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workers and businesses as trade barriers are cut further. In all my discussion with Asian and with Latin American leaders, my message is clear: We need to keep working to open these markets; it's the best path for prosperity, for growth, for good jobs, for better lives for people in America and people in all these other nations.

We can build this future of better prosperity, stability, and prosperity we committed ourselves to in Blake Island, Washington, in 1993 if we keep working on it in Vancouver.

Thank you very much.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President—[*inaudible*]—sanctions on Iraq?

The President. I reiterated my position, and I'll be glad to say it again. The United States is concerned about the welfare of the people of Iraq; we don't want to see them suffer unnecessarily. We took the lead in putting in place a policy in the United Nations that permits us to expand humanitarian assistance there. But the most important thing is that those inspectors need to be back at work, and they need to work without impediment. Mr. Butler gave a report today to the United Nations Security Council which points out that there are still impediments to their work, and he recommends a more robust inspection regime. That is what we need to focus on.

I understand President Yeltsin's position, and I thank him for the work they did to end the crisis, at least temporarily—we hope it's ended permanently, but we're not sure. But keep in mind, it is more difficult for these inspectors to do their work with regard to biological and chemical weapons than it is with regard to missile and nuclear issues under their jurisdiction. And we have to do more.

And again I say, I want to compliment the members of the press. We sometimes have our differences, but I think there has been a real effort to make the public aware of the storage of chemical and biological agents that Iraq admitted having in 1989 and now has no records, cannot produce records proving it destroyed—and then the admitted stores that were there in 1995, just 2 years ago.

So I just want to—what I emphasized to President Yeltsin is we have come a long way by working together, and we have to continue to work together. And the decisions about what to do with the inspections should be made based on the evidence, the facts, and the professional judgment of the inspectors. Neither the political inclinations of the United States nor of our allies should control those decisions.

This is about the future safety not only of the people in Iran and on its borders but indeed of the whole world. It's not hard to carry this stuff around in small amounts once it's developed.

So it was a very good conversation, a very forthright one, and I thought a constructive one, and I believe it will enable us to take the next steps by working together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at the Denver International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Wilma J. Webb, wife of Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver; Richard Butler, chairman, United Nations Special Commission; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Denver

November 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Governor, I'm very grateful for what you said and grateful for what you're doing. It's hard enough to be a Governor; even if you've been doing it as long as Roy has—[*laughter*]—it still requires some effort. And to do that and still be willing to travel around the country and represent the Democratic Party and deal with the challenges we've had to face in this last year takes somebody with a heart of gold, and a steel backside to be on the plane all the time, and a pretty tough skin to take some of the slings and arrows that they fling at you. And I don't think we could have had a better leader for our party than Roy Romer in this last year. And I'm very grateful to you.

Thank you, Mrs. Webb, for being here and for what you said. Wilma and I had a good talk at lunch about the kind of the afterglow of the experience we had in bringing the

G–8 conference here a few months ago. When I saw Sharon I told her that for the rest of my life every time I saw her I would imagine her riding into the arena on that beautiful horse. [*Laughter*] I was almost willing to take odds she would have ridden in here on that horse today. It was wonderful.

But it was a great experience for us. And it was a great thing for me to be able to show that part of America to the other world leaders and to the rather vast retinue that came with them from all over the world. And I can tell you, they were just fascinated because—I was kind of carping at lunch—I go a lot of places, but very often I might as well just be moving around from Federal office building to Federal office building in Washington. Sylvia Matthews is hiding her head. You know, my staff's idea of a good foreign trip is: I get off the airplane; I get in a limousine; I go to a government office building; I talk to three people over a cup of coffee; I go get briefed for an hour; I go to a dinner; I sleep a little bit and turn around and come home. And it doesn't really matter what country I'm in. I'm always ragging them about that. [*Laughter*]

But you were able to show all these people something really special about Colorado, about the West, and about the diversity and texture of America. And that's important because we have the same problems in dealing with each other around the world as sometimes we do in Washington. That is, the harder that you work and the less interpersonal time you have, the more likely you are to be driven by whatever the difference of the moment is being exaggerated by people who either work for you or work for them or write about it in the political press, and you wind up drifting apart. And so—and sometimes unnecessarily. So the fact that—I mean, you really did further the interest of the United States in building a more cooperative, peaceful world simply by letting them see real people living real lives in an interesting and, for them, a novel context. So I thank you for that.

Roy said one other thing that I want to reiterate. I want you to know that I thank you for being here, and you have to understand that there is a significant connection between your presence here and what happens in Washington and what has happened in Washington for the last 5 years. I don't think anyone would dispute the proposition that this country is in better shape than it was in 1992. And in 1992 when I ran for President, I wanted to take our country in a new direction based on our oldest values of work and family and opportunity and responsibility, community and world leadership, the things that America has stood for throughout this entire century, and most of it for most of our existence.

But it was obvious that we needed, among other things, a different notion of Government—that the arguments that I read as a Governor—and every Governor I knew, including yours, had the same reaction. We'd read in the paper every day, wherever we lived out here in the hinterland, about some fight they were having in Washington. And it looked to me like they were having a fight about whether the Government should try to do everything when we were broke and couldn't, or whether the Government should do nothing and just sit on the sidelines because Government was the source of all of our ills. Where we lived and worked and the people we worked with, we didn't think either one of those things was true.

