

These trends reinforce that our efforts over the last 7 years to strengthen Medicare and Social Security, while also paying down the debt, have been successful. However, there is still a tremendous amount to be done to ensure the well-being of all older Americans, which is becoming more critical as the baby boomers approach their senior years. By 2030, one in five Americans, 70 million people, will be 65 years of age or older.

We need to prepare for the inevitable health and financial challenges that confront Medicare

and Social Security. As an important first step in that direction, we should follow Vice President Gore's suggestion to take Medicare off budget. If we do, we will ensure that Medicare payroll taxes are only used for Medicare. We should also modernize and strengthen Medicare by making the program more competitive as well as providing for a long overdue and voluntary prescription drug benefit. I urge Congress to work this fall across party lines to improve our seniors' health security and pass these important reforms.

## Remarks at a Dinner for Hillary Clinton in New York City *August 10, 2000*

First of all, I want to thank John and Margo and Dennis and Mike and Peter and everybody else that made this dinner possible tonight. And I'd like to thank Attorney General Spitzer and Comptroller McCall for coming. And all the rest of you, I thank you for being here for Hillary and for our country.

I can be quite brief, but I won't be. *[Laughter]* I will be. I will be. The only thing that I'm concerned about in this election is whether people really know what it is about and believe it's important. In over 200 years, the American people have almost always gotten it right when they had the facts and the time to digest them, and that's why we're all still around here, why it's still a great country. It's why we've done what we've done as a people and taken in wave after wave after wave of immigrants and met crisis after crisis, challenge after challenge. Democracy actually works.

And we have to trust the people, if they know what it's about. And the only thing—as I said, what's concerned me is I have repeatedly seen stories to the effect that many people didn't think this was such a big election. I mean, after all, things are going so well, and you couldn't mess up the economy if you tried, so is it really a big deal? And then the second thing that's bothered me is I've seen lots of stories which indicate that people don't have any idea what the real differences are between the parties, the candidates for President, the candidates for the New York Senate race and other things.

A big story in USA Today about 3 weeks ago: What's the difference in the Vice President and Governor Bush's economic policy? A story just 10 days ago interviewing suburban women who favored greater gun safety legislation—our candidate had a six-point lead. And then when this polling outfit just read the positions of the two candidates—and by the way, they had nothing to do with either party; this was an independent polling outfit—they just said, "Okay, here's their positions"—they went from 45 to 39, to 57 to 29.

So what I want to say to you—you came here tonight; you've helped Hillary. I am profoundly grateful, and I want to say a few words about that. But every one of you has friends who are less political than you are. Every one of you has friends who may not even be active Democrats. You have networks of people you contact. And what I want to ask you to do is to remind people that this is a big election. And how many times in your lifetime have you a chance to vote in an election solely on the basis of how we can use this astonishing prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence to build the future of our dreams for our kids? It may never happen again in your lifetime. So to pretend that this is like a no-consequence election because we don't feel like we're on the edge of a cliff about to be pushed off, I think is a grave error.

The second thing I want to say is, there are huge differences. And we mustn't be shy in pointing out to the best of our ability what we

think those honest differences are. We don't have to say bad things about our adversaries, but we do have to say what the differences are.

It tickles me—a lot of these folks that spent years kind of attacking their opponents, now act like the Democrats are being negative if they just point out what the voting record was. [Laughter] It's like, "How dare you do something so mean. I have a right to keep from the people what my positions are." [Laughter]

So we have to create a climate here where we have a good old-fashioned election: no personal destruction; no personal attacks; an honest effort to identify what the major issues are, what the stakes are, and what the differences are; and just trust the people.

And I can just tell you that there are massive differences on economic policy, on crime policy, on education policy, on the environment, on health care policy, on a woman's right to choose, and the appointment of judges and the ratification of judges, the approval in the Senate. And the American people need to know what they're doing here. And we just need to trust them. But you need to help us with clarity of choice.

The second thing I'd like to say in asking Hillary to come up here is that I'm actually very proud of her for doing this after all we've been through the last 8 years, and most of it's been quite wonderful. But all our friends who leave the White House and go back to private life tell us that they don't even get out of physical pain for about 6 months—[laughter]—that they had no idea how tired they were until they left. And we were looking forward to spending the last year making all these trips together, having people come into the White House. And it's wonderful to have our daughter home, and she can come campaign with Hillary and make a few trips with me. But we wanted to have this last year just to celebrate the millennial year and have more of these lectures that Hillary organized and celebrate the preservation of our natural heritage.

