and I want you to help him.

Congressman Donald Payne from New Jersey, a true friend of ours, thank you. And Representative Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston is here. Our present Democratic chair and the former mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell—the first

time he ran for mayor, he spent half his advertising money trying to convince people he was Irish. [Laughter]

Then we have, I see John Raffaelli back there, the Italian-Irish—[laughter]—Tim Chorba over there; Rashid Chaudary, the Pakistani-Irish—[laughter]—I'm saying this for a point, I'm getting to McAuliffe here in a minute. [Laughter] I want to say three things very briefly.

First of all, I want to thank you. Thank you for giving me the chance to serve as President. Thank you for supporting me. Thank you for helping us to make America's role in the Irish peace process a constructive one and to do the things that have been done here in the United States. It's been an unbelievable experience. We've still got a lot to do, and it's also been a lot of fun. And it wouldn't have been any of that if I hadn't had the support of the American Irish and we hadn't been involved, as we've had the chance to be, in the Irish peace process. It's been a wonderful experience, and I'm very grateful to you.

The second thing I want to say to you is that the President may get all the blame when things go wrong, but he also gets the credit when things go right. And very often a lot of other people are involved, without whom none of that would have happened. And I want to mention two people in particular because they both need your help.

One is, when I took all that flack for getting involved in the Irish peace process and I was being ridiculed by the members of the other party—Secretary Baker, a man I actually like quite a lot, did call it "Gullible's Travel." None of the elitists really thought I ought to do it. But all us blue-collar rednecks thought it was a pretty good idea. But I want you to know that it was tough, and there was a huge part of the permanent Government that thought I had taken leave of my senses. And I want you to know that Al Gore stood with me in that. And you need to know that.

The second thing I want to say is that I'm especially proud of the work that my wife did in Northern Ireland with the Vital Voices, the women, the Protestant and the Catholic women. And they need your help, and they deserve it.

I want to say one other thing about the peace process. One of the reasons that I wanted to do this, quite apart from my Irish roots where the Cassidy family goes back to Fermanagh—and they've given me a little watercolor of the

18th century farmhouse. It's the oldest house we can find that has any ties to anybody that's kin to me—at least that will admit it. [Laughter] When I got elected President, I had all these relatives turn up, you know. [Laughter] It was kind of weird.

I did get a letter, you should know, though, from an 88-year-old woman in northern Louisiana who explained to me—and she sent an identical letter to the other person—how I was the 12th cousin of the great mystery writer from Mississippi, John Grisham. And my mother's parents were Cassidy and Grisham. And of all the people—and I wrote John a letter. And he's a wonderful guy, used to be a Democratic legislator in Mississippi, which was almost an oxymoron for a while, but we're coming back. [Laughter] And I told him that I was delighted, not only because I liked his books but because of all the relatives that had turned up, he was the only one who had any money. [Laughter] So I liked that.

But I felt, in addition to wanting to do this, that if we could make it work, this old, old conflict, with its legendary, sometimes romantic, often horrible ramifications, that the United States could then go to other places in the world and make the same argument—that if the Irish could do it, you could do it.

You might be interested to know, you might remember that not very long ago, around last Christmas, I went to Kosovo, after the war was over. And we're still having a lot of trouble there, but the wounds are fresher there. And I got everybody in the room, the leaders of all the various sects—the various Kosovar Albanian groups and the Serbian groups and the minority groups there—there are several other ethnic minorities there—and we're sitting around a little table in metal chairs in this little airport room. And I said, "Look, let me tell you something. I've been working for all these years on the Irish peace process." And I said, "Here's the deal they've agreed to: the principle of consent, majority rule, minority rights, shared decisionmaking, shared benefits, and ties to their neighbors that they have ethnic and religious ties to."

I said, "Now, you can have that deal today, or you can air all your grievances and whine and beat the table and walk away and refuse to talk to each other and keep letting people die around the edges. And 20 years from now somebody else will be sitting in metal chairs

like this, making the deal. And the deal will be majority rule, minority rights, shared decisionmaking, shared benefits, and ties with your neighbors. You can do it now, or you can do it later. But you look at what the Irish did; that's what you're going to have to do. You can do it now or later. I'd advise you to do it now, while the rest of the world still cares a whole lot about you."

If this hadn't happened in Ireland, I could not have made that speech. And you need to know that.

Now, the next thing I want to tell you is, I realize I'm preaching to the saved here, and I don't need to give you a campaign speech for Al Gore or for our candidates for the Senate or the House. But I want to tell you, I worked as hard as I could to deal with the big problems of this country, to turn the country around, to get it going in the right direction. Nothing lasts forever. If you've ever been through bad times, you thank God for that. But when you have good times, you really have to cherish them and make the most of them.

This country has the chance of a lifetime now to build the future of our dreams for these children. People ask me all the time, who do you think is going to win the election? And my answer is, it depends on what the people think the election is about. Often, the answer depends upon the question you ask. And what this election ought to be about is, how are we going to make the most of this moment of promise for all the people of this country? How are we going to fulfill our responsibilities to people around the world, to build the kind of world we want our children to live in? How are we going to deal with these big things?

So, I'm for Al Gore because he's by far the most effective Vice President in the history of the country—he's done more good and had more impact in that job by far than anybody who ever had it; because he will keep the prosperity going; because he wants to spread it to people who haven't been part of it; and because he understands the future and knows how to get us there. So I'm for him.

But the things I want you to remember about this election are these: It's real important. There are profound differences between our candidates. And number three, only the Democrats want you to know what those differences are.

You watch these guys campaigning; you'd think they'd never even had a primary and made

those commitments, like all of this just sprung—and it's flattering, and I suppose we should be happy about it, but you need to go out there and tell people about that. We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're not. We believe that everybody on Medicare ought to have access to prescription drugs they can afford, and they don't. We're for an increase in the minimum wage, and they aren't. And I could go on and on.

But this is very important. Look, we don't have to run these elections the way some of these sort of tormented elections have been run in the last 20 years, where each candidate was trying to convince the people that their opponent was just one notch above a car thief. I mean, this doesn't have to be a negative campaign. Nobody has to be smeared. You can say, "Look, we've got honorable people from the top to the bottom on both sides. All we have to do is assume they mean what they say, see what they've said, see what they've done, compare where they are and where they want to go. Let the American people make up their mind." It ought to be a serious election, but a decent one.

But don't pretend there are no differences, and don't let anybody tell you, when you point out the difference, that that's a negative campaign. Because there are people here who want the voters to believe there are no real consequences to which way they vote. And that is not true.

I've done everything I could do to turn this country around, to keep it going. I'm going to do everything I can in the next 7 months I have. But you've got to do your job and give the election back to the people, but tell them there are real consequences and real differences, and they need to face up to what they are and vote—[*applause*].

Now, what's all this got to do with Terry? A lot. [*Laughter*] A lot. I told somebody the other day, I think there's a real difference in whether somebody who's done well in this country and made some money, got a world of friends and contacts, is out there raising money to get himself another tax cut, or to try to get the people who work in this hotel an increase in their wages, or give them a tax break so their kids can go to college, or trying to make sure all working people can afford to give their children health insurance.

And in the system we have, I wouldn't still be here doing what I'm doing if he didn't do what he's done. You'd be amazed how many conversations we have where we're just talking about the issues. "Well, how are you doing with the Middle East peace process?" "Are you going to get that Patients' Bill of Rights or not?" So the first thing I want you to know is this guy believes in what we're doing. If he didn't, he could be over there in the other party and he'd be making more money, out of raising all this money, than he's going to do because of me and what he's doing for the Vice President.

The second thing I want you to know is that he and I have one thing in common that maybe shows that we both need help. [Laughter] But we're crazy enough to think that this is fun and that we're lucky to be doing this. I can just tell you from my point of view, one or two little other breaks in life and I'd still be home doing deeds and real estate transfers, you know. [Laughter] People say, "Oh, hasn't it been horrible?" I say, "Are you kidding? I could be home writing deeds." [Laughter]

You need to know—McAuliffe goes out to L.A., and they say we're having trouble financing the convention. He's there 3 hours, and total strangers are walking up to him on the street throwing money at him. I mean, it's unbelievable. [Laughter] Why? Because he's having a good time, obviously doing what he believes.

It is a great gift to be able to make people believe that they can do something important and enjoy it at the same time. It is a great gift to make people believe that they have something unique that they can contribute. It is the

true mark of leadership, since none of us is indispensable—me included—none of us have the whole truth, and all of us have something to give. He is better at making people understand that than any human being I have ever known.

And Stella was up here bragging about how he had intelligence and energy and charm. And I thought, where's the blarney part? [Laughter] But I'm telling you, I know this guy. I know him well. And he's kind of hot right now because he's raising all this money and having a good time doing it. But what you need to know is, he believes in what he raised it for. He believes in what we've done here these last 8 years. And he knows that we couldn't have done it if he hadn't done what he did.

And he's given in unique ways thousands of us a chance to be a part of changing America for the better. And I think that's something that his wife and his children and his family and his friends ought to be very, very proud of. Because this is a better country today because of Terry McAuliffe.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. in the Rooftop Ballroom at the Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Stella O'Leary, president, Irish-American Democrats; John D. Raffaelli, partner, Washington Group; former U.S. Ambassador to Singapore Timothy A. Chorba; Rashid Chaudary, president, Raani Corporation; former Secretary of State James A. Baker III; and Mr. McAuliffe's wife, Dorothy.

Remarks at a Hillary 2000 Dinner

June 21, 2000

That was one of my great jokes—[inaudible]—that I intended to be president again next year, president of the Senate spouses club. [Laughter]

Let me say that I love coming to this magnificent home. I'm always so happy here. It's a happy place. I love being here. And now I'm here as surrogate-in-chief. Hillary is in New York tonight, and I was delighted to come by and have a chance to talk to you at the table.

I would like to just say a couple of things. First of all, thank you. I am very grateful that I've had a chance to serve as President. And I'm grateful that I had a chance to get elected in a moment where I felt that I had some ideas that would change the country for the better—and only after I've had years and years and years and years of working seriously on these ideas so I could test them, and it turned out

most of them worked out pretty well. And I feel good about it.

We've still got a lot of good things going, and I think a lot of good things are going to happen in the next 7 months. You may have seen yesterday the House—the Senate passed the hate crimes legislation I've been pushing for 2 years. A couple of days before that, the House reversed itself and decided to leave my process of creating national monuments, to protect land for all time to come, alone. We're moving on a lot of the fronts that I hope we'll have some progress on. I think we will.

The second point I'd like to make is that people come up to me all the time and say, "Well, who is going to win this election or that election or the other?" Except I always say Hillary now, but apart from that—and I believe that very strongly. But I think my experience has been that the outcome of elections are largely determined by what the voters believe the elections are about.

That's what you were talking to me tonight on the New York City—what you think the election is about may determine more than anything else which candidate you vote for. And what I have been trying to hammer home all across the country, to all kinds of audiences—partisan audiences, nonpartisan audiences alike—is that this election must be about what we're going to do with our prosperity.

Eight years ago when we were in deep trouble—the economy was down; society was divided; we had all kinds of difficulties—everybody knew what we had to do. We had to roll up our sleeves and get out of the ditch. We had to turn things around. We had to put things moving in the right direction. Well, now things are moving in the right direction, and the real question is, what do we do with it, not just the budget surplus but the confidence, the capacity, to deal with the challenges facing the country, to deal with the big opportunities out there?

And if the American people think that is what we should do, then we're going to have a very good election. Because that means it's no longer necessary to have one of these sort of mud-slinging campaigns where everybody tries to convince everybody else that their opponent is just one step above a car thief. I mean, how many elections have we had like that? That's not necessary. You start with the two Presidential candidates, you go through these Senate

racers, these House races, you've got people that make a very presentable case for their point of view and that argue it out. And so we really can have an election about the future.

And I worked as hard as I could to turn this country around, get it going in the right direction, and that's really what I want to have. If you believe that, then there are three things I want you to know—and don't laugh. Number one, it's a really big election. How a country deals with its prosperity is as important a test of its character and judgment as how you deal with adversity.

There's not a person around this room tonight who cannot remember one instance in your life when you made a mistake not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well you thought there was no consequence to the failure to concentrate. If you live long enough—[inaudible]—everybody knows that. So this is a big election.

Point number two, there are real and honest differences between the candidates for President, for Senator, for the House, and people, historically, pretty well do what they say they're going to do when they get in office. Contrary to a popular expression that all politicians are a bunch of slugs and don't keep their word, by and large, they do. If you look at all the historical studies, they do pretty much what they said they were going to do.

One of the proudest days I've had as President was in '95, when things looked so bleak for us, a scholar of the Presidency and the media named Thomas Patterson published a report and said I kept a higher percentage of my promises to the American people than any of the last five Presidents by '95, even though I'd made more, which made me feel very good. But most people will do most of the things they say.

And usually when a President doesn't do it, you wind up being glad. For example, aren't you glad that Abraham Lincoln didn't keep his promise not to free the slaves? That was one of his 1860 campaign promises. Aren't you glad that Franklin Roosevelt didn't keep his promise to balance the budget in 1932, when we had 25 percent of the people out of work in 1933? It would have been exactly the wrong thing to do for him, just like it was the right thing to do for me. So basically, you've got a big, important election; you've got real differences.

Now, here's the third thing: Only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. Really. The real differences. You see that in the way the Republicans are basically trying to make everybody forget they had a primary season in which they made a lot of very specific commitments, and they don't want to talk about them anymore.

But I think they're honorable; I think they'll keep the commitments they made in the primaries. And it makes it uncomfortable for them when, like Mr. LaPierre, the NRA guy, says, "Well, we'll have an office in the White House if Bush wins the election," because they want him to go away until after the election.

But there are real differences, and by and large, they relate to how we think we ought to manage this moment of prosperity.

And I'll just say a brief word about the Vice President. I do believe by now I know him as well as anybody besides his wife, maybe his children. He's been, by far—as a matter of historical fact, he's had, by far, a greater positive impact on the country in this job than anyone has ever had—in this job.

Now, I have to make full disclosure. That's a very self-serving statement for me, because the way the job works depends on what the President asks the Vice President to do. But I've spent a lot of time studying the Presidency, and I never could figure out why you would want a Vice President who didn't get up and go to work every day. I never could figure out why the Presidents felt threatened by their Vice Presidents. I didn't get all that stuff.

I picked Al Gore because he basically was in tune with me, and we got along together. But he knew things I didn't know. He had experiences I didn't have, and he has made an absolutely incalculable contribution to whatever good we've accomplished in the White House. And I think he should be elected because I agree with his economic plan, as compared with the alternative, and we need to keep the prosperity going; because I know he'll work harder to extend the benefits of our prosperity to other people, whether it's the differences they have over the minimum wage or the Patients' Bill of Rights or you name it; and because he understands the future. He understands issues like climate change and the other energy and environmental issues, or the Internet privacy issues, which I predict will be very big for all of you over the next 5 or 6 years. All of our medical

records and all of our financial records and all of our other records, everything is on a computer somewhere. I think that's a big issue. I'm very pro-high-technology. I've tried to do everything I could to create as many jobs, to support a competitive environment with the Telecommunications Act and all. But I think these privacy issues are going to be big.

So I think he's good because I like his economic plan. I think he'll do more to help everybody participate in our society, and I think he understands the future. And it's really important, because the next 8 years are going to be different from the last 8. The issue is not whether we're going to change; the issue is how are we going to change.

I wouldn't vote for anybody that said, "Hey, I'd like to be President because I'll do everything Bill Clinton did." I wouldn't support a candidate—that would be wrong. Things are changing too much. So that's my take on that.

Now, in Hillary's case, what I think will happen is she'll go through a period of time where—apparently, just looking, I saw Mr. Lazio had a film the other day that had me on it saying something nice about him. Well, I'm not like them. If a Republican votes on something that I think's good, I'll brag on them. I'm not ashamed of it. I don't think you have to say, just because somebody is a member of the other party, that they're right over there with Attila the Hun.

But I kind of—it was a gas that he would try to give the people of New York the impression that I'd prefer him to my wife in the Senate. [Laughter] Because she would have voted for my economic plan, not against it, and she would have voted against the contract on America, not for it. She wouldn't vote to shut the Government down and get rid of the Department of Education or get rid of the 100,000 police that lowered the crime rate in New York and other places. So, there, too, there are real differences.

I think the big issue here on the economic front for both of them—and it's one that all of you need to think about because you could actually be better off the day after it passed with the Republican plan, everybody here—the day after it passed. Because basically, what they want to do is spend the whole projected surplus on the tax cut, for Social Security transition costs, and extra defense costs. And what we want to do—even though I'm not a candidate,

I strongly support this—is to set aside at a minimum—at an absolute rock-bottom minimum—at least 20 percent of this projected surplus which comes then from your Medicare taxes, and put it in a Medicare Trust Fund, and get it away from any spending, and use it to continue to pay the debt down. And then we want to have a tax cut that's much smaller, probably about 40 percent the size of theirs—still substantial, but not as big as theirs, slightly less than half of it—and we want to invest more money in education and research and technology and health care and the environment.

Now, why is ours better? Because, number one, we may not have—just because some economist says we're going to have \$1.9 trillion over the next 10 years doesn't mean it's going to happen. And I'll bet you everybody in this room, in your heart of hearts, says, "Gee, I hope that will happen," but it might not. You know, we might not have 4 years like these last 7 years.

If I tell you—this gentleman was telling me about his business in Buffalo. If I said, "What's your projected revenue? Are you going to go out and not only spend it all but borrow money on the basis of it, no matter what, with no safety net," you probably wouldn't do that. And so I think if we—I believe if you have sort of a Bush-Lazio tax plan, and it passed, you'd all be better off the day after because all of you can afford to come here tonight. But you wouldn't be better off if it led to a 2 percent increase in interest rates. But in 2 years, the impact it would have on the markets, on the overall economy, on the unemployment rate, you'd be worse off. And the overall economy would be worse off, and we wouldn't have any money to do these things.

And the way our crowd has it structured is, number one, they're going to save 20 percent of the money on the front end and put it into Medicare, as long as it materializes, which is good because when the baby boomers retire it's going to be hard to—[inaudible]—and we're going to keep paying the debt down as fast as we can, which I believe is good. I think since there's so much private debt, we should pay the public debt down and keep interest rates as low as possible. That's what I believe.

And most of the people I know that have done well in this economy, if they have to choose between low interest rates and a growing stock market and a tax cut, and if it's either/or, they would choose the former every single

time. So this is a big issue, and I think it's important.

The second big cluster of issues, I'll say again: what do you believe our obligations are to those who haven't done as well in this whole thing as we have, or those that have got the good jobs, but they have other problems?

The biggest challenge most working families, even upper class working families that work for salaries, face today is how to balance the burden of raising their children and succeeding at work. Because in the United States we have less support for that than our competing countries do. We don't do as much to help people pay for child care. We don't do as much to make sure they all have affordable health insurance. We don't do as much to make sure the kids are all in preschool or after-school programs. We don't do as much to guarantee that they have family leave options so that if the baby is sick or the parents are sick or there's a newborn baby, that everybody can get pretty much what they need.

Now, I think this whole cluster of family-related issues, I'll predict to you, will be very big over the next decade, because we're not all working just to have money to go spend it on things; that's not why people do it. They find reward from their work, and they try to run businesses that they're proud of, and they want to raise families they're proud of. And this all has to be done in the context of a certain value structure. And if we've got a country where, in order to be a success, you have to just basically walk away from your responsibilities as parents, we're in deep trouble here. And this is a challenge for every business, for everybody, and we're going to have to work through a lot of these issues together.

But one of the reasons that I think Hillary ought to go to the Senate is that she spent 30 years working on this stuff. She knows more than anyone I personally know about adoption, about foster care, about the children's health care and emotional and nutritional and educational needs, about the relationship of early childhood brain development to whatever the Government policy is. She has lived with this stuff.

And I was just kind of surprised when all those New York House Members came to see her and asked her to run for the Senate. I was surprised she'd even think of it. I said, "Do you know how much this is going to cost

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you?” She said, “You’re talking to me about money?” [Laughter] She laughed at me. She said, “You, who have never cared if we had a nickel in the bank”—[inaudible]—and we laughed about it, you know, and we admitted that in the end we were kind of public service junkies. It’s what we care about. [Laughter]

And for 30 years she’s worked for me and worked on the side. The whole time we were in Arkansas, she gave away lots of potential income every year just to do public service, because it’s what she wanted to do. And I can just tell you that in a lot of ways she’s better than I am on a lot of this stuff, and she knows things I don’t know. And she will be absolutely unbelievable.

I know there are still some people in New York who say, “Well, why is she doing this, and why are they coming to New York, and why is she running for the Senate?” It’s not very complicated. She would prefer to do that than go out and get real rich. I mean, that’s basically—she would prefer to do this work than even be a wonderful commentator and talk about it. Arguably, in the modern world, people who have access to communications can influence more people because they can just talk to a lot of people and convince them to go change their behavior. Not her, man. She thinks she’s supposed to show up for the job, do it in the old-fashioned way—bam, bam, bam. That’s what she believes.

All I can tell you is, I’ve been around a lot of people, and I’ve never seen anybody that I thought had the gift for public service that she does. And so what she’s got to do is work like crazy and just keep meeting people in New York and basically chip away at the people who are still questioning, “Well, why is she doing this?” And at some point between now and election day, a critical mass of people will have been reached, and they will be talking to other people, who will be talking to other people, who will be talking to other people.

Did you read that little book, “The Tipping Point”? Have you all read that, how little things make big changes? At some point, we’ll reach the tipping point in this whole issue, and it will vanish, and I think she’ll be elected. But she can only do it if we can get our message out, which is why it’s so important.

So, anyway, that’s my pitch. You’ve got a good Senator. You’ve got a good Presidential candidate. It’s a big election. There are big differences, and I do want you to know what they are.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; Representative Rick Lazio; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Message to the Congress on the National Emergency With Respect to the Russian Federation

June 21, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1631, I hereby report that I have exercised my authority to declare a national emergency to deal with the threat posed to the United States by the risk of nuclear proliferation created by the accumulation in the Russian Federation of a large volume of weapons-usable fissile material. The United States and the Russian Federation have entered into a series of agreements that provide for the

conversion of highly enriched uranium (HEU) extracted from Russian nuclear weapons into low enriched uranium (LEU) for use in commercial nuclear reactors. The Russian Federation recently suspended its performance under these agreements because of concerns that payments due to it under these agreements may be subject to attachment, garnishment, or other judicial process, in the United States. Accordingly, I have issued an Executive Order to address the unusual and extraordinary risk of nuclear proliferation created by this situation.

A major national security goal of the United States is to ensure that fissile material removed from Russian nuclear weapons pursuant to various arms control and disarmament agreements is dedicated to peaceful uses, subject to transparency measures, and protected from diversion to activities of proliferation concern. The United States and the Russian Federation entered into an international agreement in February 1993 to deal with these issues as they relate to the disposition of HEU extracted from Russian nuclear weapons (the "HEU Agreement"). Under the HEU Agreement, 500 metric tons of HEU will be converted to LEU over a 20-year period. This is the equivalent of 20,000 nuclear warheads.

Additional agreements were put in place to effectuate the HEU Agreement, including agreements and contracts on transparency, on the appointment of executive agents to assist in implementing the agreements, and on the disposition of LEU delivered to the United States (collectively, the "HEU Agreements"). Under the HEU Agreements, the Russian Federation extracts HEU metal from nuclear weapons. That HEU is oxidized and blended down to LEU in the Russian Federation. The resulting LEU is shipped to the United States for fabrication into fuel for commercial reactors. The United States monitors this conversion process through the Department of Energy's Warhead and Fissile Material Transparency Program.

The HEU Agreements provide for the Russian Federation to receive money and uranium hexafluoride in payment for each shipment of LEU converted from the Russian nuclear weapons. The money and uranium hexafluoride are transferred to the Russian Federation executive agent in the United States.

The Russian Federation recently suspended its performance under the HEU Agreements because of concerns over possible attachment, garnishment, or other judicial process with respect to the payments due to it as a result of litigation currently pending against the Russian Federation. In response to this concern, the Minister of Atomic Energy of the Russian Federation, Minister Adamov, notified Secretary Richardson on May 5, 2000, of the decision of the Russian Federation to halt shipment of LEU pending resolution of this problem. This suspension presents an unusual and extraordinary threat to U.S. national security goals due to the risk of nuclear proliferation caused by the accumulation of

weapons-usable fissile material in the Russian Federation.

The executive branch and the Congress have previously recognized and continue to recognize the threat posed to the United States national security from the risk of nuclear proliferation created by the accumulation of weapons-usable fissile material in the Russian Federation. This threat is the basis for significant programs aimed at Cooperative Threat Reduction and at controlling excess fissile material. The HEU Agreements are essential tools to accomplish these overall national security goals. Congress demonstrated support for these agreements when it authorized the purchase of Russian uranium in 1998, Public Law 105-277, and also enacted legislation to enable Russian uranium to be sold in this country pursuant to the USEC Privatization Act, 42 U.S.C. 2297h-10.

Payments made to the Russian Federation pursuant to the HEU Agreements are integral to the operation of this key national security program. Uncertainty surrounding litigation involving these payments could lead to a long-term suspension of the HEU Agreements, which creates the risk of nuclear proliferation. This is an unacceptable threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

Accordingly, I have concluded that all property and interests in property of the government of the Russian Federation directly related to the implementation of the HEU Agreements should be protected from the threat of attachment, garnishment, or other judicial process. I have, therefore, exercised my authority and issued an Executive Order that provides:

- except to the extent provided in regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that may be issued pursuant to the order, all property and interests in property of the Government of the Russian Federation directly related to the implementation of the HEU Agreements that are in the United States, that hereafter come within the United States, or hereafter come within the possession or control of United States persons, including their overseas branches, are blocked and may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in;
- unless licensed or authorized pursuant to the order, any attachment, judgment, decree, lien, execution, garnishment, or other

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- judicial process is null and void with respect to any property or interest in property blocked pursuant to the order; and
- that all heads of departments and agencies of the United States Government shall continue to take all appropriate measures within their authority to further the full implementation of the HEU Agreements.

The effect of this Executive Order is limited to property that is directly related to the implementation of the HEU Agreements. Such property will be clearly defined by the regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that will be issued pursuant to this Executive Order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued. The order is effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on June 22, 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 21, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22. The Executive order of June 21 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iran

June 21, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared

in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 21, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit and Tobacco Litigation Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

June 22, 2000

The President. Good morning. Before I leave, I would like to make a couple of comments about two questions now before Congress: first, whether to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare beneficiaries; and second, whether to hold tobacco companies, not taxpayers, accountable for the costs of tobacco.

Both issues require a bipartisan response. Both are important to the health of our people. Both require Congress look for the public interest, not the special interest. That's especially true when it comes to our seniors and their need for affordable, dependable prescription drug coverage. I have proposed that all our sen-

iors have that option through Medicare, wherever they live, however sick they may be.

Now, Republicans in Congress say they, too, want a prescription drug benefit. They've even hired pollsters, according to your reports, to teach them all kinds of new words to convince the American people they are in favor of it. But the latest plan doesn't measure up to the rhetoric.

Last night, in a completely party-line vote, the House Ways and Means Committee approved a private insurance benefit that many seniors and many people with disabilities simply will not be able to afford. It's a benefit for

the companies who make the drugs, not the seniors who need them most. Moreover, their bill would do nothing for the hospitals, home health care agencies, and other providers who clearly need extra help to provide quality care under the Medicare program.

I hope when the full House considers this issue, it will reject this false promise and vote instead for a proposal that provides a real and meaningful Medicare prescription drug benefit on a voluntary basis, but one that is affordable and available to all seniors who need it.

If the House acts to protect the public health, it would be following the fine example it set earlier this week when it permitted the Department of Veterans Affairs to help to fund the Justice Department's litigation against the tobacco companies. This modest investment of VA funds can help our veterans and other taxpayers recover billions of dollars in health care costs, a substantial sum that will improve health care for veterans and for all Americans.

This shows what we can accomplish when we put the public interest ahead of special interests, the public interest ahead of partisan disputes. But it's only a first step. Today the House can move further ahead if it votes to allow the Justice Department to receive these and other funds.

Tuesday's victory for veterans and taxpayers will prove to be hollow if today the House reverses itself. The tobacco companies and their powerful allies in Congress are working overtime to pass special protections to shield them from financial responsibility for the harm they've caused. So again I ask Congress, just let the American people have their day in court. The legal responsibility of the tobacco companies should be decided by judicial process, not by the political process.

The health of our people is a precious resource. Those of us in public life should be doing everything we can to work together, whether we're working to provide affordable prescription drug coverage or to demand accountability for the health care costs of tobacco. In the days and months ahead, I will continue to work with members of both parties to achieve these goals.

Thank you very much.

Gasoline Prices

Q. Sir, on gasoline prices, the Vice President was very direct and forthright yesterday, sir, in

his accusations that there is collusion among the oil companies to inflate prices. Do you share those sentiments, and what are your thoughts on this becoming a preeminent issue in the Presidential campaign?

The President. Well, first of all, let's look at the problem here. This is a big problem, because there are a lot of Americans that have to drive to make a living. They have to drive distances just to make a living. Then you've got all these truckers out there that have to pay big fuel costs to make a living. And something that there hasn't been a lot of talk about, but if this thing can't be moderated, it's also going to have, I think, quite a burdensome impact on the airline companies, on the cost of air travel. So this is going to rattle throughout our economy.

I have said repeatedly, and I will say again, I think that it is in the best interest of the people of the United States, but also the oil-producing companies, to have oil prices somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20 to \$25 a barrel. That gives them the revenues they need. It keeps the incentives in our economy to continue to become more energy efficient, and it doesn't bankrupt people that have to have fuel in substantial quantities. So this is a big problem.

Now, I have a lot of concerns about the speed with which this runup occurred. I expected some upward pressure on prices because our economy is doing well and because the Asian economy is coming back, the European economy is coming back, so there would be a bigger global demand for oil and there would be some upward pressure. But it doesn't explain, by a long stretch, the dramatic increase in prices. Neither does the requirement for special additives to reduce air pollution even come close to explaining the increase in the Chicago-Milwaukee area. We're talking about 2 or 3 cents a gallon for the environmental requirements, and that won't come close to explaining prices that are 50 cents a gallon higher than they are in other places.

So the proper thing to do, I think, is to have a vigorous inquiry by the Federal Trade Commission; they're going to do this. If you've noticed, there's some indication that the best evidence to support the statement the Vice President made is that 2 days after the call went out for the Federal Trade Commission to investigate this, there was a 16-cent-a-gallon

drop in the price of the oil at the refinery level. Now, that hasn't manifested itself at the pump yet, because it takes time for this oil to be refined and to be distributed and to be sold as fuel. But I'm very concerned about it.

Let me say, I guess the followup question—and I don't want to anticipate it, but you know, there are all these stories about, well, is this or is this not a political issue, and who does it help or hurt? And I think the important thing is, this country should have a bipartisan or a nonpartisan interest in a long-term, stable energy policy, and there are several things the Congress can do right now to help that. And I would like to just go through them, because I mentioned several of them earlier this year.

But let me just mention—first of all, you will remember I sent a proposal to Congress earlier this year to encourage more stripper well production in the United States. The Congress needs to pass that. We need to get some of these American wells back in operation now. The price will make it quite profitable, but we can do some things to jump-start that.

Secondly, the Congress still has not reauthorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which ties the President's hands; it undermines one of the options we have to maintain downward pressure on the oil prices but also to deal with any emergencies that might crop up.

Thirdly, because of the failure to reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, there is a cloud over the question of whether we can establish a regional home heating oil reserve for the mid-Atlantic and the Northeastern States that rely so heavily on home heating oil. And if these prices in fuel are any indication and the oil prices stay above \$30 a barrel, we're going to have serious problems in the Northeast this winter unless we have that reserve and we can move home heating oil in there in a hurry.

So let me just go through a couple of other things. Fourthly, I have for years now asked the Congress to fund research and development into alternative energy, into the partnership for new generation vehicles. I have proposed for over 2 years a \$4 billion set of tax incentives for manufacturers and consumers to buy energy-efficient cars, homes, and consumer products. I've proposed a total spending of \$1.4 billion this year for the Department of Energy for renewable energy, for the development of natural gas, for distribution of power methodologies that will save consumers a lot of money. And on

balance, Congress has approved about 12 percent of the funds I've asked to be spent for these things that will clearly lower energy bills and help the economy.

And the last thing I would say is, for 2 or 3 years, I've had the electricity restructuring bill up there, that we estimate would save consumers in America \$20 billion a year in energy costs by the more efficient distribution and sales of electricity.

So there are things that the Congress can do, that I would hope they would do on a bipartisan basis and do quickly, that would help us to have a better long-term energy policy and would begin to show immediate benefits for a lot of people who could take advantage of these laws if we could just go ahead and pass them. So we need to do the stripper wells. We need to pass the tax incentives to buy more energy-efficient cars, homes, and other products, and we need to stop spending about 12 percent a year of what we should be spending to develop alternative energy sources. And the electricity restructuring act needs to pass. So those are things we could do together in a bipartisan way to show movement.

Meanwhile, we need an aggressive inquiry by the FTC. There is no economic explanation I can think of for the runup in the prices, particularly in the Middle West, and I want this thing to continue.

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson

Q. Mr. President, Bill Richardson was grilled pretty badly yesterday by the Republicans, and even Senator Byrd, and they didn't make the Secretary feel very good yesterday. What do you think of the hearing, the way it's done, and do you still have full confidence in Mr. Richardson?

The President. Well, first of all, I think the short answer to your question is, yes, I do. He came in there and faced a whole host of problems, and I think that in every case he's dealt with them in a forthright and aggressive manner. They're getting to the bottom of this last issue, I think, pretty quickly with the help of good work by the FBI and others.

But it's a very serious matter, so the administration should expect to be asked hard questions about it, and we should figure out not only what happened in this case but how to keep such things from happening in the future. You

have to expect that you'll have tough congressional hearings when you have something really serious. And I don't have a problem with a tough hearing, but I do have confidence in him. He's worked hard on this, trying to do the right thing.

China Trade Legislation

Q. Mr. President, what is your view of Senator Lott's handling of the China trade bill, and are you concerned that the delay is now endangering chances for final passage?

The President. I was very concerned when I heard that the delay might run into September. Now, I believe we have agreement, as you've seen reported and as you have reported, to bring up the China bill shortly after the Fourth of July recess. Obviously, I wish we could have voted on it before the Fourth of July recess, but there are some issues there. There are some Members in the Senate that want to offer amendments, just like in the House, and there's some work to be done.

I met with a group of Senators yesterday, a bipartisan group, and we'll continue to work it hard. But I think we're on schedule now for a timely vote. And I had a good visit with Senator Lott about it, and I think we're on the same page. We're working together, and I look forward to a successful conclusion of this in July.

Midsession Review

Q. In the upcoming midsession review, with the additional budget surplus you're anticipating, are you planning to propose a speedup in the catastrophic coverage under your Medicare prescription drug plan?

The President. I'll have some more to say about that next week when we've got the formal numbers. But let me say, as you have reported, there will be some upward revision in the projections, and that's good news.

I guess in this season we ought to be crowing about it. But we've come a long way over the last 8 years by being prudent. And one of the things that you can be sure I'll do is to reflect a recommendation that the Vice President made, that we wall off that portion of the surplus due to Medicare taxes like we've walled off that portion due to Social Security taxes so that we can pay down the debt more, and that would protect at least 20 percent of this pro-

jected surplus from either being spent or used on tax cuts.

But I think the most important thing you should remember is, we don't have any of that money yet; that's what we think will happen. These are the—keep in mind, when I became President, they were forecasting a \$400 billion budget deficit for this year alone. And we worked very hard to turn that around. We should invest more; we should have a substantial tax cut for our people focused on the things that are most needed. But we shouldn't remember what got us to the dance here. What got us to the dance, what got us to this unbelievable point to have this discussion at all, was discipline—fiscal discipline, arithmetic, being careful, understanding that a projection is just that.