So the first thing I did was, I went there with a determination to try to get decisionmakers in Washington to rethink the notion of Government and the role of Government in moving America forward and in bringing America together. And I believe that the role of Government is to give people the tools they need and establish the conditions so they can make the most of their own lives. And therefore, I think we should do those things which promote both opportunity and responsibility among citizens. We should do those things which bring us together, across the lines that divide us, into one America. And we should do the things that are necessary to maintain our leadership for peace and prosperity and freedom in the world, because all those things are necessary if we're going to have a 21st century which can be, and I believe will be, the best time in all of human history for the people of our country and hopefully for people around the world.

Now, there are differences between the parties. When I became President, my economic policy was unanimously opposed by the other party in Congress—unanimously. Not a single one of them voted for my economic plan in 1993. And they said it would be the ruination of America; it would deepen the recession; it would explode the deficit. Well, 5 years later that plan has produced $810 billion worth of deficit reduction. The deficit is 92 percent smaller than it was when I took office—92 percent. That is before—it's very important you understand it—that is before the bipartisan balanced budget agreement kicks in. One reason we were able to have a bipartisan balanced budget and agree on how to do it is, it's not so hard once 90 percent of the heavy lifting is behind you. [*Laughter*] And I think it's important to emphasize that.

The second thing that we were able to do is to develop a national crime policy. And again, the leaders of the other party opposed my crime policy. I sometimes get tickled when I read in the paper, they talk about how the President adopted Republican positions on crime. I said, ''Hello? Who are these people? Where were they?'' [*Laughter*] They fought bitterly—bitterly.

Now, it's no secret; I've got a good personal relationship with Senator Dole and a fair and a high estimation of him. I awarded him the Medal of Freedom. I think he's a remarkable fellow. The angriest I ever heard him on the floor of the Senate was when he was unsuccessful in filibustering the crime bill. He tried to kill it.

The NRA was against it, said I was going to take everybody's guns away. And they said, ''If you put 100,000 police on the streets it wouldn't make a lick of difference—just as sort of a boondoggle.'' They attacked us for being for after-school programs for kids and preventive programs to keep kids out of trouble in the first place. But our crime bill was basically written out of the experience of police officers and prosecutors and community leaders who were in communities where they were already lowering the crime rate by doing what was in our bill.

So we passed the bill with 100,000 police officers and with tougher punishment where appropriate, but with prevention measures and with the assault weapons ban. And 5 years later, we've had 5 years of steeply dropping crime, and the murder rate has dropped 22 percent in the last 3 years in this country.

Now, you know here in Denver—you've just been through it—the crime rate is still too high, and there's still too much violence in this country. But we're going in the right direction. And that happened because of a political choice the American people made, and they knew how to make it in part because they heard the messages of the competing candidates. There is a direct connection between your presence here and that decision. And we had a huge fight about it.

In welfare, the same thing is true. I didn't mind letting the States set the level of assistance to people on welfare because they had been, in effect, doing that for 25 years anyway. Before I ever signed the welfare reform law, there was a difference of more than four to one—more than four to one—between what a family on welfare could get in the State where the benefits were the lowest and the State where the benefits were the highest—three and half to one. I don't want to over-exaggerate—[*laughter*]—three and a half to one. I just redid the math in my head.

And I had no problem in requiring people who are on welfare who are able-bodied and able-minded to go to work. I thought that was important, because—we were talking around our table—half the welfare caseload was becoming people who were just permanently on welfare, almost, and sometimes intergenerationally. And that has nothing to do with compassion. You are not being compassionate when you leave people in a position of dependency when they don't have to be there.

On the other hand, it's important, it seemed to me, when you require people who can work to work, not to ask them to hurt their children in doing it. After all, the biggest problem working families have today, many working families, is balancing the demand of taking care of their kids and taking care of their job. And I hear people even with very comfortable income levels, when they're honest, say they feel conflicts between their obligations to their children and their obligations at work. And I think that

it's not an exaggeration to say the most important job that any society has, ever, is raising good, strong, ethical children. That is society's most important job. So why should we expect people on welfare to sacrifice the most important job of society to do what is the most important job, arguably, in the short run to give them the self-respect and the independence they need to contribute to our common welfare?

So I vetoed two bills because they took away medical care and nutrition for kids and they didn't give enough money for child care and because I wanted more money to put people to work in high unemployment areas. Once we resolved those things, I signed that bill. And I think it's a good thing. And the results are clear: We had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history, 3.8 million fewer people on welfare than the day I became President. So we're moving in the right direction.

The environment: The air is cleaner; the water is purer; the food supply is safer; and there are fewer toxic waste dumps. And we proved you could grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time. Now we have to prove we can do that with greenhouse gas emissions to deal with the climate change issue. And it will be tougher, but it clearly can be done—clearly. There's no question, if you just look at the evidence, that we can do it.

