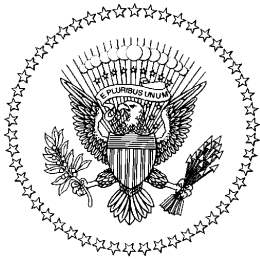


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 26, 1999

**The President's News Conference**

*March 19, 1999*

**Kosovo**

**The President.** Ladies and gentlemen, as all of you know, we have been involved in an intensive effort to end the conflict in Kosovo for many weeks now. With our NATO allies and with Russia, we proposed a peace agreement to stop the killing and give the people of Kosovo the self-determination and government they need and to which they are entitled under the constitution of their government.

Yesterday the Kosovar Albanians signed that agreement. Even though they have not obtained all they seek, even as their people remain under attack, they've had the vision to see that a just peace is better than an unwinnable war. Now only President Milosevic stands in the way of peace.

Today the peace talks were adjourned because the Serbian negotiators refused even to discuss key elements of the peace plan. NATO has warned President Milosevic to end his intransigence and repression or face military action.

Our allies are strongly united behind this course. We are prepared, and so are they, to carry it out. Today I reviewed our planning with my senior advisers and met with many Members of Congress. As we prepare to act, we need to remember the lessons we have learned in the Balkans. We should remember the horror of the war in Bosnia, the sounds of sniper fire aimed at children, the faces of young men behind barbed wire, the despairing voices of those who thought nothing could be done. It took precious time to achieve allied unity there, but when we did, our firmness ended all that. Bosnia is now at peace.

We should remember the thousands of people facing cold and hunger in the hills of Kosovo last fall. Firmness ended that as well. We should remember what happened

in the village of Racak back in January—innocent men, women, and children taken from their homes to a gully, forced to kneel in the dirt, sprayed with gunfire—not because of anything they had done, but because of who they were.

Now, roughly 40,000 Serbian troops and police are massing in and around Kosovo. Our firmness is the only thing standing between them and countless more villages like Racak—full of people without protection, even though they have now chosen peace.

Make no mistake, if we and our allies do not have the will to act, there will be more massacres. In dealing with aggressors in the Balkans, hesitation is a license to kill. But action and resolve can stop armies and save lives.

We must also understand our stake in peace in the Balkans and in Kosovo. This is a humanitarian crisis, but it is much more. This is a conflict with no natural boundaries. It threatens our national interests. If it continues, it will push refugees across borders and draw in neighboring countries. It will undermine the credibility of NATO, on which stability in Europe and our own credibility depend. It will likely reignite the historical animosities, including those that can embrace Albania, Macedonia, Greece, even Turkey. These divisions still have the potential to make the next century a truly violent one for that part of the world that straddles Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Unquestionably, there are risks in military action, if that becomes necessary. U.S. and other NATO pilots will be in harm's way. The Serbs have a strong air defense system. But we must weigh those risks against the risks of inaction. If we don't act, the war will spread. If it spreads, we will not be able to contain it without far greater risk and cost. I believe the real challenge of our foreign policy today is to deal with problems before they do permanent harm to our vital interests. That is what we must do in Kosovo.

Let me just make one other statement about this. One of the things that I wanted to do when I became President is to take advantage of this moment in history to build an alliance with Europe for the 21st century, with a Europe undivided, strong, secure, prosperous, and at peace. That's why I have supported the unification of Europe financially, politically, economically. That is why I've supported the expansion of NATO and a redefinition of its missions.

What are the challenges to our realizing that dream? The challenge of a successful partnership with Russia that succeeds in its own mission; the challenge of a resolution of the difficulties between Greece and Turkey so that Turkey becomes an ally of Europe and the West for the long term; and the challenge of instability in the Balkans. In different ways, all those things are at stake here.

I honestly believe that by acting now we can help to give our children and our grandchildren a Europe that is more united, more democratic, more peaceful, more prosperous, and a better partner for the United States for a long time to come.