I think it would be a grave error to plan to spend every penny of this, particularly on tax cuts or other things that are so unavoidable because they may not get it back. Now, you can say, "This is my plan for education," for example, and if the money doesn't come up, then you don't have to spend it. But if you spend all this in tax cuts or some other mandated fashion on the front end and it doesn't materialize, then you'll be right back into deficits, right back into higher interest rates. And I think, frankly, just the whole legislative process, if that's the track we're on, would lead to an immediate increase in interest rates which would slow the economy down and keep those surpluses from materializing.

So my caution to everybody involved in this is prudence. We got here by being disciplined and prudent. Don't get off of that. Keep paying the debt down, and there will be more money than there would be if you tell everybody how you're going to spend it and then it doesn't show up.

Q. Won't there be greater room for debt reduction as well as greater tax relief and other changes?

The President. Yes, you can have both, but you can't—but I think it's a mistake to plan to spend it all. Because what are you going to do if it doesn't materialize—particularly if you plan to spend it all on the tax side, because if you do that and the money doesn't materialize, the tax cuts are still on the law.

You can say, "Well, if it comes, I would like to spend it on certain things," and then if it doesn't show up, you don't spend it, because we do the spending every year. So I'll have

more to say about it next week when we'll have more time to talk about it in detail.

Colombia

Q. Sir, on Colombia, after the Senate's endorsement last night of the appropriation, are you optimistic that you will get the funding for Operation Colombia before losing so much ground it will be impossible to make it back up?

The President. Well, first, I'd like to compliment the Senate and the bipartisan vote. I'm grateful for it. As you know, there were some differences in the Senate bill and the House bill, first of all, a not insubstantial financial difference—I think about \$300 million over 2 years—and then some differences in how the money would be allocated. But I'm encouraged that we could maybe get the differences between the Senate proposal and the House proposal worked out.

The second part of your question is really a question that neither I nor anyone else is qualified to answer, that is, it requires conjecture. I think, as I've said all along, sooner is better than later. The quicker we can reach agreement and show that the United States is committed to democracy and to fighting the drug wars in Colombia and to strengthening the oldest democracy in Latin America, the better off we're going to be. The quicker we do it, the quicker the Colombians will be able to get Europeans and others who are very sympathetic

with them to come in and do their part, the more appealing it will be for the international financial institutions.

We haven't had a chance to talk about this much because there are so many other things going on. But those people, they're in the fight of their lives for their very way of life, with the combined pressure of a guerrilla war that's been going on for decades and the rise of the narco-traffickers over the last two decades.

I don't think the average American can imagine what it would be like to live in a country where a third of the country, on any given day, may be in the hands of someone that is an enemy, an adversary of the nation-state. I don't think we can even imagine what that would be like. Just, you know, driving through Washington, DC, and you've got a one-in-three chance of being in a neighborhood that your Government and the law of the land doesn't prevail in. This is a huge, huge issue. And again, I'm grateful to the Senate, and I'm grateful it was done on such a bipartisan basis, and we just need to get it done as quickly as possible.

Now, on Monday or so, I'll be back with something on the mid-session review, and we'll have a chance for more questions next week.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the South Portico at the White House, prior to his departure for Phoenix, AZ.

Remarks at a Federal Victory Fund Reception in Phoenix, Arizona

June 22, 2000

Thank you very much. I appreciate the standing ovation. [*Laughter*] Let me say I'm delighted to be back in Arizona again. If you only knew how many times I complained that I wasn't coming out here enough, you'd really be impressed. [*Laughter*] I love coming here.

I want to say, in his absence, that Bruce Babbitt has done a magnificent job as Secretary of the Interior, and I'm very proud of him. We had some rocky issues in the first couple of years, and we still do some things that our friends in the Republican Party don't agree with. But we decided together—and we've been friends for many years because we served as

Governors together—that all these emerging issues in the West, the challenges of reconciling all this growth with the environmental challenges, basically were ignored by the other party when they were in power, and they normally did well in the elections because the Federal Government wasn't getting in anybody's hair. And then when the Democrats got in, they tended to try to deal with them, but in a way that alienated so many people, we found further behind. So we decided that we would not ignore them, but we'd try to do it in a way that would make connections with people at the grassroots

level. And I think, by and large, the strategy has worked, and I'm very grateful.

We set aside, among other things, more land—in national monuments, in the 43 million roadless acres of the national forests, otherwise—than any administration in the history of this country except those of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. And I'm very proud of that. And you should be proud of him.

I want to thank the gentleman to my left—to your left, my right—Ed Rendell, the former mayor of Philadelphia who has been a great chair of our Democratic Party and who was leading us to victory this year. And I really thank him for doing that. I decided he ought to be chair of the party when Al Gore and I won Philadelphia with about 80 percent of the vote and a bigger margin than President Kennedy did when it was a much larger city. So I figured if he could work that kind of mathematical magic in Philadelphia, there's no telling what he could do with the country as a whole. [Laughter]

I want to thank Steve for his long friendship and Janet for her outstanding leadership. I also want to thank her publicly—I've never had a chance to do this before—for her sterling service as United States attorney here in my first term, before she became the attorney general.

I want to acknowledge the event cochairs here, John Shacknai, Bob and Carolyn Wolf, Delbert and Jewell Lewis, and Fred DuVal, who is much missed in the White House, but I thank him for what he did. And let's give them all a big hand. [Applause]

Now, I also want to say a heartfelt thanks to one present and one former Member of Congress, Ed Pastor and former Senator Dennis DeConcini. I think I'm going to see them sometime today. I don't know if they're in this room, but they really did a lot to help ensure the success that this country has enjoyed in the last 7½ years.

I will be brief, but I want to say some things as succinctly as I can. First, I am more grateful than you know that in 1996 we won the electoral votes of Arizona, for the first time since Harry Truman in 1948.

Second, I am profoundly grateful for the success our country has enjoyed in these last 7½ years, that Steve and Janet outlined. I've worked real hard to try to turn this country around and move it in the right direction. And I think we were helped by the fact that I had been

a Governor for nearly a dozen years, that I had dealt with most of the problems that the country was facing in 1992, and that we actually had specific, clear ideas about what we wanted to do and we laid them before the American people in great detail.

And that brings me to the present moment. Everybody knew what the problem was in 1992. The wheel was about to run off. The economy was in bad shape. The society was deteriorating by most indicators, and we knew what we had to do. We also knew that Washington was just paralyzed by this sort of partisan fight when basically people would say, "You got an idea. I've got an idea. Let's fight. Otherwise, neither one of us will get on the evening news." And so there was a real penalty put on thinking. If you thought you had new ideas and you tried to work things out, there was really no reward. And most of us out in the country, whether we lived in Arizona or Arkansas or someplace else, thought that it didn't make much sense. So we set about trying to turn the country around, and the results have been good.

But now we're in a new election season. And people ask me all the time, "Well, who's going to win? Do you think the Vice President is going to win?" I say yes. "Do you think Hillary is going to win?" I say yes. And I do, on both counts. "Do you think the Democrats will win back to Congress?" Of course, I say yes. But here's the real truth: Who will win this election depends upon, more than anything else, what the people of America think the election is about. The question you ask may determine the answer you get.

So that's what I want to say to all of you, because when I leave, somebody might ask you why you were here today and what you intend to do. And there's a lot of work for you to do between now and November, and you have to decide what you think the election is about. The election in 1992 was about what we were going to do to turn our country around. In 1996 it was about whether we would continue and build on that direction and build our bridge to this new century. This election is about, in my view, what do we intend to do with our prosperity.

And I would argue to you that what a country does at a magic moment like this is just as stern a test of its judgment and its character as what a country does when it's in trouble. Anybody in this audience today, who is over

30 years of age at least, can cite at least one time in your life when you made a mistake, a personal or a professional mistake, not because things were so tough but because things were so good you thought there was no penalty for the failure to concentrate and think about the long run.

Now, for me, what we ought to do with our prosperity is take advantage of it, because nothing lasts forever—nothing bad, nothing good, nothing lasts forever. So take advantage of this moment to build the future of our dreams for our children, to deal with the big challenges: to deal with the aging of America, to deal with the plain environmental challenges that are out there because of the way we have grown as a nation and as a world, to deal with the challenge of giving all of our children a world-class education.

And while I'm at it, I'd like to compliment the legislators. It seems to me like there's a bipartisan majority in Arizona for really doing something significant about the schools, and I hope it will get through the legislature. And I want to thank the Republicans who are supporting—[*applause*].

What are we going to do to help all these families who now have jobs balance work and family? Our country is behind other countries in that. You'd be amazed how many parents I talk to, whether they're working for minimum wage or whether they're making six-figure incomes, who worry every single day about how they're going to meet their responsibilities at work and meet their most important responsibilities of raising their children.

There are all these really big, interesting challenges. The reason that I want the Vice President to win, apart from my personal loyalty to him and the role that he's played—and he has been, by far, the most significant Vice President in the history of the country. No other Vice President—I'm a pretty good student of American history, and this is not just election-year hype—no other Vice President has ever had anything close to the positive impact on the affairs of America and the lives of the American people as Vice President than Al Gore has had. Not Harry Truman; not Theodore Roosevelt; not anybody as Vice President.

So when people say, "Why do you think he should be elected?" I say, first of all, because he'll keep the prosperity going; secondly, because he really wants to extend it to the people

and places that have been left behind and aren't fully part of this; and thirdly, because he understands the future, and he can take us there.

We worked very hard to build America's high-tech future because we fought for a technology act, the Telecommunications Act of '96, that was pro-competition and pro-education, with the E-rate that gives discounts so that all of our schools and public libraries can hook up to the Internet. We've got a very different world today. He understands a big issue that all of you will face sooner or later—probably sooner rather than later—which is, how are we going to preserve people's privacy rights when all of our financial records and all of our health care records are on somebody's computer somewhere? That's just one example.

You need to elect a President now who will keep the prosperity going, who will extend it to people and places left behind, and who understands the future and can lead us there.

Now, I want you to know three things about this election. One, it is really big. It is just as important as the elections of '92 and '96, because we may never have another chance in our lifetime to have a moment where there is so much economic prosperity, social progress, and relative absence of domestic crisis or foreign threat. So it's important.

Two, there are real differences between the parties, from the Presidential candidates to the Senate candidates to the House candidates—real differences—and that's good. It means we can have an exciting and fundamentally positive election. We've had too many elections in the last 20 years where both candidates tried to convince the voters that their opponents were just a notch above a car thief. And you don't have to do that. You can assume in this election that everybody is honorable, that everybody is going to try to do what they say they're going to do, and there are differences. So, one, it's important; two, there are differences.

The third thing you need to know is, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [*Laughter*] For example, there is no question that it will be very appealing for the Republicans, beginning with the nominee for President, to say, "Hey, vote for us, and we'll give you a tax cut worth over a trillion dollars over the next 10 years. And we can easily afford it because we're going to have such a big surplus, because it's projected."

And we say—the Vice President said last week—“No, no, no. First of all, let’s start by saving 20 percent of the projected surplus by taking the taxes you pay for Medicare and putting it in a lockbox so it can’t be spent on anything besides Medicare. We’ll pay the debt down until we need it, and we’ll have a hedge in case this surplus doesn’t materialize. And, yes, let’s have a tax cut, but let’s focus it on the people who really need it and on their need to educate their children, to pay for child care, to pay for long-term care, to accumulate wealth and save for their own retirement.”

But let’s not spend it all, because if you pass a tax cut now based on an assumed surplus—it’s self-serving for me; I ought to say, “Of course we’re going to have a multi-trillion dollar surplus over the next 10 years, and I produced it, ha-ha.” But the truth is, you don’t know any more than I do whether we’re going to have all that money over the next 10 years. And I think—people ask me all the time, “What great economic innovation did you bring to Washington?” And I give a one-word answer: arithmetic. [Laughter] We brought arithmetic back. We said, “Look, if we don’t have it, we shouldn’t spend it. We’ve got to get rid of the deficit. We’ve got to pay the debt down.”

Now, the Democrats should be for, yes, investing in education; yes, giving working people tax breaks; yes, investing in the environment and scientific research. We should be for all that. But we should also be for continuing to pay down the debt. Why? Because it will keep interest rates lower. It will stave off inflation. It will keep the stock market growing. It will keep the economy stronger. We need to do it.

You don’t know any more than I do whether all this money that we now project is going to be there over the next 10 years. And if we give it away all on the front end in a tax cut, you know as well as I do, if it doesn’t materialize, we’ll be right back into the bad old days of deficits. Big issue. So you can’t pretend that there are no consequences here. And if you want this thing to keep going, prudence, arithmetic, relying on human experience is really important.

I’ll just give you a couple of other examples. We’re for the minimum wage, and they’re not. We’re for a real Patients’ Bill of Rights; a few of them are, but most of them aren’t. We be-

lieve you can grow the economy and improve the environment in the information age. It is no longer necessary for a country to stay rich or grow rich by putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Most of them don’t believe that, but I do. And I believe the evidence is clear.

Vice President Gore said the other day, “Vote for me, and I will build on and strengthen President Clinton’s declaration of over 40 million roadless acres in our national forests.” In the primary—something that the Republicans hope you’ll develop amnesia about—[laughter]—in the primary, his opponent said, “Vote for me, and I’ll get rid of that order protecting those 43 million roadless acres.” There’s a real difference.

So there are real differences. And what I want—what I would like to ask you to do is go out to the people who aren’t here, people you talk to every day, people that might not be Democrats—independents, Republicans—people with money, middle class people that spend everything they earn paying their bills every 2 weeks, people that work in this hotel and have to struggle to pay their bills—and talk to them about it, and say, “Look, this is a gift, folks. We can have an old-fashioned American election. We don’t have to be swayed by 30-second ads saying that this person’s bad or that person’s bad. Let’s assume everybody’s honorable and that they’ll do what they say they’re going to do.” And get the differences out there, and ask people to think about what they think this is about.

I have done everything I could to leave our country in good shape. And I just want us to take advantage of this moment to build a future we dream of for the kids that are in this audience. And if we do that, then the outcome will be clear, here and throughout America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. in Salon 2/3 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception cohost Steve Owens; Janet Napolitano, Arizona attorney general, who introduced the President; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Phoenix June 22, 2000

Thank you, Fred. Thanks for the great work you did at the White House. Thanks for this today. Thank you, Steve. And to all of you who contributed and raised money and made this a success, I thank you.

I want to thank Mayor Rendell. Remember that old joke about W.C. Fields? He said he wanted on his tombstone, "All things considered, I'd rather be in Philadelphia." [*Laughter*] Mayor Rendell would always rather be in Philadelphia. But he's seen a great deal of America here, and he's done a great job for us.

I also want to introduce Congressman Bob Filner and his wife, Jane, from San Diego, who's here with us today. I'm glad to see you. They're taking me to San Diego after I leave you.

I know about half of you were in the other room, and I'm loath to repeat my speech, although I'm reminded once I went to—I once went to a concert when I was Governor of Arkansas that Tina Turner held in Little Rock. And the guy that ran the place where we had the concerts knew that I was a huge Tina Turner fan. And so was Hillary, and she was out of town, and she was really steamed that she couldn't go. So I took six of our friends, and I went to this Tina Turner concert. And she was just making her big comeback, and she sang all these new songs. Then at the very end of the concert she started—the band started playing "Proud Mary," which was her first hit, and we'd all heard it before. And so Tina Turner goes up to the microphone, everybody cheers like crazy, and she said, "You know I've been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it." [*Laughter*] So maybe I should just give the same speech I just gave. [*Laughter*]

I want to say to all of you how much I have loved coming here to Arizona and working with the people here on a wide variety of issues; how grateful I am for the service of all the Arizonans in the administration, including Fred and Bruce and Hattie and all the others; and how profoundly grateful I am that we actually won Arizona's electoral votes for the first time since Harry Truman was President.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the Native American tribal leaders who are

here. When I became President, I had spent a lot of time—and so had Hillary, actually—going out into Indian country, across America. And first of all, there is no monolith there. Some of the tribes have great wealth and success because of their gaming operations, and some of them have diversified into operations. Others, including the Navajos in northern New Mexico, up near the Colorado border, the Lakota Sioux in southern South Dakota, are still so physically isolated that more than half the people are unemployed. In some places, more than half the people don't have telephones. And the relationship between our National Government and the Native American tribes, in my judgment, have never really been as it should have been, and certainly has never been consistent with the promises we made in return for all the land and minerals and other things that we took so long ago.

So, shortly after I became President in 1994, I invited all the tribal leaders in America to come to the White House, for the first time since James Monroe was President in the 1820's. And we had an incredible day there. But it was very instructive for the senior members of my administration because we had people who could fly in on their private jets, and other people where the tribal members had to pass the hat to raise enough money to buy an airplane ticket.

And I just say that to you here in Arizona because we have to keep working on this. We have come a long way. We've made a lot of progress. We've done a lot in education. I've got an economic initiative out there that I think we'll pass this year, that I believe will make a big difference. But we have a lot of work to do. And we are beginning to build—I'm happy to say, we're beginning slowly to build some bipartisan coalition for building the right kind of commitment to empowerment and equality. But I thank you all for being here, and I think the Vice President will show up at your meeting. [*Laughter*]

I would like to also say that a lot of people are—when I go to these events, people say thank you, and I look around and wonder if they're talking about somebody that's still

breathing. [Laughter] And so—I got a great call the other day from a very distinguished gentleman who said, “You know, Mr. President, for a lame duck you’re still quacking quite loudly.” [Laughter] I like that.

We’re trying to get a lot of things done, but we’re also in an election. And I just want to give you a couple of observations. First of all, insofar as we have had any success over these last 7½ years, the real credit belongs to the people of this country for supporting us and for what they do outside the Government sphere all day, every day, and to the fact that I think we had good ideas. People come up to me all the time, and they say, “Gosh, you really brought a certain political skill to the office.” And I said, “What difference does it make? If we had the wrong ideas, we wouldn’t be where we are.” It really matters what your ideas are and whether you can turn those ideas into policy.

And Janet Napolitano said in the previous event something that I really appreciated very much. She talked about the work I did in 1990, when I had no idea that I would be here, to write a document for the Democratic Party through the Democratic Leadership Council, that said, okay, here’s where we think America is; here’s what our core values are; here are the specific things we would do if we had a chance to govern.

Really it’s like, being President’s not all that different from any other job. It matters how hard you work, and it matters whether what you’re working on is right. And I say that because we’re so fortunate this year to have such a good set of circumstances in the country, although we are reminded to be a little humble about it—like the gas price rises in the Middle West—there should be a little reminder that there’s no such thing as a static reality. Things are changing in this country very rapidly, and in the whole world.

But we’re very fortunate. And the only thing that I really worry about is whether we kind of get lulled to sleep in the midst of our own prosperity and progress and think that there are no serious consequences to this election. This election is every bit as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996.

In ’92 we all knew what we had to do; we had to change something. We not only had to change the economic and social policies of the country; we had to change the way politics

works, because Washington had virtually become paralyzed in the shouting match between the two political parties. I’d sit home in Little Rock and look at the news at night, and it appeared to me that the paradigm for how it was working was something like, “I’ve got my idea. You’ve got your idea. Let’s fight, because if we don’t fight, neither one of us will get on the evening news. Now, we won’t get anything done, but we might get on the evening news.”

And I was stunned that when I became President and I started trying to implement some of our ideas, say, for welfare reform; people would say, “Well you can’t do that. That’s supposed to be a Republican idea.” And I’d say, “Well, what is that?” And there was never any substance; it was just like a tag. And if you had the tag, whether it was crime or welfare reform, that was a Republican tag. If it was education or health care, that was a Democratic tag. And that doesn’t tell you very much. That’s just a category. That’s a word; you have to give meaning to it.

So we’ve really worked very hard in the last 7½ years to actually show up every day, have ideas, and try to implement them. And it’s amazing; it’s like any other kind of job. It actually yields to effort. And I say that because it’s very important to me, as someone who is not a candidate for the first time in more than a quarter-century, that you understand that this is a really, really significant decision that is in your hands, and that we are very fortunate to be able to make this decision at a good time for our country.

And I hope we will make it in a very positive way, which doesn’t mean that I don’t think there ought to be any fights and arguments. That’s what elections are for. Then you have to do your best to govern after the election. But I’ve been so troubled, in the last 20 years, how many elections seem to have revolved around both sides, as I said in the other meeting, trying to convince the voters that their opponents were just one notch above a car thief. And the truth is, if you look at the whole history of American politics, Presidents pretty much do what they say they’re going to do when they run. And when they don’t do it, we’re normally glad they didn’t. [Laughter]

I’ll give you an example. Aren’t you glad that Abraham Lincoln didn’t keep his campaign promise in 1860 not to free the slaves? Aren’t

we glad that—he basically said, “My commitment is to limit slavery, but I won’t try to free them.” And he got in the middle of the Civil War, and he realized that in good conscience, it was wrong. At least three times a week, I walk into the room in the White House where Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and thank God that he changed his mind.

Aren’t you glad that Roosevelt didn’t keep his campaign promise in 1932? Look at Bert laughing over there; he brought me a Roosevelt letter the last time I was here, so I could read it. And he promised in ’32 that if he got elected, he’d balance the budget. Well, it was a good thing for me to promise, but a very bad thing for Roosevelt to promise, because the unemployment rate of the country was 25 percent. And if he’d balanced the budget, it would have made the economy worse. So, instead, he experimented until he found something that was working. But by and large, people do what they say they will do.

One of the nicest things that I have read—and I have read some things about myself that weren’t so nice, as you might imagine—[laughter]—but one of the nicest things that I’ve read—way back in ’95, when we were in political trouble, a distinguished Presidential scholar of the Presidency and the media named Thomas Patterson did an analysis of our record and said that I had already kept a higher percentage of my campaign commitments than the previous five Presidents, even though I made more of them.

I say that—the people on our side, we took these ideas seriously. We took these policies seriously. We really worked at them. And this is—I’m not giving you a slogan or a 30-second ad, but I’m saying how I hope you will approach this election. We can approach the election and say, “Okay, we’ve got two candidates for President that are honorable people. We have candidates for the Senate and the House that are honorable people. Let’s tee it up and see what they expect to do with this magic moment.”

The most important thing for the Democrats is that people understand how important the election is. We knew what the deal was in ’92, and we knew it was real important. We had a huge turnout. The country was flat on its back. But I say this over and over again, but I’m going to say it again: There’s not a person in the world over 30 years old that cannot remember at least one instance when you made

a personal or a professional mistake not because things were so bad but because things were so good that you thought there was no consequence to the failure to concentrate. There is nobody who has lived very long who can’t remember at least once when that happened to you. That is what we have to avoid.

If we understand that this is like the moment of a lifetime, and then we say, okay, what are we going to do with our prosperity, I hope the answer is, big things. It’s a chance to paint the future that we all want for our children.

How are we going to deal with the aging of America? When all the baby boomers like me get in the retirement system, there will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. How will we manage that? Both candidates have an idea about Social Security; the Vice President said more about Medicare. Who’s right?

How are we going to grow the economy and deal with the challenges of the local environment, where you have a lot of growth, and the global environment and global warming, which is real and can change everything about the way our children live? How are we going to be a force for peace and freedom and decency throughout the world and minimize the new security challenges that the young people in this audience will face from chemical, biological, nuclear weapons that like everything else will benefit from, unfortunately, new technology and miniaturization? How are we going to give all of our kids a world-class education? How are we going to make sure everybody has got a chance to participate in this economy?

One of the things we are doing in a bipartisan fashion in Washington now is pushing this new markets legislation of mine. I’ve been on two reservations lately to say that America ought to give people with money the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Asia and Africa, because we’ll never have a better chance to bring the benefits of free enterprise to neighborhoods that have been left behind.

See, these are big questions. These are questions—most of these questions we couldn’t even ask back in ’92 because we were \$300 billion in debt.

Now, so it’s a big election, ought to be about big things. As Ed said, there are real differences. I’ll just mention three or four. There’s a huge

difference between the Democratic take on where we are and how to keep the prosperity going, and the Republican take. They think that we ought to have a tax cut that costs somewhere between \$1.3 trillion and \$1.6 trillion. And they say, "Well, the projected surplus is bigger than that." But if you take their Social Security proposal and other things, the missile defense and all those other proposals, it's way more than the projected surplus.

We think—the Vice President said the other day—we ought to take \$400 billion of this projected tax cut, that's going to come right out of the Medicare taxes you pay, and take it out of the budget, save it, wall it off, and use it to pay down the debt until we need it for Medicare. Now, that has two benefits. First of all, you're protecting the money and paying down the debt. Secondly, you're protecting yourself in case all that projected surplus doesn't materialize.

I think it is really a mistake to decide now to spend all of this projected surplus over the next 10 years, which may not materialize. And they say back, "Well, you guys want to spend a lot of it." We do. But the difference is you have to approve the spending bills every year, so if the money is not coming in, you just don't approve the bills. But if you build it all into a tax cut on the front end, it's gone.

So we want a tax cut, too, but we think it ought to be more modest in scope because the main thing we can do for the economy is to keep these interest rates down, keep paying that debt down, keep this thing going. That's a big difference.

Then what about including people? We think we ought to raise the minimum wage again; they don't. We think we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights; they don't. We think we ought to provide a Medicare prescription drug benefit to every senior at an affordable price on a voluntary basis; and their plan doesn't do that.

Now, you ought to tell your friends out here that are independents and Republicans—you ought to listen to them, hear their side out, let them say why they differ with us. But don't pretend they don't differ. I got a big laugh in the other meeting when I said there are three things you need to know about this election: It's important; there are differences between the candidates and the parties; and only the Demo-

crats want you to know what the differences are. But there's a certain truth to that.

And I think it's important that we have a great, decent, candid, clear national debate without trying to impugn anybody's personality, integrity, but to say this is—we have been given a gift here, and we can talk about it, and we can chart our future. We're not bailing water out of a leaky boat anymore; now we've got a chance to really just think about where we're going.

There are lots of other issues. This country is fast becoming the most multiracial, multi-ethnic, multireligious democratic society in the world. How do we intend to go forward into the future, actually not just tolerating each other but celebrating our differences and feeling secure enough to do it because we know our common humanity is even more important than all of our differences? This is a huge question.

You think about what I have to—how have I spent the time you gave me as President on foreign policy? I worry about Northern Ireland. I worry about the Middle East. I've worried about Kosovo. I've worried about Bosnia. I worry about the tribal wars in Africa. All over the world, in this so-called modern world, people are still out there killing each other because they're from a different tribe, a different faith, a different race, a different ethnic group. And still in America we have hate crimes where people get killed just because of their race or their religion or because they're gay.

This is a big deal. We've got to figure out—we're not going to be able to do good around the world unless we are good here at home. And we have the opportunity to honestly discuss this. How are we going to get this done now? And you can say, "Well, you can say all this high-minded stuff because you're not running." [Laughter] In the end there will be some 15-second slogan that will pierce to the heart of this. That does not have to be the case. That does not have to be the case.

We had two guys offer, I think—or one man offered the other day a million dollars to the Presidential candidates' favorite charity, \$500,000 each, if they'd just show up and have a debate on nothing but education—and he happens to be a Republican. And the Vice President—I was proud of him—said, "Absolutely, right now, I'll do it."

But I think the more we just sit around and treat each other like we've got half-good sense

and we know what we're doing and we talk about what kind of future we want, the better off we're going to be. Now, do I believe it helps the Democrats? You bet I do. Do I think, if that's the environment of the election, Al Gore will be elected, that we'll pick up seats in the Senate, including one I hope in New York, that we'll take the House back? Yes, I do. I think that. But I might be wrong. I trust the American people. Why are we around here after 200 years? Because most of the time we get it right, if we have enough time and enough information. The sort of internal compass of the American people, if it's not threatened, normally comes out all right. That's why we're still around here after all this time.

So that's what I'd like to ask you all to think about. I'd like to ask you to go out and talk to people about it, because there is a lot more consensus on a lot of these issues than I think we think, number one; number two, there are a lot of these issues that nobody has got the answer to, that we need debates on.

I mentioned in the other room—I want to mention again—I was thrilled when I found out that your Republican Governor and the whole Democratic legislature, all the Democratic legislators were pushing an education initiative to lower class size, raise teacher pay, and improve the quality of education. That's a great thing. Because I can tell you this, if we can't provide a world-class education to all of our kids, then we will never be the country we ought to be.

And I can also tell you that we can do it. I was in a public school in Spanish Harlem in New York the other day. Two years ago, 80 percent of those kids were reading below grade level and doing math below grade level—2 years ago. Today, 74 percent of them are at or above grade level—in 2 years.

I was in a little school in Kentucky the other day where way over the half the kids are on free or reduced lunch. They were identified as a failing school that had to do better. They were going to have to shut down or turn around. And in 3 years, they went from 12 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 57 percent. They went from 5 percent of their kids doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent. They went from zero percent of their kids doing science at or above grade level to two-thirds of them. And it's one of the 20 best grade schools in Kentucky today—over half the kids from very poor homes.

So we can do this. That's another thing. I'd like to see this debated. I've been working on this school reform business for 20 years. And when we started—when Hillary and I started with the schools at home, we kind of thought we knew what needed to be done, and some of the stuff was obvious. But now, we actually know. Now there are a remarkable number of success stories like this about educating our children. We know how to do it now. There's not a State in America where you can't identify a cluster of schools that were in the tank that are performing at very high levels now—not a one. So, what's our excuse for the others? That ought to be a big source of debate in this election.

How are we going to close the digital divide? What about the Indian reservations, where half the people don't have phones? I was introduced the other day, on the Navajo Reservation, by a 13-year-old girl that won a contest—and she was very brilliant—and she won a contest; she won a computer. And she couldn't get on the Internet because there was no phone line in her home. So who's got the best ideas about what to deal with that?

The point I'm trying to make is, there's plenty of stuff to debate. And I don't think the American people would be bored if we had an honest, civil, explicit discussion about the big challenges out there. Now, do I think we would win? You bet I do, in a heartbeat. I believe that. But I might be wrong. We ought to suit up and find out.

And I'll just say this about Al Gore: I think I now know Al Gore better than anybody, outside his family. We had lunch once a week, the whole time we've been there together, except when he had something more pressing to do, when he started running for President. And I picked him not only because we shared a certain orientation toward the challenges of the 1990's but because he had experience in Washington I didn't have and he knew things about technology and the environment and arms control and foreign policy I didn't know. And it has been one of the best decisions I ever made in my entire life about anything.

And I can tell you, on every tough decision that I had to make—and we made some tough ones. When we decided to help Mexico, something that would have a big effect on Arizona—the Mexican economy, it collapsed a few years ago—the day we did it, there was a poll that

said by 81 to 15, you, the American people, thought I shouldn't do it. That was a real tester. [Laughter]

But we did it, because I knew it was the right thing to do. And I figured, a poll is like a horserace; it's not over yet. People pay you to win and to do the right thing for the country, and if it comes out all right, it's all right.

But Al Gore was for that. We went into Bosnia and Kosovo; Al Gore was for that. When we went in to save democracy in Haiti, Al Gore was for that. He broke the tie on the economic plan of '93, where we had no votes from the other party. And if it hadn't been for that economic plan passing, the rest of us—we wouldn't be sitting here in this nice hotel having this lunch today.

So he is a person of extraordinary intelligence, extraordinary energy, and like me, he loves all these issues. He also knows a lot about these technological issues that we're going to have to face. For example, we've got to close the digital divide. Wouldn't you like to have somebody as President who knew how to do it, and who had been working on it for 6 or 7 years?

We've got to deal with the privacy issues. We're all going to have all our records on computers, all our financial records, all our health care records. If you had to put up health care

records to get health insurance, don't you think there ought to be some limit to who gets access to them? Shouldn't you have to give your own permission before you give them up? Do you think you ought to be denied a job because somebody can log on to the Internet and find out something about you your first cousin may not know? These are big issues.

So anyway, I realize this is not a traditional political speech; this is a conversation. But you just remember what I told you. It's a real big election, real big issues, honest differences—not bad guys and good guys, honest differences. And if people know what they are, we'll win. That's what you have to help us do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in Salon 1 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon cohosts Fred DuVal and Steve Owens; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and his wife, Harriet C. Babbitt, Deputy Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development; Janet Napolitano, Arizona attorney general; Thomas Patterson, professor of government and the press, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; and Gov. Jane Dee Hull of Arizona.

Statement on Proposed School Modernization Legislation *June 22, 2000*

Every year that Congress stalls on passing critical school modernization legislation is another year our children have to go to class in trailers, in crowded classrooms, in crumbling schools. A new U.S. Department of Education survey of the condition of American schools gives cause for concern. Rising enrollments and years of deferred maintenance have taken a serious toll, jeopardizing our children's health and the quality of their education. According to the report, our schools require \$127 billion in repairs and 3.5 million students attend school in buildings that need to be replaced altogether.

Children cannot learn in crumbling schools. It is clear that additional resources are needed to accommodate record enrollments and allow

smaller classes. I have called on Congress to enact my proposal to repair 25,000 schools over the next 5 years. In addition, I have proposed a school construction tax cut that would help communities build and modernize 6,000 schools. Representatives Charles Rangel and Nancy Johnson have introduced legislation to do just that. While there is broad bipartisan support for this key school modernization legislation, congressional leaders have refused to even bring it to a vote. Congress should act now to give all our children the safe, modern, world-class schools they deserve.

June 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Bolster Enforcement of Gun Laws June 22, 2000

Today the House has an opportunity to bolster our efforts to fight gun crime in America as it considers the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill. In its current form, the bill severely underfunds my \$280 million national gun enforcement initiative—including funding for 1,000 new State and local gun prosecutors, anti-gun violence media campaigns, and smart gun technology. I urge the House to pass Representative Lowey's amendment to provide \$150 million to hire State and local gun prosecutors to put more gun criminals behind bars.

Yesterday the Treasury Department released its first-ever gun ATF gun trafficking report demonstrating my administration's commitment to tough gun enforcement and the need to close deadly loopholes in our laws that make gun shows and corrupt dealers favorite supply channels for illegal traffickers. Congress can take immediate action to address these issues and make

progress in the fight to reduce gun violence. Instead, the House attempted to undermine the administration's historic gun safety agreement with Smith & Wesson last night. Despite the failure of this attempt, the Republican leadership continues its assault on this agreement at a time when our Nation loses nearly 12 children per day in gunfire.

We should be doing all we can to move forward in the fight to reduce gun violence, not backward. I urge Congress to focus on measures that will improve public safety by fully funding my national gun enforcement initiative to give law enforcement even more tools to crack down on gun criminals. And Congress should finally pass the stalled commonsense gun safety legislation to close the gun show loophole and take other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Statement on the Shootings of Government Meat Inspectors June 22, 2000

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic shootings of three government inspectors, including two U.S. Department of Agriculture employees, in California. The Federal Government is working closely with local authorities on this matter. This grievous act was committed

against dedicated individuals who were working to ensure the public's health and safety. I want to join all Americans in extending our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families and coworkers.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Energy Policy Legislation June 22, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

With so much attention focused on the recent spike in gasoline prices and OPEC's decision to increase production quotas, it is critical that we not lose sight of our nation's long-term energy needs. For seven years, my Administration has pursued a sound, comprehensive policy to address those needs. Regrettably, several key elements of this Administration's strategy have

languished in Congress. In recent days, in fact, budget initiatives to strengthen our energy supply have suffered significant cuts, while some Members have advanced proposals that would seriously harm our environment in the name of energy security. I urge you to work closely with me to enact these critical energy proposals without further delay.

I remain very concerned about high gasoline prices and find the situation in the Chicago/Milwaukee region particularly troubling. Last week, the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency sent analysts to the region to explore the reasons for this price differential. While a number of factors appear to have contributed to the unusually high prices in the region, it is possible that they may not account for the entire increase in gas prices. The Federal Trade Commission has initiated an investigation of pricing practices in the region to determine if there is any unfair or illegal activity there. We look forward to the results of these investigations.