So what I want you to know is that every time you see something like that, that's good; that's a product of a choice because we had a fight about all those issues. We had an honest debate, a partisan debate about these issues. In this last year we passed a balanced budget agreement that had overwhelming bipartisan support, but there were elements that our side brought to it. We said, okay, we want to balance the budget, and we don't mind giving families the tax cut; we don't mind giving businesses the tax cut if we invest properly in giving all Americans access to college—we want tax breaks for that; we want to spend some money to provide health insurance coverage to the children of working families who don't have it.

We've got enough money for 5 million more kids to get health insurance in working families with low incomes. That's half the uninsured kids in the country. And we got the biggest new investment in education since 1965. That was because of choices that we made in Washington that the people who were there wouldn't have been able to make if you hadn't helped us get there. There's a direct connection between your presence here and the things that are in that budget.

And just this last week—let me just close with this—I had a week—it was a killer of a week. And what you saw probably in the headlines was the work we were doing on Iraq, but let me tell you what else went on last week.

We signed a bill that we worked on for 2 years to overhaul the way the Food and Drug Administration regulates medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and the foodstuffs they regulate—2 years. It passed by voice vote—everybody. But underneath that there were these incredible conflicts and rubbing up against—and debates and everything. And the way it came out, I believe the public interest is dramatically advanced, because if you've got a safe drug or if you've got a safe medical device, for goodness sakes, you want it on the market as quick as possible. So we had to strike all those balances. Well, the public interest side of that—a lot of that work over the last 2 years came from people that you helped to elect and from attitudes that you helped to advance.

I signed a bill dramatically overhauling the foster care and adoption procedures and clearing away a lot of the obstacles to quicker adoption, even for children that have serious health problems. And my wife has worked on these subjects for 25 years. I have rarely seen her as happy as she was last week. [*Laughter*]

And all these advocates from all over the country came in, and I met a family that had adopted 20 children, including 3 of them who were wheelchair-bound. And to see these people who care about these kids—you know, just last year we put in a $5,000 tax credit for adoption. But you need to know—we all talk about how we believe in family values—there are hundreds of thousands of kids out there that need a home that are trapped in a foster care system.

And one of my staff members after it was over came up to me with tears in his eyes—

the guy has nothing to do with the human services area—he came up to me, and he had tears in his eyes and said, "I just want you to know that I spent 9 years of my childhood in one foster home after another. And this is going to change entire lives for people."

And then I went to Wichita, Kansas, to the Cessna plant and saw what that company is doing to take hardcore welfare recipients and put them through training programs and guarantee them jobs. And a lot of these women have been severely beaten by their spouses or partners, have no money, are high school dropouts. Cessna provides housing, a 3-month training program, a 3-month pre-job program, and a guaranteed job for anybody who can finish. And I saw people speaking—they had two of these women speaking. If you'd been told that 6 months ago they were on welfare and had less than a high school education, you wouldn't have believed it. You would have thought they were members of the Wichita City Council. [*Laughter*] And I expect they both could be if they put themselves up for election now. [*Laughter*]

We announced—you saw yesterday, we announced that we're going to have the first permanent peace talks between North and South Korea, in the four-party context we proposed, since the end of the Korean war. We're working through a very difficult situation in Iraq, and I think in an appropriate way. And I know those things have dominated the news. But if you think about what happened in America for Americans this week, there were a couple of times when all of us just looked at each other and said, "You know, this is what we got in public life to do. This is what makes all the other stuff worth it."

And what I want you to understand is, the decisions that are made—and the way they're made—are made by real human beings who have real views and real convictions, in conflict with other real human beings who also have honest views.

You know, I had a long talk with Senator Lott yesterday. I like Senator Lott. You know, we lived across the river from each other in our former lives, and it's nice having the Senate Majority Leader without an accent. [*Laughter*] We like each other. We understand each other. I had to give him 5 pounds of barbecue when Mississippi beat Arkansas in football. [*Laughter*] I like him. And he would tell you the same thing. We really look at the world differently. We see things differently. We have honest differences of opinion. And what Roy told you is true: That's what's kept this country going for 220 years.

I believe history will record that at this moment in time our views were right and that we prepared the world—prepared America for a totally new world. But you've got to know that you helped to make it possible. And you should never let that sort of fashionable rhetoric demeaning the whole act of contributing to your democracy so people who believe what you do can hold up their side—that's there's something wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with that.

Tonight when you go home, you think about being at this lunch; you think about those adopted kids; you think about the people who are going to get drugs that will keep them alive; you think about those women that can now be going into the work force because their kids do have food and medicine and child care; you think about the doors of college being opened to everybody for the first time in the history of this country. You think about all that and be proud.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. in the Mansion at the Lawrence C. Phipps Memorial Conference Center-University of Denver.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Denver

November 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you, Governor, Congressman Skaggs, Representative DeGette, Vice Chair Rodriguez, and Lieutenant Governor Schottler, and to all the office holders and all the candidates and all the would-be office holders. I'm delighted to see my longtime friend Dottie Lamm and all the others here who are going to put themselves up in our Democratic primary for office this next year. Thank you for being here. I'm glad to see Americans here from all walks of life, Native Americans, Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, a few of us Irish boys. [*Laughter*] This