

see the role of China for international peace and security in this century?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think it was a very good idea by President Jiang to have the P-5 meet. I was amazed that they had never met, or hadn't met in a long time. And I think it was a very good idea. And we actually made a specific decision to, as a group, help the Secretary-General implement his report on peacekeeping and to continue to explore what else we could do together.

I think it might be a forum in the future that would provide an opportunity for Chinese cooperation with the other members of the P-5 in a way that would be very helpful to the rest of the world, as well.

President Fidel Castro of Cuba

Q. Could you describe your encounter with Fidel Castro yesterday?

The President. What Joe said is right. It just happened. There were a whole lot of people in a line. I was talking to them. I turned around, and he was standing there. He apparently had come up and waited, and we must have—the encounter lasted just a few seconds. That's all that happened.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:40 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria. In his remarks, the President referred to White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on a Revision of the United Nations' Peacekeeping Costs Assessment Scale

September 8, 2000

I am pleased that so many nations have announced their support for a revision of the United Nations' peacekeeping scale of assessment, a revision that will better reflect the reality of peacekeeping costs in the year 2000. Much will depend on the outcome of this fall's deliberations, including the future of U.N. peacekeeping.

Specifically, I want to express my personal appreciation to the countries who have demonstrated leadership by agreeing to assume additional financial responsibility under the peacekeeping scale: Antigua and Barbuda, Bulgaria, Kuwait, Malta, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, and Slovenia. The formula used for funding

U.N. peacekeeping operations, the so-called scale of assessment, is long out of step with today's realities and is in pressing need of change.

Yesterday all permanent five members of the Security Council supported a revision of the peacekeeping financial structure. My team and I will be working on this important issue for the remainder of this administration.

The U.N. General Assembly will be debating revisions to the scale of assessments over the next few months. These deliberations will be guided and inspired by the example of the countries.

Remarks at a Dinner for Hillary Clinton in New York City

September 8, 2000

Thank you. First of all, I want to thank Jonathan for this incredible setting. It's a beautiful place. It makes me want to get in your line of work, so I can have a place like this. [Laughter] And I want to thank Jerry Colonna and Barbara and Fernando and Ann Espuelas

and Andrew Rasiej and all the people on the host committee and all of you who came tonight for Hillary and for a better future for this country.

I want to thank these Senators here. Nothing I was able to do in the last 8 years would

have been possible without them, both when they were in the majority and most of the time—and even especially—when they were in the minority. I want to thank them for being on our high-tech council and trying to put the Democrats on the side of positive change in this economy.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to Jay Rockefeller, who served with me as Governor for many years. And we used to sit together and ruminate together and fight for the same things together. And the socioeconomic profiles of West Virginia and Arkansas were the two most identical in the country. The real reason I'm glad he's here tonight is that he proved that you could go someplace else and represent them real well in the Senate. *[Laughter]* He is exhibit A for Hillary's campaign.

I want to thank Mark Green, the public advocate, for being here tonight. And he's my great friend of many years, thank you.

I would just like to make a couple of points in introducing Hillary. First of all, I am profoundly grateful that I've had the chance to serve and grateful for the opportunities that Al Gore and I and our whole administration had to help make America a better place.

I think it is important to point out something that you know because it's a part of what you do every day, and that is that the most important force in the world are ideas—forces in the world. And they have consequences. And if your ideas are good and you implement them, they have good consequences. And if they're not so good, you live with the consequences. We forget that sometimes in politics—when we vote, when we debate issues, we forget that in the end, it really does matter whether your ideas are right or not. And I remember when I went around the country in 1991 and 1992 and the economy was stagnant and inequality was increasing and all the social indicators were going in the wrong direction, I came to the conclusion that one reason was that Washington was being run on a set of ideas that were, if they were ever any good, their time had long since passed, and some of them never were right.

And we changed the economic policy, the welfare policy, the crime policy, the education policy, the health care policy, and the environmental policy and the foreign policy of this country. Ideas have consequences in public life just like they do in what you do.