I will say again to Mr. Milosevic, as I did in Bosnia, I do not want to put a single American pilot into the air; I do not want anyone else to die in the Balkans; I do not want a conflict. I would give anything to be here talking about something else today. But a part of my responsibility is to try to leave to my successors and to our country in the 21st century, an environment in Europe that is stable, humane, and secure. It will be a big part of America's future.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

**Q.** Mr. President, as you mentioned, Yugoslav forces seem to be mobilizing for war in Kosovo despite the warnings of NATO airstrikes. After so many threats in the past, why should President Milosevic take this one seriously? And is there is deadline for him to comply? And is it your intention to keep pounding Serb targets until he agrees to your peace terms?

**The President.** Well, there are several questions there, but let me say, I think he should take this seriously, because we meant—we were serious in Bosnia. And it

was the combined impact of NATO's action in Bosnia, plus the reversals they sustained on the ground in fighting, plus the economic embargo, that led them to conclude that peace was the better course.

Now, he says here that this is not like what happened last fall, that this threatens Serbia's sovereignty to have a multinational force on the ground in Kosovo. But he has put that at risk by his decade—and I want to reemphasize that—his decade of denial of the autonomy to which the Kosovars are legally entitled as a part of Serbia.

My intention would be to do whatever is possible, first of all, to weaken his ability to massacre them, to have another Bosnia; and secondly, to do all that I can to induce him to take—it is not my peace agreement. It was an agreement worked out and negotiated and argued over, with all the parties' concerns being taken into account.

I will say again—for the longest time, we did not believe that either side would take this agreement. And the fact that the Kosovar Albanians did it, I think, reflects foresight and wisdom on their part. They did not get everything they wanted. And in a peace agreement, nobody ever gets everything they want. We've seen it in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, everywhere else.

So it is not my agreement. It is the best agreement that all the parties can get to give us a chance to go forward without bloodshed. I believe, also, as I have said publicly to Mr. Milosevic and to the Serbs, it is their best chance to keep Kosovo as a part of Serbia and as a part of Yugoslavia. And so I would hope that the agreement could be accepted, and I'll do what I can to see that it is.

**Q.** And the deadline, sir—is there one?

**The President.** I don't want to discuss that. We're working on that. I expect to be working on this all weekend.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

### **Chinese Nuclear Espionage**

**Q.** Mr. President, how long have you known that the Chinese were stealing our nuclear secrets? Is there any trust left between the two nations? And some Republicans are saying that you deliberately suppressed the

information from the American people because of the election and your trade goals.

**The President.** Well, let me try to respond to all those things. First of all, the latter charge is simply untrue. We were notified—Mr. Berger was notified sometime in 1996 of the possibility that security had been breached at the labs, the Energy Department labs where a lot of our nuclear work is done, in the mideighties—not in the 1990's, but in the mideighties—and that there was an investigation being undertaken by the FBI.

Then, sometime in the middle of 1997, he was notified and I was notified that the extent of the security breach might have been quite extensive. So we had the CIA looking into that, the Energy Department looking into that, and the FBI investigation continued with the cooperation, the full cooperation of the Energy Department.

In early 1998 I propounded a Presidential directive designed to improve security at the labs. And as you know, Secretary Richardson's been talking quite a bit in recent days about what has been done since that directive was signed and what continues to be done today.

Now, I think there are two questions here that are related but ought to be kept separate. One is, was there a breach of security in the mideighties; if so, did it result in espionage? That has not been fully resolved, at least as of my latest briefing. The second is—there are really three questions, excuse me—the second is, once the executive branch was notified and the investigations began, was everything done in a timely fashion? I am confident that we in the White House have done what we could to be aggressive about this.

Look, if there was espionage against the United States, I will be very upset about it, as I have been every time there has been. And anybody who committed it ought to be punished, just as we went after Mr. Ames, anybody else who committed espionage against the United States.