Our concern about high gasoline prices in the short-term, however, cannot be allowed to distract us from addressing the long-term energy needs of our nation. My Administration has pursued an energy policy that provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to addressing the nation's energy needs. Unfortunately, Congress is considering proposals that are unnecessary and would do irrevocable harm to the environment, such as opening the Arctic refuge to drilling. Instead, Congress should act on the following key pieces of my energy policy.

First, I have proposed a \$4 billion package of tax incentives to encourage consumers to purchase more efficient cars, homes, and consumer products. Congress has failed to enact this package for over two years, even though these tax credits would save consumers money, protect our environment, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I also have proposed tax incentives to support renewable energy and the domestic oil industry, including the expensing of geological and geophysical expenses and delay rental payments.

Second, over the past seven years I have repeatedly proposed significant increases in Federal investments in responsible domestic sources of energy, including most recently \$1.4 billion in FY 2001 for high-priority items at DOE for energy efficiency, renewable energy, natural gas, and distributed power generation systems. Specific examples of these investments include more efficient technologies for our factories and homes, weatherization of low income households, technologies to produce biofuels and power from biomass, and the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles (PNGV)—a collaborative effort with automakers to deliver affordable cars that are three times more fuel

efficient. Yet, Congress has failed to support these critical goals, approving only 12 percent of our proposed increases for energy efficiency and renewables over the past seven years. This year, the House has already cut DOE's FY 2001 budget for energy efficiency programs below last year's enacted level and has cut virtually all DOE funding for the PNGV program.

Third, two years ago I submitted the Comprehensive Electricity Restructuring Act to Congress, to improve the operation and efficiency of the electricity sector. Congress to date has not enacted a comprehensive restructuring bill. Such legislation would improve the reliability of our electric power system, provide American consumers an estimated annual savings of \$20 billion as a result of competition in electricity markets, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Fourth, to address energy supply emergencies, I have called for reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast, and replenishment of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program emergency funds. Authorization for the SPR expired on March 31, 2000. It is critical that the SPR be reauthorized so that I have available all means to respond to any possible energy supply emergency. Further, the Department of Energy cannot establish a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to respond to shortages of home heating oil until Congress either reauthorizes the SPR or separately passes legislation authorizing the creation of such a reserve with a responsible trigger. Because Congress has failed to act thus far, it will be virtually impossible to establish a home heating oil reserve in time for next winter.

America needs a balanced, forward-looking energy policy based on the proposals that my Administration has put before Congress. We are committed to a responsible approach that will infuse our energy sector with both efficiency and competition; that values clean air, clean water, and healthy lands; and that seeks to cushion America against emergencies in the energy market. Congress should act on my proposals without further hesitation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

June 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Tom Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Message to the Senate Transmitting an Amendment to the Montreal Protocol

June 22, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the “Montreal Protocol”), adopted at Beijing on December 3, 1999, by the Eleventh Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (the “Beijing Amendment”). The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The principal features of the Beijing Amendment, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program, are the addition of trade controls on hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), the addition of production controls on HCFCs, the addition of bromochloromethane to the substances controlled under the Montreal Protocol, and the addition of mandatory reporting requirements on the use of methyl bromide for quarantine and preshipment purposes. The Beijing Amendment will constitute a major step forward in

protecting public health and the environment from potential adverse effects of stratospheric ozone depletion.

By its terms, the Beijing Amendment will enter into force on January 1, 2001, provided that at least 20 parties have indicated their consent to be bound. The Beijing Amendment provides that no State may become a party unless it previously has become (or simultaneously becomes) a party to the 1997 Montreal Amendment. The Montreal Amendment is currently before the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification (Senate Treaty Doc. No. 106–10).

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Beijing Amendment and give its advice and consent to ratification, at the same time as it gives its advice and consent to ratification of the Montreal Amendment.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 22, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Susan Davis in San Diego, California

June 22, 2000

Thank you. I’m sorry Susan couldn’t be here today, but I’m glad she’s doing her job. [*Laughter*] That’s what Democrats do. And I feel really comfortable having Steve here, because we’re both campaigning for positions in the congressional spouses club. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Congressman Bob Filner for that rousing speech and for the wonderful service he gives to you, to California, and to our Nation every day in the United States Congress.

Somewhere in this crowd we have two other Democratic candidates for Congress, George Barraza and Craig Barkacs. Where are they? They’re here somewhere. Give them a hand. There they are. [*Applause*] On my way in, the first lady of California, Sharon Davis, met me. I want to thank her for being here.

And I want to say to all of you, thanks. I think all of you know the role that this State played in our campaign in ’92 and in ’96; the unbelievable vote we got here against all the

odds in 1992, when I became the first Democrat since Harry Truman to carry San Diego, and I thank you.

I just want to say one or two words. You know, I can speak with a certain freedom about this election because it's the first time in 26 years I haven't been on the ballot. [Laughter] Most days, I'm okay about it. [Laughter] I know it's hot in here, and I want to get out and shake hands and all that, but I want you to just listen for a minute. Somebody might ask you why you came here, and I want you to be able to give a good answer.

Now, we have worked hard to turn this country around. And where I could—where I could in good faith, I have worked with the Republicans. But they opposed our economic policy and said it would bankrupt the country. Instead, it gave us the longest economic expansion and the biggest surpluses in our history.

They opposed our social policies. They were against the family and medical leave law. They said it would hurt the economy. Instead, we've had over 20 million people take advantage of it when a baby was born or a parent was sick. And we've got over 22 million new jobs.

Basically, they opposed us on the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, putting 100,000 police on the street, putting 50,000 more on the street. They said it wouldn't put a dent in crime. Instead, it gave us the lowest crime rate in 25 years and a 35 percent drop in crime.

They kept trying to put these riders to weaken our environmental protection on all the bills that I passed, ever since 1995. They opposed it when I tried to set aside national monuments, when I set aside over 40 million acres for roadless areas in the national forests. They said all of our efforts to have cleaner air, cleaner water, were going to hurt the economy. Instead, we've got the strongest economy and the cleanest environment in history.

Now, what's the point of all this? We have had a contest of ideas. And that's what you have to remind the voters of this November, the people who aren't here, the people who don't follow this so closely, but the people who love our country and love this State and want to do right by America when they go into the voting booth. We have had a contest of ideas. Ours have been tested in the crucible of experience, and guess what? They worked. They worked.

I recommend you go out all across this community and to your friends all across the State and throughout the Nation and say the following: Number one, this is a really important election. It is just as important as the election of 1992 or the election of 1996. And the danger is that people may not understand it. In '92 California was hurting; the economy was hurting; the open wounds of society were laid bare. We knew what the election was about. We knew we had to change. In 1996 the election was clear: Were you going to ratify what we were doing or reject it and build our bridge to the 21st century?

What is the election of 2000 about? It is about, what do we propose to do with our prosperity, with our surplus, with our good fortune, with our social progress, with our confidence? That's what it's about. I believe with all my heart, if the American people believe that's what this election about, we'll win. I believe Al Gore will win. I believe Susan Davis will win. I believe Hillary Clinton will win. I believe—[inaudible].

Here's the good news. You don't have to go out and say anything bad. All you've got to do is tell the truth about the differences. I'm sick and tired of elections—for 20 years, I have watched elections—mostly driven by the far right in this country—where, in the end, people were so angry and upset with each other, both sides were essentially trying to convince the voters that their opponents were just one notch above a car thief. [Laughter]

Now, you don't have to do it, and you shouldn't. What you ought to say, number one, this is a big election; we've got the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. Number two, there are real differences, and they are profound. And you should assume that people on both sides are honorable, and they will continue to do what they have done, and they will do exactly what they say they will do. And number three, only the Democrats want you to know what the real differences are in this election.

You watch—I'll tell you, I love watching these Republicans now. Butter wouldn't melt in their mouth. They want you to forget all about the fact that they even had a Presidential primary campaign. And they certainly want you to forget the commitments they made in their primary campaign. And you watch a lot of them voting this year; they want you to forget all about how

they voted from 1995 until they figured out where the voters were. And they figured they could just get by this election and they could go back to being the way it was.

Now look, there are real differences. On economic policy, they want to take all this marvelous projected—the operative word is projected—surplus and spend it on their plan for a tax cut, \$1.3 to \$1.5 trillion; on their plan to partially privatize Social Security, which would cost about \$800 billion. They want to spend more for their missile defense system and their other defense ideas and for their school voucher program. In other words, they want to spend it all now because they know it's going to materialize.

Now, I ought to say that it will, because it's self-serving for me. We turned this deficit around, and we got a projected huge surplus. But I say again, it is projected.

Now, what Al Gore and the Democrats want to do is to, first of all, say it's projected; we don't have this money yet. How in the world can we give it all away before we've got it? Let's save 20 percent on the front end by taking all the taxes you pay for Medicare and putting it over here so it can't be spent on anything else, and keep paying down the debt. Let's give the people a tax cut, but one they really need to help educate our children, send them to college, pay for child care, pay for long-term care for the elderly, pay to give people incentives to invest in the poor areas that have been left behind. But let's make sure it's something we can afford, even if what is projected doesn't materialize. And let's save some back to invest in the education of our children and cleaning up the environment and extending health care coverage to people who need it.

Now, folks, this is a huge deal. Do you want the main benefits of this surplus we worked so hard for to go to just a few, and do you want to risk the fact that we'll be back in deficits before you know it? Or do you want to keep paying the national debt down and investing in the future of our children and our families?

You know, now that I've just got about 7 months to go, all these people come up to me all the time and say, "What was the secret of your economic policy? What did you bring back to Washington? What new idea did you introduce?" And I give them a one-word answer: arithmetic. We tried their way for 12 years; we tried it our way for 8 years. Does anybody seri-

ously doubt which way works best? Let's don't go back to that old way. Let's go forward.

Now, what about building one America? We're for a minimum wage increase; they're not. Only now they feel bad about it when they're not. [Laughter] We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're not. Only now they act like they feel bad about it when they're not. [Laughter] We're for a Medicare voluntary prescription drug program so that all of our seniors have access to prescription drugs; they're not. Only now they have posters to tell them what words they're supposed to say so you'll think they're for it. [Laughter]

Now, I'm not the most partisan person we ever had in the White House. I like working with Republicans. I will work with Republicans every day until I leave if they'll work with me. But I'm not going to paper over the differences, and you shouldn't either. There are real differences here, on economic policy, on Medicare and prescription drugs, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, on the minimum wage, on whether we're going to protect the environment or weaken our environmental protections, on whether the next Supreme Court will protect a right to choose or get rid of it.

So I'm here for Susan Davis because I think she's on the right side of those issues, and because she has worked hard at a public job and represented you well. And she's doing her duty today, which is what she ought to be doing. And that's what we need more of in this country.

And I'm here for Al Gore because I know he will have an economic policy that will keep the prosperity going. You ought to ask—I just want you to ask your friends in California and throughout the country if they really want to go back to that economic policy, or wouldn't they like to build on what we've done and go forward? That's the first thing.

Second thing, I'm for him because I know he will try to extend the benefits of this prosperity to the families of people in the places that have been left behind, which is a passion of mine. If we can't take economic opportunity to the poor neighborhoods, the poor people, and the poor places that have been left behind now; if we can't close the digital divide; if we can't raise educational opportunity—if we can't do this now, when will we ever get around to

it? Now is not the time to change our commitment to spreading the benefits of this new economy.

And the final thing, the third reason I'm for him is that he understands the future. And we need somebody in office who understands the future. There will be all kinds of new issues. The children in this audience will spend the next 30 years worrying about global warming if we don't take action now. And Al Gore was the first public figure in American life to understand that. When everybody else was saying it was some sort of conspiracy to undermine the American economy, he said, "No, the climate is getting warmer, and it's going to wreck a lot of what we do and a lot of how we live. And we can still grow our economy and improve our environment."

When we rewrote the telecommunications law in a way that created hundreds of thousands of jobs, all the big monopolists moved in on Congress, and Al Gore said, "No, we're going to have competition here; we're going to let small entrepreneurs and little guys get in here and take advantage of this technological revolution. And we're going to have the E-rate so that every school and every library can afford to log on to the Internet, and none of our kids will be left behind."

And now, when all of our health records and all of our financial records are on somebody's

computer somewhere, and a lot of big economic interests want to get their hands on it—for obvious reasons—Al Gore is up there in Washington saying, "No, Americans should have the right to privacy. And unless they say you can have their information, you shouldn't get their health or their financial information."

So I want you to take that message out of here. I want you to work for Susan Davis, not just when the President comes to town but every day between now and November. I want you to work for Al Gore and the other Democrats. I want you to remind the people of California what it was like in 1992 and what it's like today. And I want you to say, "Look, we need somebody who will keep the prosperity going, who will spread it to more families and people who have been left behind, and who understands the future."

And remember, it's a big election; there are real differences and only the Democrats want you to know what they are.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. at the El Cortez Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ms. Davis' husband, Steve; and George (Jorge) Barraza and Craig Barkacs, candidates for California's 51st and 52d Congressional Districts, respectively. Ms. Davis was a candidate for California's 49th Congressional District.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in San Diego June 22, 2000

Let me say, first of all, Mike, you gave a wonderful talk, and you gave a wonderful toast. And I like it either way. [Laughter] And I want to thank you and Carol and all of you for the work you did to make this a success tonight. I'd like to thank California's first lady, Sharon Davis, for being here. I'd like to thank Representative Bob Filner and his wife, Jane, who are here. Thank you for being here. Former Representative and chief of staff to the Governor, Lynn Schenk, thank you for being here.

And I also would like to thank the leaders of the Barona and Viejas Tribes for their support and for the example they're setting. We had a great talk around the table tonight about the

differences among the tribes in terms of economic circumstances and potential in Indian country throughout America. One of the great honors of my Presidency has been the opportunity I've had to spend more time with more people from the Native American tribes and the tribal governments than any President probably in history. I even invited all the tribal leaders to meet me at the White House; for the first time since James Monroe was President in the 1820's, that happened. It was quite wonderful. So it's been a great thing.

I would like to thank Bertrand, the owner of Mr. A's Restaurant, for a wonderful dinner tonight. Was this great, or what? [Applause]

When I used to do these back home—and we didn't eat like this—[laughter]—I feel pretty great about it.

I'd like to thank Mayor Rendell, who I did—he was looking forward to a fairly peaceful retirement of a year or so, and then he was going to ascend to the governorship of Pennsylvania, which I still hope he will do. So I told him I had this little part-time job I was interested in him doing. And he has part-timed himself all across America, exhausting himself, trying to make sure that we preserve the progress in this country and preserve the prosperity. And I'm very, very grateful to him. He's been a great leader for our party. And all these young people that work on these events, I'm grateful to them.

I'll tell you a story. I don't know about a joke, but I'll tell you a story. You gave the Irish blessing so—my people are from a place called Fermanagh. They were Irish Protestants living on the border. Fermanagh is a little village literally on the border of Northern Ireland and Ireland, in the west. And my mother was a Cassidy. So we found the Protestant Cassidys; we traced them all the way back to a farmhouse built in the 1750's. And I went to Ireland in '95; they actually gave me a watercolor of the farmhouse, which is the only—the oldest known residence of relatives of mine—at least, any relative that's willing to admit it still. [Laughter]

And you know I've had this remarkable love affair with Ireland, because I got the United States involved in the peace process, and it's worked out in a remarkable way. I went to Dublin in '95; we had 100,000 people in the street; it was really one of the great days of my life. I turned on the Christmas lights in Belfast, and there were 50,000 people there. It's just been unbelievable.

What happens, especially when you're not running anymore, you tend to get a little free with what you say. [Laughter] Sometimes you actually commit the sin of saying exactly what you think. [Laughter] I can say this because we've had a happy ending now. [Laughter] You may remember, for a while we got the institutions of self-government up to Northern Ireland, and everybody is working along together, and then all of a sudden it all gets taken down because they can't agree on the decommissioning issue. And it was maddening—and all these people had been working for years, many of them a lot longer than I had thought—that after we had actually ended the Irish civil war

and we had got it all done, it was all going to pieces again.

And I said—not thinking about stereotyping the Irish, of which I am one—I said, this reminds me—I said these two sides in Northern Ireland remind me of two guys that are kind of drunks, and they decide they're going to quit drinking. And they walk out of the bar together, arm in arm, and right as they get to the swinging door they say no, and they turn around and go back.

So I was blasted all over Ireland. "Clinton let us down. He's stereotyping the Irish." And I was really worried about it until about 3 days later I got in the mail a copy of a letter to the editor from the Irish Times saying, "I see all this criticism of President Clinton for comparing us, and all those things he said." And he said, "It is terrible what he said; I've been a drunk all my adult life, and I resent being compared to those people." [Laughter] So sometimes when you're uptight, you've just got to tell a joke and laugh it off and go on.

But anyway, I'm delighted to be here and I'm delighted that—I sort of thought there would come a time this year when I'd show up at one of these dinners and no one would be there. [Laughter] And so I'm very grateful to you. I'm grateful to the people of California, and I'm very grateful to the people of San Diego. I've had a special relationship with this community from the beginning. I love it here. My family and I have had a wonderful set of experiences here. We had a wonderful vacation here one year around—a springtime vacation. And I'm particularly glad that I came here tonight and somebody showed up. [Laughter]

I got a call last week from a very distinguished citizen of the world who said, "Well, Mr. President, for a lame duck, you're still quacking rather loudly." [Laughter] So that's what I'm trying to do.

I would like to just say a couple of things to follow up on what Mayor Rendell said. I thank you for coming here, and we'll do our best to invest the funds you have given us wisely. But we need your help in telling people why you feel this way. People ask me all the time, they come up to me and they say, "Who do you think is going to get elected?" And I always say, "I think the Vice President is going to win." I do. I said it a year and a half ago when he was 18 points behind in the polls. Then they kind of say, "Do you think Hillary

is going to win?" I say, "Of course"—I mean, what do you expect me to say? But I actually believe it.

But let me say what I think the real issue is in all these Senate and the House and the President's race. And I do think we're going to win. But the issue is, what do the voters think the election is about? This is one of those deals—we've got a lot of trial lawyers in this room. Sometimes the answers people give depends upon the way the question is asked or what you think the real question is. And this election really—the outcome of this election is going to be determined, by and large, by what people think this election is about.

And I think if we can demonstrate, number one, that we've been working here for 8 years with a core set of ideas designed to give opportunity to every responsible citizen and to create a community in which any American can be a part; and that we've tried to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity and decency around the world; and that what we need to do is to build on that, not undo it—if we can make that point, then the second point we need to make is that we have to decide, we need to make a conscious decision about what to do with our prosperity. I mean, sometimes I feel like a broken record, but I will say this over and over and over again. Anybody who is over 30 years old can remember at least one time in his or her life when you have made a whopping mistake not because you were faced with adverse circumstances but because things were rocking along so well you thought there was no penalty to the failure to concentrate. Anybody who is over 30 years old can remember at least one time in your personal life or in your work life when a mistake has been made because it seemed that there were no consequences to the failure to concentrate because everything was rolling along.

And if you really listen to the two sides, the other side really seems to be saying, "Look, we need to just take this thing while it's coming because nobody can mess up this economy if they try." And I don't believe that. I think we need to make a conscious decision as a people that we have an obligation, a solemn obligation to our children's generation, to use this magic moment to deal with the big issues out there, the big challenges, the big opportunities of this century.

Now, if you get that far, then you have to say, what are those challenges; what do you think they ought to do; and are there any real differences between the parties? And I have to tell you that I think it's obvious what we ought to be doing. We need to figure out how to keep this prosperity going and spread its benefits to people and places who have been left behind.

We need to figure out how to make people who have jobs better able to balance their responsibilities at work and their responsibilities at home—something America still has not done enough on. Child care, preschool, after-school, health care for the families that are working out there that don't have it yet—all of those things.

We need to figure out how to continue to grow the economy and do even better at preserving and improving the environment, and especially dealing with the problem of climate change.

We've proved that we can get the crime rate down. We ought to commit ourselves to making this the safest big country in the world. We can do that in 5 years if we made up our mind to do it.

We ought to commit ourselves to paying America's debt off. We're not running deficits anymore; we're running surpluses. I think it ought to be a national policy goal to pay off the public debt. That's what I believe.

Now, I have to tell you, that's a very controversial position among Democrats, because we also want to spend more money to educate people, to provide health care to poor people. But here's why I'm for that. If we keep paying the debt down, we'll keep interest rates down. It'll be easier for people to borrow money. It will be easier to invest. There will be more jobs. There will be higher incomes. And we'll keep the expansion going along. And the best social program any government can provide is a good private sector job. You've got to have a growing economy first. We wouldn't be here having this conversation. This election wouldn't even be about all this stuff. We're sitting here arguing about how to spend the surplus, and is it one or two trillion dollars over the next 10 years?

If I had told you in '92, if I had to come to California and I said, "I want you to vote for me, and I'll get rid of this deficit"—we'd been running a deficit for 30 years, and we

quadrupled the national debt in the last 12 years—“now vote for me, and I’ll get rid of it. And before I’m gone we’ll have three different surpluses, and we’ll know that we can pay off our debt in the first decade of the 21st century.” Do you know what you would have said? You would have said, “He seems like such a nice man, but he’s slightly daft, and we better send him home.” [*Laughter*]

But it happened. People ask me all the time, what magical new idea did we bring to Washington in the economic area? And I always say, in one word, arithmetic. That is, we stopped playing games with the numbers. We stopped promising people something we couldn’t deliver. We said, if we’re going to spend the money, we’ve got to have the money. And we made hard choices. I got rid of hundreds of programs so that we could double our investment in education while we were cutting the deficit. And those things had to be done.

Now, what’s all this got to do with where we are? So here we are now. If you believe these big challenges ought to be faced, then you have to say, well, are there consequences to the decision of who gets to be President? Are there consequences to the decision who gets elected to the Senate, who gets elected to the Congress? And I would argue that there are big differences between these candidates. And if you’ll listen very closely to the debate, the Democrats are a lot more interested in you knowing what the differences are than the Republicans are, because they know if you really understand the differences, two-thirds of the people agree with us.

For example, should we say, okay, now we have the surplus at \$2 trillion over 10 years, estimated, projected, over the next 10 years. So their policy is to spend over half of it on a tax cut, \$1.3 trillion, and then to partially privatize Social Security, which—and guarantee the benefits of everybody still in the system, which will cost about another \$800 billion. So there’s \$2 billion there. And then to pay for “star wars” and school vouchers and some other promises, so that we’ll be back into deficits sooner or later in the next decade if we get the whole \$2 trillion.

Our policy, as reflected in the Vice President’s position, is we may not get the \$2 trillion. That great line from “Jerry McGuire”—“Show me the money!” The problem with all this tax cut stuff—it sounds great, and most of you would

be better off in the short run with their policy. But I emphasize “in the short run” because if we have a big tax cut with 4 percent unemployment, it will be perceived as inflationary; interest rates will go up more than they’ve already gone up; it will slow the economy; it will cut the profitability of your investments; and therefore, the projected surplus will not materialize, and we’ll be right back in the deficit suit.

So we’re put in a position of telling you things you may not want to hear, like the Vice President said the other day, why don’t we just start by saying we’re going to save 20 percent of this projected surplus, because \$400 billion of this projected surplus are taxes you’re paying for Medicare. So let’s just wall it off, use it to pay down the debt until we need it, and then Medicare will last a lot longer.

Why don’t we have a tax cut, but less than—and a sizable one, but still less than half the one they propose, so we can focus on wealth creation for people that can’t do it otherwise, help them establish their own savings account, child care, sending kids to college, long-term care when you’ve got an elderly or disabled relative who is sick, and then save some money to invest in our future—in education, in science and technology, in new environmental technologies, in health care, and the things that will change our future?

Now, there’s a huge difference. What do you propose to do with the surplus? What do you propose to do with this moment of prosperity? It will affect economic policy; it will affect social policy. What are the other differences?

Well, we think we ought to bend over backwards and let everybody participate. We think the people that served this food tonight, if they’re working hard and obeying the law, have just as much right as we do to benefit from this new economy. That’s what we think. And so we think we ought to raise the minimum wage; they don’t. We think we also ought to have a tax cut for working people that have modest wages with children at home.

We think that we ought to pass the Patients’ Bill of Rights, and they don’t. We think we ought to have a Medicare-based, broad-based prescription program for seniors so that people can get medicine that can’t afford it today, and they don’t. If we were creating Medicare today,

we'd never create Medicare without a drug program today. It was a doctor-and-hospital program in 1965 because that's what medicine was. Now anybody that lives to be 65 years old has got a life expectancy of 82. And if they take care of themselves and they have access to good health care, they could live longer.

In a few days, we'll have an announcement that the human genome project is essentially completed, its basic mapping. You will then see in the next couple of years this breathtaking explosion of discoveries about the pattern and genes that make you more likely to get certain kinds of cancer or Parkinson's or Alzheimer's or become overweight or have a heart attack or whatever. You'll see all this stuff. And you will begin to see kind of individualized plans develop for little babies when the mothers bring them home from the hospital that will change the whole landscape of health care. And it wouldn't surprise me a bit to see children being born within the next 10 years, in our country and other developed countries, that are being born with a life expectancy of 90 years. That is going to change everything.

So if you're going to live that long, it seems to me that the society's obligation is for people not only to live as long but to live as well as possible. One thing the Congress did on the bipartisan fashion—and I applaud everybody who did, including the Republicans, and take the earnings limit off Social Security. We need to do that. You can't have—if a huge percentage of your population is over 65 and a bunch of them are healthy as can be and they want to work, you don't want to have an economic incentive for them not to work when you're going to have a ratio of people on Social Security to not—of only two to one.

So we have to think of all these things. Now, why am I for Al Gore for President? Not just on all these issues. I could go through—let me just talk about crime a minute. I want to talk about crime. I want to talk about welfare.

We got a bipartisan welfare reform bill through, but I had to veto two bills. Why? Because I agreed with the Republicans that people who were able-bodied on welfare who could work should work, but what I did not agree with is that we should abandon the national guarantee of health care and nutrition to their children. So we finally got a bill. And I said, "We've got work requirements in here. This is not going to be a disincentive. But we've got

to take care of these children." So I vetoed two bills, and we finally got one we agreed on. I signed it, and they were saying, "Well, maybe it was too weak." All I know is, since I became President, we've got the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, and they're less than half the size they were in '93.

On the crime bill, the first time I ever did an event with Ed Rendell when he was mayor was on an antidrug, anticrime, antigang event. Ed and I were so dumb, we didn't know crime was a Republican issue; we thought it was an American issue. [Laughter] All this idea that it's a Republican issue is like that's what's the matter with Washington; it's all about words and stuff instead of what are you really producing.

So we had a crime program: Put more cops in the streets, do more things to keep kids off the street and out of trouble, and take steps to get guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. It wasn't rocket science. Yes, the improving economy helped the crime rate. Yes, the aging population in some places helped the crime rate. Yes, the sort of waning of the crack epidemic helped the crime rate. But put more police on the streets, giving the kids something positive to do, and doing more to take guns out of the hands of criminals and children also had something to do with it.

Now, I realize that it was a political risk. We lost a dozen members of our caucus in the '94 election because they had the guts to vote for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, because the NRA convinced people we were going to come and take their guns away. A dozen gave up their careers so that your kids could be safer. And these people are still talking about—now they say if Governor Bush wins, they'll have an office in the White House. And figuratively, they will, because they've made their commitments, and they'll have to honor them.

But look here, not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods because of the Brady bill or the assault weapons ban. [Laughter] And when we banned those cop-killer bullets, they still haven't found the first deer wearing a Kevlar vest. [Laughter] I mean, there are no problems here. What is the deal here? I mean, what is this about? I mean, I can say it. One of the reasons that they dislike me so intensely is that I grew up in one of the all-time hunting cultures of the world.

But this is crazy. You can't have a society where you take no sensible steps to keep criminals and little children from having access to guns. So the Brady bill has kept a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns. We've got a 35-year low on gun crime.

So what do we want to do? Well, we want to close the gun show loophole. That means if somebody goes to a gun show, we think we ought to do a background check. We want child trigger locks on the guns. We want not to import large capacity ammunition clips which can be used by people in America to get around the assault weapons ban.

Now, there is still not anybody going to miss a day in the deer woods. All this rhetoric about gun control is crazy. You know, in America, we have a constitutional right to travel, too. The Supreme Court says there is a constitutional right to travel. But if you leave here and you get in your car and you go home, you'll have seatbelts; you'll have a speed limit; if you've got a little baby, you'd have a child restraint law. And you don't ever hear anybody griping about car control, do you? "Car control, it's a threat to the constitutional rights of travel." Car control is if I come get your car and put it in my garage. [Laughter] Otherwise, it's highway safety.

So there is a big difference between our two parties in this. And I think it's a huge issue. I'm glad we've got a lower crime rate, but this country is nowhere near as safe as it needs to be. And I don't think we ought to quit until we're the safest big country in the world. Just like I don't think we ought to quit paying down the debt until we're out of debt. And these are big ideas. You get the drift here. And we're different on these issues.

So the last thing I want to say is, I hope this election will be an honest, open debate where we posit the fact that the candidates for President and Senate and Congress are basically honorable people who intend to keep their commitments and talk about their differences and have an honest debate. I think if we do that, I think Al Gore will be elected President. I think that all these great candidates we've got in California—we've got a chance to pick up several House seats here. I think we'll win all of the ones we've got a chance to win because they're good candidates and because the voters will agree with us, because we've got a record that proves that in the areas where we're dif-

ferent we've gotten results, and because we've got new ideas.

And I just want to say one word about the Vice President. I think I probably know him better than anybody outside his family now. There are three reasons that I'd be for him if he weren't my Vice President and I didn't feel obligated in a profound and wonderful sense. One is, I agree with the economic policy he's articulated. I don't think we ought to risk giving away the whole projected surplus on tax cuts and long-term spending commitments. I think it's a risky strategy, and it's not worth it. And you wouldn't run your family business that way, and you wouldn't run your business that way. And we shouldn't run our Government that way. We worked a long time to turn this thing around, and we don't want to just squander it again.

Number two, I think he'll work harder to extend the benefits of this prosperity to people in places that aren't part of it now, and to help average families balance work and child rearing, open the doors of college to everybody.

Number three, I think he understands the future. This is a big deal. Al Gore was talking about global warming before most people even knew the two words went together. I'm talking years and years and years ago he was talking about it. Now, even the major oil companies admit that it's real. The first time we ever had lunch together, he showed me this chart he's got about greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere and how much they've gone up. And in the 8 years we've been here in the White House, 7 of them were 7 of the 10 hottest years recorded since 1400.

Al Gore was talking about the Internet before other people in Congress. He's been falsely accused of claiming he created it. That's not true. That's like another one of those bum raps. Once somebody says something in the press, they just keep on playing it. It doesn't matter if it's not true anymore; it sort of acquires it.

What he said was that he introduced legislation which helped to create it, and it did create it as a phenomenon that went beyond a small private government research project. Do you know how many sites there were on the World Wide Web when I became President? Fifty. How many are there now, everyone? Fifty million. Fifty, and now 50 million. He understood that.

He understands that there is all these fabulous possibilities to close the digital divide and to do things that we haven't even imagined, but we also are going to have to work hard to protect our old-fashioned values. For example, if all of our health records and all of our financial records are on somebody's computer somewhere, I think that you ought to have some privacy protections. And there are some things I don't think other people ought to be able to get unless you say okay. And somebody that understands all the competing considerations—it would be a good thing to have a President that understood that.

So I think his economic policy is right. I think he'll do more to try to help everybody benefit from the things that are going on. And I think he really understands the future. And I think that's what you want.

So what I'd like to ask you to do is to go out and tell people who want to know why you came here tonight—not to hear me tell Irish jokes—that, well, California is a better place

than it was 8 years ago, they had some ideas, and they turned out to be pretty good; that you agree with Gore's economic policy, and you think we ought to spread the benefits to more people and build one American community; and you want somebody who understands the future and can lead us there.

And on the critical issues, there really are differences between the parties, and it's important that they be clarified and uplifted. But if the people believe that this election is about whether we can build the future of our dreams for our children, we'll be just fine.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. in Dining Room B at Mr. A's Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Michael T. and Carol Thorsness; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee, and former mayor of Philadelphia, PA; Bertrand Hug, owner, Mr. A's Restaurant; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks to the United States Olympic Training Center Community in Chula Vista, California

June 23, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, Deena, for the wonderful introduction and for the way you represent our country—and for the little local reference to Arkansas. I liked that. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Bill Hybl, for the work you do with the Olympic Committee. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Pat Milkovich for the wonderful tour of the training center today. We had a great time, and I thank you so much.

I want to thank Representative Bob Filner, the Congressman from this district, for being with me today and for his support. Someone just thanked him on the way for being against having all that cargo noise coming over here and interrupting your training center. So, I figure he'll take a lot of heat for that position. So, somebody who likes it might as well clap. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Bonita Vista High School Marching Band for playing. Let's give them a

hand; they're great. [*Applause*] Some of their members have been selected to perform at the opening ceremonies in Sydney, and I know they'll have a good time. I'd like to thank Mayor Horton from Chula Vista and the Chula Vista council members who are here and the county officials who are here. And Representative Susan Davis, the candidate for Congress, thank you for coming. I'm glad to see all of you here.

Most of all, I'd like to thank the athletes and the coaches and the trainers that gave me a tour around this magnificent facility today. I had a great time. And I realize that most of these things I can't do anymore—[*laughter*]—but I really had a great time.

Deena talked about perseverance and hard work, but I want to tell you a little something about her. She was too humble to mention her own experience with cross country championships in Portugal this year. About 100 yards into the race her throat closed up, and she couldn't breathe. After 5 kilometers, she blacked out and

fell. It turned out a bee had flown into her mouth and stung her in the throat. But she got up and kept going, and thanks to her, the women's team still left Portugal with a medal. She gave new meaning to the term "making a beeline." Give her a hand; she was great. [Applause]

One of the real highlights of our White House years for Hillary, Chelsea, and me has been the chance to be a part of the Olympic experience, cheering on our teams from Lillehammer to Atlanta to Nagano and now to Sydney, where at least I know my daughter is going. My wife is in a competition of her own, and I am informed that my services may be needed elsewhere; but our daughter informed us that she would be in Sydney to cheer the teams on.

I am so glad to have this chance to see all the work that you're doing to prepare for the games here. You know, just moments before he won one of his gold medals, the legendary Jesse Owens said, "A lifetime of training for just 10 seconds." In the magic of the Olympic moment, it may be easy for those of us who aren't part of it, except as spectators, to lose sight of all that had to be done before: the years and years of getting up before the Sun, the time away from your loved ones, the hard work, the sacrifice, and something that's often overlooked, the pain.

So on behalf of all the people of this country. I'd like to just say more than anything else, I wanted to come here to say to these team members and those who want to make the Olympic teams, we appreciate you; we thank you; and we are very, very proud of you.

I have thought a lot, especially in the Olympic season, about why the Olympics mean so much to people all over the world, and especially why the American people get so completely caught up in them, why they capture our imagination and our hearts. Obviously, we love athletics. And we are highly competitive people, as that little in-your-face rap that Deena gave us showed about the American team.

But I think there's even more to it than the love of competition and athletics. I think people like the Olympics, in large measure, because the Olympics work pretty much the way we think life ought to work, the way we think the world ought to work: Everybody gets an opportunity to play, regardless of race or station in life—and increasingly, thank goodness, regardless of gender. People are valued based on their

performance and their effort, not their posturing. People get a chance to do their best, and also to bring out the best in one another. And everybody, including those that don't win medals, is better off for having tried and given his or her best. You win by playing by the rules and by doing it well.