And instead, she decided, for the first time in 30 years, to actually get in and run for herself instead of help somebody else do it. And she did it after a half a dozen or so New York House Members came and asked her to consider doing it and then traveling all over the State and concluding that the work that she'd done all of her adult life is basically the kind of thing that New York needs and wants now.

And I just want to remind you of a few things. First of all, when I met her in 1971, in the springtime, she was already completely obsessed with the issues of children and families, and she took an extra year in law school to work at the Yale Child Study Center and the children's ward of the Yale University hospital, so that when she got a law degree she would actually have detailed knowledge about health, psychological, and other issues relating to children and their parents.

Secondly, the first job she ever had was for a group that became the Children's Defense Fund.

Thirdly, when she came home to Arkansas to be with me, she—and we helped Jimmy Carter get elected President—she became the youngest chair ever of the Legal Services Corporation to try to provide legal aid to poor people.

Then when I became Governor, she helped to establish a neonatal nursery at the Children's Hospital in our home State, what my predecessor affectionately, or not so affectionately, referred to as a small southern State. By the time we left—Hillary ran all the fundraising every year for the Children's Hospital, did all that. By the time we left office, the Arkansas Children's Hospital was the seventh biggest children's hospital in the United States of America.

And after she became First Lady, she has worked on dramatically improving the adoption laws, making it easier for people to do cross-racial adoptions, getting a \$5,000 tax credit for people who adopt children with disabilities, doing more for children who age out of foster care—a really big issue in New York State, a huge issue—doing more to give health insurance for children, doing more to promote child care and to deal with the challenges of early childhood.

There's really—I doubt very seriously that any person has ever been First Lady who's had the range of detailed involvement and interests she has. And along the way, she wrote a best selling book and gave 100 percent of the profits away to children's charity.

And in 30 years, all she ever did was try to help other people. Every year I was Governor, she gave away lots and lots of income to help other people. This is the first time she's ever, ever done anything where she was asking people to help her. And all I can tell you is, in the over 30 years now I've been involved

in politics in one way or another, I have worked with hundreds of people that I liked and admired, that I thought were gifted, patriotic, and devoted. There is no question, even though you can say, well, I'm biased, and I'll get a better night's sleep if I say this—[*laughter*—but I'm just telling you, I love my country enough to say that even though I'm kind of missing this last year that we had looked forward to, I'm glad she's doing it. Because of all the people I've ever known, I have never known anybody that had the same combination of mind and heart and knowledge and organizational ability and constancy—constancy—I'm talking about 30 years of constancy—that she has.

So if you will get her elected, she will be a magnificent Senator. And all these people who wonder whether they should be for her now because—why is she doing this now, and why is she doing it in New York—after she's been there about 60 days, they will never have an-

other question. They will never have another question.

So what you've got to do is get out here and stir around and tell people that. Tell people what the differences are between her and her opponent and what the two parties' differences are and personally validate what you see and know. And if you do, she's going to win. And it won't be long until everybody else will think they voted for her, too. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much. Please come up, Hillary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts John and Margo Catsimatidis; dinner cohosts Dennis Mehiel, Michael Sherman, and Panayiotis (Peter) Papanicolaou; New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer; New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

## Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Arabic-Language Newspaper Al Hayat August 10, 2000

### *Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Do you have any special message for the Arab world after Camp David?

*The President.* We have in the next few months an historic chance to resolve the Palestinian issue. It is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and we can and must resolve it on a basis that's fair, honorable, and lasting. Together, we need to seize this opportunity, or it will be lost. The parties cannot do it alone. We need the help of our Arab friends in the region. And we need an approach that resolves problems in a practical and fair way so that the principles that guide Arab-Israeli peace—comprehensiveness and implementation of United Nations Security Resolutions 242 and 338, including land for peace—can be realized in a way that meets the needs of both sides. What is fair and just for Palestinians and Arabs must also be fair and just for Israelis. There cannot be a winner and a loser in these negotiations. We must have two winners, or we will lose the peace.

I know that there is a deep sense of grievance in the Arab world, and through nearly 8 years of working for peace alongside Chairman Arafat, I understand the suffering and pain of the Palestinians. But I also know that the only pathway to realize Palestinian aspirations is through negotiations, through the process of give and take where each side can have its needs met and its hopes realized. I urge all those in this region committed to peace to join with me and to seize this historic moment.

The opportunity to work for a lasting peace between the Palestinian and Israeli people has been among the most meaningful and rewarding aspects of my Presidency. I am motivated in these efforts by the possibility of a better future for all of the peoples in the region. We must all remain focused on this better future, a future in which the Palestinian people might finally achieve through negotiations their aspiration of a Palestinian State recognized by and integrated with the world, at peace and working to address the needs of the Palestinian people.