In an effort to ensure that there was an independent review of this, in addition to whatever work is being done by the Senate and House committees—who have, as you know, received more than a dozen briefings over the course of this investigation, going back to 1996—I asked Senator Rudman,

former Republican Senator from New Hampshire, and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to review the chronology, to make an assessment, and to make any recommendations about what further action also might need to be taken. So I believe that's the appropriate thing to do.

Now, the third question is, what, if anything, does this mean about our relationship with China? I don't believe that we can afford to be under any illusions about our relationship with China, or any other country, for that matter, with whom we have both common interests and deep disagreements. I believe the course I have followed with China is the one that's best for America: disagreeing where we have serious disagreements; pursuing our common interests where I thought it was in the interest of the United States.

And again, let me say just one or two examples. I think if we hadn't been working with China, China would not have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention. They would very likely not have refrained from transferring dangerous technology and weaponry to countries that we don't believe should get it. I doubt if they would have helped us as much as they have to try to contain the North Korean nuclear threat, or that we would have had the level of cooperation we had in trying to limit the Asian financial crisis, which is a serious economic and security problem for our country.

And I think we should just take the facts as they come and do what is best for the American people. But I can say categorically that it never crossed my mind that I should not disclose some inquiry being undertaken by the United States Government for reasons of commercial or other gain. That is not true. I just think we should always pursue what is in the interest of the United States. And if we think we've got a security problem, we ought to fix it. Plainly, the security was too lax for years and years and years at the labs. And a lot of important changes have been made, and yesterday the Secretary of Energy announced some others.

I think that if anybody did, in fact, commit espionage, it is a bad thing, and we should take appropriate action. But in our dealings with China, we should do quite simply what

is in the interest of the American people, and that's what I intend to do.

Yes. And Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters], you're next.

**Q.** Mr. President, if I could follow up on this issue of alleged Chinese spying, you just said that according to your latest briefing, you've not fully resolved the issue of whether Chinese actually spied on the United States. Are you meaning to suggest that you're not certain at this hour whether there was, in fact, Chinese spying?

You also said that you've had the full cooperation of the Energy Department. How do you explain, sir, then, that in April of 1997, the FBI made specific recommendations to the Department of Energy about the need to tighten security and those recommendations were not followed through on for 17 months?

And, finally, sir, you mentioned the spying in the 1980's, or the alleged spying in the 1980's. Can you assure the American people that under your watch, no valuable nuclear secrets were lost?

**The President.** Well, you asked several questions there. Let me say, first of all, it's my understanding that the Energy Department has fully cooperated with the FBI in investigating the alleged breach in the mideighties, including the person who was suspected. That is my understanding.

On the question of what recommendations were implemented by whom, when, that's what I've asked for the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and Senator Rudman to review, to report to me on, as well as to make further recommendations.

I can tell you that I have—what I said about the espionage was that it is my understanding that the investigation has not yet determined for sure that espionage occurred. That does not mean that there was not a faulty security situation at the lab. The security procedures were too weak for years and years and years, for a very long time. And I believe that we are aggressively moving to correct that and a lot of changes have been made. I think Secretary Richardson has been quite vigorous in that regard.

The chronology about who did what, when, I think it's more important to have an independent analysis of that, which is why

I asked the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to do that.

Now, you asked me another question, which is can I tell you that there has been no espionage at the labs since I have been President. I can tell you that no one has reported to me that they suspect such a thing has occurred.

Larry.

### **Kosovo**

**Q.** Mr. President, you met this morning with Members of Congress. And afterward, some of them came out and said that they had trouble imagining how you could justify airstrikes in Kosovo unless the Serbs launched a new offensive first. In fact, Senator Nickles actually suggested that it might take a significant massacre before such a move would get public support.

In your mind, does the mere fact that the Serbs refused to sign a peace treaty justify airstrikes? Or do you think they need to—if they took military action, only then you could act?