I think we like the Olympics because we all think the world ought to work that way. And we know if other forms of human endeavor worked that way, we'd be better off. One of the reasons I ran for President 8 years ago is that I thought that Washington ought to work more like that. I thought it ought to be more about production and less about posturing. And it's tough for people in politics, because they know that if they produce, they may not get on the evening news. But if they posture, they can get there.

And so I hope part of what will happen in this is that the Olympic spirit will catch up in Washington and will actually produce some things: medicine for our seniors on Medicare and a Patients' Bill of Rights and an increase in the minimum wage, a lot of other things we could be doing that we could actually reach agreement on across party lines, even though it may cost everybody a few seconds on the evening news. The rules of the game there are too often, "I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight." [Laughter] And you give us all a good sober reminder that in the end, when it's all said and done, we're going to be judged not by what we said but by what we've done. And I thank you for that.

Now, let me just say, this day is special for a lot of reasons. It's Olympic Day. On this day more than 100 years ago, the modern Olympic games were founded. It was also 100 years ago this summer that women were first allowed to compete in the Olympic games, and they did, all 11 of them. [Laughter] This year more than 4,000 women will compete in the Olympic games, the largest number ever.

Let me say a couple of other things about this day. On this day 60 years ago one of the greatest Olympians of all time was born, Wilma Rudolph. She won her first medal the last time the Olympics were held in Australia, in 1956. And finally, today is special because it's also on this day 28 years ago that Title IX became the law of the land.

Now, it's interesting that all this stuff happened on this day. But Title IX has really enabled America to live up to the Olympic spirit to give everybody a chance, to give everybody a chance to play by the rules, everybody a chance to live up to his and her God-given abilities.

Before Title IX, there were 300,000 girls in high school sports. Today, there are more than 2 million. It's not a coincidence that in Atlanta, the first generation of women to grow up under Title IX—literally to have their whole lives in Title IX—went on to win the gold medal in soccer, the gold medal in softball, the gold medal in gymnastics, and the gold medal in basketball. It works.

Believe it or not, I found out not long ago that Title IX's requirement for equal opportunity in sports and in education does not apply to the education and training programs run by the Federal Government itself. So on this anniversary of Title IX, I am actually signing an Executive order that applies Title IX to the Federal Government's programs and prohibits discrimination of any kind in federally conducted education and training programs.

Let me just say one other thing about the importance of broadening opportunities here. I would like to ask all of you who are presently athletes or who have been or who are otherwise involved in this Olympic movement to continue to share your gifts, not only on the field of competition but in the playing field of life, and especially with our young people—and with those whose job it is to raise them well.

Let me just give you one example of something that really concerns me. Over the last 20 years, too many of our schools have abandoned their music, their arts, and their physical education programs. You may have noticed that last week I went to New York City to be on the "Today Show" to talk about the VH1 music in school program, where they worked so hard to get instruments back into schools so schools can start their school music programs again. There is so much evidence that a lot of young people learn better if they have access early to music and arts programs. But it's also really troubling to me that so many schools have just completely abandoned physical education programs for all kids, while maintaining team sports.

Now, a lot of the athletes behind me may be going to the Olympics in sports for which there was no competition in their schools. And

they wouldn't necessarily have been football or basketball players, or even soccer players, if their schools had competitive soccer.

Listen to this. The percentage of high school students in daily physical education has declined more than 30 percent in the last 10 years. Today, fewer than one in three students are enrolled in phys-ed every day. Meanwhile, the percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled in the same time period. The two things are closely related. And we know that it has an effect on learning, on self-image, on self-esteem, on a sense of what you can do.

Today I'm directing our Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, and Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to work with the U.S. Olympic Committee, our physical fitness council, and others to try to find ways to encourage more young people to get fit and stay fit. And I'm asking Congress to establish a foundation that will leverage the energy, creativity, and resources of the private sector in furthering the mission of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, to help every young person in America to live an active, safe, and healthy life.

I hope you'll help us do that. We need to remember that not every 6- or 8- or 10-year-old can be on the football team or on a basketball team or even on a soccer team, and all of our kids need access to healthy lifestyles, good exercise, and basic good athletic habits. We need your help in achieving that goal.

Finally, let me say I'd give anything to be in Sydney. I thank you for your dedication, your courage, for reaching deep inside, for giving your heart and soul to this. And I want you to win all the medals you can, just like Deena said. But I want you to realize that by what you have accomplished already and by the way you have done it, you have already made your country very proud.

You carry more than our flag to Sydney. You carry the spirit of our country, our hopes, our dreams, our prayers. And all of us will be with you all the way.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. on the terrace at the U.S. Olympic Training Center Visitors Center. In his remarks, he referred to athlete Deena Drossin, who introduced the President; Bill Hybl, president, U.S. Olympic Committee; Pat Milkovich, director, U.S. Olympic Training

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Center; Mayor Shirley A. Horton of Chula Vista; State Assemblywoman Susan Davis, a candidate for California's 49th Congressional District. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition

of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92–318, the Education Amendments of 1972. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Memorandum on Enhancing Efforts To Promote the Health of Our Young People Through Physical Activity and Participation in Sports

June 23, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education

Subject: Enhancing Efforts to Promote the Health of Our Young People Through Physical Activity and Participation in Sports

Physical activity and participation in sports are central to the overall health and well-being of children and adults. Adolescence is an especially important time to establish the habit of participation in daily physical activity. Sports and physical activity can introduce young people to skills such as teamwork, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. Lack of recreational activity, on the other hand, may contribute to making young people more vulnerable to gangs, drugs, or violence. Studies consistently show that adolescents who engage in regular physical activity have higher self-esteem and lower anxiety and stress. Unfortunately, daily enrollment in high school physical education classes dropped from 42 percent to 29 percent between 1991 and 1999 and about 14 percent of young people ages 12–21 report no recent physical activity at all. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled.

The extent of this problem should not be underestimated. Last year, for example, the United States spent over \$68 billion, or 6 percent of the Nation's health care expenditures, on direct health care costs related to obesity. According to the landmark 1996 Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, inactivity and poor diet contribute to nearly 300,000 deaths in the United States annually. In conjunction with the recent National Nutrition Summit hosted by my Administration—the first in over three decades—I released revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including a new guideline recommending regular physical activity.

My Administration has an ongoing multi-pronged effort to promote physical activity and fitness. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Participation continues to play an important role in promoting physical fitness and sports participation nationwide. A key part of the Council's work is the President's Challenge Youth Physical Fitness Awards Program, which offers awards for participation and excellence in a set of physical fitness assessments to encourage 2.9 million students to improve and maintain physical fitness. The Department of Health and Human Services' National Youth Sports Program collaborates with participating colleges to provide summer sports programs in college environments to youth living in areas of urban and rural poverty. Currently, over 70,000 children at over 200 colleges and universities through this program can improve their physical fitness and health habits while becoming acquainted with post-secondary educational opportunities.

The Department of Education also promotes physical activity and health in schools. My Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization proposal includes "Lifelong Physical Activity" discretionary grants as part of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Building on current demonstration projects by the Centers for Disease Control, this initiative would authorize funding for sites to implement programs that promote lifelong physical activity and health awareness during and after school by linking physical education with health education.

These efforts, and many similar public and private initiatives around the country, are encouraging. We must now build on this groundwork by developing additional strategies for promoting physical fitness and participation in

sports, which are essential to improving individual and community health.

Therefore, I direct you to identify and report back to me within 90 days on strategies to promote better health for our Nation's youth through physical activity and fitness, including:

1. Promoting the renewal of physical education in our schools, as well as the expansion of after-school programs that offer physical activities and sports in addition to enhanced academics and cultural activities;
2. Encouraging participation by private sector partners in raising the level of physical activity and fitness among our youth; and

3. Promoting greater coordination of existing public and private resources that encourages physical activity and sports.

In developing these strategies, you shall work with the U.S. Olympic Committee, and other private and nongovernmental sports organizations, as appropriate.

By identifying effective new steps and strengthening public-private partnerships, we will advance our efforts to prepare the Nation's young people for lifelong physical fitness.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Tobacco Litigation Legislation

June 23, 2000

I am pleased today that the House of Representatives voted decisively to support the interests of the American people over those of the special interests. This action will help support the Justice Department's litigation to re-

cover billions of dollars in tobacco-related health costs. I commend the bipartisan efforts led by Representatives Waxman, Evans, Meehan, Hansen, Ganske, and others who worked tirelessly to ensure that justice is carried out.

Statement on Action To Prosecute for the Killing of United States Department of Agriculture Inspectors

June 23, 2000

Today the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California filed a complaint charging an individual with the intentional killing of two U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors in the course of their duties. I want to commend Fed-

eral and local law enforcement for working so quickly to investigate and prosecute this important case. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims, their families, and the community during this difficult time.

Remarks at a California State Democratic Party Reception in Los Angeles, California

June 23, 2000

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, before I start my speech, there's one other thing I want to say. There's somebody else here

I want to introduce and I want to ask to come up here.

When we nominated Al Gore—we haven't formally, yet, but when he got through the primaries—he's the only candidate in our party's history in a contested primary, including me, who went all the way through the primaries and didn't lose a single one. And I want to bring up Bill Daley's partner, Donna Brazile, our campaign manager for the Gore campaign. Come on up here, Donna. Thank you.

I thank Joe Andrew for his leadership. And I want to thank Terry McAuliffe for coming in here to help us get this convention financed and get it off to a good foot. It sounds strange, but I'm grateful to Bill Daley for leaving my Cabinet—[laughter]—because he's going to lead the Vice President to victory. So I thank them all.

I want to say a couple of things about—first, I thank Art for reminding you that I kept my word—[laughter]—and I'm glad to be here. In 1995 a Presidential scholar named Thomas Patterson surveyed all the campaign commitments made by the last five Presidents and said, by '95 I had already kept a higher percentage of my commitments than my five predecessors. And we've got a higher percentage now, thanks to you, and I thank you for that.

I would like to say just a few things to you. First, I am grateful that we are having this convention which will be, as you know, my farewell convention as President, in the State of California.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Well, I'm not going to shrivel up; I'll be around. [Laughter] But listen, I'm grateful that we're having this in California because so much of the texture of my campaign in '92—the energy, the ideals, the passion—was born out of the inspiration I received from the pain and the faith, from the longing and the idealism that I saw in California in 1992, when we had a terrible economy, a profoundly divided society, and a level of political rhetoric that was making it worse. And I asked you to give me a chance to turn it around. And starting with the California Democrats, you did. And you didn't give up on me.

The day after I won the Democratic primary in California, they said, "How dumb are they? Clinton is in third place in the polls." You hear all these people talking about the polls today; remember, in June I was in third place, at 25 percent. I've been buried more times than the undertaker's old suit. [Laughter] But you didn't

quit because you had this idea that we could do something together to make a difference.

And then, after I got in, California had earthquakes, fires, floods—[laughter]—everything but the lotus arrived for you. [Laughter] And we just kept plugging away and you didn't give up. And now—yeah, we had to rebuild a freeway, rebuild Cal State, Northridge.

Audience members. You helped us.

The President. We had to do a lot of things, but—I did try to help, and I appreciate that.

So 7½ years later, thanks to your work and your faith and the support I got from the people of California, along with Al Gore and our whole team, we've got the longest economic expansion in history and the highest homeownership in history and over 22 million new jobs and the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rate ever recorded and a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime, a 32-year low in the welfare rolls. The air is cleaner. The water is cleaner. The food is safer. We set aside more land to be protected in history in the lower 48 States than anybody but the 2 Roosevelts. And we had the most diverse administration, the most diverse appointments to the courts in history, and we've been a force for peace and freedom and decency around the world. I'm proud of what we did in Kosovo—that caused me to have to miss my last chance at you. It made a difference. We stood up against ethnic cleansing.

Now, I'm grateful for the chance you gave me to serve and to do that. What do you want to do with that? That's the big issue in this election.

In 1992 we knew what the deal was. I mean, the economy was in the ditch; California was in trouble; all the golden era seemed to be washed away. We knew what we had to do. We had to turn this country around. We had to prove it would work again. We had to pull people together. We had to move forward. It turned out it worked.

Now, the big question now is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? And what I want to say to you is a couple of things. Number one, I appreciate your support for me, but I didn't do it alone. Al Gore has done more good for more people as the Vice President than anybody that ever held that position, ever, by far. By far.

When no—not one—Republican would vote for our economic plan, he cast the tie-breaking

vote. When we knew 6 years ago we had to do something to close the digital divide, we came here in California, began to wire the schools. At the time, only 16 percent of our schools were connected to the Internet; today, 95 percent are. Only 3 percent of our classrooms connected; today, 75 percent are. He did that. He led our empowerment zone program, which has brought opportunity to poor areas. He managed a lot of our foreign policies. He cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate on whether we would try to close the gun show loophole and have child trigger locks.

No Vice President in the history of this country ever had such a big impact in the office of Vice President. A lot of them went on to be great Presidents—Teddy Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson—but none of them had any impact as Vice President remotely approximating what this man has done. He is the best qualified person to run for President in my lifetime.

Now, the second thing I want to say is, we could have been compassionate and caring and hard working and eloquent, and if our ideas had been wrong, we still wouldn't be in very good shape. Now, we have tested our ideas. They said—the other side, our friends in the Republican Party—when we presented our economic plan, it would wreak havoc; it would cause a disaster; the deficit would go up; the economy would be in the tank. That's what they said. If you will notice, they're not running their quotes about my economic policy in this election. [Laughter]

Then when I was advocating the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the 100,000 police, they said, "Oh, these cops won't do any good," and "This law won't keep any guns out of the hands of criminals." And now we've had a 35 percent drop in gun crime and a 25-year low in crime and a 30-year low in homicide, and you don't hear them criticizing our crime policy publicly anymore. I don't know why they're not publicizing their positions on all these issues.

And every time we tried to have cleaner air, cleaner water, set aside more land, you know, it was a "land grabber"; it was going to "break up the economy." And now you don't hear that.

So the second thing I want to say to you is this: This is a real important election. It's just as important as '92 and '96 were. What a country does with its prosperity is just as stern

a test, if not a sterner one, of our character and our judgment as what we do in times of distress.

In my lifetime we have never had a chance like this. The last longest economic expansion we had in American history was in the 1960's. When I graduated from high school in 1964, I thought it was going to go on forever. I didn't think anybody could mess it up. [Laughter] I thought—I did. And I was optimistic. Lyndon Johnson was my President. I thought all these civil rights problems were going to be solved in the courts and the Congress, not in the streets. I didn't believe we'd get all mired down in Vietnam.

Four years later, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed here, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President because the country was too divided. And just a few months later, the longest economic expansion in American history was history. Nothing lasts forever, folks. We're going to be judged by what we do with what we have built over the last 8 years. That's what this election is about.

Now, I will remind you, there are differences between us and the Republicans—the second point I want to make. [Laughter] But they matter. What I'm saying is—and it's not like we hadn't had a test run here. [Laughter]

So the three points are: It's an important election; there are real differences; the third point you've got to remember is, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] Why is that? Because we've had a test run here. They want to talk about how the economy is so prosperous, and we've got this big projected surplus so we can spend it all on a tax cut and on their plans to partially privatize Social Security and build a missile defense system and that kind of stuff. We can just spend it all.

Well, I would like to remind you that that word is "projected." Al Gore says, "No, no. Let's save at least 20 percent by taking your Medicare taxes and walling it off and using it to pay down the debt and protect it for Medicare, because it may not materialize. And we don't want to go back to the bad old days of deficits and high interest rates and putting California's economy at risk and America's economy at risk."

Now, it's not like we hadn't had a test. We did it their way for 12 years and our way for

8 years, and our way works better. People need to understand that.

Now, look at crime. They tried to abolish my program to put 100,000 police on the street. They opposed the Brady bill. They opposed the assault weapons ban. They won't close the gun show loophole. Now they're trying not to do the 50,000 more police that I want. And it's not like we hadn't had a test. We tried it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years. Our way works better. Crime goes down more.

And they say if they get in, they will reverse my order for 43 million roadless acres in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. Al Gore says, "I'll keep it, but I'll do better. I'll build on it." And they say all this stuff we're trying to do to clean up the air and the water is just terrible for the economy. I tell you what, if I was trying to hurt the economy with my environmental policies, I've done a poor job of it. [Laughter]

So they say they won't be so tough on this clean air, clean water, safe food, all this environmental stuff. Now, wait a minute. We tried it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years, and we proved you can make the economy very strong and make the environment cleaner at the same time. It's not like we hadn't had a test.

So I want you to tell people this: It's an important election; elections are about the future; there are real differences. We want you to know what the differences are.

And I want to make this last point. It's also important that we have a leader who understands the future. Al Gore understands the implications of the information technology revolution. He understands the implications of the foreign policy changes happening all around the world that will affect our children's lives. He understands the challenges that ordinary families face in this new economy. He and Tipper Gore were holding an annual family conference in Nashville, Tennessee, even before I named him to be Vice President. And so much of the things that we have done, from family and medical leave to parity for mental health in health insurance policies, are things that came out of the work he and Tipper did.

So people ask me—I say, I'm for Vice President Gore because he'll keep the prosperity going, because he'll do more to spread it to people and places left behind and to help all American families, and because he understands

the future and can lead us there. I am for the Democrats in the Senate and the House races. And you're going to give us, by the way, four or five new ones out here in California alone. And I'm for them, and I have a special interest in one in New York, as you know. [Laughter] But I'm for them because we've had a test run here.

And if you listen to this rhetoric in the campaign, you know the Republicans never talk about their primaries. They're hoping you'll forget that and have amnesia. [Laughter] And all the commitments they made, and all the things they said and they really don't want to talk about, they want this to be a blur. They want you to think that nobody could mess up this economy; take your tax cut and run. And it's kind of like a—they kind of want you to say, "Well, their fraternity had it for 8 years. Give it to ours for a while." [Laughter]

Let me tell you something, this is about people's lives, folks. This is about our children's future. You've got to go out and tell people in California and beyond California—because we've been here a lot. I've been here more than any President ever had. [Laughter] You know what's going to—you lived this, and you have—here in California, you have a searing memory of what it was like in 1992. You remember what it was like.

So you need to reach out across the country. And in this convention and after the convention, you need to say to the American people, "Hey, we don't want a negative campaign. We want a positive campaign. We don't want to say anything bad about our opponents, personally. We want to assume that they're honorable, and therefore, they will do exactly what they say. But we don't want them to be too selective with you in pointing out our honest differences."

So we want this to be a campaign in which we honestly expose our differences, and we measure those differences against the experience we have had. And then we say to people, "You've got to make this about the future." We may never have a time like this in our lifetime, and we owe it to the children in this room and throughout this country to build them the future of our dreams. We can do that.

And if we make that the issue, then Al Gore and his new running mate will be elected, my favorite candidate for the Senate and a lot more will be elected, and Dick Gephardt will be the Speaker of the House. And we will get what

we should get because we have delivered for the American people.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in the Century Room at the Century Plaza Hotel & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to William M. Daley,

general chair, and Donna L. Brazile, campaign manager, Gore 2000; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; and Art Torres, chair, California State Democratic Party.

Remarks at a Saxophone Club Reception in Hollywood, California June 23, 2000

The President. Well, thank you very much. I never thought I'd live to hear Bill Maher say those things. [Laughter] And he said it in front of the press, which means he'll have to dump on me twice as hard next week. [Laughter] But it'll be worth it. I love it. Thank you, Bill. Thank you, Vivica. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to thank our hosts for having us here. I was coming over here with my buddy Terry McAuliffe tonight, and he said, "Now, tell me where we're going?" He's a good Irish-Catholic boy. I said, "We're going to a place called the Garden of Eden." [Laughter] He said, "We can't go." [Laughter] I said, "Why?" He said, "They'll accuse one of us of being in search of original sin." [Laughter] But here we are, and they did a nice job for us. Thank you very much, all of you. It's really beautiful, thank you. Thank you so much.

Now, look, you all came here to have a good time, and you probably don't want to hear a political speech. But I do want to say one or two things. First of all, I am very, very grateful for the chance that I have had to serve as President these last 7½ years. I am grateful for the support I received from California, from southern California, from Los Angeles, and from this community, and I thank you very, very, much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience member. Run for Governor of California. [Laughter]

The President. I don't think so. You've got a good Governor, and you've got to get a good President.

The second thing is, somebody might ask you why you came, tomorrow, and I want you to be able to give a serious but brief answer. There are three things you need to know about this election. Number one, it is real important. It's

just as important as it was in '92 and '96. And I want all the young people here, everybody here under 40, to listen to me about this.

In '92, when I got elected, California was in the dumps. We had had riots in the streets. We had the politics of division. Everybody knew what had to be done. We had to get the show back on the road. We had to turn the economy around. We had to get the society coming together again. The political system had to work. You didn't have to be a genius to know what we needed to do.

But now things are going well. And what I want to say to you, if you're young, is this: It is just as stern a test of a nation's judgment and character, what you do with the good times, as what you do with adversity. And everybody here who is over 30 can remember at least one time in your life when you made a significant mistake not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well you thought there was no penalty to the failure to concentrate. Nobody who's lived any length of time has failed to make a mistake like that.

So the first thing I want you to know is, this is a big issue, this election. What's the question? The question is, what are we going to do with the prosperity? Are we going to indulge ourselves, take all the short-term fixes, pretend there are no consequences, or take this opportunity to build the future of our dreams? That's really what this is about.

And there are a lot of things out there to do. What are you all going to do when all the baby boomers like me retire and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? We need to prepare for that.

We have more kids in our schools than ever before, and they're more diverse. What are you going to do 20 years from now, if you're young, and we don't succeed in giving them all a world-class education?

We still have people in this country, in this city, on the Indian reservations, and the rural areas, that aren't part of all this prosperity. If we don't give them a chance to participate now, when will you ever get around to it?

What are you going to do 20 years from now if we don't do something about global warming and prove that we can still grow the economy and improve the environment? If all these people that say you can't do that, and don't worry, just keep putting stuff in the air, what are you going to do if the sea level rises a foot? What will it be like here? What will you be making movies about?

So you've got to think about these things. We have never in my lifetime had the chance we have now for you as citizens to decide that you want to do big things and get them done. So it's an important election.

The second thing I want to tell you is—as if you needed reminding—there are huge differences between the two parties, from the candidates for President to the Senate to the House. Now, Bill made a joke about Governor Bush, and people have made a few jokes about me, as he pointed out. [Laughter] People made a few jokes about Al Gore. Al Gore makes jokes about himself. We all ought to make a few jokes and laugh and have a good time.

But I want to be dead serious about this. You have a chance here to have a positive election. That is, most of these elections the last 20 years have been fueled by fanatics or people who wanted power, and they thought that the best way to win an election was to keep everybody home that could think and then try to persuade those that were going to vote that their opponents were just one notch above a car thief. I mean, how many elections have you seen like that?

Now, you don't have to say anything bad about anybody in this election. All we ought to do is just have a debate about what we think we ought to do with our prosperity, and know what the differences are. So, number one, it's a big election. It's about your future. Number two, there are real differences.

And here's the third point, and it's real important. Only the Democrats really want you to

understand what the differences are. You listen to the Republicans talk, you'd think they never even had a primary. [Laughter] And when the lobbyist for the NRA says that if they win the White House, then the NRA will have an office in the White House, it's probably true, but it's inconvenient for him, so they sort of hide that.

We differ. They want to spend all this projected surplus we've worked so hard to get over the next 10 years on a big tax cut which would benefit a lot of you—a big tax cut—and spend the rest of it on partial privatization of Social Security and a big national missile defense program and whatever else they've promised. And there won't be any money left, even if all the surplus materializes. If it doesn't materialize, we'll be back to deficits, high interest rates, not such a good economy, and you will pay the price.

We say—and I'm proud of Al Gore for saying this—it may not be popular, but we're going to save some of this money, because it may not materialize. The taxes you pay for Medicare, we're going to save. Pay the debt down, and know we can take care of the baby boomers when they retire without bankrupting the rest of you. It's time to think about the long run.

We have differences on the environment. We have differences on education. We're for putting 100,000 teachers in our schools and modernizing our schools and providing extra funds and requiring schools to turn around if they're failing, or shut down; and they're not. We're for raising the minimum wage, and they're not. We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're not. We think all seniors on Medicare ought to have access to affordable prescription drugs, and we ought to take this time and provide it; and they don't. We have big differences.

Now, there are lots of others, but you get the idea. If we have a debate about this, we will win.

Now, let me just say one other thing. In the history of America, we have always had a Vice President; we've had some pretty great Vice Presidents. Thomas Jefferson was Vice President, made a pretty good President. Theodore Roosevelt was Vice President, made a good President. Harry Truman was Vice President, was a great President. But we have never had a person in the office of Vice President who, while he was Vice President, had anything like the positive impact on the economy and the society of our country that Al Gore has had.

He's by far the best Vice President in the entire history of the United States.

And therefore, he is by far the best qualified person to be President who has run for office in my adult lifetime, because of the way he spent the last 8 years and because I had sense enough to give him a lot to do. [Laughter] It's self-serving for me to say, but he has performed magnificently.

And there are three reasons you ought to be for him: Number one, he will keep this prosperity going because he won't change our economic policy; he'll build on it.

Number two, he'll try to include everybody in his vision of America, the people in places left behind, all the families that are working for a living but need help to raise their children, need help with child care or long-term care for their parents or their disabled family members, or after-school programs for their kids. He'll try to do that. And everybody will have a place. We led the fight for the hate crimes victory that we got in the Senate this week, which a lot of you like. We think everybody should be part of our America.

And the final reason you ought to vote for him is, he understands the future, and he can lead us there. He understands the implications of the Internet revolution. He understands that all your medical records and all your financial records are going to be in somebody's computer file somewhere, and your privacy ought to be protected, and they ought not to be invaded unless you give permission to do it. That's an important issue.

He understands that global warming is real. He's the first politician in American life that

said anything to me about climate change, long before it was widely accepted that it was happening.

So what do you need in a President? Somebody with the best experience; somebody that will keep the prosperity going; somebody that cares about all of us; someone that understands the future.

If you want, all of you—so many of you said, “Thank you very much for being a good President. I wish I could do something for you.” You can do something for me: Make sure that everybody you know in this State and across America understands it's a big election; there are real differences; and we want you to know what they are and that we intend to build the future of your dreams. And we need Al Gore. We need these candidates for the Senate and the House.

And if you'll go out and tell people that, and tell people we don't want to badmouth anybody, just let's talk about what our honest disagreements are, we're going to have a big celebration in November. And more important, you young people here are going to have the best days America has ever known.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Lounge at the Garden of Eden nightclub. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Maher, host of the television program “Politically Incorrect”; actress Vivica A. Fox, who introduced the President; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Gov. Gray Davis of California; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles, California

June 23, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all, I was very touched by what you said, Kenny, and I thank you and Tracy for having us here in your beautiful home in this little pup tent. [Laughter] I'm going to call home tonight, and Hillary is going to say, “Well, what did you do tonight?” And I'm going to say, “Well, I went camping with K-rations.” [Laughter]

Anyway, I thank you for doing this, and I thank all of you for coming. And you make Joe Andrew and Terry and Donna and Yolanda and all of us who are going to fight this election out have heart and feel good about it. And we're very proud that people like you are supporting our party. And I thank you for what you said about me.

I guess tonight I would like to make not just kind of a traditional political speech, but I would like to say three or four things. I have been very fortunate in my life. I got to do something I wanted to do for a long time. And when I started, only my mother thought I could win. I never will forget how President Bush, in '92, used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. And I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [*Laughter*] And you know what? I still do.

I mean, the thing that makes this country work at its best is that people get a chance to live their dreams. And the thing that makes it improvable is, there are still too many who don't, or there are still people who find folks standing in the way.

When I ran for President in '91 and '92, I did it not because I was dissatisfied being the Governor of a small southern State—I actually was having a heck of a good time. But I really was worried about our country. Our economy was in bad shape, but it was about more than money. We had all these—the social problems were getting worse; they had the riots here in L.A.—you remember that—and the political rhetoric was so divisive.

And the more I listened to it, the more I thought there's something funny about Washington, because where I come from, everybody tried to work through their differences, and in Washington people said, "Well, I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight." Then I realized that they did it partly because they thought it was the only way they'd ever get on the evening news.

Anyway, we set out on this odyssey to try to change the way the political system works and change America for the better, and it has worked out reasonably well. The country is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. And I'm just very grateful. And I appreciate what Kenny said about hard work and all that, and I believe that. But most people who amount to anything in politics want you to believe that they were born in a log cabin that they built themselves. And I think it's important to recognize that, but for one or two fortunate turns in the road, I could be home doing \$200 divorces and deeds tomorrow, instead of being here doing what I'm doing with you.

The things that makes a democracy work truly great are the kind of shared values that people have, and the fact that ordinary citizens get to

participate, and that over a long period of time—Mr. Martin Luther King said, "The arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice." And if you look at the whole history of America, it basically has been a struggle to live up to what the Founders said we were about, that all of us are created equal, and that we ought to have a chance to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and that, in order to do that, we have to make this a more perfect Union. And when they said that, only white male property owners could vote, but the smartest ones among them had enough sense to know it was a fraud, and they'd have to do better. And they just set in motion a set of ideas that have carried us all the way to the present day.

Now, what I would like to say to all of you is, you have earned your success. And most of you didn't have much to start with, and it's a real tribute to the power of the mind and the spirit and the openness of America. But you have to ask yourself now—just as you're asking yourself in your personal lives what you're going to do with your success—what is our country going to do with its success?

And I think about it a lot, and I'm not running for anything. This is the first time in over 25 years I haven't been on the ballot. And most days, I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] A distinguished world citizen called me last week and said, "You know, Mr. President, for a lame duck, you're still quacking rather loudly." And so I think about it.

And I think anybody in this room tonight over 30 can remember at least one time in your life when you made a mistake not because times were so tough but because times were good and seemed easy and there seemed to be no consequence to the failure to concentrate. That's the thing I'm worried about in this election.

And I hear people talking about the election. I read all these articles like you do. I follow all these polls. And a lot of it's not real substantial yet. People haven't, obviously, kind of come to terms with what this is about. And a lot of you are in a position to influence a lot of other people. And I just want to tell you that there's never been a time like this in my lifetime, where we had so much economic prosperity, so much social progress, so much national self-confidence, so few real crises at home and threats abroad. There are problems, but if you compare this with the last time we had a long economic expansion, for example, it was in the

sixties when we were also dealing with Vietnam and the civil rights struggle. We have never had a period like this.

And I think we ought to give it to our kids. I think we ought to really spend a lot of time this year thinking about how we can build the future of our dreams for our children. And if we think that's what the election is about, then we have to take on the big challenges that are still out there. And I'll just mention three or four of them.

One is, what are we going to do when all these baby boomers like me retire, and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? What are we going to do when everybody that lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of another 20 or 25 years? It's going to happen here directly. Are they going to be able to work? Are they going to be able to get medicine if they need it? How are they going to be able to make the most of these years?

What are we going to do, now that we have the largest and most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse student population in the history of the country, to give all our kids a world-class education? And I'll tell you this: We know we can do it now.

I was in a public school in Spanish Harlem. Some of you mentioned tonight you saw me on the "Today Show" the other day pushing the VH1 music-in-school program. I was at a school in Spanish Harlem that 2 years ago had 80 percent of the kids reading and doing mathematics below grade level—2 years ago. Today, 74 percent of them are performing at or above grade level—in 2 years. So all children can learn. The public schools can work. But what are we going to do to make that story true everywhere?

What are we going to do to make sure that everybody gets a chance to participate in this economy, to make sure that the people who served our dinner tonight have their chance at their dream, just like we've had our chance at ours?

What are we going to do to help people balance work and childrearing? You'd be amazed how many people I've talked to that make real good incomes that still worry about whether they can do all the stuff they're supposed to do at work and do right by their most important job, raising their kids.

What are we going to do to meet the big environmental challenges of the 21st century? The globe is warming up, folks, and your kids are going to have to live in a very different and much less pleasant world unless we turn this environmental situation around. And it is now possible to do it and still grow the economy, but a lot of people don't believe that.

What are we going to do to continue to stand against hatred and bigotry here at home? There are still people who get killed just because of their race, their religion, or because they're gay in America. That's why I'm glad that hate crimes bill passed the Senate this week. And if you want America to be the force for good around the world, we have to first be good at home.

Now, I think if the election is about that stuff, Al Gore will be elected President, and Hillary and a lot of other Democrats will be elected to the Senate. We'll win our majority back in the House.

Very often an election turns on what people think it's about. And most of you are younger than I am, but I came of age in the 1960's, and I thought the economic prosperity was on automatic. And when I finished high school, I thought the civil rights problems would be solved in the courts and Congress. And I never dreamed that our country would be consumed by Vietnam, but it happened. And the longest economic expansion in history, at that time, vanished a few weeks after Dr. King got killed and Bobby Kennedy got killed and Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection.

I'm not saying this to be a downer. I'm saying this to point out nothing lasts forever, and when we're going through the tough times—Kenny mentioned that—we're going through the tough times, we have to keep reminding ourselves of that. We say, thank God, nothing lasts forever, right? Take a deep breath, get up, put one foot in front of another. But it's also important to remember in the good times.

That's what this election ought to be about: What in the world are we going to do with this prosperity? I worked as hard as I could to turn this country around, to give everybody a chance to be a part of it, to give people the confidence that we can actually do things together, and to beat back all those people that think politics is just about grabbing power and destroying your enemy and doing things that I don't agree with, anyway.

But now we have to decide, okay, we've got the ship of state turned around; we're moving in the right direction; we built our bridge to the 21st century; now, what in the wide world are we going to do about it? That's what this election has to be about.

We Democrats, we can go to the people and say, "Look, we don't have anything bad to say about our opponents as people." I think we should assume they're honorable, and they will do what they say. But what you need to know is that we're really the only—our side is the only side that wants you to know what the differences between the two parties are.

They're making arguments that remind me of the way I felt when I was 18, in 1964, and I thought the economy was on automatic. They're basically saying, "Oh, heck, this thing—nothing—nobody can mess up this economy. So let's just take the biggest tax cut we can and spend all this projected surplus—not actual but projected over the next 10 years—and just do what we want to do."

And here's Al Gore saying, "Hey, I don't think so. I think we should save at least 20 percent of it, what you pay in Medicare taxes, and put it over here in a box so nobody can get at it, and pay the debt down some more and make sure the money is there when all these baby boomers retire so their retirement doesn't bankrupt their kids and their ability to raise their grandkids."

Now, it's not as popular because the other guys are saying, "Here, take your money back." And he's saying, "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow." But that's how we got here. People ask me all the time, they say, "You must be some economic genius. What great new idea did you bring to Washington?" And I say, "Arithmetic." [Laughter] That's what I brought to Washington. I said, "If you're going to spend it, you've got to have it. And if you don't have it, you shouldn't spend it. And don't pretend that two and two makes either six or three"—arithmetic.

Now they're saying, "Oh, man, you couldn't mess this economy up if you tried. Let's just take all that surplus and give it to the voters right now and make everybody fat and happy, and we'll ride off into the sunset." Don't you believe it. You've still got to be thinking about tomorrow.

And the reason that I support Al Gore so strongly—yeah, I feel indebted to him because

he's been good to me, a good Vice President, but I think I know him better than anybody outside his family now. And I want this economic expansion to continue, and I want it to go and reach people and places and neighborhoods that are still left behind. Do you know what the unemployment rate is on the Navajo Reservation at Window Rock in New Mexico? Fifty-eight percent. Do you know what it is at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota? Seventy-three percent. In many places in the Mississippi Delta, where I come from, it's still in double digits.

Al Gore ran our empowerment zone program. We proved we could bring investment and the free enterprise system to poor people. So now we've got a program to bring it everywhere. That's one reason I'm for him. I think he cares about that. We care about that. We want to raise the minimum wage, and they don't. We want to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they don't. We want all the seniors in the country to be able to get affordable prescription drugs, and they don't.

