

Alisa, who sang the national anthem; Representative Crowley's wife, Kasey; New York City Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi; State Assemblyman Brian McLaughlin; former President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

(Serbia and Montenegro); Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and Nava Barak, wife of Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel.

## Remarks at a Westchester County Democratic Party Dinner in New Rochelle, New York October 23, 2000

Thank you. Thanks. *[Laughter]* Thank you for the wonderful welcome. Thank you for being here in such large numbers. Thank you for making David Alpert look good tonight at the Westchester County Democratic dinner. *[Laughter]* Thank you, Dennis Mehiel, for your friendship and your support. I want to thank my great friend John Catsimatidis for helping you at this dinner, and Anthony Pagano and everyone else who had anything to do with the dinner.

I want to thank the county executive, Andy Spano, for being such a good friend to Hillary and to me and making me feel welcome here in Westchester County. Our great comptroller, Carl McCall, we welcome him tonight. And I want to thank the two people here who, next to Hillary, are most responsible for making me look good over the last 8 years, Representatives Eliot Engel and Nita Lowey. Thank you very much for all you have done, wherever they are.

Now, let me say to all of you, I want you to have most of the time to listen to Hillary and to think about this Senate race, but I want to say just a few things about how the race for the Senate in New York relates to the larger national campaign, which will also unfold 2 weeks from tomorrow. I want to begin by thanking you all from the bottom of my heart for the phenomenal support that the people of New York have given to me and Al Gore in 1992 and then in 1996. I am very grateful.

I would just say, to me there are basically three or four questions that are really important. I think they matter in the Senate race. I think they matter in the race for President and Vice President. And I hope you will share them with friends of yours who not only live in New York but live in other States, because every one of you has tons of friends or family members, co-workers, some of whom live in New York, some

of whom don't even live in this State, who will never come to a dinner like this. Isn't that right?

When you come to a dinner like this, don't you have some people say, "Why do you spend your time and money doing that?" *[Laughter]* You do, don't you? Everyone one of you do, right? But all these people that sometimes make fun of you, sometimes want to know why you're doing this, virtually all of them are going to vote 2 weeks from tomorrow, or they would if they knew exactly what was at stake.

So while we're all having a good time tonight, and the temptation is just for me to hit you with a bunch of one-liners that make you want to scream with joy—*[laughter]*—the truth is, what we should be focused on is, how do we get people who don't come to dinners like this, who aren't as political as we are but who love our country very much and will definitely show up at election time, to understand this election in the way that we understand it?

I told the Democratic Congress and the Senate the other day that we ought to think of ourselves as America's weather corps, that if we can make the choices clear, our side wins. If the choices can be blurred and remain cloudy, we have a lot more trouble. So over the next 2 weeks, this is what I could say, if I could personally speak to all your family and friends: Here's why you ought to be for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary.

Number one, we've had the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded. And it's really important to keep this prosperity going, especially if you want to extend it to the inner-city neighborhoods in New York and the rural counties in New York that still haven't fully participated. You will never be able

to do that unless you keep the economy going, keep unemployment down, and keep it going.

Now, you have a choice. And what our side says is, "Look, we're going to have a tax cut, not near as big as theirs, not nearly as big. And we're going to focus it on paying for college tuition, paying for long-term care for elderly or disabled relatives, financing retirement, paying for child care, the basic things that families need today, and inducing people to invest in areas that are still underdeveloped."

But it's a smaller tax cut than theirs. We admit it. Why? Because we want money to invest in education and health care and the environment, what we have to invest in technology and national defense, and we've got to keep paying down the debt. The single most important economic difference in the election today is that our budget pays down the debt and gets America out of debt for the first time since 1835.

Now, why is that important? Why is that important, and why should people, even people who do quite well and would get more money in the short run under their tax cut, support our program? Because if you pay the debt down, you keep interest rates lower. If you keep interest rates lower, it's like a whole other tax cut. If we keep interest rates a percent lower a year for a decade, and that's about what the difference in the two plans will do, do you know what that's worth to you, as an American? Listen to this: \$390 billion in lower home mortgages; \$30 billion in lower car payments; \$15 billion in lower college loan payments; plus lower credit card payments; plus lower business loans, which means more businesses, more jobs, higher incomes, and a better stock market. It's a tax cut for everyone, to get America out of debt. It is the progressive, right thing to do.