**The President.** Well, first, I believe they have already taken provocative actions. And there was, in the very recent past, the massacre at the village that I mentioned in my opening statement. Plus, there is the long unquestioned record of atrocity in Bosnia.

So what we have tried to do all along—and frankly, the Russians have been with us in this; I don't mean that they support military action, but they've been with us in the peace process—is we could see that the same thing that happened in Bosnia and that had happened to some extent in Kosovo already, and had already produced tens of thousands of refugees in Kosovo, was going to happen there. And it seems to me that if we know that, and if we have a NATO action order predicated on the implementation of the peace process, and the failure to do it triggering reaction, that we ought to do what we can to prevent further atrocities.

I understand what Senator Nickles was saying. I think he was saying that the American public has not seen the sort of atrocities there they saw in Bosnia, that that is not fresh in people's minds. But with all the troops that have been massed, and what we know about their plans and what they have publicly

said about them, I would hate to think that we'd have to see a lot of other little children die before we could do what seems to be, to me, clearly the right thing to do to prevent it.

**Q.** So you would act first then? I mean—

**The President.** I don't think it's accurate to say we're acting first. I think they have acted first. They have massed their troops. They have continued to take aggressive action. They have already leveled one village in the recent past and killed a lot of innocent people. I do not believe that we ought to have to have thousands more people slaughtered and buried in open soccer fields before we do something. I think that would be unfortunate if we had said we have to have a lot more victims before we can stop what we know is about to happen.

Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

#### ***Mrs. Clinton's Possible Senate Bid/ Personal Relationship***

**Q.** Mr. President, there has been a lot of people in New York State who have spoken with your wife who seemed to be pretty much convinced she wants to run for the Senate seat next year. A, how do you feel about that; do you think she would be a good Senator? And as part of the broader question involving what has happened over the past year, how are the two of you doing in trying to strengthen your relationship, given everything you and she have been through over this past year?

**The President.** Well, on the second question, I think we're working hard. We love each other very much, and we're working at it.

On the first question, I don't have any doubt that she would be a magnificent Senator. She told me—oh, I don't know—over a year ago, and long before this ever occurred to anybody, long before we even knew Senator Moynihan wouldn't run for reelection—that she thought we should move to New York when I left the White House, knowing that I would spend a lot of time at home in my library and with the work there, but that we would also establish a home in New York. I don't have any doubt that she really would be a terrific Senator. She knows so

much about public policy; she cares so much about the issues, especially those that have a particular impact on New York, including the education and economic issues that would be very important to the people there.

But I also have to tell you, the people she's talking to must know more than I do because I literally don't have a clue. If you ask me today whether I thought it was more likely or not that she would run or not run, I could not give you an answer. I just don't know.

She's doing what I urged her to do, and what I think her instinct was, which is to talk to a lot of people. I think she was, at first, just immensely flattered that so many people wanted her to do it, but she couldn't really believe it. And I think now she's decided to take a look at it. But I don't have any idea what she's going to do. If she wants to do it, I will strongly support it. But I do not know and really have no idea what decision she will ultimately make.

**Q.** Mr. President—

**The President** Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service]. [*Laughter*]

#### ***Treatment of the President***

**Q.** Sir, will you tell us why you think people have been so mean to you? Is it a conspiracy? Is it a plan? They treat you worse than they treated Abe Lincoln.

**The President.** I don't know. You know, one of my favorite jokes—you know that story about the guy that's walking along the Grand Canyon? And he falls off, and he's falling hundreds of feet to certain death, and he reaches out—he sees a little twig on the side of the canyon, and he grabs it. He takes a deep breath, and then all of a sudden he sees the roots of the twig start to come loose. And he looks up in the sky and he said, "Lord, why me? Why me? I pay my taxes. I go to work every day. Why me?" And this thunderous voice says, "Son, there's just something about you I don't like." [*Laughter*]

Who knows? Let me say this. Let me give you a serious answer. Whatever happens, I have been very blessed in my life. Most of us leave this life further ahead than we would be if all we got was justice. Most of us get a fair share of mercy, too. And I wouldn't

trade anything for having had the opportunity to be President and do the work I've done. So I feel very good about all that.

Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News].

**Juanita Broaddrick**

**Q.** Mr. President, when Juanita Broaddrick leveled her charges against you of rape, in a nationally televised interview, your attorney, David Kendall, issued a statement denying them. But shouldn't you speak directly on this matter and reassure the public? And if they are not true, can you tell us what your relationship with Ms. Broaddrick was, if any?

**The President.** Well, 5 weeks ago today—5 weeks ago today—I stood in the Rose Garden, after the Senate voted, and I told you that I thought I owed it to the American people to give them 100 percent of my time and to focus on their business and that I would leave it to others to decide whether they would follow that lead.

And that is why I have decided as soon as that vote was over that I would allow all future questions to be answered by my attorneys, and I think I made the right decision. I hope you can understand it. I think the American people do understand it and support it, and I think it was the right decision.

Scott [Scott Pelley, CBS News].

**Q.** Can you not simply deny it, sir?

**The President.** There's been a statement made by my attorney. He speaks for me, and I think he spoke quite clearly.

Go ahead, Scott.

**Threshold for NATO Action in Kosovo**

**Q.** Mr. President, it seems you're on the verge of committing U.S. forces to combat without a clear definition of your threshold for doing so. In January, Serb troops massacred 44 civilians. You called it murder and demanded that the Serb forces withdraw. They did not. Last month you said it would be a mistake to extend the deadline, but the deadline passed. Last week your administration said atrocities would be punished, and then after that a bomb went off in a Kosovo market and killed numerous children. What level of atrocities, sir, is a sufficient trigger? What is your threshold?

**The President.** Well, you've just made my case. I think that the threshold has been crossed. But when I said that the deadline should not be extended, Mr. Pelley, what I said was that those of us who were trying to shepherd the process should not extend the deadline. When the parties themselves asked for a delay, that's an entirely different kettle of fish. The rest of us can't be so patronizing that we can't say to both sides they had no right to ask for a delay. They asked, themselves, for a delay, and I thought it was the right thing to do. I still believe that it was the right thing to do. And it did lead to one side accepting the agreement.

You have made another point, which I did not make in my remarks, but I would like to make, based on the factual statements you made—everything you said was right, all the factual things you've cited—which is that there are, basically, two grounds on which, in my judgment, NATO could properly take action. One is the fact that we have already said that if the peace agreement were accepted by the Kosovars, but not by the Serbs, we would take action to try to minimize the ability of the Serbs just to overrun and slaughter the Kosovars. That's the first thing I said.

The second thing, what you said is quite right. While our threat of force last year did result in the drastic reduction of the tension and a lot of the refugees going home, it is absolutely true that there have been actions taken since then and forced movements since then that would trigger the other NATO action order to use force. The reason that has not been done, frankly, is because the peace process was going on and we knew that if we could just get an agreement from both sides that we could end the violence and we wouldn't have to act under either ground.

So from my point of view, as I made clear to the Congress today, I think the threshold for their conduct has already been crossed.

John [John Harris, Washington Post].

**Q.** Sir, if I might follow up. With the OSCE monitors leaving tonight, if Serbian forces move into Kosovo, will that trigger NATO strikes?

**The President.** I've already said, I do not believe that—I think that whatever threshold they need to cross has been crossed. I think



that, in view of the present state of things, it would be better if I did not say any more about any particular plans we might have.

John.

### **Books by Former White House Staff Members**

**Q.** Sir, George Stephanopoulos has written a book that contains some tough and fairly personal criticism of you. Earlier, Dick Morris had written a somewhat similar book. How much pain do these judgments by former aides cause you? And do you consider it a betrayal for people to write books on the history of your administration while you're still in office?