But all these things will tend to be blurred, and I want you to just remember what I'm telling you tonight. This is a chance of a lifetime. This is an important election. There are real differences. And right now, we're the only side that wants you to know what the differences are. Their argument is almost like, "I'll give you a bigger tax cut now. Besides, their fraternity had the ball for 8 years. Why don't you let us have it for a while?" This is a serious deal.

Most of my life has been lived, and my child is now grown. Most of you have little kids, and you're looking at your future. Some of you have grandkids. We ought to be thinking about them. And I'm just telling you, I was 18 years old the last time my country had an economy like this. I have waited for 35 years for us to have this chance. And you've got to make the most of it.

We've got a guy running for President that has done more good for the country as Vice President than anybody ever has. Thomas Jefferson was Vice President. Theodore Roosevelt was Vice President. Harry Truman was Vice President. They were all great Presidents, but they didn't do anything remotely as important as what Al Gore has done as Vice President. He's the best qualified person in my lifetime to run for President. He'll keep the prosperity going. He'll

care about all the people and try to make sure we build one America.

And the last thing I'll tell you is, he understands the future. And we need somebody that really understands the future. Don't you want somebody that understands science and energy and technology and all this information stuff? All your medical records, all your financial records on somebody's computer somewhere—wouldn't you like to have a President that would fight for your right to privacy so nobody could peer into them unless you said yes? Don't you want somebody that understands climate change and can figure out how to deal with it without breaking the economy?

So if somebody asks you why you came, tell them it's because it's real important. Tell them there are real differences. Tell them we're running somebody for President that's the best qualified person in your lifetime, who understands the future and can lead us there and

wants everybody to go together. And tell them we've got to keep this prosperity going.

But mostly, if you have kids, tonight when you go home, look at them, and remember what I told you: I've waited 35 years for this chance. I don't know when it will come again. And we can't pay any attention to the polls or anything else. We've just got to get up and saddle up and fight for their future. And if we do, we win.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to singer Kenneth Edmonds, popularly known as Baby-face, and his wife, Tracy, dinner hosts; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Donna L. Brazile, campaign manager, Gore 2000; and Yolanda Caraway, president, Caraway Group.

The President's Internet Address

June 24, 2000

Good morning. Here in America, a revolution in technology is underway. It is more than a time of innovation; it's a time of fundamental transformation, the kind that happens, at most, every 100 years. Today, in my first Saturday webcast, I'd like to speak to you about how we can seize the potential of this information revolution to widen the circle of our democracy and make our Government much more responsive to the needs of our citizens.

Early in our history, people often had only one option when they needed the help of the National Government. They had to visit a Government office and stand in line. Indeed, as Vice President Gore has pointed out, after the Civil War the only way our veterans could collect their pensions was by traveling all the way to Washington, DC, and waiting for a clerk to dig out their war records. Those war records were actually bound in red tape. That gave rise to the universal symbol of bureaucratic delay that has existed down to the present day.

Thankfully, things have gotten a lot easier for citizens over the years. In recent years, advances in computing and information technology have

led to remarkable gains. Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, we have greatly expanded the spread of information technology throughout the Government, cutting reams of redtape, putting vast resources at the fingertips of all of our citizens. Citizens now are using Government websites to file their taxes, compare their Medicare options, apply for student loans, and find good jobs. They're tapping into the latest health research and browsing vast collections in the Library of Congress and following along with NASA's missions in outer space. This is just the beginning.

Today I'm pleased to announce several major steps in our efforts to go forward in creating a high-speed, high-tech, user-friendly Government. First, we're going to give our citizens a single, customer-focused website where they can find every on-line resource offered by the Federal Government.

This new website, FirstGov.gov, will be created at no cost to the Government by a team led by Eric Brewer, who developed one of the most successful Internet search technologies

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with the help of Government grants. In the spirit of cutting through redtape, this new website will be created in 90 days or less. It will uphold the highest standards for protecting the privacy of its users.

When it's complete, FirstGov will serve as a single point of entry to one of the largest, perhaps the most useful collection of webpages in the entire world. Whether you want crucial information in starting a small business or you want to track your Social Security benefits, you can do it all in one place, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Second, now that we're poised to create one-stop shopping for Government services, we'll also greatly expand the scope of those services. Increasingly, we'll give our citizens not only the ability to send and receive information but also to conduct sophisticated transactions on-line.

For example, this year the Federal Government will award about \$300 billion in grants and buy \$200 billion in goods and services. Over the coming year, we will make it possible for people to go on-line and compete for these grants and contracts through a simplified electronic process. Moving this enormous volume of business on-line will save a great deal of money and time for our taxpayers. It will also expand opportunities for community groups,

small businesses, and citizens who never before have had a chance to show what they can do.

Third, in conjunction with the nonprofit Council for Excellence in Government, we're launching a major competition to spur new innovative ideas for how Government can serve and connect with our citizens electronically. The Council will award up to \$50,000 to those students, researchers, private sector workers, or Government employees who present the most creative ideas.

In the early years of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, "America's institutions must move forward hand in hand with the progress of the human mind." Well, today, the progress of the human mind is certainly racing forward at break-neck speed. If we work together, we can ensure that our democratic institutions keep pace. With your help, we can build a more perfect, more responsive democracy for the information age.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:15 p.m. on June 23 at a private residence in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10 a.m. on June 24. In his remarks, the President referred to Eric Brewer, cofounder, Inktomi. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

The President's Radio Address

June 24, 2000

Good morning. This week we mark the beginning of summer, another summer of national prosperity, continuing the longest economic expansion in our history. The big question now is what we intend to do with this economic prosperity. One of our most pressing needs, clearly, is providing voluntary prescription drug coverage under Medicare for older Americans. We should do it this year.

The American people have made their feelings clear. They know our seniors are paying too much for prescription drugs that help them live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives. Three in five older Americans don't have dependable insurance coverage for prescriptions, and too

many seniors simply aren't getting the drugs they need.

Again and again I've said it should be a high priority to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare this year. But we must do it the right way, by making the benefit affordable and available for everyone who needs it.

I'm deeply concerned that the proposal House Republicans put forward this week will take us down the wrong road. What they have proposed is not a Medicare benefit; it's a private insurance program which many seniors and people with disabilities simply won't be able to afford. It will not offer dependable coverage to every American in every part of the country. Rural

Americans will be at particular risk because private insurance is often unavailable to them or very, very expensive.

The plan doesn't ensure that seniors will be able to use the local pharmacist they trust. Insurance companies have already said this model won't work. It benefits the companies who make the drugs, not the older Americans who need to take the drugs.

There is a better way. I propose giving all our seniors the option of a prescription drug benefit through Medicare, wherever they live, however sick they may be. My plan would be affordable and dependable and give every senior equal coverage.

Because our economy is so strong and because we worked hard to put the Medicare Trust Fund back on sound footing, we have the money to do this now and do it right. We should use a part of our hard-earned budget surplus to meet America's most pressing priorities, like paying down the national debt, strengthening Medicare, and providing a prescription drug benefit.

That's why next week I will propose using the surplus to improve my plan. I will unveil specific protections for catastrophic drug expenses to ensure that no senior pays more than \$4,000 in prescription drugs and keeping premiums at \$25 a month. And I'll propose making that benefit in the full prescription drug initiative available in 2002, instead of 2003. To do that, I'll ask Congress to add about \$58 billion to our funding for Medicare over the next 10 years.

Providing a voluntary prescription drug benefit is only one of the challenges we must face to keep Medicare healthy for generations to come. We also have to increase payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, home health care agencies, and other providers, to make sure Medicare patients get high-quality care. Earlier

this week, I proposed that we use \$40 billion of the surplus to do that.

We should also follow Vice President Gore's proposal to take Medicare off budget, like Social Security, so that the Medicare taxes you pay cannot be diverted for irresponsible tax cuts or other Government spending that could lead us back to the bad old days of deficits and give us higher interest rates. This will protect Medicare and make a major contribution toward paying down the debt. And I propose using the savings from debt reduction to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund through at least 2030, when the number of Medicare people will be double what it is today.

We're fortunate—very fortunate—to live in a time of budget surpluses and remarkable prosperity, but we didn't get there by accident. We maintained our fiscal discipline, invested in our people, made good on the commitments that matter most. We can't let up now. And we have few responsibilities more important than helping our older Americans live out their lives with quality and in dignity.

We have the opportunity to meet that responsibility with a straightforward plan that all seniors can buy into. We have growing bipartisan agreement in the Senate that this is the way to go.

I hope as we mark the 50th anniversary of the Korean war tomorrow, we'll remember that a generation of Americans who did not let us, their children and grandchildren, down. And in return, we owe it not to let them down.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:45 p.m. on June 23 at a private residence in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the Democratic National Convention 2000 Host Committee Breakfast in Los Angeles

June 24, 2000

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. And Nancy, thank you for having us in your home. Since you said I had done pretty well for a

young fellow from Arkansas, I can't resist—I have a lot of friends here, but I cannot resist the temptation at this apt moment in history

to introduce another contribution that my State made to your success: Mr. Derek Fisher of the Los Angeles Lakers. I was watching one of the Lakers games, actually, one of the games against Portland. And Derek comes in at the end, steals the ball five or six times, and confuses everybody. And somebody says, "God, that guy is aggressive." I said, "If you come from Arkansas, you have to be." [Laughter] It's just sort of our deal. You did us proud, and congratulations.

I want to thank the host committee, every one of you. And I thank my good friend Terry McAuliffe. And I thank Secretary Daley—I don't know why I'm thanking Secretary Daley for leaving my administration; he was doing such a great job. But he's doing—it's a very important thing for us to continue our work, and I thank him for taking over the leadership of the Vice President's campaign.

I want to thank Joe Andrew and all the people here from the Democratic Party and recognize two of my very old friends, Henry and Mary Alice Cisneros. Thank you for the help you've given us on the convention, and thank you for being my friends, and congratulations on being new grandparents—most important thing. They will shamelessly show you the pictures if you ask. [Laughter]

I also want to congratulate Governor Roy Romer on his new job here in Los Angeles and thank him. When this was announced, I told—Hillary and I were talking. I said, "This is really what Romer's always wanted to do. He's the only guy I ever knew who ran for Governor and served 12 years just so he could be a school superintendent." [Laughter] But you could go all the way across the country and not find a single human being who wants to do the right thing by our children and prove that our schools can work for all kids more than Roy Romer.

And what I want to tell all of you is, I've been in a lot of Los Angeles schools, and I've been in some that are working very, very well, indeed. And I've been all across this country, and when several of us who are involved in this—and Secretary Riley and I, we go back to the seventies; we were involved in school reform. And Hillary and I rewrote all the school standards in Arkansas nearly 20 years ago now. There was a long period of time when everybody thought they knew what the answer was to failing schools and how to help kids in poor neighborhoods, sometimes in very difficult fam-

ily situations, or just people whose first language was not English, learn up to world-class standards. But the truth is we didn't know as much for a long time as we thought we did.

That's not true anymore, and we now have—this is the most exciting and important time in modern American history to be involved in the education of children from kindergarten to the 12th grade, for two reasons. One is, for 2 years we've had, for the first time, a group of schoolchildren bigger than the baby boom generation. It's the biggest group of kids ever in school. And those of us among the baby boomers, which are basically people today between the ages of 36 and 54 years old, we were the biggest group of people ever in school until this crowd. And this group is far, far more diverse racially, ethnically, religiously, culturally—much more diverse. So, obviously it's important—self-evidently.

But the second thing you need to know is, we actually do know how to provide excellence in education to all kinds of children in all kinds of circumstances. And so now the question is how to replicate what works somewhere everywhere. But there's no excuse anymore; we really do know how to do it.

I was in a school in Spanish Harlem the other day, appearing on the "Today Show" for the VH1 music-in-schools program. Some of you may have seen it, where I tried to help VH1 get instruments donated, money donated to start school music programs again, because a lot of them were lost in the schools over the last 20 years, along with, I might add, the physical education programs for people not involved in team sports.

And so, we were working on it. And in this school, I met this magnificent principal. Now 2 years ago, this grade school, P.S. 96 in Spanish Harlem in New York, had 80 percent of the kids—80 percent—reading and doing math below grade level—2 years ago. Today, 74 percent of them are doing reading and math at or above grade level—in 2 years.

I was in this little school in Kentucky the other day in this real poor area, where more than half the kids are on free or reduced lunches. Four years ago, it was supposed to be one of the worst schools in Kentucky. Today, it's one of the top 10 or 20 grade schools in the entire State. Listen to this; in 3 years this is what they did. They went from 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level to

57 percent; from 5 percent of the kids doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent; from zero percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level to two-thirds—3 years. And I can tell you there are hundreds of stories like this.

So I want all of you to support your school system. We need to put this beyond partisan politics; we need to put this beyond everything else. But you do need to know that it can happen. And I have seen it with my own eyes in every conceivable different kind of circumstance. It can happen, and you can do it.

Now, in 1991, before I had decided to run for President, as chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council, I came to Los Angeles to look at an anticrime program. And they had arranged for a young student who came from the East but who was studying out here in California, named Sean Landress, to drive me around. You might be interested to know he subsequently went to divinity school, got a graduate degree, studied in Romania, talked about how to rebuild the economies of central and eastern Europe. He's a remarkable young man. He was 20 years old at the time and had been in school at Columbia in New York.

So we're driving across Los Angeles on one of these beautiful days, when I then did not have the benefit of not having to stop for the traffic. [Laughter] So this 20-year-old young guy that I'd never met before looks at me, he says, "Well, let's get right down to it. Cut it out. Are you going to run for President or not?" I'd never seen this kid before in my life. I said, "Well, I don't know. Maybe." He said, "Well, if you do, here's what your theme song ought to be." [Laughter] So he puts this tape in the tape deck—we didn't have CD players in cars back then—and it's Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow."

And so we asked them later if we could do—I said, "That's sounds pretty good." So I decided to run for President, and I asked Fleetwood Mac, and whoever we contacted had the same attitude that President Bush used to express, that I was just a Governor from a small southern State; why should I use their song? [Laughter] I was so naive I thought that was a compliment, being a Governor, and I still do. But anyway, eventually we found them, the Fleetwood Mac people, and they said okay, so that became the theme song of the '92 campaign.

And I just want to pick up on something Terry said about Los Angeles. The best elections are always about the future. No matter how good a job you've done, they're always about the future.

I remember once when I was trying to decide whether to run for my fifth term as Governor in Arkansas, I went out to the State Fair. And I used to have a booth at the State Fair, and I'd just sit there and talk to people, anybody that wanted to come up. And everybody in the State comes to the State Fair, in a little State like that.

This old boy in overalls came up to me, and he said, "Bill, are you going to run for another term?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. If I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yes, I guess I will. I always have." And I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all this time?" He said, "No, but everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And I got kind of hurt. I said, "Well, don't they think I've done a good job?" He said, "Oh, yeah, they think you've done a good job, but you did draw a paycheck every 2 weeks didn't you?" He said, "That's what we hired you to do, a good job." [Laughter]

And so I say that to make this point. I think the record of our administration is a relevant consideration in this election but mostly because it's evidence of whether we will keep the commitments we make to the American people, or whether the Vice President will, and what we will do in the future.

But one reason I wanted to be in the millennial year in Los Angeles is that you do represent the future. And you've got all the challenges and all the opportunities of the future within 20 miles of where we're having breakfast today. And that's what I want you to help us show America. I want America to see the future, the diversity, the youth, the vibrancy, the technology, the creativity, the whole 9 yards.

I'm a little superstitious about things, and I'm—one of the things I'm happy about is the Lakers won in the Staples Center. And 4 years ago, we met in Chicago right after the Bulls won in the United Center. So I think if we can just keep this basketball-Democratic Party partnership going, we're in pretty good shape. [Laughter]

But I hope you will think about this. Many of you, in ways that you can't even imagine now, will come in contact with people from other States, people from other countries, the

thousands of people that will be here for the media. And I hope that you will say that, because the thing that's most important to me right now—and I admit it's self-serving—but the thing that's most important for me right now is that the American people make the right decision in trying to figure out what this election is about.

My experience in life is that a lot of you get—the answers you get sometimes depend on the questions you ask. So when people say, “Well, who do you think's going to win this or that other election?” I often say, “Well, what's the election about?” What the election's about depends on—will determine in large measure who wins.

And we've got this enormous opportunity now to give America a gift, which is an honestly positive election, not a saccharine election, not a “let's all just kind of wander through in a fog” election, but an election that is a genuine debate about the future of the country, at the time of the greatest prosperity and social progress we have enjoyed in my lifetime, with the absence of dramatic internal crises or external threats. And a time like this comes along once in 50 years, sometimes once in 100 years. And I think it is a very stern test of the judgment and character of the American people, what we do with this moment of prosperity.

You know, when I came here in '92—you heard the mayor talking about it—I mean the economy was in the tank. You'd had riots in Los Angeles. The people in Washington were—had what I call the combat mentality. “I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight. Maybe we'll both get on the evening news.” [Laughter] And people didn't worry about what was going to happen.

So it was—to be fair, you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out we needed a new economic policy, a new social policy, and a new way of doing politics. And we brought our ideas to the table, and thankfully, they worked out pretty well for America. And I am very grateful for the chance I have had to serve.

But I, too, think this election is about tomorrow. And I've worked as hard as I could to help turn this country around, and I'm very proud of where we are. And I'm proud of the Vice President for running, and I'm very proud of my wife for running for the Senate in New York, and I'm proud of all these people who

want to keep doing, keep the direction going that we have worked on.

But for you, whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, what you should want now is for the American people to come out of Los Angeles—because it will be the second convention—thinking this is great, the country's in great shape, and we now have the opportunity and the responsibility to chart a course for the future, to think about the big issues.

Now, I'll just mention some of them: What are you going to do when all of us baby boomers retire and there's only two people working for every one person on Social Security? What are you going to do to make sure all these kids do get a world-class education? What are you going to do to deal with the fact that we have a lot of people that have jobs in America today who still can barely pay their bills and have a hard time raising their children, because our country does less than other countries to help people balance work and childrearing?

What are we going to do about the fact that global warming is real? These environmental challenges are real, and we have to find a way to grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time. What are you going to do about the fact that we still do have hate crimes in America? We had kids shot at a Jewish community center here; a Filipino postal worker killed—clearly, the person who went after him thought he had a two-fer, an Asian and a Federal Government employee; a former basketball coach at Northwestern, an African-American man killed by a fanatic in the Midwest who then went and shot a young Korean Christian as he walked out of his church. The guy said he didn't believe in God, but he did believe in white supremacy, and he belonged to a church that elevated it. So we still have these.

How are we going to build one America? How are we going to build a global economy that has a human face, that gives everybody a chance to participate? How are we going to make sure that the people and places who have not fully been part of our economic recovery get a chance to share in the prosperity? That helps the economy grow and keeps the recovery going.

What's your position about what we should do with this projected surplus? They now say the projected surplus will be huge—I'm going to talk about it the day after tomorrow. And the Republicans say we should spend way over

half of it in a tax cut and spend the rest of it on the cost of partially privatizing Social Security and building a missile defense scheme and other things, and it will materialize.

We say—even though I think our economic policy has produced this happy projection—that we shouldn't spend our money before it materializes, that we ought to save a good portion of it, pay down the debt, keep interest rates down, protect Medicare, and give a tax cut, but keep it within bounds in case all this money doesn't come in. Because once you cut taxes, if we don't have this projected surplus, we'll be back in the soup—old deficits, old interest rates, California 1991–1992.

Anyway, these are big issues. And when you're getting ready to do a convention you think about, well, who's going to do the party; what is the entertainment; how are we going to work out the security; what are we going to do if all the people who think the global economy is terrible show up and demonstrate? You've got all these practical problems to work out. But what I want you to remember is, how they're worked out and the spirit in which you work them out and what you say to people you come in contact with will determine what people think of Los Angeles but also what people think the election is about right now.

I trust the American people to get it right; nearly always, they get it right. Otherwise we wouldn't be around here after over 200 years. If the alternatives are clear and they have time enough to digest it and hear both sides, they nearly always make the right decision. And what my mission is going to be is to make sure people understand this is a very big election, that we have an enormous responsibility to deal with

the big challenges and opportunities facing the country, that there are dramatic differences between the two parties and we don't have to badmouth our opponents to say that—that we can just say, let's lay the differences out there, and you decide what you want for the future of America.

And Los Angeles can help us do that. You can embody the future and clarify the choices to be made. And you can do it and have a heck of a good time doing it. I told the staff at the convention yesterday, I've been to every Democratic Convention since 1972; makes me feel kind of old. And what I think is important is that there be competence, a sense of mission, a sense of energy, and a sense of joy and pride. Our country has got a lot to be proud of; this State and this community have a lot to be proud of. I want you to have a good time. I want you to help everybody else have a good time. But never let people forget, it's still important to think about tomorrow.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard J. Riordan of Los Angeles, and his wife, Nancy Daly Riordan; William M. Daley, general chair, Gore 2000; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Roy Romer, former general chair, Democratic National Committee; former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry G. Cisneros and his wife, Mary Alice; and Victor Lopez, principal, Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96), New York City.

Remarks at a Brunch for Senator Dianne Feinstein in Los Angeles June 24, 2000

Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here. I always try to show up on Dianne's birthday. [Laughter] I was just thinking, one time in 1994 I made an appearance in northern California for Senator Feinstein, and she didn't come—[laughter]—because she had to stay back and vote in the Senate. So I was sort of her surrogate. And I was talking about that the other

day, and Hillary said, "Well, if you did it for her, you can do it for me." [Laughter] So now I've started—now we're actually doing it on purpose in her election, so we'll see. [Laughter] I hope the results are just as good, and I'm inclined to think they will be. [Applause] Thank you.

I want to thank our friend Ron Burkle for giving us this beautiful home to have this event. And I'd like to recognize Joe Andrew, the chairman of the Democratic committee, and Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of our convention. Thank you both for being here.

I want to thank Governor Davis for many things, two in particular: Number one, the extraordinary example he has set in pushing for reforms in education and criminal justice and other things; and secondly, I want to thank you for being so loyal and helpful to Vice President Gore. And when we win, we will never forget that you were there, and I appreciate that.

Sharon Davis is here, and I want to thank her for going down and being with me in San Diego the other night. We had a great time down there. We're actually swelling the ranks of the Democrats in San Diego.

And we have a lot of mayors here: Mayor Vicki Reynolds of Beverly Hills; Mayor Miguel Pulido of Santa Ana; Mayor Bill Bogaard of Pasadena; and my great friend Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach. Thank you all for being here.

I want to introduce one other person and ask him to stand, because I believe he is one of the reasons that Dick Gephardt will be the new Speaker of the House, State Senator Adam Schiff, candidate for—[inaudible]—Adam, stand up here. Thank you. [Applause] You ought to help him. He deserves to be elected to Congress. He did a great job.

Now, I want to be brief. Gray has already talked about Dianne's remarkable record. I have said many times, but I will say again, I can't think of any first-term Member of the United States Senate, particularly one who had to labor in the minority—and I know she got the short straw, she's actually sort of in her second term because she was elected in '92 and '94. But if you think about what she did with the Headwater Forest, the Mojave Desert National Park, the other national monuments we set aside in California—with the assault weapons ban, with the water agreement, it's really, truly astonishing. And I literally can't think of anybody else who accomplished so much in such a short time.

I think one reason is her extraordinary ability, her persuasiveness, and her persistence. I remember one time 4 or 5 years ago, somebody called and said Senator Feinstein had called and asked us to do something in the White House,

and what did I think. I said, "Well, there's only one decision to make, are we going to do it now or later"—[laughter]—"because I can tell you, no will not be an option." [Laughter] When she makes up her mind, no is not an option.

I think also the fact that she was a mayor had something to do with her success, that she was willing to approach people with different views in good faith and try to work things through.

One of the reasons I ran for President in 1992 is, I was just—Washington drove me crazy. They had—the basic mode of operation in the Congress was, "I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight. Maybe we'll both get on the evening news." [Laughter] And it worked pretty well, I guess, to get on the evening news. It didn't have much to do with what was happening in America, and we weren't very well off as a result of it.

So I'd like to tell you, I am very grateful for the chance I've had to serve as President. I am very grateful for the opportunity I've had to work with people like Dianne Feinstein. I'm glad the results have been good for California and good for America.

But I think the most important thing that we should be thinking about is, what do we plan to make of this moment, and what is this election about anyway? And I want you to know three things. I think Dianne's going to be re-elected, overwhelmingly, because she's done such a great job and because people will agree with her. It will be better for her and she'll do more for you if we pick up a dozen or 15 House seats, if we pick up 5 or 6 Senate seats, and if the Vice President is elected President. And I believe that whether those things happen depend in large measure on what the American people believe this election is about. Sometimes the answer you get depends on the question you ask.

And there are three things I want you to know about this election. And you know, I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] Most days I'm okay about it. [Laughter] I got a call—this is the first time in 26 years they've had an election roll around, and I can't go ask somebody to vote for me. [Laughter] Sometimes I have, you know, kind of DT's about it, but most days I'm okay. [Laughter]

A distinguished citizen of the world called me last week and said that for a lame duck, I was quacking rather loudly. [Laughter] And

I'm trying to do that. We're trying to get things done.

Oh, I want to tell you one other thing, one other Californian I want to brag on. You should be very proud of Henry Waxman, because this week he got a bipartisan majority in the House to vote to let us proceed with the tobacco litigation. And he beat the tobacco interests and the Republican leadership, and I'm really proud of him. It was great.

So what is this election about? When you leave here and you go around and you talk to people and they ask you, why did you show up at this, what are you going to say? "Burkle's got a pretty spread." "Dianne makes a great speech." "I want to see Clinton one more time before he withers away." [Laughter] What are you going to say?

You're laughing, but I'm serious. I want you to laugh, but I want you to think, because I'm telling you—here are the things you need to know about this election. It's really important. It's just as important as the '92 and '96 elections were. I mean, to be fair, you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to know that '92 was important. I mean, California was in the dumps. We had riots in the streets. The economy was bad. The political environment was rancorous. It was obvious that we needed a new economic policy, a new social policy, and a new political approach. We knew that.

And in '96 it was obvious, I think, to the people that we had to keep working on this. A lot of stuff was in transit. So now I've worked as hard as I could to help turn this country around. And what's the election about? It's about, what are you going to do with this magic moment? And it is not self-evident yet that the American people understand or accept that that is what this election is about.

Once in maybe 50 years a country gets a chance to have a set of circumstances like this, where you really can build a future of your dreams for your children. So, I think what the election ought to be about is, how are we going to meet the big challenges; how are we going to seize the big opportunities? What is it going to be like when all of us baby boomers retire and there are only two people working for every one person going on Social Security and Medicare? How are we preparing for it?

We have the largest group of schoolchildren in history, and the most diverse one, racially, ethnically, religiously. How are we going to give

them all a world-class education? And are we prepared to live with the consequences if we fail to do so?

What about all the people that aren't part of this prosperity, all the people in places that have been left behind? If we don't bring them into the circle of opportunity now, when will we ever get around to doing it? What about all the people who have jobs and have children and have a really tough time balancing work and family? Because our country is still way behind most others in giving support to working parents.

What about global warming and these big new environmental challenges? Are we going to prove we can grow the economy and improve the environment, or are we going to keep our heads stuck in the sand and say it's going to be unfortunate when the sugar cane fields in Louisiana flood and the Florida Everglades flood and we can't grow crops on part of our land anymore, but we just aren't going to do anything about this?

What about the fact that there is still manifest hatred in our country against people just because of their race or their religion or just because they're gay? What are we going to do about that? I mean, here in Los Angeles, one of the most diverse places, one of the most exciting places, and often, one of the most tolerant places in the country, you had those kids shot at that Jewish community school—shot at; you had that Filipino postal worker murdered by a person who apparently thought he got a two-fer, he got an Asian and a Federal employee; Matthew Shepard killed because he was gay; James Byrd dragged to death because he was black. In the Middle West, we had a young Korean Christian shot, walking out of his church, and an African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern shot, walking in his neighborhood, by a guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but believed in white supremacy. We still have these things in our country. We have less grievous manifestations of it.

How are we going to build one America? And if we want to build a human face on the global economy and we want to be a force for peace and freedom and decency, from the Balkans to the Middle East and Northern Ireland to the African tribal conflicts, we have to be good at home if we want to do good around the world. How do we propose to deal with

this? Now, that's what I think this election is about. These are big things.

You know, when I got elected it was, how are we going to pay the bills and get out of debt and get interest rates down, so people can go back to work; what are we going to do to make the streets safer so people can walk down the streets? Now we have these big questions. You can get America out of debt if you want to. I think you ought to want to. I think the liberals ought to want America to pay off its debt. Why? Because it means lower interest rates, more jobs, more money for ordinary working people. The people that serve our food today will be better off if America is not borrowing money that they can then borrow for lower costs to send their kids to college or to get an education themselves or make a car payment.

Yes, the crime rate is down to a 30-year low. So what? Anybody think America is safe enough? What are we going to do to make America the safest country in the world? Yes, we have a Children's Health Insurance Program, and 2 million kids are now getting insurance, but just like Hillary warned in 1994, the number of people uninsured has gone up. One Democratic Member of Congress told me the other day, "You know, they told me if I voted for Hillary's health care program, the number of uninsured Americans would go up, and I voted for it, and that's exactly what happened." Think about it. [Laughter]

So what are we going to do about this? So that's the first thing. If the American people believe that this is a moment that we cannot afford to squander, her election is a cinch, and I believe the Vice President will win; I think Hillary will win; I think we will definitely win the House and probably win the Senate—if that's what people really believe. So it's a big election.

The second thing I want to tell you is there are huge differences.

And I'll just go to the third point now. There are three points you need to remember—big election, big differences. The third point, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] Now, you laugh, but it's true. Can you believe this Republican campaign? They've tried to get you to develop amnesia about the primary they had. [Laughter] And their nominee did not go to his own State party convention this year because he didn't

want to have to answer questions about the Texas Republican platform.

I urge you to get a copy of that. [Laughter] I mean, you can get rid of every other reactionary tract in your library, if you just got a copy of the Texas Republican platform. [Laughter] You would never have to do any research again for the rest of your life about what the most reactionary position is on any issue; just that one little document, you'll have it forever.

There are differences. I'll just give you a few. We think we ought to be spreading this benefit to everybody. We think we ought to raise the minimum wage, and they don't. We believe in managed care, but we don't think people should be abused in managed care, so we favor a Patients' Bill of Rights. And if people get hurt, we think they ought to be able to sue for redress, and they don't. We favor a Medicare prescription drug program that every senior that needs it can buy into on a voluntary basis, and they don't. We favor continued aggressive efforts to improve the environment, even as we grow the economy. They won't fund our initiatives for global warming. They never want to fund our initiatives to develop alternative sources of fuel on more efficient cars, even though you see what's happening to gas prices in the Middle West today and why we need to diversify our energy sources.

Al Gore says, "If I get elected President, I'm going to build on President Clinton's order setting aside 43 million roadless acres in the national forests," something the Audubon Society said was the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. [Applause] I don't want you to clap for the self-serving part. [Laughter] So Gore says, "Clinton did a good thing. I'll build on it." His opponent says, "Vote for me, and I'll reverse it. It is an unconscionable land grab."

We believe that we should build on Senator Feinstein's assault weapons ban and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which allow people to evade the assault weapons ban. We think we should mandate child trigger locks. We think we should close the gun show loophole, and they don't. They don't.

We know that in the next election, there will be—we'll produce a President who will get to make at least two and maybe four appointments to the United States Supreme Court—at least two and maybe four. And we have a candidate who is committed to support a whole range of

personal liberties, including a woman's right to choose, and they have one who is committed to do what he can to do away with it.

Now, they don't want to talk about that anymore. That was all stuff that happened in the primaries. But my view is, we ought to run this election not in a hateful way, not in a negative way. I hate these campaigns the last 20 years where you get these forces in opposition, they're running down their opponents, and they want you to believe that whoever they're running against is just a step above a car thief. I don't believe that. I don't like that. I think we should assume that from top to bottom, the people running are honorable and intend to do exactly what they say they will do. But let's not have a shaded definition of what they have said. Let's get it all out there and let people see the choices and let them make their decision.

So, big differences. Only we want you to know what they are. You've got to go out and tell people. There are consequences here.

Their position is, "Hey, this economy is on automatic now. You couldn't mess it up if you tried. Their fraternity had it for 8 years. Give our side a chance." Their position is, "Hey, we're going to have all this money in the surplus. We want to give you way over half of it in a tax cut, spend more than the rest of it that's left in our Social Security privatization plan, spend a little more on our national missile defense or whatever other commitments we've made, and it will all be there, even though it's just projected."

Al Gore stands up and says, "Look, I know I'm running for President, and I'd like to have all the votes I can, but we don't know if we're going to have all this money that we're projecting." What's your projected income over the next 10 years? Would you go spend it all today? [Laughter] Anybody here that's sitting down right now and projecting your income for the next 10 years and is willing to make an ironclad commitment that will land you in the poorhouse if you don't do it—spend every nickel of it—you ought to vote for them. The rest of you ought to vote for us.

And you need to tell people that. I mean, Gore says, "Look, let's take at least 20 percent of this money that is being produced only because you're paying more in Medicare taxes than we're spending now, and set it aside and not spend it, not fool with it, use it to pay down

the debt, and take the interest savings and put it into Medicare so it will be there when the baby boomers retire. And we don't have to bankrupt our kids. Let's do for that what we're doing for Social Security. And then if the money doesn't materialize, we haven't spent it, and we won't go back to deficits and interest rates. And let's have a tax cut, but let's use it to help people like the folks that are working here establish their own savings account, create a little wealth, prepare for the future; help families with child care, with long-term care for their parents and their disabled family members; open the doors of college to everybody and still have some money to invest in education and the environment and making a safer world."

Now, I think that that's more likely to keep this economy going. People ask me all the time, "Well, what great new innovation did you bring to Washington? How did you do this economic magic? What did you bring?" And I always say, "Arithmetic." [Laughter] We brought arithmetic back to national policymaking.

So I want you to think about this, folks. We've got to have California. California can influence Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nevada, people all over the country you've got friends with. You need to tell people when you leave here, "I'm glad I went there yesterday because I understand clearly now that this is a really important election. I understand clearly that there are real differences with real consequences. I'm for Dianne Feinstein because I agree with her, and she has gotten more done in less time than anybody I ever saw. And I'm for Al Gore because he's had more impact for the good as Vice President than anybody in history, because he will keep the prosperity going, because he cares about people that too often get forgotten in our society, and because he understands the future and he can lead us there." Now, if people think that's what the election is about, we win.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to brunch host Ron Burkle; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Brunch for Senator Dianne Feinstein in Los Angeles
June 24, 2000

Thank you very much. When I get home and they ask me how Dianne's campaign is doing, I will say it is really hot. [Laughter] I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to especially thank our friend Ron Burkle for opening his home and being so generous on this and on so many other occasions. And I thank the other officials who are here. And I'm glad to see Roz Wyman here. It reminds me of my ties to my roots. And her loyalty to our party and our candidates is something I hope I can emulate for the rest of my life.

Let me say to all of you, it's hot, and you've been here a long time, and I'm preaching to the saved, so I'll be brief. Once I came to a fundraiser for Dianne 6 years ago in San Francisco, and she didn't show up—[laughter]—because she had to stay and vote. So I was her surrogate. And I told the folks out here, I said we were talking about this, and Hillary suggested that I make it a habit for her. So now, last week I went to a couple of events for Hillary, and she didn't show up on purpose. [Laughter] So we can be in two different places. So I'm now the surrogate-in-chief of the country, and I'm having a good time. If Dianne hadn't provided me that opportunity, it never would have occurred to me. [Laughter]

Let me say—I want to say one thing seriously about Senator Feinstein. In my experience I know of no Member of the United States Congress of either party, in the majority or the minority, who got so much done in his or her first term of service. Now, you think about, the assault weapons ban would not have happened without her; the resolution of the northern California water problem; the Mojave Desert National Park and the other expansions of the parks we've done in California; the Headwater Forest, the preservation of the priceless redwoods—none of this stuff would have happened without her. It's unheard of for somebody in his or her first term of service to have this kind of constructive impact. Nobody does that. And so she has become not only California but the Nation's resource. And you've got to send her back for that reason alone. And I mean that.