And so, for me, apart from my extraordinary personal feeling about this race, the reason I'm going around the country now—the first time in 26 years when I haven't been on the ballot during an election—*[laughter]*—is because I've worked as hard as I could to turn our country around and move it in the right direction. But I honestly believe all the best things are still out there. And I think this is the first time in my lifetime that our Nation has had a chance to shed its baggage, to shed its racial baggage, to shed its homophobic baggage, to shed all of its divisive baggage. My party has shed a lot of its baggage that basically was rooted in our fear of change and has embraced change.

And I really believe that all the best stuff is still out there. You look at the last 8 years. It's a very impressive record. But basically what it did was lay the foundation for Americans together to be able to build the future of our dreams for ourselves and our children. Almost everybody in this room is younger than me, and most days, I'm okay about it. *[Laughter]* But you've got a lot more at stake in this election than I do.

And I believe that elections are determined, by and large, by what people think they're about. So that if people believe this is really about building the future of our dreams for our children, if they believe we have to empower everyone, if they believe we all do better when we work together, if they believe that the ideas that work are the ones that ought to be embraced instead of the ones that sound good in 5-second sound bites, then we'll win the White House, and we'll win the Senate, and we'll win the House, not because it's us but because of you and the future you want for yourselves and your children.

Martin Luther King once said, "The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice." It's a wonderful, eloquent line, and a lot of people said, "It's a wonderful, eloquent line, but it may not be true. Look at all the horrible things that happened in the 20th century." There is a new book out by Robert Wright, called "Non Zero." Some of you may have read it. But essentially what he argues is that as societies become more complex and people grow more interdependent, all of us are forced to look more and more for non-zero sum solutions, for win-win solutions, not win-lose solutions, for things that bring us together and unite us and

lift us all up, not things that divide us so I can win at your expense.

And that basically has been the social and economic policy we have tried to follow. I'm very proud that more millionaires and even more billionaires have been created in the last 8 years than at any time in American history by a long stretch. But I'm also proud that the people that are serving and catering this event tonight have a better chance to send their children to college and make a better life than they did before. I think that's important.

I just got back from Nigeria, and I went into this desperately poor village, and I had all these little children dancing for me and giving me their village gifts. And I was looking at those children, wondering whether there was someone who had just as good a brain as I did, who could grow up to speak just as well, and whether that person would have the chance, that boy or girl, to live their dreams as I have.

And one of the reasons I've loved the sort of new, high-tech world, even in the areas that challenge me technologically—[laughter]—is that I think that it is so egalitarian, and I think it's so open to people and their ideas and their efforts. And I think it also has more non-zero action than most sectors of the old economy. That's the sort of politics I believe we ought to embrace.

And so I'm going all across the country trying to help Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and all of our candidates for the Senate and the House, because it's the right thing to do for America's future.

Now, that brings me to Hillary and this race. You have to pick the person who will succeed to the Senate seat of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Robert Kennedy. You don't have to worry about whether she'll be the junior Senator. Senator Schumer's aggression will take care of that—[laughter]—and I say that with great admiration.

I do want to say one other thing about him. For all the good things he's done, the thing that I'll never forget is that he helped Al Gore and me and our administration stand up to the NRA and stand for gun safety.

But Senator Schumer already said a few things about Hillary. Let me say, of all the things that her adversaries sometimes say, the thing that steams me the most is that she wouldn't be doing this if she weren't the First Lady. What I want you to know is, if she weren't

the First Lady, she'd have been in a position to do this 25 years ago.

She will tell—when we first met and fell in love, I actually felt guilty about it because I thought I was robbing her of the career that I felt she should have. I thought she was better organized than me. I thought she was a better—I thought she understood things about public policy I didn't know. I thought she had more talent as a public servant than anybody I ever met. And I have watched her spend 30 years helping other people as a private citizen, all the way up until she came to the White House and she wrote a best-selling book and gave 100 percent of the money to children's charities that she earned; when she fought for the family and medical leave law; when she fought to insure millions more children under the Child's Health Insurance Program; when she fought for better treatment for breast cancer and diabetes and Parkinson's. And I could just go on and on and on.

I can tell you that when the record of this administration is written, one of the chapters will have to be how she fundamentally changed the scope, depth, and range of the role of First Lady.