**The President.** Well, like I said last night, I haven't read it. [Laughter] So I have absorbed no pain, since I haven't read either one of the books, but I—or even any articles about it. I don't think that furthers the commitment I made to the American people to focus on their business and their future.

What I will say is that I very much value the loyalty and service I have received from the overwhelming majority of the people who have worked here in the White House and in the Cabinet and in the administration, often under positions of almost unprecedented pressure. And I think that very often that kind of loyalty goes unrecognized, but it is not unappreciated by me.

I remember once, in the difficult days of early 1995, a scholar of the Presidency came here and said that I was a most fortunate person because I had enjoyed the most loyal Cabinet since Thomas Jefferson's second administration. It took my breath away when he said it, but the more I thought about it and the more I read about what had happened between this time and Mr. Jefferson's, the more I realized he was probably accurate. All I can tell you is I am profoundly grateful for the service and the loyalty that I have received, that our cause has received, and I think the American people have benefited quite richly from it.

Mr. Walsh [Ken Walsh, U.S. News & World Report].

### **Post Impeachment Impressions**

**Q.** Mr. President, I understand that you don't want to speculate about what your op-

ponents might do now, after the impeachment struggle is over. But I wonder what your feelings are after some period of reflection on the impeachment process, how you were treated, and if you feel resentment, relief, and how you think people will deal with this and see it 10 or 20 years from now.

**The President.** I think it's best for me not to focus on that now. I think it's best for me to focus on my job. I have nearly 2 years to go. I have an enormous amount to do. I am trying to convince the Congress to adopt what, if they do adopt it, would be the most ambitious set of legislative proposals yet in my tenure, probably even more ambitious than the economic reforms of '93 or the balanced budget of '97 or any of the other things that were done—to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century, to pay our debt down, to secure our economy for the long run. And it seems to me that anything I say or do, or any time I spend working on that will detract from my ability to be an effective President. And I owe that to the American people, and so that's what I'm going to focus on.

Yes, go ahead.

### **Personal Savings Rate/National and International Economies**

**Q.** Mr. President, with the Dow crossing the 10,000 mark, the stock market is trading well above any traditional benchmarks. Meanwhile, the personal savings rate has dropped below zero, largely in part, perhaps, because of rising stock prices. Are you worried that the U.S. and the world economies have become too dependent on a stock market that may be overvalued, and if so, is there anything the administration can do about it?

**The President.** I think what the administration should do is focus on the economic fundamentals at home and focus on fixing what appears to be, in my judgment, the biggest remaining obstacle to continued growth around the world on which our growth depends. I think that the savings rate, the aggregate savings rate of the country is very important for the long-term economic health of America.

I don't think there's any question that the savings rate dropping to zero or negative in the last quarter of last year is in part due

to the fact that people feel that they have more wealth. Now, that is not a bad thing that they have more wealth. One of the things that I'm really pleased about is that through retirement funds and other things, there is a more broad sharing of the wealth in America.

But I would like to just say the two things I think I should be working on, and this is something I ask all of you to watch as we debate the specific proposals on Social Security and the specific proposals on Medicare. Because, keep in mind, I carefully made the Social Security and Medicare proposals I made so that we could fund them and pay down the debt, because if we pay down the debt we increase savings, aggregate savings, in America. And when we do that, we assure the long-term stability of our economy. Lower interest rates means higher investment, more jobs, more businesses, lower mortgage rates, lower home loan rates—excuse me, lower car loan rates, lower college loan rates, lower credit card rates, the whole 9 yards.

I think that is very, very important. At a time when we have such a low personal savings rate it is very important that we get the Government debt down.

Secondly, it will help us to do what we have to do in the rest of the world. If you look at Asia, they have—their situation in a lot of those Asian countries is more like what we went through in the 1930's; that is, they have a collapse of demand. They need more liquidity. They need more funds. They need more investment. They need more activity.