Now, the second thing I want to say, again very briefly, is I think we'll have a very good

election this year. I think we'll pick up a lot of seats in the Senate and the House, and I think we'll win the White House if the people believe the election is about what I think it's about. If they understand there are real differences between the two candidates and the two parties, and if they understand what those differences are, then we'll do just fine.

I tell everybody the three things you need to know about this election: It's real important; there are real differences; and only the Democrats want you to know what the real differences are. But it's really worth remembering that.

And I won't go into it all. Basically, if you heard my State of the Union Address, you know what I think. But I want to tell you this. We've had some children here at this event today; we've still got this young lady here and this young lady over there, and Steve and Chantal Cloobek brought their little boy here. You ought to be thinking about these kids between now and November. And you ought to be thinking about what their life will be like when all the baby boomers retire; what their life will be like in the most diverse society we ever had if we have the ability to provide excellence in education to all of our kids, and if we don't; what their lives will be like if we have a society that values both work and family and the importance of childrearing and giving all of our kids a decent upbringing, and if we don't; what their lives will be like if we can deal with climate change and other environmental problems and still grow the economy, or if we don't; and what their lives will be like if we continue this economic expansion and extend it to the people in the places that were left behind, or if we don't; what their lives will be like if we continue to follow Senator Feinstein's lead and make America a safer and safer country, or if we decide to give crime policy back to the interest groups; what their lives will be like depending on the attitudes of the next two to four Justices of the Supreme Court that the next President will appoint.

This is a big election. And I can only tell you that not only from my life's experience, which regrettably is getting increasingly longer—

although I prefer it to the alternative—[*laughter*]*—*and from my reading of American history, a time like this comes along at the most once every 50 years or so, sometimes maybe once every 100 years. We have economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, no overwhelming domestic or foreign threats to the fabric of the Nation's life. And those of us who are older, particularly those of us who have lived most of our lives, have a heavy responsibility not to squander this, to make sure that people understand what a profoundly important gift this election is.

And I tell people all the time, I don't want this to be a negative campaign. I don't want to see people trying to attack the character of their opponent. We've had too much of that. And there's a verse in the New Testament that says that they who judge without mercy will themselves be judged without mercy. And we don't have to have that kind of campaign. What we ought to have is an old-fashioned debate. We ought to have civics 101. Because you should assume that we have good people who

in good faith will attempt to do exactly what they say, and then we can identify the differences, clarify them, and say, "We want to build the future of our dreams for our children. Which choice is better?"

Now, believe me, if that's what the election's about, if people understand it's big, that there are real choices, and they understand what the choices are, then on January the 20th, Al Gore will be inaugurated President. Dianne Feinstein will be overwhelmingly reelected, and she'll have a lot more Democrats helping her. Dick Gephardt will be the Speaker of the House, and I'll be a member of the Senate spouses club. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to brunch host Ron Burkle; Roz Wyman, chair, Feinstein 2000; and Steve Clooback, president and chief executive officer, Diamond International Resorts, and his wife, Chantal.

Remarks to the Association of State Democratic Chairs in Los Angeles

June 24, 2000

Thank you very much. First, I thank you, Joan, for 8 years of friendship and for the remarkable support that you and the State of Massachusetts have given to me and Al Gore and our whole team.

Thank you, Governor Davis, for your friendship and for the extraordinary example you've set here in California, with your education legislation, your crime control legislation, and your devotion to our party. And we thank you, and we thank you for the day you had with the Vice President up in northern California yesterday. I liked reading about it. It was good press, and we thank you.

Thank you, Joe Andrew, for leaving their ranks and coming to ours. It's hard for me to say—I thank Bill Daley for leaving my Cabinet. [*Laughter*] But he might take it wrong. But I thank him for his willingness to assume the chairmanship of the Vice President's campaign. And I thank you, Donna Brazile. And thank you, Johnny Hayes, who is my political memora-

bia partner. I thought I had a lot of it until I met Johnny.

I want to thank Maxine Waters, who had me in her home in 1992 to meet with people from Los Angeles after the riots here, to deal with the economic and the social problems. And we walked down the streets together, burned out streets, and talked to people in a very different Los Angeles, a very different California, and a very different America than we have today.

I thank Dennis Archer and Kathy Vick and Bill Lynch and Lottie Shackelford and all the rest of you, so many of you I've known a long, long time. When you were introduced, ma'am, as having been at every convention since '36, I've been at every one since 1972 and that makes me pretty creaky, I guess. [*Laughter*]

But I'd like to say a few things. First, I just got off the phone with the Vice President, and he told me to tell you hello and to thank you. Secondly, I don't think you can possibly know how grateful I feel to all of you for your loyal

support in '92 and '96 and in all the times in between, in the good times and the bad times. I've had a real good time doing this job, and I'm glad it has worked out so well for the American people.

But I want to have a brief but serious conversation with you now. We have to win. We have to win the White House. We have to win the Senate. We have to win the House. We have to win these governorships. We need to get some more of them back. And to win, we have to make sure that the election is about the right subject. People ask me all the time, "Who's going to win this or that election?" I say, "It always depends on what the voters believe the election is about." Very often, the answer you get depends upon the question you ask.

And for me, it is a pretty simple matter. I have worked as hard as I could to turn our country around, to get us going in the right direction. You know, you didn't have to be a genius in '92 to figure out what the election ought to be about. The economy was in the tank. All the social indicators were going in the wrong direction. Washington politics was basically a matter of lobbing rhetorical bombs, or, as I like to say, "I got an idea, and you've got an idea. Let's fight. Maybe we'll both get on television tonight." [Laughter] And it often got people on television, but it didn't often change the way we were living.

This country is in good shape now. But there are some huge challenges out there still and huge opportunities. And I would argue to you that how a country deals with its prosperity is at least as big a test of its judgment and its character as how a country deals with adversity.

For me, it's not even close, because I know that a time like this comes along maybe once every 50 years, where you have a strong economy and improving society, a lot of national self-confidence, the absence of crippling domestic or foreign threats. And those of us who have lived most of our lives have a profound obligation to make sure that this election is about building the future of our dreams for our children.

What are they going to do, when all those baby boomers retire, about Social Security and Medicare? How are we going to make aging meaningful in terms of helping people to work who want to work, making sure people have affordable prescription drugs who need it? What

about the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren in our country? Will they have world-class educations or not? Will they all be able to go on to college or not?

What about the environment? Will we continue to improve it as we grow the economy, or will we go back to the old idea that you can't improve it and grow the economy? Will we really seriously take on this problem of global warming and climate change that Al Gore has been talking about for years and years and years now, and now everybody recognizes it's real, and he was right all along? Or are we going to continue to deny that it's a real problem until we see the flooding of the sugar cane in Louisiana, and the Everglades in Florida and a lot of farmland dry up and blow away?

What about all the people that have jobs but still have problems raising their children and doing their work? Are we going to do more for child care, for after-school programs, for long-term care for elderly and disabled relatives? Are we going to do more for family leave? Are we going to do more, in short, to help people balance work and family? What about people like a lot of the people who work in this hotel that are doing the best they can, but they need some help to reward their work so they can raise their kids, too? We're going to take account of them in the tax policy of the country, in the education policy of the country.

What about the people in places that have been left behind? Are we going to bring them into the free enterprise revolution or not? What about the digital divide? Are we going to close it or let it gape open? What about our responsibilities around the world? What about here at home, where people still get hurt and unfortunately sometimes killed because they're black or brown or Asian or gay or they work for the Federal Government or some other reason? We may never get another chance in our lifetime to take on this big stuff.

So the first thing you've got to do is to convince people back home that this is a huge election. It is just as important as the election of '92 or '96—every bit as important. Point number two, there are real differences. Point number three, only the Democrats want you to know what they are. [Laughter] Now, you laugh, but it's true, isn't it? Do you ever hear them talk about their primary campaign? They want America to develop amnesia about their primary campaign—who was on what side, who said what,

what commitments were made. You don't see them passing out copies of that Texas Republican platform, do you? [Laughter]

I was down in Texas the other night when that thing came out, with a bunch of my old friends. And one of them said that it was so bad, you could get rid of every Fascist tract in your library if you just had a copy of the Texas Republican platform. [Laughter] And I noticed their leader didn't go to the convention, and he didn't repudiate it. He just said, well, he was talking about other things. I say that in a good-natured way.

But let me say this. I don't believe we have to have a negative campaign this year. I don't think we should. I'm sick and tired of these campaigns where this vast amount of money and effort is spent to try to convince people that there's something wrong with their opponents. How many elections have we had in the last 20 years where basically the whole deal is designed to put everybody into a white heat, including our friends in the press, to convince the voters that your opponent is just one step above a car thief? Now, we don't have to do that this year. This country is in good shape. And what we ought to do is to have a real debate here. We ought to say, "Let's assume that everybody is honorable. Let's assume that they're pretty much going to do what they say they're going to do."

That's what history indicates is the case, by the way. Most Presidents do pretty much what they say they're going to do. And when they don't, we're normally glad. Aren't you glad Lincoln didn't keep his campaign promise not to free the slaves? Aren't you glad President Roosevelt didn't keep his campaign promise to balance the budget when unemployment was 25 percent? But basically, Presidents do what they say they're going to do, so we can have this debate. So you've got to go out and say, "Folks, whatever your take on this is politically, this is a huge election. We may never get another chance in our lifetime to actually vote to make the future of our dreams for our children."

Secondly, we have real differences. I'll just mention a few. We think we ought to raise the minimum wage, and they don't. We think we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights—if somebody gets hurt, they ought to be able to sue—and they don't. We think we ought to have a voluntary prescription Medicare drug

benefit available to everybody who needs it, and they don't.

We think we ought to close the gun show loophole, require child trigger locks, and not import large capacity ammunition clips that make a mockery of our assault weapons ban. And we don't believe anybody is going to miss a day in the deer woods if we do that. But they're not for it. We think we ought to put 50,000 police on the street in the highest crime neighborhoods, because the 100,000 we put on worked so well, and they disagree.

We think we ought to build 6,000 new schools and modernize another 5,000 a year for the next 5 years, and they don't. We think that we ought to require schools to turn around or shut down failing schools, school districts in States, but we ought to give them enough money so that every child who needs it can be in an after-school or a summer school program, and they don't. We think we ought to put 100,000 more teachers out there in the early grades to lower class size, because it has a direct impact on student achievement, and they don't.

We think we ought to keep trying to clean up the air and the water and deal with climate change and develop alternative sources of energy and support the development of cars that get better mileage, and they voted against that stuff every year I put it up. They just don't agree. If you're buying gasoline in Chicago and Milwaukee now, you probably wish we'd move faster to develop alternative sources of fuel and higher mileage vehicles.

So in all these things, I think we're right, and I think they're not. But they ought to be given a chance to have their piece—say their piece. Most important of all, on how we're going to keep the prosperity going, they think that we ought to have a tax cut that costs over half of the projected new surplus, which is real big, and that we ought to spend the rest of it on—the projected surplus—on the partial privatization of Social Security, on a big national missile defense system, and on whatever else they promise to spend money on, even though all that together is more than even the new surplus projections.

Now, we're taking a more politically risky position at a time when people feel kind of relaxed. The Vice President says, "Why don't we not spend all our projected surplus." What's your projected income for the next decade, folks? Are you ready to spend it all tomorrow?

Everybody that wants to spend your entire projected income for the next decade should seriously consider changing parties, because that's their position. And everybody that doesn't, who's not in our party, should seriously consider changing parties.

So what does Al Gore say? He says, "Why don't we just start by saying there is at least 20 percent of this projected surplus we are not going to spend, because we're getting it from your Medicare taxes, anyway. So we'll put it over to the side, and we'll pay the debt down with it. And then we'll take the money we save from doing that and put it into Medicare so when the baby boomers retire, we can keep Medicare alive, we won't bankrupt our kids. And, by the way, we're not going to spend all this projected surplus.

"And why don't we have a generous tax cut that helps working people, especially at modest incomes, to set up their own retirement accounts and invest, if they want, in the stock market and generate wealth, while we don't mess up Social Security; and then help others with the cost of child care or long-term care or paying for our children to go college, so we can open the doors of college to all; and one that gives wealthy people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America to create jobs we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa. And why don't we do that, and then we'll still have some money to invest in the future."

I know what I think is more likely to keep this prosperity going. People ask me all the time now that I've just got a few months left, 7 months left. They say, "What was the secret of your economic policy? What was the genius that Bob Rubin and Lloyd Bentsen and all of them brought to Washington?" And I look at them, and I say, "Arithmetic." [Laughter] The Democrats brought arithmetic back to Washington. If we didn't have it, we didn't spend it. We made a commitment to cut out programs that we didn't have to have, so we'd have more to invest in education and technology and the future.

But I'm just telling you, these are big issues, and you ought to clarify them. But if the public believes that this is a big election and it's about building the future of our dreams for our children, and if the public believes that there are real differences—and I only touched on a few of them. There are real differences in our posi-

tion on what it really means to include women and gays and people of color, people of all different backgrounds in the Government and in the life of America.

The next President is going to get two to four appointments to the Supreme Court. They've made different commitments about what their heartfelt positions are on the right to choose, for example. And I think you have to assume that both these people now running for President will do what they have promised to do on this. You have to assume that they are honorable and they will. So you have big differences. And we can have a great debate.

Let me just say one other thing I want you to know. I think I know Al Gore about as well as anybody alive except his family. And I've seen him at every conceivable kind of circumstances, in good and bad times for him, good and bad times for me, good and bad times for our administration. There are three things that I think you ought to know—or four.

Number one, this country has had a lot of Vice Presidents who made great Presidents. Thomas Jefferson was Vice President. Teddy Roosevelt was Vice President. Harry Truman was Vice President. Lyndon Johnson was Vice President. But we have never had anybody who, while he was Vice President, made so many decisions and did so many things that helped so many Americans remotely compared with Al Gore. He has been by far the most important Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Whether it's breaking the tie on the economic plan or leading our empowerment zone program to bring economic opportunity to poor people, or leading our efforts in technology, or our efforts to reinvent Government that has given us the smallest Federal Government since Kennedy was President, or our efforts to continue to improve the environment while we grow the economy, or our efforts with Russia or South Africa, or our arms control policy, or sticking by me when I made very, very tough decisions in Haiti and Bosnia and Kosovo, in financial aid to Mexico—a lot of them some of you didn't agree with me on—he was always there.

The second thing I want you to know is, it's my opinion, based on a lifetime of experience with this economy and some fair understanding of it, that our economic policy, the one he has embodied, is far more likely to keep

this economic expansion going and get the most out of it.

Thirdly, and in some ways most important of all to me, I think that we ought to have a President in a time of prosperity who is genuinely committed to helping all families participate in it, to giving all people a sense that they belong in America, and to giving everybody a chance to express their opinions and to be part of the future.

And fourthly, I think it's quite important that we have a President that really understands what the future is going to be like, that really gets it. I don't know how many people I've said—heard tell me that Al Gore is the first person that ever talked to them about the Internet. He said when we took office that someday the whole Library of Congress would be on the Internet, and I thought it was something that would happen in 20 or 30 years, and it's just about there right now.

He was the first person I ever heard talk about global warming. The first lunch we ever had, in January of '93, he was showing me his charts. Now everybody says it's real. I had to listen to 8 years of some people saying it was some sort of subversive plot to undermine the American economy. [*Laughter*]

I'll give you another example, something really important in the future. We're going to have all of our medical records and all of our financial records on somebody's computer somewhere. I think it's important whether you have privacy rights. I think you ought to be able to—you ought to have to give specific approval before somebody goes into somebody else's computer and gets your financial records or your medical records in ways that can affect your life. I think that's important. That's a big issue.

I could give you lots and lots of other examples. I'll give you one chilling one. The same things that are working in the information technology revolution that are going to give you little computers you can fit in the palm of your hand, with a screen that works just like the Internet so you can bring up things—you'll even be able to watch CNN news or something on a little screen you're holding in your hand—all that's going to happen in weapons systems. The biggest challenge we're going to face in the future, I think, over the next 20 years will be from the enemies of the nation-state, from the terror-

ists, the drugrunners, the weapons peddlers, and people who will have miniature weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological—God forbid—maybe even nuclear weapons. We need somebody who understands this stuff, somebody that's worked at it for years and years, somebody that gets it.

So that's my pitch. We've got—our nominee is the best Vice President the country ever had. He is clearly the person who is offering an economic strategy most likely to keep the recovery going. He has a clear commitment to help all the people to make sure nobody gets left behind. And he understands the future and can lead us there.

Now, if the public understands, if the people we represent believe that this is a huge election, that it's a chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children, if they believe there are real differences, if they understand what the differences are, then he will be elected President, and Hillary will be elected to the Senate, and so will a lot of others, and we will win the House back, and we will be celebrating.

Now, that's your job. You've got to make sure people understand what the deal is. That's what our job is. This is a happy job. You never have to say a bad word about a Republican. All you have to do is go out and say, "Here is where we are. Here is where we want to go. Here are the honest differences, and at least our party would like you to know exactly what they are."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Century Room at the Century Plaza Hotel & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to Joan M. Menard, president, Association of State Democratic Chairs; Gov. Gray Davis of California; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Kathleen M. Vick, secretary, Bill Lynch, vice chair, Dennis W. Archer, general co-chair, and Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, Democratic National Committee; William M. Daley, general chair, Donna L. Brazile, campaign manager, and Johnny H. Hayes, finance director, Gore 2000; former Secretaries of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin and Lloyd Bentsen; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on the Observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War June 25, 2000

Thank you very much, Secretary Cohen, for your remarks and your outstanding service. General Myers, Mr. Ambassador, thank you so much for being here today. Chaplain Craven, Chaplain Sobel; especially, my friend Senator Glenn, whose life is a testament to the triumph of freedom.

I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Goyer for being here, and acknowledge that Secretary West and Congressman Charles Rangel, a Korean war veteran, are in Seoul today leading the American delegation at the commemoration activities there, and we ought to give them a big hand. They're representing us well. [Applause]

I want to recognize Congressman Bishop and Congressman Faleomavaega and thank Senator Paul Sarbanes, who did so much to keep this Korean War Memorial beautiful. I want to thank the members of our Armed Forces here and around the world and especially those in Korea, whom I have had the honor of visiting on several occasions; and of course, and especially, the veterans and their families here today.

Five years ago I had the honor of dedicating this remarkable memorial, and on that day, many who were seeing the 19 beautiful statues for the first time commented on how very life-like they seemed. But one veteran wryly said, "They were lifelike in every way but one. They were all 7 feet tall." He said, "When I think about the courage of those who fought in Korea, I remember them as being 20 feet tall."

All across our Nation today, our fellow citizens are coming together to say to men and women who fought for freedom half a century ago, half a world away, we will never forget your bravery. We will always honor your service and your sacrifice.

As we meet today, we are blessed to live, as Secretary Cohen said, in a world where, for the first time, over half the people on the globe live under governments of their own choosing. It has happened so rapidly that we may fall into the trap of thinking that it had to happen, that communism's fall and freedom's victory was inevitable.

But 50 crowded years ago, the world we know today was anything but inevitable. Hitler was gone, but Stalin was not. Berlin was divided. A revolution across the Pacific began a fierce debate here at home over the question, who lost China? In 1949 the Soviet Union had detonated its first atomic bomb. As we struggled to rebuild Europe and Japan, the free nations of the world watched and wondered, when and where would the cold war turn hot, and would America meet the test?

Fifty years ago today, the world got its answer in Korea, in a place known as the Uijongbu Corridor. In the early morning hours of June 25th, 1950, 90,000 North Korean troops broke across the border and invaded South Korea.

The only American there that day was a 31-year-old Army captain and Omaha Beach veteran named Joseph Darrigo. He was awakened by what he thought was thunder. But when the shell fragments hit his house, he ran half-dressed to his Jeep and drove. Within half a mile of the local train station, he couldn't believe what he was seeing, a full regiment of North Korean soldiers getting off the train. Now, he later recalled, "Over 5,000 soldiers came against one person, me."

Captain Darrigo escaped that day. He went on to serve another year in Korea before an illness brought him home. Time has slowed him down some, but not much. And we are honored that he could be with us here today.

I'd like to recognize Captain Joseph R. Darrigo. Please, sir, stand. [Applause]

The truth is, the leaders of the Communist nations did not believe America would stand up for South Korea. After all, Americans didn't want another war; the blood still hadn't dried from World War II. Nobody wanted more rationing. Nobody wanted more Western Union boys riding up with telegrams from the War Department. Americans wanted to start families. They wanted to see gold stars on report cards, not gold stars in windows.

But from the moment Harry Truman heard the news at home, on his first trip to Missouri since Christmas the year before, he knew this

was a moment of truth. If an invasion was permitted to triumph in Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation again would have the courage to resist aggression. He knew American boys didn't fight and die to stop Nazi aggression only to see it replaced by Communist aggression.

So Korea wasn't just a line on a map. It was where America drew the line in the sand on the cold war and where, for the first time, the nations of the whole world, together at the then newly created United Nations, voted to use armed force to stop armed aggression.

The papers ordering Americans to combat in Korea included the marvelously romantic phrase, "for duty beyond the seas." Some duty. For those who fought it, there was no romance. The war was bitter, brutal, and long.

In the first weeks, not much went right. Troops from the Occupation Force in Japan were thrown into the middle of combat, not prepared to fight a war. Their weapons were rusty. Rockets from World War II bazookas bounced off Russian tanks like stones. In many ways, it wasn't a modern war at all. Oh, there were jets and helicopters, but most of the fighting was done with rifles, machine guns, bayonets, and mortars. Soldiers lived in sandbagged bunkers and stood watch on lonely ridges. It has been said that the Americans who fought in France in 1917 would have understood Korea, that the men who served under Lee and Grant would have recognized Korea.

And then, of course, there was the weather. The cold war was never so cold as in Korea. It may be hard to believe today, but imagine. They spent a few minutes in temperatures from time to time more than 50 degrees below zero. Now, imagine trying to fight a war in it. I'm told that pins even froze inside grenades. Many died from shock brought on by the cold. And then when summer came, there was no relief but, instead, 100-degree heat and dust so thick, supply trucks had to keep their lights on at midday.

There is no question: Korea was war at its worst. But it was also America at its best.

These are men and women, as the memorial says, who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they had never met. Throughout most of the war, they were unbelievably outgunned and outmanned, in some places 20 to 1. But they never gave up and never gave in.

At Pusan Perimeter, troops were so spread out, if you looked left and right, chances were you couldn't see another soldier. But the line did not break. At Inchon, troops had to scale a dangerous seawall within a 2-hour window. They went on to take back Seoul. At Mig Alley, Americans encountered the world's fastest fighter jets. For every jet the enemy shot down, our pilots shot down 10. At Heartbreak Ridge and Pork Chop Hill, wave after wave of enemy soldiers came crashing in, but our troops stood their ground. And at the Chosen Reservoir, when legendary marine Lewis "Chesty" Puller heard that the Chinese troops had them surrounded, he replied, "Good, now they can't get away."

The Americans, South Koreans, and our allies who fought in Korea set a standard of courage that may someday be equalled but can never be surpassed. Korea was not a police action or a crisis or a conflict or a clash; it was a war, a hard, brutal war. And the men and women who fought it were heroes.

There is another subject that has to be addressed here today. When the guns fell silent, some asked what our forces in Korea had done for freedom, after all, for after all, the fighting began at the 38th parallel and ended at the 38th parallel. I submit to you today that looking back through the long lens of history, it is clear that the stand America took in Korea was indispensable to our ultimate victory in the cold war. Because we stood our ground in Korea, the Soviet Union drew a clear lesson that America would fight for freedom.

Had Americans and our allies, from South Korea to as far away as Turkey and Australia, not shown commitment and fortitude, we could well later, as Harry Truman foresaw, have faced world war III. It is, therefore, not a stretch to draw the line of history straight from those brave soldiers who stood their ground on ridged lines in Korea 50 years ago to the wonderfully happy young people who stood and celebrated on the Berlin Wall 10 years ago.

Because they all stood their ground, today, South Korea is a free and prosperous nation, one of the great success stories in the world, as the Ambassador said, with the world's 12th largest economy and, I might add, a remarkable democratic leader in President Kim Dae-jung.

Because we have continued to stand with our democratic ally South Korea, with 37,000 American troops standing watch on the border today,

just as we have since 1953, we have kept the peace. And because of all that, there is now a chance for a different future on the Korean Peninsula.

Last week's summit between President Kim Dae-jung and Chairman Kim Chong-il, the first of its kind in 50 years, was a hopeful and historic step. It was courageous of President Kim to go to Pyongyang. He had no illusions, however. Nor should we. There is still a wide gulf to be crossed; there is still tension on the Peninsula. North Korea still bears the wounds of self-inflicted isolation. The people there are suffering terribly. But if we hadn't done what we did in Korea 50 years ago, and if the United States and its allies hadn't stood fast down to the present day, South Korea might well look the same way.

Korea helped remind us of a few other lessons, too, that our people and all our rich diversity are our greatest strength, that a fully integrated military is our surest hope for victory, that our freedom and security depends on the freedom and security of others, and that we can never, ever, pull away from the rest of the world.

And finally, for all the talk about Korea being the "forgotten war," we must never forget that for some, Korea is still alive every single day.

In 1950 a young woman from Hannibal, Missouri, named Virginia Duncan saw her older brother, Hallie, go off to fight in Korea. He skipped his high school graduation because he wanted to join the service so badly. In Korea he sent letters home about every week. In one, he told them he was looking forward to a shipment of cookies from his mother.

At the same time, in Belham, Kentucky, another young woman named Betty Bruce watched her brother, Jimmy, go off to war. He was the 10th of 11 children. His parents had to sign a permission slip so he could join the Army at 17. When he got there, he sent a letter home saying that no matter what happened, he was all right because he had given his heart to the Lord.

Betty and Virginia never met. But in the winter of 1950, they both received the same awful news. On the day after Thanksgiving, Betty and her family got a knock at the door and two Army officers told her her brother was missing in action. Two weeks later, 4 days before her own wedding, Virginia and her family were told that her brother, too, was missing in action.

Not long after, the cookies they sent came back home, marked "return to sender."

For 50 years, Virginia and Betty asked questions without answers. Oh, they made sure their children came to know the uncles they had never met. They kept the pictures, and they prayed. They both had just about given up hope, but earlier this month, their prayers were answered. Three weeks ago, they both learned that a search and recovery team, working out of Hawaii, had identified the remains of two soldiers in North Korea.

Today I am honored to say that the remains of Betty's brother, Sergeant Jimmy Higgins, and Virginia's brother, Sergeant Hallie Clark, Jr., are finally coming home to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. I'd like to thank Virginia Duncan and Betty Bruce and their families for being here today and ask them to stand and be recognized. [*Applause*]

Before I close, I also want to say a special word of appreciation to the men and women of the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, known as CIL-HI. Since 1996, they have recovered more than 40 sets of remains from Korea. On Memorial Day I announced that we had resumed talks with North Korea in hopes of recovering more. The talks were successful. Today I am pleased to announce that as we are here meeting, the latest team from CIL-HI is in the air, on the way to North Korea. We will not stop until we have the fullest possible accounting of all our men and women still missing in action there.

To my fellow Americans and our distinguished allies and friends from Korea and those representing our other allies, we all know that Korea isn't about Hawkeye and Houlihan but about honor and heroes, young men and women willing to pay the price to keep a people they had never met free.

To the veterans of the Korean war—those here, those around the country, those whom we must remember today—let me say, on behalf of a grateful nation: Fifty years ago you helped make the world that we know today possible. You proved to all humanity just how good our Nation can be at its best. You showed us, through your example, that freedom is not free, but it can be maintained. Today your fellow Americans say: We remember, and we are very grateful.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:47 p.m. at the Korean War Memorial in West Potomac Park. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Commander, U.S. Space Command; Hong Koo Lee, South Korean Ambassador

to the United States; Chaplain John N. Craven, USN (Ret.); Chaplain Samuel Sobel, USN (Ret.); former Senator John Glenn; and General Secretary Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks on the Completion of the First Survey of the Human Genome *June 26, 2000*

The President. Good morning. I want to, first of all, acknowledge Prime Minister Blair, who will join us by satellite in just a moment from London. I want to welcome here the Ambassadors from the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France. And I'd also like to acknowledge the contributions not only that their scientists but also scientists from China made to the vast international consortium that is the human genome project.

I thank Secretary Shalala, who could not be here today, and Secretary Richardson, who is here; Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, Dr. Ari Patrinos, scientists of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Energy, who have played an important role in the human genome project.

I want to say a special word of thanks to my science adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and of course, to Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the international human genome project, and to the Celera president, Craig Venter. I thank Senator Harkin and Senator Sarbanes for being here, and the other distinguished guests.

Nearly two centuries ago, in this room, on this floor, Thomas Jefferson and a trusted aide spread out a magnificent map, a map Jefferson had long prayed he would get to see in his lifetime. The aide was Meriwether Lewis, and the map was the product of his courageous expedition across the American frontier, all the way to the Pacific. It was a map that defined the contours and forever expanded the frontiers of our continent and our imagination.

Today the world is joining us here in the East Room to behold a map of even greater significance. We are here to celebrate the completion of the first survey of the entire human genome. Without a doubt, this is the most important, most wondrous map ever produced by humankind.

The moment we are here to witness was brought about through brilliant and painstaking work of scientists all over the world, including many men and women here today. It was not even 50 years ago that a young Englishman named Crick and a brash, even younger American named Watson first discovered the elegant structure of our genetic code. Dr. Watson, the way you announced your discovery in the journal "Nature" was one of the great understatements of all time: "This structure has novel features, which are of considerable biological interest." [Laughter] Thank you, sir.

How far we have come since that day. In the intervening years, we have pooled the combined wisdom of biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, mathematics, and computer science; tapped the great strengths and insights of the public and private sectors. More than 1,000 researchers across 6 nations have revealed nearly all 3 billion letters of our miraculous genetic code. I congratulate all of you on this stunning and humbling achievement.

Today's announcement represents more than just an epic-making triumph of science and reason. After all, when Galileo discovered he could use the tools of mathematics and mechanics to understand the motion of celestial bodies, he felt, in the words of one eminent researcher, "that he had learned the language in which God created the universe."

Today, we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift. With this profound new knowledge, humankind is on the verge of gaining immense new power to heal. Genome science will have a real impact on all our lives and even more on the lives of our

children. It will revolutionize the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of most, if not all, human diseases.

In coming years, doctors increasingly will be able to cure diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, and cancer by attacking their genetic roots. Just to offer one example, patients with some forms of leukemia and breast cancer already are being treated in clinical trials with sophisticated new drugs that precisely target the faulty genes and cancer cells, with little or no risk to healthy cells. In fact, it is now conceivable that our children's children will know the term "cancer" only as a constellation of stars.

But today's historic achievement is only a starting point. There is much hard work yet to be done. That is why I'm so pleased to announce that from this moment forward, the robust and healthy competition that has led us to this day and that always is essential to the progress of science will be coupled with enhanced public/private cooperation.

Public and private research teams are committed to publishing their genomic data simultaneously later this year for the benefit of researchers in every corner of the globe. And after publication, both sets of teams will join together for an historic sequence analysis conference. Together, they will examine what scientific insights have been gleaned from both efforts and how we can most judiciously proceed toward the next majestic horizons.

What are those next horizons? Well, first, we will complete a virtually error-free final draft of the human genome before the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the double helix, less than 3 years from now. Second, through sustained and vigorous support for public and private research, we must sort through this trove of genomic data to identify every human gene. We must discover the function of these genes and their protein products, and then we must rapidly convert that knowledge into treatments that can lengthen and enrich lives.

I want to emphasize that biotechnology companies are absolutely essential in this endeavor, for it is they who will bring to the market the life-enhancing applications of the information from the human genome. And for that reason, this administration is committed to helping them to make the kind of long-term investments that will change the face of medicine forever.

The third horizon that lies before us is one that science cannot approach alone. It is the

horizon that represents the ethical, moral, and spiritual dimension of the power we now possess. We must not shrink from exploring that far frontier of science. But as we consider how to use new discovery, we must also not retreat from our oldest and most cherished human values. We must ensure that new genome science and its benefits will be directed toward making life better for all citizens of the world, never just a privileged few.

As we unlock the secrets of the human genome, we must work simultaneously to ensure that new discoveries never pry open the doors of privacy. And we must guarantee that genetic information cannot be used to stigmatize or discriminate against any individual or group.

Increasing knowledge of the human genome must never change the basic belief on which our ethics, our Government, our society are founded. All of us are created equal, entitled to equal treatment under the law. After all, I believe one of the great truths to emerge from this triumphant expedition inside the human genome is that in genetic terms, all human beings, regardless of race, are more than 99.9 percent the same.

What that means is that modern science has confirmed what we first learned from ancient faiths. The most important fact of life on this Earth is our common humanity. My greatest wish on this day for the ages is that this incandescent truth will always guide our actions as we continue to march forth in this, the greatest age of discovery ever known.

Now, it is my great pleasure to turn to my friend Prime Minister Tony Blair, who is joined in the State Dining Room at 10 Downing Street by Dr. Fred Sanger and other world-renowned scientists. With the generous support of the Wellcome Trust, British scientists have played an invaluable role in reaching this milestone.

On behalf of the American people, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the scientists, and the British nation for the brilliant work you have brought to this international effort.

And Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to salute not only your unwavering support for genome research but also your visionary commitment to sparking ever-greater innovation across the full spectrum of science and technology. And on a personal note, I can't help but think that the year of your son's birth will always

be remembered for the remarkable achievements we announce today. I think his life expectancy has just gone up by about 25 years. [Laughter]

[At this point, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom made remarks by satellite.]

The President. Tony, if I could, I would like to pick up on your last remark. I think everybody genuinely is concerned about the issues you raised, the privacy issues, and the whole general set of ethical, social, and legal issues. And it strikes me that our scientists—the British and the American scientists, our French, German, Chinese counterparts who worked on this—were working toward a single, clearly defined goal in all those countries and in the other countries of the world that will have to live with both the benefits and the challenges of these discoveries.

There are different legal systems, different social mores, but I think that it would be a very good thing if the U.S., the U.K., and anybody else that wants to work with us could have the same sort of joint endeavor we've had with the human genome to deal with the implications of this, to deal with the legal, the social, the ethical implications. We may have differences from country to country, but I think that if we work together, we'll give a higher sense of urgency to the project, and we'll get a better product.

And so I'm offering you another partnership. It's easy for me to do, because you'll have to do it, and I'll be gone. [Laughter]

[Prime Minister Blair responded.]

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much, Tony.

Now, in a few moments, we'll hear from Celera president Dr. Craig Venter, who shares in the glory of this day, and deservedly so because of his truly visionary pursuit of innovative strategies to sequence the human genome as rapidly as possible. And I thank you, Craig, for what you have done to make this day possible.

And now I'd like to invite Dr. Francis Collins to the lectern. I also want to congratulate him. From his development of some of the central

methods for finding human disease genes to his successful application of those methods to the discovery of the cystic fibrosis gene in 1989 to his current leadership for the international human genome project, he has combined the talents of rigorous science and a profound sensitivity to ethical, legal, and social issues. He is a physician-scientist of great faith, compassion, energy, and integrity. And he has truly helped us more than anyone else to understand how the marvels of genome science will actually improve human health.

So Dr. Collins, please come up to the lectern.

[Dr. Francis Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, and Dr. J. Craig Venter, president and chief scientific officer, Celera Genomics Corp., made brief remarks.]