I do think there ought to be one person in the Senate who is a recognized national lifetime advocate and expert on children's issues and on the relationship of work and childrearing and on education and health care. I think that's important. But the main thing you need to know is that I still feel the way I did almost 30 years ago: I've never known anybody that I thought had a greater capacity for public service, had a greater sense of mind and heart and operational effectiveness.

And I want to see this seat occupied by someone, yes, that I happened to have loved for three decades, but more important, whose love can change the future of America and New York in a positive way.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Jonathan Lidersdorf; dinner host committee members Jerry Colonna, Barbara Chang, Fernando Espuelas and his wife, Ann, and Andrew Rasiej; Senator John D. Rockefeller IV, who was Governor of West Virginia, 1976–1984; and Mark Green, New York City public advocate.

The President's Radio Address *September 9, 2000*

Good morning. This year our Nation is experiencing one of the worst wildfire seasons in memory. Extreme weather and lightning strikes have helped spark an estimated 250 fires every day. More than 6.6 million acres have burned already, and more than 35 large fires continue in 9 States. We've all witnessed the tragedy of family homes destroyed and admired the bravery of firefighters and citizens joining efforts to battle the blazes. I saw it firsthand in Idaho last month, and I'll never forget it.

Today I want to talk with you about important new steps we're taking to help communities recover and to ease the threat of fires in the years ahead. For months now, we've been mobilizing Federal resources to provide firefighters and communities the tools they need to combat the fires. More than 25,000 Federal, State, and local personnel have been engaged in the effort. We provided \$590 million in emergency firefighting funds, and recently I declared Montana and Idaho disaster areas, making them eligible for more Federal relief. But we must do more.

That's why I directed Interior Secretary Babbitt and Agriculture Secretary Glickman to prepare a report outlining a strategy to help communities recover from these fires and to ensure that others are spared from similar tragedies in the future. Today I'm accepting the recommendations contained in this report and announcing the first steps we're taking to implement them.

First, saving lives and property is and will remain priority one. Our Nation is blessed with the best firefighting force in the world. They're doing an extraordinary job in some of the most dangerous and difficult conditions imaginable. Some are finally returning home for well-deserved rest. But the fire season isn't over, and as long as the fires burn, our firefighters will continue to receive our strong support to get the job done as quickly and safely as possible.

Second, we're launching new actions to help hard-hit communities recover as the smoke clears. Once the fires are out, the threat doesn't stop. Rain, for example, could trigger mudslides, and dirty runoff threatens water quality. To help prevent further damage, we've dispatched more than 50 rapid response teams to work with local

communities to develop plans to repair damaged lands and protect precious water supplies.

In addition, we've just released nearly \$40 million for 90 restoration projects throughout the West. We'll also soon establish one-stop centers in Idaho and Montana, so that citizens can gain quick access to assistance, from unemployment aid to small business loans. We want to make sure the help gets to those who need it right away.

Finally, we must continue to take a long-range look to diminish the threats from fires in the years ahead. For almost 100 years our Nation pursued a policy focusing on extinguishing all wildfires. It was well-intentioned, but as a result, many of our forests now have an unnatural buildup of brush and shrubs. This excessive undergrowth fuels forest fires, making them far more dangerous and difficult to control.

Our administration has taken a new approach to protect communities and reduce wildfire risks by getting rid of the forest underbrush that has accumulated over the last century. We're reducing the risk of fire on more than 2.4 million acres a year, a fivefold increase since 1994. We want to work with communities to expand these efforts in an environmentally sensitive way, particularly in those areas at greatest risk of wildfire.

Today's report provides a blueprint for action, immediate steps to deliver assistance to hard-hit communities, new measures to build on our efforts to ease the threat of wildfires nationwide. The report recommends an additional \$1.5 billion to carry out this strategy, and I'm committed to working with the Congress to secure this critical funding.

Throughout this wildfire season, we've seen our fellow citizens come together to save lives and aid communities in need. That's the best of the American spirit. It's reflected in these new steps to help put out the fires today, help communities heal tomorrow, and help to reduce wildfire threats for years to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6 p.m. on September 8 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September