We have worked so hard to turn a \$290 billion deficit into a \$230 billion surplus, so hard after quadrupling the national debt for 12 years, before we came in, to start paying the national debt off. This is a big deal. You need to go out and tell people, "If you want to keep the prosperity going, support Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary and get this country out of debt to keep interest rates down."

Number two: Second thing you ought to say is, if you want to build on the progress in areas other than the economy and keep our society growing stronger, you should vote for Gore/Lieberman, and Hillary. Look at where we were

8 years ago compared to now. The crime rate has dropped every year to a 26-year low. The murder rate is at a 33-year low. Gun violence down 35 percent. In the environment, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the drinking water is safer; the food is safer. We cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps in 8 years as they did in 12. We set aside more land in perpetuity than any administration since that of Theodore Roosevelt 100 years ago. And the economy got better.

We added 26 years to the life of Medicare, had the most sweeping improvements in diabetes since the development of insulin, did more to prevent breast cancer and prostate cancer, provided health insurance for children of low-income working parents, which has given us the first decline in uninsured people in 12 years. In education, we sponsored higher standards, accountability, smaller classes. We're in the process of putting 100,000 teachers in the schools. We've gone from zero to serving 800,000 children in after-school programs. We're trying to build or modernize schools. We've opened the doors to 2 years of college to everybody, and our college tax credits are now being taken advantage of by 10 million families.

What are the results of all this? A lower drop-out rate, a higher graduation rate, higher test scores, the biggest college going rate in history. So the question is, are we going to keep going in the right direction? If you want to go in the right direction, since there are honest differences in this campaign, on crime policy, on environmental policy, on health care policy, on education policy—it's not like you don't have a record here. And the differences are honest and heartfelt. So Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary, they'll do what they think is right, and our opponents, they'll do what they think is right.

But we have a record here. So you have to say, if you want to build on the prosperity of the last 8 years, and you want to take on the big challenges of the future—excellence in education for everybody, closing the digital divide, opening the 4 years of college, making the most of the human genome, protecting the privacy rights of people and their medical and financial records, all these big new questions—you only have one choice. You've got to vote for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary, if that's what you want.

The third thing and maybe the most important is, you ought to vote for them because we are really the party of one America. We believe that our diversity of all kinds is interesting and makes America more exciting, makes us much better prepared for the global society we'll be living in, but we think our common humanity is even more important. And that has very practical implications. It means we think all these young people that served your meal tonight, they ought to have the same chance to go to college and send their kids to college as people who could afford to come here and buy a ticket tonight do.

It means we're for raising the minimum wage. It means we're for stronger enforcement of the equal pay laws, because there's still discrimination against women in the workplace today, and we think we ought to get rid of it. It means we're for strong hate crimes legislation and employment nondiscrimination legislation. It means that we are for a Supreme Court that will protect a woman's right to choose and the other basic fundamental rights.

Look, I have spent, as all of you know, and many of you mentioned tonight when I saw you earlier, I spent a lot of time the last 8 years trying to bring peace to the world. We've made a lot of progress in Northern Ireland. We've made a lot of progress in the Balkans, after combat in Kosovo and conflict in Bosnia. We finally had the last dictator in that part of the world gone from office now. We've worked for 8 years in Korea to try to bring an end to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula. We're closer than ever before, and the Secretary of State of the United States is in North Korea, and the President of South Korea won the Nobel Peace Prize because he went with an outstretched hand and said, "Let's put an end to the Korean war. It's been 50 years."

The world is moving in the right direction. And until 2 weeks ago, you could make the same case about the Middle East. With all the trouble that has roiled the Middle East in the last 2 weeks—I don't want to talk too much about it tonight, because I find when I'm heavily involved in something like this, the more I say about it, the less positive impact I can have, and the less I say, the more I can get done. But suffice it to say that the United States has been a friend to Israel, has believed in Israel and its right to be in the Middle East, and has thought the only way, ultimately, for real

peace and security to come was through a reconciliation and a peace process that would end the violence and enable everybody to live on fair and decent terms. And I don't think all this is going to change that.