The President. Well, thank you both for those remarkable statements. I suppose, in closing, the most important thing I could do is to associate myself with Dr. Venter's last statement. When we get this all worked out and we're all living to be 150—[laughter]—young people will still fall in love; old people will still fight about things that should have been resolved 50 years ago—[laughter]—we will all, on occasion, do stupid things; and we will all see the unbelievable capacity of humanity to be noble. This is a great day.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassadors to the U.S. Christopher Meyer of the United Kingdom, Shunji Yanai of Japan, Juergen Chrobog of Germany, and Francois Bujon de l'Estang of France; Aristides Patrinos, Associate Director, Office of Science, Department of Energy; James D. Watson, president, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory; Francis H. Crick, researcher, Cambridge Laboratory of Molecular Biology; Frederick Sanger, 1958 and 1980 Nobel Prize-winner for chemistry; and Prime Minister Blair's son, Leo. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the Prime Minister Blair, Dr. Collins, and Dr. Venter.

Remarks on the Midsession Review of the Budget and an Exchange With Reporters

June 26, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. This is a great day for America. First, we had the announcement of the sequencing of the human genome. Now I have just received a report from my Chief of Staff and the members of my economic team on our latest budget projections, and it's more good news.

In 1993, when I became President, the Federal budget deficit was \$290 billion. It was projected to rise to \$455 billion this year. The American people wanted a better future, and we offered a new economic course of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and greater investment in our people and our future.

The result has been the longest economic expansion in history, a fiscal turnaround that is stronger, frankly, than any of us had imagined. In fact, in each year since 1993, both economic growth and Federal revenues have surpassed our forecasts. And this year is no exception.

Today, as required by law, I am releasing the midsession review of the budget that shows that our overall budget surplus this year will be \$211 billion, more than a \$700 billion improvement over where we projected to be in 1993. And we're forecasting a surplus for the next 10 years that is over a trillion dollars larger than was forecast just 4 months ago.

The American people should be very proud of this news. It's the result of their hard work and their support for fiscal discipline. It's proof that we can create a better future for ourselves when we put our minds to it, and it provides a tremendous new opportunity to build an even brighter future if we sustain our prosperity by maintaining our fiscal discipline.

These new surpluses put us in a position to achieve something that would have seemed unimaginable in 1993. As this chart shows, we can now pay down the debt completely by 2012, a year earlier than we projected just 4 months ago. This is my last drawing as President. *[Laughter]*

Now, why should we do this? Because by paying down the debt we can keep interest rates lower and free up more capital for private sector investment, creating more jobs and economic growth for years and years to come. We can

eliminate the burden of paying interest on the debt, which today takes up 12 cents of every Federal tax dollar. And we can use part of this savings, as I have suggested, to extend the solvency of Social Security to 2057 and of Medicare to 2030.

Now, think about what this means. A 6-year-old today—we may have some out here—is living in an America that is \$3.5 trillion in debt. If we follow the course I'm laying out, we can eliminate that debt by the time the child enters college. The economy will be stronger; his parents' incomes will be greater; the interest rates on college loans will be lower. And 12 years from now people of my generation will be entering retirement knowing that Social Security and Medicare will be there for them.

Quite simply, an economic plan that invests in our people and pays down the debt is the wisest choice we can make to honor our values and ensure a better future for our children.

To that end, I propose that we follow Vice President Gore's recommendation and lock away that portion of the surplus that comes from the Medicare taxes people pay. Medicare payroll taxes should not be used to finance tax cuts or other spending. They should be saved for Medicare, and Medicare alone. There is already broad bipartisan support for saving the Social Security surplus for debt reduction. It's time to do the same for Medicare by taking Medicare off budget. By protecting both the Social Security and Medicare surpluses, we can lock in \$2.7 trillion of debt reduction in just the next 10 years, enabling us to get the debt entirely gone by 2012.

Before we make any other major budget decisions this year, I ask Congress to come together across party lines to protect the Medicare surplus. Now, a lot of people are saying that because this is an election year, Congress won't get much done. It does not have to be that way. Today I called House Speaker Hastert and Senator Lott with a proposal to break the logjam and do what we all say we want to do.

We all say we want to provide prescription drug coverage to the millions of senior and disabled Americans on Medicare who currently

lack it. I have presented my plan; the Republicans have presented theirs. We all say we want to end the marriage penalty. I presented my plan; the Republicans have presented theirs. I believe their marriage penalty, standing on its own, and not part of an overall commitment to fiscal discipline, and also tilting, I believe, too much toward upper income Americans, is too big and not targeted toward those who need it most.

But if we can all agree to take Medicare off budget and not use Medicare money for tax cuts or for other spending, then I've told the Republican leaders I would like to make a simple offer: If Congress will pass a plan that gives real, voluntary Medicare prescription drug coverage, available and affordable to all seniors and consistent with the principles of my plan, costing roughly \$250 billion over 10 years, then I will sign a marriage penalty relief law, which also costs roughly \$250 billion over 10 years. This is a proposal for true compromise. It asks each party to accept some of the positions of the other party in the name of progress.

By adopting the Vice President's plan to save the Medicare surplus, we will achieve the most significant strengthening of Medicare since the proposal was created in 1965, and deliver the largest tax relief to families in decades. These are goals that both parties and all Americans agree on. It would be wrong to let politics keep us from seizing the opportunity to achieve them. We can take these actions and still have, according to our new budget projections, substantial resources left over for future budget priorities.

Now, I want to remind the people, however, that this is just a budget projection. It would not be prudent to commit every penny of a future surplus that is just a projection and, therefore, subject to change. Fiscal discipline helped to create these surpluses; fiscal discipline is what we should continue as we determine how best to use it.

In my midsession review, therefore, I propose to set aside a \$500 billion reserve for America's future, a fund that could eventually be used for any number of key priorities from retirement savings to tax cuts to investments in education, research, health care, and environmental protection, to further debt reduction.

We should set aside this reserve fund. At this late date in the fiscal year, with elections looming, it would be unrealistic and imprudent for those of us in Washington to decide what to

do with this money. That's something that should be debated in the coming months and decided on by the American people this fall. Our obligation is to move forward on those issues that have been fully debated, where there is bipartisan agreement for action.

So this summer let's set aside the Medicare surpluses and pay down the debt. Let's pass a voluntary prescription drug benefit for seniors and disabled Americans on Medicare, and marriage penalty tax relief for American families. When that's done, I hope we will also raise the minimum wage, pass a strong enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, pass a juvenile justice bill that closes the gun show loophole, hate crimes legislation, and the new markets legislation, and make key investments in education, health care, and the environment.

Then in the election, let's have a vigorous debate about how the remainder of these new surpluses can best be used to advance our Nation. It's the right debate to have, and I think we can all agree that it's a debate we are very fortunate to be able to have.

How we use these surpluses in this moment of prosperity will determine America's future for decades to come. Nothing will more surely determine it than making the right choices, if we do the right things to keep our prosperity going, to extend its benefits to people in places not yet fully part of it, to help Americans balance the demands of work and family, to seize the remarkable potential and meet the challenges of globalization and the revolutions of science and information technology.

This is a good day for America. We ought to preserve it for the future and make the most of the moment.

Thank you very much.

Q. What did the Speaker and Mr. Lott have to say to you in response?

The President. I think they were interested in it, and obviously, I've also talked to the Democratic leaders, Senator Daschle and Representative Gephardt. And I told them that I would send the review up today and that, obviously, everybody needs time for their staffs to look at it to see what the options are. But I think this is a very good-faith offer where I want to meet them halfway. I want them to meet me halfway. We can clearly afford this, and we ought to do it.

Q. Mr. President, if in the course of 4 months these figures have changed a trillion dollars, how

realistic is it to believe that these are sound figures that are going to last?

The President. Well, first, I think that they are reliable in the same sense—I would just remind you, I've been here for 7½ years, and I have never yet overstated the numbers. So we've got a pretty good record on this. Now, this is what the numbers show. But as I said to you, I believe it would be a big mistake to commit this entire surplus to spending or to tax cuts.

That's one of the reasons I like the Vice President's suggestion so much. If you start by taking the Medicare taxes out, then you know you're going to have further debt reduction, and you've got a big incentive for fiscal discipline right there.

The projections could be wrong; they could be right. That's why we shouldn't spend it all now. And moreover, we're having a debate in which the two candidates have very different notions about what should be done with this moment of prosperity, and the American people ought to have some say in this. But I think that it's my duty to tell you what I think the numbers are now and my duty also to raise a little caution and say, let's don't go off and spend it.

If I asked you what your projected income is over the next 10 years, and you told me, and I said, "Okay, now I want you to spend it all right now," I doubt if you'd do it. So I don't think the American people should do it. But neither should we be blind to the fact that we have an enormous opportunity here to build the future of our dreams for our children, and that should inform what we do in this year's budget, and it should inform what we do, I believe, in making an agreement to get the right kind of Medicare prescription drug coverage in return for tax relief for American families.

Gasoline Prices

Q. Sir, even with this optimistic news, gas prices across the board continue to increase, threaten inflation, threaten to derail all of these projections. What can you do immediately to stop the spiraling cost of gasoline?

The President. Well, I think, for whatever reason, in places where it's highest, they seem to be dropping some. So I think that we need to keep up the pressure to make sure that there is no noneconomic basis for these price increases. And that's what the Federal Trade

Commission inquiry is all about. Then I think it is very, very important for us to accelerate our efforts to get high mileage cars on the road and to develop alternative fuel sources.

And let me say, I've been trying for years to get more money into Federal research on this. The United States Government has been very active in our administration, in the Partnership for the New Generation of Vehicles that the Vice President's headed, in trying to develop alternative fuels from agriculture and other sources. The Senate did pass a bill last week on a bipartisan basis which should help us in the development of more biofuels. But we're not far away from being able to develop very high mileage vehicles and dramatically different fuel options for the American people.

But I would say this: I have not had the same level of support on a bipartisan basis for this kind of Federal research and investment that we've had, for example, for the human genome project. But the principle is exactly the same. When you're breaking new ground, a lot of the basic research should be paid for by the American people as a whole, and then the industry should do its part. Just like we're doing with the human genome project, we need to do more here.

And I think that you will see—what we really need and, I think, what the American people want to know is that we've got a plan that will move them away from being subject to these kind of radical swings. And we do have a plan. And we know that we can get cars on the road soon that can get 60, 80, maybe more miles to the gallon. We know we can get cars on the road soon using alternative fuels, from fuel cells to biofuels to natural gas, that will cut the cost of transportation. That's what we need to be doing.

Q. Forgive me, sir, but the question was, what can you do immediately? Will you consider relaxing—

The President. What we are doing immediately—what we're doing immediately is continuing this investigation. If the prices are being set for noneconomic reasons, then we ought to do what we can to pressure them down. Now, if the Congress wants to consider some sort of relief on the Federal gas tax, it would be modest compared to the price increase, and they would have to be willing to defer substantial Federal highway projects. That's something they have to come to terms with.

But I think that it's clear, over the next 2 years you're going to have all these cars that will then be coming out that will basically make this problem go away as we know it, and we need to do everything we can to accelerate it.

Budget Surplus

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. I don't know the answer to that. They'll have to tell you that. But it's \$211 billion for this year.

Yes, sir.

2000 Election

Q. [Inaudible]—Republicans look at the \$500 billion fund as a goody bag for Vice President Gore to use throughout the campaign to make promises in programs. First of all, do you agree with that assessment? And second of all, is that the proper use for a surplus fund?

The President. Well, I think—let me say this: That's a \$500 billion fund; I'll tell you what I would do with it—later on, I may make some suggestions what I would do with it. But Vice President Gore will say what he thinks should be done. Governor Bush will say what he thinks should be done. The Republican leaders and candidates will say what they think should be done. The Democratic leaders and their candidate will say what they think should be done.

In other words, my position is that the Congress and I should not commit all this money. We should let the American people decide what to do by the judgments they make in the election and by the debates that they hear. I don't believe that—we're so close to the election. We have such an enormously crowded agenda of things that we can do that have been fully debated. I think the responsible thing to do is to let the American people hear from those who are running for office, who will be responsible for these decisions if they are elected, say what they should be doing.

So Vice President Gore has no more opportunity as a result of this proposal of mine than Governor Bush does. All candidates running for office can say this is what they think about the \$500 billion. They can also say that they disagree with some of the things we're recommending now, if they choose.

Yes.

President's Book on Race/Elián González

Q. Mr. President, your time is ticking away, and we understand you're still working on your book on race. When are you anticipating having this book out, and what can we expect to be in it?

The President. You just have to wait to see it. *[Laughter]*

Q. Is Taylor Branch working with you on it?

The President. No.

Q. Mr. President, this week, probably by Wednesday, the legal case of Elián González will probably come to an end. Do you feel the relations between your government and the government of Fidel Castro have gotten a little better because of this case—relations between Washington and Havana?

The President. I don't know. That's the honest answer. I don't know.

Let me just say one other thing about the race book. You asked me a question about Taylor Branch. I did—I have consulted with him on it. I've shown him some drafts, but he is not working with me on it. But I don't want to imply that I've never asked him to look at it. I did.

Q. When do you think the book is coming out, though?

Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. The Japanese Ambassador was here today for the human genome announcement, and we had a brief conversation about it, and he said that he expected Prime Minister Mori to continue as Prime Minister and to host us at the G-8 Summit. And I expect that's what will happen.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Pulitzer Prize-winning author Taylor Branch; and Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Shunji Yanai. A reporter referred to Cuban youth Elián González, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

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Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

June 26, 2000

The Northern Ireland peace process has been given a tremendous boost forward by the announcement that Martti Ahtisaari and Cyril Ramaphosa have inspected several IRA arms dumps and issued a positive report on their findings through the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. The fact that the IRA has reestablished contact with the Commission is equally significant, representing a tangible step toward fulfillment of its undertaking to put arms beyond use in the context of full

implementation of the Good Friday accord. I urge all paramilitary organizations and political parties to build on this progress. I believe all the people of Northern Ireland should take heart from these harbingers of lasting peace.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, chairman, and former African National Congress Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa, board member, International Crisis Group.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision To Uphold

Miranda v. Arizona

June 26, 2000

In 1966 the Supreme Court decided in *Miranda v. Arizona* that law enforcement officials must give certain warnings, including a suspect's right to remain silent and to have counsel, before criminal suspects are questioned in custody. I am very pleased that today the Supreme Court by a large majority, has affirmed that ruling and upheld the important constitutional rights protected by *Miranda*. As Chief Justice

Rehnquist's opinion notes, the warnings have become part of our national culture; they have worked for law enforcement by providing clear standards for our officers; and they have worked to protect the rights of our citizens. I am pleased that today's opinion so resoundingly reinforces the important place of the *Miranda* warnings in our Nation's criminal justice system.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Nicaragua-United States Investment Treaty With Documentation

June 26, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annex and Protocol, signed at Denver on July 1, 1995. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Treaty.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Nicaragua is the fifth such treaty signed between the United States and a country of Central or South America. The Treaty will protect U.S. investment and assist Nicaragua in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for U.S. private investment and thereby strengthening the development of its private sector.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy toward international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. policy, reflected in this

Treaty, is that U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investments; freedom of investments from specified performance requirements; fair, equitable, and most-favored-nation treat-

ment; and the investor's freedom to choose to resolve disputes with the host government through international arbitration.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Treaty as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification of the Treaty, with Annex and Protocol, at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 26, 2000.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

January 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Acting President Vladimir Putin of Russia to offer congratulations on his designation.

January 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Shepherdstown, WV.

In the afternoon, the President met separately with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara of Syria in the Sun Room at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Center.

In the evening, the President met with Foreign Minister al-Shara of Syria in the Sebastian Room at the Clarion Hotel. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

January 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Shepherdstown, WV, where he met with Prime Minister Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister al-Shara of Syria.

In the evening, the President attended an informal reception for the Israeli and Syrian delegations at the Clarion Hotel.

Later, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight. He then placed telephone calls to Sugar Bowl participants in New Orleans, LA.

The White House announced that the President transmitted the 1999 National Security Strategy Report to Congress.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nicholas P. Godici to be Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to appoint Cruz M. Bustamante as a member of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board.

January 5

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Brooklyn and Manhattan, NY, on January 13.

January 6

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC. Later, the President traveled to Shepherdstown, WV, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joe Velasquez to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

January 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Shepherdstown, WV, where he met with Prime Minister Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister al-Shara of Syria.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

January 9

In the evening, the President traveled to Shepherdstown, WV, where he met with Prime Minister Barak of Israel. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

January 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Annapolis, MD, and later returned to Washington, DC. In the evening, he traveled to Grand Canyon, AZ.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by tornadoes, severe storms, torrential rains, and flash flooding on January 3–4.

January 11

In the morning, the President toured areas of the Grand Canyon by helicopter.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Houston, TX, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bonnie Prouty Castrey as Chair and David J. Leland as a member of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

January 12

In the afternoon, the President met with Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams in the Oval Office.

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard J. Gonzales as a member of the Advisory

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Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

January 13

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. Later, he traveled to New York City. In the evening, the President returned to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gov. Marc Racicot of Montana to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael M. Reyna as Chair of the Farm Credit Administration Board.

January 14

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the appointment of Victoria Wilson as a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

January 18

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

Later, the President traveled to Boston, MA, arriving in the afternoon. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

January 19

In the evening, the President met with Crown Prince Hamad of Bahrain in the Oval Office.

Later, the President attended a game between the NBA Washington Wizards and Dallas Mavericks at the MCI Center.

The President announced his intention to nominate Scott O. Wright to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint George B. Newton and Jim O. Llewellyn as members of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint John F. Leyden, Jr., as a member of the Federal Salary Council.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Steven Pennoyer as a member of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

January 20

The President announced his intention to reappoint Warren L. Miller as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

January 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Pasadena, CA. In the afternoon, he traveled to Los Angeles, CA, where he attended a Democratic National Committee dinner at a private residence in the evening.

January 22

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

January 27

The President announced the nomination of Edward B. Montgomery to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nancy Killefer to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Beverly White and appoint Phyllis C. Borzi as members of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

January 28

In the morning, the President traveled to Quincy, IL. In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President traveled to Zurich, Switzerland, arriving the following morning.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 22 and continuing.

January 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Davos, Switzerland. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

January 30

In the evening, the President hosted a Super Bowl party in the Family Theater at the White House. After the game, he placed separate telephone calls to Dick Vermeil, head coach, Super Bowl XXXIV champion St. Louis Rams, and Jeff Fisher, head coach, Tennessee Titans.

January 31

In the evening, the President had telephone conversations from the Oval Office with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams concerning the Northern Ireland peace process.

The President announced the recipients of the 1999 National Medal of Science and National Medal of Technology.

The President announced the nomination of Richard C. Houseworth and Donna A. Tanoue to be members of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nathan O. Hatch to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ross L. Wilson to be Ambassador to Azerbaijan.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm beginning on January 24 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm beginning on January 22 and continuing.

February 1

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward McGaffigan, Jr., to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The White House announced that the President will travel to south Asia during the week of March 20, visiting India and Bangladesh.

February 2

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas G. Weston for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Special Coordinator for Cyprus.

The President announced his intention to nominate Karl William Hofmann to be Ambassador to Togo.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan S. Jacobs to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

The President announced his intention to nominate John F. Tefft to be Ambassador to Lithuania.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald Y. Yamamoto to be Ambassador to Djibouti.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janet A. Sanderson to be Ambassador to Algeria.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carey Cavanaugh for the rank of Ambassador, as Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and New Independent States Regional Conflicts.

The President announced his intention to nominate John W. Limbert to be Ambassador to Mauritania.

The President announced his intention to nominate Laurens L. Wise II to be Commissioner of Education Statistics at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy T. Taylor to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ian A. Bowles as a member of the Enterprise for the Americas Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Patty Gerstenblith as a member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee.

February 3

In an afternoon ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Arman Kirakossian of Armenia, Maleeha Lodhi of Pakistan, Faida Mitifu of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Idriss Jazairy of Algeria, David Ivy of Israel, Paul T.S. Kandiero of Malawi, Gunter Burghardt of the European Commission, Guillermo Gonzalez of Argentina, John Paul Bojang of Gambia, Michael J. Thawley of Australia, and Konstantin Hryshchenko of Ukraine.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roger A. Meece to be Ambassador to Malawi.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald E. Neumann to be Ambassador to Bahrain.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rust Macpherson Deming to be Ambassador to Tunisia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nikki McCray and Ken Preminger as members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

February 4

In the morning, the President participated in the Senate Democratic Issues Conference at the Library of Congress.

The President announced his intention to appoint Diana S. Natalicio as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to appoint Colleen M. Kelley as a member of the Federal Salary Council.

The White House announced that the President has invited King Juan Carlos I of Spain for a state visit to Washington on February 23.

February 5

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

February 7

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he traveled to Hot Springs, VA, where he attended the House Democratic Issues Conference. In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mary Lou Leary as Acting Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice.

February 8

The President announced his intention to nominate Donna Jean Hrinak to be Ambassador to Venezuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Alan Hartwick to be Ambassador to Laos.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher R. Hill to be Ambassador to Poland.

The President announced his intention to nominate John R. Dinger to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary Ann Peters to be Ambassador to Bangladesh.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher A. McLean to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service at the Department of Agriculture.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Martin O'Keefe to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic.

February 9

In the morning, the President traveled to McAllen, TX, and in the evening, he traveled to Dallas, TX.

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Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donnie R. Marshall to be Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Senko to be Ambassador to the Marshall Islands and to Kiribati.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan D. Solomont to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Danny Lee McDonald and Bradley A. Smith to be Commissioners on the Federal Election Commission.

February 10

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward William Gnehm, Jr., to be Ambassador to Australia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel A. Johnson to be Ambassador to Suriname.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald D. Godard to be Ambassador to Guyana.

The President announced his intention to appoint Valerie Crotty as a member of the Commission on Presidential Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jane Macon as a member of the National Selective Service Appeals Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Haim Saban as a member of the President's Export Council.

The White House announced that the President asked Energy Secretary Bill Richardson to take new measures to address the critical situation involving home heating oil, and that he directed Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to release additional funding in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program emergency funds for States, territories, and tribes due to continuing increases in home heating fuel prices.

February 11

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas N. Slonaker to be Special Trustee for American Indians at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate E. Ashley Wills to be Ambassador to Sri Lanka and to Maldives.

February 15

In the morning, the President met with President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rear Adm. Keith W. Lippert as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rabbi Irving Greenberg as Chair of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint James V. Kimsey to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Salvador Diaz-Verson as a member of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 27–30.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on February 14.

February 16

The President announced his intention to appoint Alice A. Kelikian as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The White House announced that the President directed Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala to release an additional \$120 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance emergency funds for States, territories, and tribes due to continuing increases in home heating fuel prices.

February 17

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms and avalanches beginning on December 21, 1999, and continuing.

February 18

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 22–29.

February 19

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton attended the wedding of former Special Assistant to the President Catherine A. Cornelius at Foundry United Methodist Church.

February 22

The President announced his intention to nominate Michelle Andrews Smith to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Laurence E. Pope to be Ambassador to Kuwait.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rose M. Likins to be Ambassador to El Salvador.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Edward Herbst to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Howard Franklin Jeter to be Ambassador to Nigeria.

The President announced his intention to nominate A. Elizabeth Jones to be Ambassador to Germany.

The President announced his intention to reappoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation:

Robert Dinerstein;
Ann Forts;
Sally Jochum;
Deborah Spitalnik; and
Cathy Ficker Terrill.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Philadelphia, PA, and New York City on February 24.

February 23

In the morning, the President met with King Juan Carlos I of Spain in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick Francis Kennedy to be U.S. Representative to the European Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nina V. Fedoroff and Diana S. Natalicio to be members of the National Science Board.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Aachen and Berlin, Germany, on May 1–2.

February 24

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA, and in the evening, he traveled to New York City.

Later, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

February 25

In the morning, the President returned to the Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President went to the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel for the presentation of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards. However, a fire in the hotel at the beginning of the President's remarks prevented him from completing his planned participation in the awards ceremony.

February 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel Marcus to be Associate Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas P. Furey to be Ambassador to Nepal.

The President announced his intention to appoint Katherine Slick as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 25–30.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by flood-

ing, severe storms, and landslides beginning on February 18 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on February 18 and continuing.

February 29

In the morning, the President traveled to West Palm Beach, FL. In the evening, he traveled to Miami, FL, and later returned to Washington, DC.

March 1

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Ashburn, VA, where he toured the UUNET Network Operations Center. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carlos Pascual to be Ambassador to Ukraine.

The President announced his intention to nominate James V. Aidala to be Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances at the Environmental Protection Agency.

March 2

The President announced his intention to appoint Jacqueline Mary Grebmeier as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

March 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Palo Alto, CA.

The President announced the appointment of Guillermo Linares as Chair of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

March 4

In the evening, the President traveled to Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, CA.

March 5

In the morning, the President traveled to Selma, AL, where he toured the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute. In the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

March 6

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald Arthur Mahley for rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Negotiator for Chemical and Biological Arms Control Issues.

March 7

In the evening, the President was joined by friends and Members of Congress in the Family Theater at the White House to watch the Super Tuesday primary election returns.

Appendix A / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Dworkin to be General Counsel at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rudy de Leon to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ronald D. Sugar as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint John E. Neece as a member of the Community Adjustment and Investment Program Advisory Committee.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on February 18 and continuing through March 2.

The White House announced that the President will visit Pakistan as part of his upcoming visit to South Asia.

March 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Madelyn R. Creedon to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen C. Duffy as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint John J. Larivee, Jackie Rowe-Adams, and Michael Taylor as members of the Parents Advisory Council on Youth Drug Abuse.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Teresa Ghilarducci as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

March 10

The President announced his intention to nominate Marc Grossman to be Director General of the Foreign Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate William A. Eaton to be Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of State.

March 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Cleveland, OH, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Chicago, IL. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

March 14

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Later, in the Oval Office, the President was presented with a portrait by photographer Arnold Newman.

March 15

In the evening, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD, and later returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bernard Daniel Rostker to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

March 17

During the afternoon, the President had separate meetings in the Oval Office with Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland, Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon and First Minister David Trimble, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, and Labour Party leader John Hume.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on March 10–11.

March 18

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Aviano Air Base, Italy, arriving the following morning.

March 19

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela from Aviano Air Base. Later, he traveled to New Delhi, India.

March 20

In the morning, the President traveled to Dhaka, Bangladesh.

In the evening, the President met separately with opposition leader Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh National Party and President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

Later in the evening, the President returned to New Delhi, India.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lawrence George Rossin to be Ambassador to Croatia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nuria I. Fernandez to be Administrator at the Federal Transit Administration at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate John A. White to be a member of the National Science Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bruce Sundlun to be a member of the National Security Education Board.

The President announced that Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala appointed 10 members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

March 21

In the morning, the President participated in a wreath-laying and tree-planting ceremony at the Gandhi Memorial at Rajghat Samadhi.

In the evening, the President met with President Kircheril Narayanan of India in the North Drawing Room at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Arthur C. Campbell to be Assistant Secretary for Economic Development at the Department of Commerce.

The White House announced that en route to Geneva, Switzerland, on March 25, the President will visit Muscat, Oman, to meet with His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

March 22

In the afternoon, the President attended a reception at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. Later, he traveled to Agra, and in the evening, he traveled to Jaipur, India.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gordon S. Heddell to be Inspector General for the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ella Wong-Rusinko to be Alternate Federal Cochair of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Julio F. Mercado to be Deputy Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy K. Hatamiya as a member of the Parents Advisory Council on Youth Drug Abuse.

The President announced his intention to appoint J. Richard Thesing as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the Access Board).

The President announced his intention to reappoint Lorenzo H. Aguilar-Melantzon and Ruth Luckasson as members of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

March 23

In the afternoon, the President toured the Amber Fort. Later, he traveled to Ranthambhore National Park, where he toured the wildlife preserve. In the evening, he returned to Jaipur.

The President announced the nomination of Manuel Trinidad Pacheco to be a member of the National Security Education Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory G. Govan for rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Chief Delegate to the Joint Consultative Commission of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

The President announced his intention to nominate Beth S. Slavet to be Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

March 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Hyderabad, India.

In the afternoon, he traveled to Mumbai, India, where he participated in a roundtable discussion with a group of young Indian leaders at the Cafe Royal.

The President announced his intention to appoint Cresencio S. Arcos and Stephen Friedman as members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

March 25

In the morning, the President traveled to Islamabad, Pakistan.

In the afternoon, the President met with President Rafiq Tarar of Pakistan in the President's Office at the Presidential Palace. Later, he met with 1999 coup leader Gen. Pervez Musharraf in the Conference Room at the Cabinet Secretariat Building.

In the evening, the President traveled to Muscat, Oman, where he met with Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said in the Sultan's Quarters at the Royal Flight Terminal. Later, the President traveled to Geneva, Switzerland.

March 26

In the afternoon, the President met with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria in the meeting room at the Intercontinental Hotel. Prior to and following his meeting with President Asad, the President had telephone conversations with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

March 27

The President announced his intention to appoint Don Casey as Vice Chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ralph S. Freedman as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

March 28

The White House announced that the President sent the Congress a fiscal year 2000 supplemental appropriations request for \$253 million, including funding for the Social Security Administration, aviation safety improvements, and summer jobs for low income youth.

March 29

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Columbia, SC, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

March 30

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jane Lubchenco and Warren M. Washington to be members of the National Science Board.

Appendix A / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council:

Edward M. Bolen;
Geoffrey T. Crowley;
Robert W. Baker;
Debbie Branson;
Kendall W. Wilson;
Robert A. Davis; and
Jerome Randolph Babbitt.

April 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV.

In the evening, he traveled to San Jose and Palo Alto, CA, and later returned to San Jose.

April 3

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara Snelling to be a member of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced his intention to appoint Susan Brophy McGowan as a member of the Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Denver, CO, on April 12, to attend a rally in support of stronger gun laws.

April 4

In the afternoon, the President met with President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol W. Kinsley and Robert Rogers to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

April 5

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

April 6

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael G. Kozak to be Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne Woods Patterson to be Ambassador to Colombia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael V. Dunn to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board.

April 7

In the morning, the President met with Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China, in the Oval Office.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local

recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on March 28–29.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Oklahoma City, OK, on April 19.

April 8

In the morning, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Alexandria, LA. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

April 9

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Fayetteville, AR, where they visited the University of Arkansas. In the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

April 10

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 25–30.

The President declared a major disaster in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal aid to supplement District recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 25–31.

April 11

In the morning, the President traveled to Annapolis, MD, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Phil Boyer to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council.

April 12

In the morning, the President traveled to Denver, CO, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

April 13

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Donald Walsh to be Ambassador to Argentina.

April 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA. In the evening, he traveled to Palo Alto, CA.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mildred S. Dresselhaus to be Director of Energy Research for the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark D. Gearan to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The White House announced that the President will address commencements at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI, on April 30; the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, on May 17; and Carleton College in Northfield, MN, on June 10.

April 15

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bakersfield, CA, where he had a telephone conversation with President-elect Vladimir Putin of Russia.

In the evening, the President traveled to Beverly Hills, CA, and later he returned to Palo Alto, CA.

April 17

In the morning, the President participated in a roundtable discussion with business and community leaders at Costano Elementary School on closing the digital divide.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Shiprock, NM, and in the evening, he traveled to Albuquerque, NM.

The White House announced that the President will visit Portugal on May 30–June 1, Germany on June 1–3, Russia on June 4–5, and Ukraine on June 6.

April 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

April 19

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation from the Oval Office with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oklahoma City, OK, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

April 21

In the afternoon, the President was interviewed at the White House by representatives of the Department of Justice Campaign Finance Task Force.

In the afternoon, the President spoke with Attorney General Janet Reno and in the evening, he had a telephone conversation with her from the Oval Office, concerning the Elian Gonzalez situation.

April 22

In the very early morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Chief of Staff John Podesta concerning the Elian Gonzalez situation. Later in the morning, he had two more conversations with Mr. Podesta and a later conversation with Attorney General Reno, concerning the situation.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Camp David, MD.

April 23

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to the White House.

April 24

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, and in the evening he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brian Dean Curran to be Ambassador to Haiti.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sharon P. Wilkinson to be Ambassador to Mozambique.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bradley M. Campbell as U.S. Commissioner to the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint James Harold French, Jr., and Arthur Wesley Nienhuis as members of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

April 25

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President met briefly with Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov of Russia in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Serena L. Wilson as a member of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

April 26

In the morning, the President traveled to Whiteville, NC, where in the afternoon, he viewed a product demonstration at Remote Data Systems and then participated in a roundtable discussion on efforts to close the digital divide.

In the evening, the President traveled to Little Rock, AR.

April 27

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

April 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Norman Pattiz to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and ice jams beginning on March 28 and continuing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Tokyo and Okinawa, Japan, in July to attend the G–8 Leaders Meeting hosted by Japan.

April 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Detroit, MI, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

May 1

The President announced his intention to nominate Katherine Milner Anderson to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Appendix A / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark S. Wrighton to be a member of the National Science Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Walter Kaye and Tazewell T. Shepard III to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rear Adm. Raymond A. Archer III, SC, USN, as a member of the Committee For Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

May 2

In the evening, the President met with Hong Kong Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara J. Sapin to be Vice Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Clayton M. Jones to the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

May 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Owensboro, KY, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Davenport, IA. In the evening, the President traveled to St. Paul, MN.

The President announced his intention to appoint Fran C. Eizenstat as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The President announced his intention to designate Greg Farmer, Lawrence Parks, and Madeline McCullough Petty to the National Capital Revitalization Corporation Authority.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on April 19–20.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Miguel Angel Rodriguez of Costa Rica in the Oval Office on May 9.

May 4

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Columbus, OH, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the nomination of Gen. John A. Gordon, USAF, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and Administrator of the National Security Administration at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Owen James Sheaks to be Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals to the Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders:

Norman Y. Mineta;
Haumani Apoliona;
Gloria Caoile;

Martha Choe;
Susan Soon-Keum Cox;
Vinod Dham;
Wilfred P. Leon Guerrero;
Tessie Guillermo;
Dennis Hayashi;
David D. Ho;
Ngoan Le;
Jonathon R. Leong;
Mukesh (Mike) Patel;
Jacinta Folas Titalii; and
Lee Pao Xiong.

May 5

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Farmington, PA, where he addressed the Senate Democratic Issues Caucus at the Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort and Spa.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Lancaster, VA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate James O. Armitage to be a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nicholas C. Burckel as a member of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

May 6

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Fayetteville, AR.

May 7

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Little Rock, AR, and in the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

May 8

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, where he attended funeral services for John Cardinal O'Connor at Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President has invited President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa for a state visit on May 22.

May 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Marjorie Ransom to be Ambassador to Yemen.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jerome A. Stricker as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina on June 13 in the Oval Office.

May 10

The President announced his intention to appoint Eva S. Teig as U.S. Representative to the Southern States Energy Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles (Chuck) Yancura as a member of the Advisory Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint John R. Roderick as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President declared an emergency in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe fire threats on May 10 and continuing.

May 12

In the morning, the President traveled to Akron, OH, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Shakopee, MN. Later, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the nomination of Barry E. Carter to be Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Global Programs, Field Support, and Research at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Pamela E. Bridgewater to be Ambassador to Benin.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas L. Garthwaite to be Under Secretary for Health for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President declared a disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe thunderstorms and flash flooding on May 6–7.

May 13

The President declared a disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe forest fire beginning on May 5 and continuing.

May 15

The President announced his intention to nominate Glenn A. Fine to be Inspector General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roger W. Kallock to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lucia A. Wyman as a member of the Advisory Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

May 16

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Albany, NY, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to appoint Debra S. Knopman, Daniel B. Bullen, and Priscilla Nelson as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Lyford to be a member of the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

May 17

In the morning, the President traveled to New London, CT. In the evening, he traveled to Greenwich, CT, and later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

May 18

The President announced his intention to nominate Don Harrell to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

May 19

In the morning, the President traveled to Suitland, MD, and later he traveled to Philadelphia, PA. In the afternoon, he traveled to Chicago, IL.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to appoint Pam Fleischaker, Harold Gershowitz, John F. Kordek, and Leo Melamed to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sanford I. Weill to serve as a member of the President's Export Council.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm, flooding, landslides, and mudslides on April 18–20.

May 20

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

May 21

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Hyde Park, NY, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

May 22

The White House announced that the President has invited King Mohammed VI of Morocco for a state visit on June 20.

May 23

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert S. LaRussa to be Under Secretary for International Trade at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robin Chandler Duke to be Ambassador to Norway.

The President announced his intention to appoint Stanley M. Chesley, Barbara W. Grossman, and Mel Levine to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

May 24

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald J. Sutherland to the Board of Trustees of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation.

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The President announced his intention to appoint Richard N. Brown as a member of the National Partnership Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sharon Cassidy as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Norman L. Christensen, Jr., Paul P. Craig, and Richard Parizek as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

May 25

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Providence, RI, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harriet Zimmerman and Marc Leland to be members of the Board of Directors for the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa Ross to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Management and Chief Financial Officer.

The President announced his intention to reappoint W. Ron Allen as Commissioner of the Pacific Salmon Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint John E. Hobbie as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

May 26

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Assateague, MD, and later returned to Washington, DC. In the evening, he went to Camp David, MD.

May 28

The President returned to the White House.

May 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Arlington, VA, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President traveled to Lisbon, Portugal, arriving the following morning.

May 30

In the morning, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Jeronimos Monastery. In the afternoon, he met with President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal in the President's Office at the Palacio de Belem.

May 31

In the morning, the President attended the U.S.-European Union summit meeting in the Throne Room at Queluz Palace.

June 1

In the morning, the President met with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel in the 20th Floor Suite at the Dom Pedro Hotel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Berlin, Germany. In the evening, he met with Christian Democratic Union leader Angela Merkel in Room 686 at the Intercon Hotel.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Train to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

June 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Aachen, Germany, and in the evening, he returned to Berlin.

The White House announced that the President will meet with King Abdullah II of Jordan in Washington, DC, on June 6.

June 3

In the afternoon, the President met briefly with Prime Minister Goran Persson of Sweden in the Chancellery following the Conference on Progressive Governance.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Moscow, Russia, arriving in the evening. Later in the evening, he attended a working dinner hosted by President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Residence Building One at the Kremlin.

June 4

In the afternoon, the President had several meetings with President Putin in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

June 5

In the morning, the President met with President Putin in the Ceremonial Office at the Kremlin. In the afternoon, he met with former President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in the Sitting Room at Gorky 9.

Later, the President traveled to Kiev, Ukraine, where he had meetings with President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine in the Blue Room and the Green Room of Mariinskiy Palace.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Billy Blanks and Lauren Gregg as members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

The President announced his intention to appoint Phillip A. Sharp as Chair of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Expanding Training Opportunities:

Christine Hemrick;
Hilary C. Pennington;
Clarence E. Anthony;
J. Paul Carey;
Anthony P. Carnevale;
Jerry J. Jasinowski;
Lawrence F. Katz;
Greta Kotler;
Belkis Leong-Hong;
Lisa M. Lynch;

Elliott Masie;
Stephen J. Rohleder;
Doug Ross; and
Jerry Sue Thornton.

June 6

The President announced his intention to nominate Holly J. Burkhalter to be a member of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced his intention to appoint George Chao-Chi Chu as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

June 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Tokyo, Japan, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard A. Boucher to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs for the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Allan I. Mendelowitz to be a member of the Board of Directors for the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Simon Shaheen to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

June 8

In the morning, the President met with Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan in the Asahi-No-Ma Room at the Akasaka State Guest House.

In the afternoon, the President met with President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea in the Presidential Suite at the Okura Hotel.

In the evening, the President attended a reception hosted by Prime Minister Mori in the Hagoroma Room at the Akasaka State Guest House. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Charles Riley to be a Commissioner of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate James A. Daley to be Ambassador to Barbados, Saint Lucia, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The President announced his intention to nominate Francisco J. Sanchez to be Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs at the Department of Transportation.

June 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Marti Thomas to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Legislative Affairs and Public Liaison.

The President announced his intention to appoint Maria Lombardo as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Marc D. Guthrie and Kenneth M. Schoonover as members of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Lt. Gen. Donald Kerrick as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser, effective August 1.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Robert Kocharian of Armenia at the White House on June 27.

June 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Northfield, MN, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 12

In the afternoon, the President met with President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dr. Samir Abu-Ghazaleh as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles F. Money Penny as a member of the Amtrak Reform Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 23–31.

June 13

In the afternoon, the President met with President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina in the Cabinet Room. Later, they had a working luncheon in the Old Family Dining Room.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dr. Dennis J. Slamon as a member of the President's Cancer Panel.

The President announced that Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala appointed eight members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

June 14

In an evening ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Marianna Fernandez of Bolivia, Igor Davidovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sven Jurgenson of Estonia, Aivis Ronis of Latvia, Tej Bunnag of Thailand, Ariel Rivera Irias of Guatemala, Hugo Tomas Fernandez Faingold of Uruguay, Ulrik A. Federspiel of Denmark, Joshua Sears of the Bahamas, Abdellah Maaroufi of Morocco, and William Bull of Liberia.

The President had an evening telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel concerning the Middle East peace process.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sarah W. Mitchell as Chair and Bryon R. MacDonald and Thomas P. Golden as members of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

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The President announced his intention to appoint Patty Wagstaff and Tom D. Crouch to the First Flight Centennial Federal Advisory Board.

June 15

The President had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley concerning Secretary Daley's resignation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard N. Brown as a member of the Federal Salary Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Marilyn M. Porter as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

June 16

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City. In the afternoon, he met with National Security Adviser Hwang Won-tak of South Korea at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

In the evening, the President returned to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced the designation of Stephen Koplan as Chairman and Deanna Okun as Vice Chairman of the U.S. International Trade Commission, effective June 17.

June 17

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 19

In the morning, the President traveled to Houston, TX, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Austin, TX.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint LeRoy F. Saunders as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joan Bennett Kennedy to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

June 20

In the morning, the President met with King Mohamed VI of Morocco in the Oval Office and later in the Cabinet Room.

In the afternoon, the President met with the Dalai Lama in the National Security Adviser's Office concerning Tibet.

The President announced his intention to appoint Carolyn Brackett as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

June 21

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Fayetteville, AR, and in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to reappoint John A. Calhoun and Larry EchoHawk as members of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

June 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Phoenix, AZ, and in the afternoon, he traveled to San Diego, CA.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kathleen Waldron Gershman to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles H. Cole to the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

June 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Chula Vista, CA, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Los Angeles, CA. In the evening, he addressed the Democratic National Committee convention staff in the Plaza Room at the Century Plaza Hotel & Spa.

The President announced his intention to appoint Deidre A. Lee as a member of the Federal Prison Industries Corporation.

The President declared a major disaster in Wisconsin and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 26 and continuing.

June 24

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 25

In the afternoon, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Korean War Memorial.

June 26

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 24

Alan Greenspan,
of New York, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Edward B. Montgomery,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, vice Kathryn O'Leary Higgins, resigned.

Submitted January 31

Nicholas P. Godici,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, vice Philip G. Hampton II.

Richard Court Houseworth,
of Arizona, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for the remainder of the term expiring December 25, 2001, vice Joseph H. Neely, resigned.

Donna Tanoue,
of Hawaii, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of 6 years (reappointment).

Scott O. Wright,
of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for the remainder of the term expiring December 10, 2003, vice Joseph E. Stevens, Jr.

Submitted February 1

Nathan O. Hatch,
of Indiana, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2006, vice John Haughton D'Arms, resigned.

Ross L. Wilson,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Submitted February 2

Karl William Hofmann,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Togolese Republic.

Susan S. Jacobs,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Papua New Guinea, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Solomon Islands, and as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Vanuatu.

Janet A. Sanderson,
of Arizona, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria.

John F. Tefft,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Lithuania.

Thomas G. Weston,
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Coordinator for Cyprus.

Lauress L. Wise II,
of Virginia, to be Commissioner of Education Statistics for a term expiring June 21, 2003, vice Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., term expired.

Donald Y. Yamamoto,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Djibouti.

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Submitted February 7

Carey Cavanaugh,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and New Independent States Regional Conflicts.

Rust Macpherson Deming,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Republic of Tunisia.

John W. Limbert,
of Vermont, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Roger A. Meece,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi.

Ronald E. Neumann,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Bahrain.

Submitted February 9

John Antoon II,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice G. Kendall Sharp, retired.

Robert J. Cindrich,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Timothy K. Lewis, retired.

John R. Dinger,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mongolia.

Audrey G. Fleissig,
of Missouri, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of 4 years, vice Edward L. Dowd, Jr., resigned.

Phyllis J. Hamilton,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice an additional position in accordance with 28 U.S.C. 133(b)(1).

Douglas Alan Hartwick,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Christopher Robert Hill,
of Rhode Island, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Poland.

Donna Jean Hrinak,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Venezuela.

Kent R. Markus,
of Ohio, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice David A. Nelson, retired.

Danny Lee McDonald,
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2005 (re-appointment).

Christopher A. McLean,
of Nebraska, to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, vice Wally B. Beyer.

John Martin O'Keefe,
of Virginia, a career member of the the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United State of America to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mary Ann Peters,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Marc Racicot,
of Montana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2004, vice Reatha Clark King, resigned.

Bradley A. Smith,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2005, vice Lee Ann Elliott, resigned.

Alan D. Solomont,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2004, vice Carol W. Kinsley, term expired.

Submitted February 10

Edward William Gnehm, Jr.,
of Georgia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of career minister, to be Ambassador

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Australia.

Ronald D. Godard,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Daniel A. Johnson,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Suriname.

V. Manuel Rocha,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bolivia.

Michael J. Senko,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati.

Submitted February 22

John Edward Herbst,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Howard Franklin Jeter,
of South Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

A. Elizabeth Jones,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Rose M. Likins,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador.

Donnie R. Marshall,
of Texas, to be Administrator of Drug Enforcement, vice Thomas A. Constantine, resigned.

Laurence E. Pope,
of Maine, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait.

Johnnie B. Rawlinson,
of Nevada, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Melvin T. Brunetti, retired.

Submitted February 23

Loretta E. Lynch,
of New York, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of 4 years, vice Zachary W. Carter, resigned.

Thomas M. Slonaker,
of Arizona, to be Special Trustee, office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior, vice Paul N. Homan.

Michelle Andrews Smith,
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Howard Monroe Schloss, resigned.

E. Ashley Wills,
of Georgia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Maldives.

Submitted February 24

Nina V. Fedoroff,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006, vice Claudia I. Mitchell-Kernan.

Patrick Francis Kennedy,
of Illinois, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, vice George Edward Moose.

Diana S. Natalicio,
of Texas, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Submitted February 28

Nicholas G. Garaufis,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Charles P. Sifton, retired.

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Gerard E. Lynch,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice John E. Sprizzo, retired.

Daniel Marcus,
of Maryland, to be Associate Attorney General, vice Raymond C. Fisher.

Submitted March 2

Sarah McCracken Fox,
of New York, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2004, to which position she was appointed during the recess of the Senate from November 19, 1999, to January 24, 2000.

Carlos Pascual,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ukraine.

Bonnie J. Campbell,
of Iowa, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, vice George G. Fagg, retired.

Thomas P. Furey,
of Oregon, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Nepal.

Submitted March 9

Madelyn R. Creedon,
of Indiana, to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration (new position).

S. David Fineman,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Norma Levy Shapiro, retired.

Mary A. McLaughlin,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Marvin Katz, retired.

Submitted March 20

Gregory Robert Dahlberg,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Army, vice Bernard Daniel Rostker.

William A. Eaton,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Administration), vice Patrick Francis Kennedy.

Marc Grossman,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, vice Edward William Gnehm, Jr.

John McAdam Mott,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Truman Aldrich Morrison III, retired.

Bernard Daniel Rostker,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, vice Rudy de Leon.

Submitted March 22

Arthur C. Campbell,
of Tennessee, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development (new position).

Nuria I. Fernandez,
of Illinois, to be Federal Transit Administrator, vice Gordon J. Linton, resigned.

Lawrence George Rossin,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Croatia.

Bruce Sundlun,
of Rhode Island, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Eamon M. Kelly, term expired.

John A. White, Jr.,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Submitted March 23

Gordon S. Heddell,
of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Department of Labor, vice Charles C. Masten, resigned.

Julio F. Mercado,
of Texas, to be Deputy Administrator of Drug Enforcement, vice Donnie R. Marshall.

Manuel Trinidad Pacheco,
of Arizona, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Steven S. Reed,
of Kentucky, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky for the term of 4 years, vice Walter Michael Troop, resigned.

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Beth Susan Slavet,
of Massachusetts, to be Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board, vice Benjamin Leader Erdreich, resigned.

Ella Wong-Rusinko,
of Virginia, to be Alternate Federal Cochairman of the Appalachian Regional Commission, vice Hilda Gay Legg, resigned.

Submitted March 27

Gregory G. Govan,
of Virginia, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Chief U.S. Delegate to the Joint Consultative Group (new position).

Roger L. Hunt,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada (new position).

Beverly B. Martin,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice G. Ernest Tidwell, retired.

Withdrawn March 27

Jose Antonio Perez,
of California, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of California for the term of 4 years, vice Stephen Simpson Gregg, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 1999.

Gail S. Tusan,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia vice, G. Ernest Tidwell, retired, which was sent to the Senate on August 3, 1999.

Submitted March 30

J. Randolph Babbitt,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Robert W. Baker,
of Texas, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Edward M. Bolen,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Debbie D. Branson,
of Texas, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Geoffrey T. Crowley,
of Wisconsin, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 2 years (new position).

Robert A. Davis,
of Washington, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 2 years (new position).

Kendall W. Wilson,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of one year (new position).

Submitted April 4

Carol W. Kinsley,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term of one year (new position).

Jane Lubchenco,
of Oregon, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Robert B. Rogers,
of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2001, vice Marlee Matlin, term expired.

Barbara W. Snelling,
of Vermont, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2001, vice Dennis L. Bark, term expired.

Warren M. Washington,
of Colorado, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Submitted April 5

Jay A. Garcia-Gregory,
of Puerto Rico, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, vice Raymond L. Acosta, retired.

Submitted April 6

Kent J. Dawson,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice a new position created by Public Law 106-113, approved November 29, 1999.

Michael V. Dunn,
of Iowa, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration for the remainder of the term expiring October 13, 2000, vice Marsha P. Martin.

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Michael V. Dunn,
of Iowa, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration for a term expiring October 13, 2006 (reappointment).

Submitted April 25

Brian Dean Curran,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Haiti.

Mark D. Gearan,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term of 2 years (new position).

Jose Antonio Perez,
of California, to be U.S. Marshal for the Central District of California for the term of 4 years, vice Michael R. Ramon, resigned.

Russell John Qualliotine,
of New York, to be U.S. States Marshal for the Southern District of New York for the term of 4 years, vice Martin James Burke.

Linda B. Riegle,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice Johnnie B. Rawlinson, elevated.

Laura Taylor Swain,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Thomas P. Griesa, retired.

Daniel G. Webber, Jr.,
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma, vice Patrick M. Ryan, resigned.

Sharon P. Wilkinson,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Mozambique.

Withdrawn April 25

Thomas P. Furey,
of Oregon, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Nepal, which was sent to the Senate on March 2, 2000.

Submitted April 27

Edward M. Bolen,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 2 years (new position).

Norman J. Pattiz,
of California, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2001, vice David W. Burke, resigned.

Withdrawn April 27

Edward M. Bolen,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position), which was sent to the Senate on March 30, 2000.

Submitted May 1

John Ramsey Johnson,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Ellen Segal Huvelle, elevated.

Submitted May 2

James Edgar Baker,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of 15 years to expire on the date prescribed by law, vice Walter T. Cox III, term expired.

Submitted May 3

Katherine Milner Anderson,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2006 (reappointment).

Dennis M. Cavanaugh,
of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, vice Alfred M. Wolin, retiring.

Gen. John A. Gordon, USAF,
to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Department of Energy (new position).

Marc B. Nathanson,
of California, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2001 (reappointment).

Marc B. Nathanson,
of California, to be Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (new position).

Barbara J. Sapin,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Merit Systems Protection Board for the term of 7 years expiring March 1, 2007, vice Benjamin Leader Erdreich, resigned.

Submitted May 8

Owen James Sheaks, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Verification and Compliance) (new position).

Submitted May 9

Paul C. Huck, of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Kenneth L. Ryskamp, retired.

Marjorie Ransom, of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

Submitted May 11

Barry Edward Carter, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, vice Sally A. Shelton.

John W. Darrah, of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice George M. Marovich, retired.

Joan Humphrey Lefkow, of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Ann C. Williams, elevated.

Ricardo Morado, of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Filamon B. Vela, retired.

Michael J. Reagan, of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois (new position).

George Z. Singal, of Maine, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maine, vice Morton A. Brody, deceased.

Mark S. Wrighton, of Missouri, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006, vice Robert M. Solow, term expired.

Submitted May 17

Roger W. Kallock, of Ohio, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness (new position).

Robert Mays Lyford, of Arkansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for

a term expiring December 17, 2002, vice Harvey Sigelbaum, term expired.

Submitted May 23

Mildred Spiewak Dresselhaus, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy (new position).

Jayne G. Fawcett, of Connecticut, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2006, vice Alfred H. Qoyawayma, term expired.

Don Harrell, of New York, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2002, vice Jerome A. Stricker, term expired.

Withdrawn May 23

Mildred Spiewak Dresselhaus, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Energy Research, vice Martha Anne Krebs, which was sent to the Senate on April 13, 2000.

Nicholas P. Godici, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, vice Philip G. Hampton II, which was sent to the Senate on January 31, 2000.

Submitted May 25

Norman C. Bay, of New Mexico, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico for the term of 4 years, vice John Joseph Kelly, resigned.

Robin Chandler Duke, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Norway.

Robert S. LaRussa, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, vice David L. Aaron, resigned.

Marc E. Leland, of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2003, vice Max M. Kampleman, term expired.

Stephen M. Orlofsky, of New Jersey, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Morton I. Greenberg, retiring.

Donald J. Sutherland, of New York, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence

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in Education Foundation for a term expiring August 11, 2002 (reappointment).

Harriet M. Zimmerman, of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2003 (reappointment).

Submitted June 6

Lisa Gayle Ross, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Nancy Killefer, resigned.

Lisa Gayle Ross, of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, vice Nancy Killefer, resigned.

K. Gary Sebelius, of Kansas, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Kansas, vice G. Thomas Van Bebber, retiring.

Kenneth O. Simon, of Alabama, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, vice Sam C. Pointer, Jr., retired.

John E. Steele, of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida (new position).

Withdrawn June 6

James M. Lyons, of Colorado, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, vice John P. Moore, retired, which was sent to the Senate on September 22, 1999.

Submitted June 8

Holly J. Burkhalter, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace

for a term expiring January 19, 2001, vice W. Scott Thompson, term expired.

John Train, of New York, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2003, vice Scott B. Lukins, term expired.

Submitted June 13

Richard A. Boucher, of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Public Affairs), vice James P. Rubin.

Francisco J. Sanchez, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, vice Charles A. Hunnicutt, resigned.

Submitted June 16

Allan I. Mendelowitz, of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007, vice Bruce A. Morrison, term expired.

Ruth Martha Thomas, of the District of Columbia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Linda Lee Robertson, resigned.

Withdrawn June 16

Bruce A. Morrison, of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on October 29, 1999.

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary which are not included in this book.

Released January 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcripts of readouts to the traveling press pool by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart on the Israel-Syria peace talks

Released January 4

Announcement: 1999 National Security Strategy Report

Announcement of nomination for Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

Released January 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 6

Transcript of a readout to the traveling press pool by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart and State Department Spokesman James Rubin on the Israel-Syria peace talks

Released January 7

Transcripts of telephone remarks to the traveling press pool by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart on the Israel-Syria peace talks

Statement by the Press Secretary on the working document that the President presented to the delegations at the Israel-Syria peace talks

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley, James Madison University President Linwood H. Rose, and NSC National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-terrorism Richard A. Clarke on the National Plan for Information Systems Protection

Fact sheet: Institute for Information Infrastructure Protection

Fact sheet: Federal Cyber Services Training and Education Initiative

Released January 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Council on Environmental Quality Acting Chairman George Frampton on the President's designation of three new national monuments and the expansion of a fourth

Fact sheet: Colombia Assistance Package

Released January 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed on the President's speech to the Democratic Leadership Council

Released January 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri

Released January 15

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

Released January 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's upcoming announcement of investments in education

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Mark C. Medish as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council

Released January 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Dr. Neal Lane, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, and

Appendix C / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Dr. Rita Colwell, Director, National Science Foundation, on the President's science and technology budget proposals

Released January 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 25

Statement by the Press Secretary on the release of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program emergency funds

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the White House State of the Union website

Released January 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta, Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed, and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the State of the Union Address

Released January 28

Transcript of remarks by Chief of Staff John Podesta to the pool on the State of the Union Address

Released February 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to South Asia

Fact sheet: Export Controls on Computers

Released February 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Special Assistant to the President Tom Kalil on the digital divide

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on China¹

Released February 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

¹This item was embargoed for release until 12:30 p.m.

Released February 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed, ATF Director Brad Buckles, and Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement Jim Johnson on the gun crimes initiative

Statement by the Press Secretary: State Visit by King Juan Carlos I of Spain

Released February 7

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily, Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the fiscal year 2001 budget

Released February 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released February 9

Fact sheet: Embassy Security Funding

Announcement of nomination for two U.S. Court of Appeals and two U.S. District Judges

Released February 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the President's Economic Report

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's action on the home heating oil situation

Released February 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on import relief for the U.S. line pipe industry

Statement by the Press Secretary on import relief for the U.S. steel wire rod industry

Statement by the Press Secretary on death sentences for three members of the Baha'i community of Iran

Released February 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released February 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta; Commerce Secretary Bill Daley; Harris Miller, president, Information Technology Association of America; Maynard Webb, president, eBay Technologies; and Howard Schmidt, chief information officer, Microsoft, on the President's meeting on cyber security

Fact sheet: Cyber Security Budget Initiatives

Fact sheet: Strengthening Cyber Security Through Public-Private Partnership

Released February 16

Statement by the Press Secretary: Federal Panel Continuation To Declassify Selected Historically Valuable Documents

Statement by the Press Secretary on Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program funding

Released February 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Fact sheet: Solidifying Our Partnership With Africa

Released February 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for African Affairs Gayle Smith and Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Howard Wolpe on the Burundi peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania

Fact sheet: Background to the Burundi Peace Process

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Ninth Circuit

Released February 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Visit to Germany May 1–2

Released February 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement: Visit of His Majesty Juan Carlos I, February 22–24

Released February 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With His Excellency Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the Southern District and the Eastern District of New York

Released February 29

Transcript of remarks to the pool by Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy Chris Jennings and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on Medicare and tobacco

Released March 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Annual Presidential Certifications for Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

Fact sheet: Overview of Annual Presidential Certification of Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

Released March 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Eighth Circuit

Released March 7

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Pakistan

Released March 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released March 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Released March 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released March 13

Statement by the Press Secretary: Belarus: Pro-Democracy Demonstrations

Released March 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the budget resolution

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Neal Lane and National Human Genome Research Institute Director Francis Collins on the human genome project

Appendix C / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Transcript of a press briefing by Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli and Ambassador Frank Wisner on the President's trip to India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan

Released March 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for District of Columbia Superior Court Judge

Released March 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Lael Brainard, and Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Rick Inderfurth on the President's upcoming visit to South Asia

Statement by the Press Secretary on the upcoming visit of President Mubarak of Egypt

Announcement of nomination for District of Columbia Superior Court Judge

Released March 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed, Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo, Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat, and Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder on the gun safety agreement with Smith & Wesson

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to South Asia

Released March 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's announcement on oil prices

Released March 19

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing cancellation of the President's planned visit to Joypura, India

Fact sheet: Promoting Clean Energy Development in Bangladesh

Fact sheet: Food Assistance for the People of Bangladesh

Fact sheet: Helping Bangladesh To Conserve Its Tropical Forests

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to South Asia

Released March 20

Transcript of a press briefing by U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Brady Anderson on initiatives in Bangladesh

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh

Fact sheet: Helping To Eliminate Child Labor and Improve the Lives of Working People in Bangladesh

Released March 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the President's visit to India

Statement by the Press Secretary on the attack on a village in Kashmir

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Oman

Fact sheet: The U.S. and India: Concrete Steps To Improve Economic Relations

Fact sheet: The U.S. and India: Promoting Democracy in Asia and Beyond

Released March 22

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles on the Indo-U.S. Joint Statement on Energy and the Environment

Fact sheet: President Clinton's India Trip: Protecting the Environment, Promoting Clean Energy Development, and Combating Global Warming

Fact sheet: Combating Trafficking in Women and Children in South Asia

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky

Released March 23

Fact sheet: The Clinton Administration: Helping To Protect India's Endangered Tigers and Elephants

Released March 24

Fact sheet: New Financing To Expand India-U.S. Trade

Fact sheet: President Clinton Announces Internet for Economic Development Assistance for India

Fact sheet: India and the United States: Partners for a Healthy World

Announcement: Special Envoy MacKay Heads U.S. Delegation to the Peru-Ecuador Consultative Group Meeting, and Attends the Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in New Orleans

Released March 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000 / Appendix C

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's upcoming meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Released March 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart on the President's meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Released March 27

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the District of Nevada and the Northern District of Georgia

Statement by the Press Secretary on Peru's April 9 national elections

Released March 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the OPEC oil production decision

Statement by the Press Secretary on the transmittal to Congress of the fiscal year 2000 supplemental appropriations request

Released March 29

Statement of Beth Noland, Counsel to the President, on the Privacy Act and the Executive Office of the President

Released March 30

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy Chris Jennings on the Social Security and Medicare Trustees Report

Announcement: White House Special Envoy for the Americas, Buddy MacKay To Attend Inter-American Dialogue Conference in Costa Rica March 31 through April 3

Released March 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert

Released April 3

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Colorado

Released April 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert, National Economic Council Direc-

tor Gene Sperling, and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Statement by Press Secretary on the visit of President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen

Announcement: Participants: The White House Conference on the New Economy

Released April 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico

Released April 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released April 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Oklahoma City

Released April 8

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Will Meet Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat

Released April 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released April 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Released April 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on the President's participation in MSNBC's townhall meeting on guns

Released April 13

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Brooke D. Anderson as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Communications at the National Security Council

Released April 14

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming commencement addresses

Appendix C / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement by the Press Secretary on the release of the President and Hillary Clinton's Federal income tax return

Fact sheet: START II Treaty Summary

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois

Released April 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Acting Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality George Frampton on the President's visit to Sequoia National Park¹

Released April 17

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming travel to Portugal, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Special Assistant to the President for Technology Matters Tom Kalil on the digital divide

Released April 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a senior staff briefing on proposed prescription drug benefit legislation

Released April 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President and Vice President's separate interviews with representatives of the Department of Justice Campaign Finance Task Force

Released April 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released April 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Central District of California

Released April 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily, Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Emeritus Robert M. Solow on permanent normal trade relations status for China

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the District of Nevada and the Southern District of New York

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of New York

Released April 26

Statement by the Press Secretary on National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling's leadership of the U.S. delegation to the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal

Released April 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming travel to Tokyo and Okinawa, Japan

Announcement of nomination for District of Columbia Superior Court Judge

Transcript of remarks by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling to the International Consultative Forum on Education for All in Dakar, Senegal

Released May 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Director of the Office of Science and Technology Neal Lane, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence Arthur L. Money, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator James Baker, and Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy Gene Conti on improvements in the Global Positioning System

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers on progress in paying down the national debt

Released May 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Armed Forces

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on China at the East Asian Institute

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed and the First Lady's Deputy Chief of Staff Shirley Sagawa

¹This item was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 14, but it was embargoed for release until 7 a.m. on April 15.

Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000 / Appendix C

on the White House Conference on Teenagers and Resourceful Youth and the President's education tour

Released May 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on the President's education tour

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Costa Rican President Miguel Angel Rodriguez

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey

Released May 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 8

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing a state visit of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa on May 22

List of attendees of the President's meeting with organizers of the Million Mom March

Released May 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming meeting with President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina

Transcript of a May 8 interview of Chief of Staff John Podesta and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman by members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters

Released May 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida

Released May 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Released May 12

Announcement of nominations for five U.S. District Judges

Released May 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Financial Disclosure Statement for President Clinton

Financial Disclosure Statement for Vice President Gore

Released May 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 19

Fact sheet: Armed Forces Day Turns 50

Released May 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the upcoming visit of King Mohammed VI of Morocco

Released May 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the new markets legislation agreement

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Executive order on increasing opportunities for women-owned small businesses

Fact sheet: The Clinton-Gore Administration Accomplishments for Women-Owned Businesses

Released May 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senate action on judicial nominations

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of New Mexico

Released May 25

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's upcoming visit to Europe

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Third Circuit

Released May 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Transcript of a press briefing by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator James

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Baker and Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Hayes on the President's coral reef and marine protected areas initiatives

Released May 29

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to Portugal

Released May 30

Statement by Press Secretary on the President's upcoming meeting with Prime Minister Barak of Israel

Fact sheet: U.S.-Portugal Bilateral Issues

Released May 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for European Affairs Antony J. Blinken and Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Lael Brainard on the United States-European Union Summit

Fact sheet: The European Union (EU)

Fact sheet: Working for Greater Stability in Southeast Europe

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Madrid Protocol on Trademark Registration

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Cooperation on Biotechnology

Fact sheet: Data Privacy Accord with EU (Safe Harbor)

Fact sheet: The U.S.-EU Summit: Joint Efforts on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and Other Infectious Diseases

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to Germany

Released June 1

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's meeting with Chancellor Schroeder of Germany

Fact sheet: President Clinton To Receive The Charlemagne Prize

Released June 2

Statement by the Press Secretary: Working Visit With His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

Statement by the Press Secretary on sanctions under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act

Fact sheet: Implementation of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act

Released June 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott on the President's meetings with President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's meetings with President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Fact sheet: United States-Russian Federation Plutonium Disposition Agreement

Fact sheet: Protecting the Environment and Combating Global Warming

Fact sheet: Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative

Fact sheet: U.S.-Russia Joint Steel Dialogue

Fact sheet: Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Warning Center for the Exchange of Information on Missile Launches and Early Warning

Fact sheet: People to People Cooperation

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to Russia

Released June 5

Fact sheet: Nuclear Safety Assistance Increased

Fact sheet: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Fact sheet: Chernobyl Closure

Fact sheet: U.S. Assists Ukraine in Small and Medium Enterprise Development

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to Ukraine

Released June 7

Statement by the Press Secretary: Terrorist Bombing in Sri Lanka

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the District of Kansas, the Northern District of Alabama, and the Middle District of Florida

Released June 8

Transcript of a readout to the pool by NSC Senior Director for Asian Affairs Kenneth G. Lieberthal on the President's meetings with Prime Minister Yoshio Mori of Japan

Transcript of readout to the pool by Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley on the President's meetings with President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judges for the District of Hawaii and the Middle District of Florida

Released June 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000 / Appendix C

Statement by the Press Secretary on the upcoming visit of President Robert Kocharian of Armenia

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs Arturo Valenzuela on the President's meeting with President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico

Transcript of a press briefing by Acting Council on Environmental Quality Chair George Frampton and Department of the Interior Solicitor John Lesly on the proclamations establishing national monuments

Announcement: Deputy National Security Adviser James B. Steinberg To Depart the White House

Released June 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Federal Aviation Administrator Jane Garvey on the FAA budget

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs Arturo Valenzuela on the President's meeting with President Fernando d la Rua of Argentina

Statement by the Press Secretary on a review regarding missing data at Los Alamos National Laboratory

Released June 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Released June 16

Fact sheet: President Clinton Encourages Support of Arts and Music Education

Released June 19

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Supreme Court decision on the Massachusetts law barring State business with companies doing business with Burma

Released June 20

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With the Dalai Lama

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 21

Statement by the Press Secretary on an initiative to protect privacy on the Internet

Statement by the Press Secretary on new safeguards for Internet users

Released June 22

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Independent Counsel's press release on the travel office report

Released June 23

Announcement of nominations for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Released June 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Dr. Neal Lane, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology; Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute; Dr. Craig Venter, president and chief scientific officer, Celera Genomics Corp.; and Dr. Ari Patrinos, Associate Director for Biological and Environmental Research, Department of Energy, on the completion of the first survey of the human genome

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Chief of Staff John Podesta, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the midsession review of the budget

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the Federal Register

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. The texts of the documents are printed in the Federal Register (F.R.) at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.

PROCLAMATIONS

<i>Proc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2000</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>65 F.R. Page</i>
7263	Jan. 11	Establishment of the Agua Fria National Monument	2817
7264	Jan. 11	Establishment of the California Coastal National Monument	2821
7265	Jan. 11	Establishment of the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument	2825
7266	Jan. 11	Boundary Enlargement of the Pinnacles National Monument	2831
7267	Jan. 14	Religious Freedom Day, 2000	2835
7268	Jan. 14	Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 2000	2837
7269	Jan. 19	National Biotechnology Month, 2000	3779
7270	Jan. 31	National African American History Month, 2000	5217
7271	Feb. 1	American Heart Month, 2000	5219
7272	Feb. 11	National Consumer Protection Week, 2000	7709
7273	Feb. 16	To Facilitate Positive Adjustment to Competition From Imports of Certain Steel Wire Rod	8621
7274	Feb. 18	To Facilitate Positive Adjustment to Competition From Imports of Certain Circular Welded Carbon Quality Line Pipe	9193
7275	Feb. 22	Registration Under the Military Selective Service Act	9199
7276	Feb. 29	National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2000	11197
7277	Feb. 29	Women's History Month, 2000	11199
7278	Feb. 29	American Red Cross Month, 2000	11455
7279	Mar. 1	Irish-American Heritage Month, 2000	11733
7280	Mar. 6	Save Your Vision Week, 2000	12903
7281	Mar. 17	National Poison Prevention Week, 2000	15201
7282	Mar. 24	Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2000	16507
7283	Mar. 24	Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2000	16509
7284	Mar. 31	Cancer Control Month, 2000	17981
7285	Mar. 31	National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2000	17983
7286	Apr. 1	Census Day, 2000	17985
7287	Apr. 7	National Volunteer Week, 2000	19641
7288	Apr. 8	Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2000	19819
7289	Apr. 8	National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2000	19821
7290	Apr. 10	National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2000	19823
7291	Apr. 12	National D.A.R.E. Day, 2000	21111
7292	Apr. 14	National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 2000	21113
7293	Apr. 14	National Park Week, 2000	21115
7294	Apr. 14	National Recall Round-Up Day, 2000	21117
7295	Apr. 15	Establishment of the Giant Sequoia National Monument	24095
7296	Apr. 21	Bicentennial of the Library of Congress	24379
7297	Apr. 28	National Charter Schools Week, 2000	25821
7298	Apr. 28	Law Day, U.S.A., 2000	25823
7299	Apr. 29	Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2000	25825
7300	Apr. 29	Loyalty Day, 2000	25827
7301	May 2	Older Americans Month, 2000	26113
7302	May 2	Jewish Heritage Week, 2000	26117
7303	May 4	National Day of Prayer, 2000	26481

PROCLAMATIONS—Continued

<i>Proc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2000</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>65 F.R. Page</i>
7304	May 5	Global Science and Technology Week, 2000	30335
7305	May 10	Mother's Day, 2000	30827
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