The reason I mention it to you is this. So much of the world's trouble, in this most modern of ages, where all of our kids are teaching us more than we know about computers, where the human genome—this is literally the truth—the human genome will lead to the younger women in this audience who have, let's say, 10 years of childbearing left, I think in about 10 years, women will be coming home from the hospital with kids that will have a life expectancy of about 90 years. There's going to be an enormous number of wonderful things happening, and the old world we live in is bedeviled by the oldest fear of mankind. We are still paralyzed by our fear and distrust and our vulnerability to slip into violence and hatred against people who are different from us; they're of a different race, a different ethnic group, a different faith.

And we can all clap when we look around this room. I mean, look around this room. This is America in the 21st century. And we can all clap about it; it's great. But what we need to understand is, you just look what happened to people who have been working together for 7½ years, in the last 2 weeks. And I'm telling you, the country needs a leader in the White House and a voice in the Senate that—people who believe with the core of their being that what we have in common is more fundamentally significant than all of our differences. Our differences are interesting. Our common humanity is fundamental.

So, if somebody asks you tomorrow—and I wish you wouldn't wait for them to ask—why you showed up here and why are you doing this and why are you for Hillary or Al Gore or Joe Lieberman, I hope you will say, "Well, you see, there are three reasons. One is, I'd kind of like to keep this prosperity going, and the only way to do it is to keep paying down this debt, investing in our future, and take a tax cut we can afford instead of one that looks good. Number two, I'd like to keep making progress. I like the fact that we've got a cleaner environment, a lower crime rate, better schools, more people with health insurance, and I want to build on that progress, not turn around. And number three, the most important thing of all

is, I want to keep building one America, where we grow closer together, where we believe everybody counts, everybody deserves a chance, and we all do better when we help each other.” That’s what you ought to say. And you ought not to wait for somebody to ask you to say that. [Laughter]

I’m telling you, these races are close, and you may have more influence over the kind of people I’m talking about than I would. And you need to know just what three things to say. That’s what I believe. If I were talking to any of your friends or family members alone in a room, with nobody looking and no media covering it, and they said, “Why should I vote for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman? Why should I vote for your wife for Senate?” those are the three things I would say. And I hope you’ll say them.

And let me just say one other thing. Dennis is going to come up here and introduce Hillary, but I want to say just one or two things about her candidacy. First of all, I am grateful to all of you for being so good to her, and I am immensely proud of her for having the courage to run and for running as she has for this last year and some odd months.

We met almost 30 years ago, and even then she was literally obsessed with the welfare of children and families, with education and health care and early childhood development. We worked together for a dozen years when I was Governor of my native State on education and economic development. One of the reasons the people in upstate New York ought to vote for her is that she literally devoted an enormous percentage of her time for years and years and years to just what upstate needs now, which is figuring out how to get investment and opportunity to places that aren’t fully participating in the national economy.

When she became First Lady, she traveled all over the world, from the Balkans to Northern

Ireland to the Middle East to Africa to the Indian subcontinent, trying to promote peace and reconciliation and the interests of young girls and families that were left behind in poorer societies. She sponsored the Millennium Project, to preserve our treasures for the new millennium, which has done a lot for New York. It’s the biggest historic preservation movement in history, in American history—the biggest one—\$100 million in public and private money that among other things preserve George Washington’s revolutionary headquarters in this State, Harriet Tubman’s home, Louis Armstrong’s home and archives, in places that it’s good for tourism, good for community pride, and good for the history of this great State.

I can just tell you that in 30 years of working in public life—you know, it’s probably not even fashionable to say this quote until the election, but I basically like most of the people I’ve known in politics. I find that most of the Republicans and well as most of the Democrats I’ve know are honest people who work hard and do what they think is right, to the best of their ability to do it. But I have never known anybody that had the combination of intelligence, compassion—compassion and commitment and ability to get things done and think of new things to do that Hillary has. She will be a worthy successor to Senator Moynihan and a great partner for Chuck Schumer.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 p.m. at the VIP Club. In his remarks, he referred to dinner emcee David Alpert, chairman, Westchester County Democratic Party; dinner cohosts Dennis Mehiel, John A. Catsimatidis, and Anthony Pagano; New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea.

## Remarks at a Tribute to Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina October 24, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, to all our friends from North Carolina, welcome to Washington. I’m glad you’re here. The two previous speakers have been two of the closest

friends I’ve had in politics and two of the best Governors with whom I’ve ever served. And so I thank them both.