If we are not taking money out of the international system, but instead paying down our own debt, then there will be more funds that will be able to flow into that part of the world to get the economy going—into Latin America to keep the economy there from sinking under the weight of the Asian problems. So this is very important.

The second thing I'd like to say is, I'm doing my dead-level best to build on the work we've been doing for the last 2 or 3 years to try to fix some of the problems in the international financial system. Keep in mind that one of the things that caused such great burden in the Asian financial crisis is, these countries didn't get in trouble the way

we were used to countries getting in trouble. We were used to countries getting in trouble where they had great big deficits and enormous inflation and everything got out of control.

What happened in these countries were, there were problems with the financial institutions, problems with the rules and the transparency and making loans and making investments. And we're trying to make some changes that we'll try to ratify this summer when we meet in Germany that I think could go a long way toward ensuring that this sort of thing will not happen again in the future.

Now, the markets will determine what happened to the markets. What I think I have to do is give the American people good, sound fundamentals, pay this debt down, and try to get the financial architecture of the 21st century straightened out.

Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

### ***Independent Counsel Statute***

**Q.** Mr. President, your administration has come out against the extension of the independent counsel statute. And yet, when you signed a reauthorization of it 5 years ago, you called it “a force for Government integrity and public confidence.” Do you think now that you made a mistake when you signed that reauthorization 5 years ago? Do you disavow those comments? And if so, do you feel that way because you were the target of Ken Starr's investigation?

**The President.** Well, because of that, because I was the target, I think it is better for me to refer you to the conclusions reached by the American Bar Association that had the same change of heart, and by the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General. I believe that their views should be given more weight since they were not the subject of such investigations. And the bar association and the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General have spoken clearly and have said anything I could say.

Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

### ***Vice President Gore***

**Q.** Mr. President, your Vice President has recently been ridiculed for claiming he invented the Internet and spent his boyhood

plowing steep hillsides in Tennessee. I'm wondering what you think of those claims and what advice you'd give him about how to brag on himself without getting in so much trouble. [Laughter]

**The President.** Well, you know, he came a lot closer to inventing the Internet than I did. [Laughter] I mean—I will say this about it. First of all, you remember he was talking about the information superhighway 20 years ago, and he did have a lot to do with supporting the development of it and supporting the Government research that led to these developments.

Keep in mind, I think when I became President in 1993, there were still only 50 or 60 sites on the Internet, and now there are millions and millions. So what I would like to say is, I don't know exactly what he said or exactly how it's been characterized, but he has been, for 20 years, one of the major architects of America's progress in technology, and he deserves a lot of appreciation for that. The Telecommunications Act, which I signed, he was heavily involved in the negotiations of our administration's positions. I talked to an executive the other day who said he was absolutely convinced at least 200,000 new high-tech jobs have already been created in America as a result of that act.

As far as his boyhood home, I think—I know what you're saying. You're saying, well, he went to St. Alban's and his daddy was a Senator. But it's also true that he is from east Tennessee, and he did learn to do all those things he did on the farm. I've been there, in Carthage, Tennessee. I've talked to his mother and his father, when he was alive, and other people who were there. And I think it's important that the American people know more about the Vice President's background. I think it's important that they know that he served in the Congress, that he served in the Senate, that before that he was a member of your profession, he was a journalist and served in the Armed Forces in Vietnam.

I think it's important also that they know that he was a principal architect of the major economic and other policies of this administration. And you know, you all will examine his claims and presumably the claims of ev-

erybody else who would like to succeed me, and make your judgments, and the American people will be as well. But the Vice President is, by nature, a reticent person, when it comes to talking about his life and his background. And I hope that he will find—for all of us, that's one of the most difficult things about running for public office. You want to be able to share formative experiences in your life or things you've been involved in that you're particularly proud of, and you want to do it without seeming to toot your own horn too much. And it's a challenge.

But I can tell you this. I'll be happy to toot his horn in terms of the years that we've worked together, because there's no question that he has been integral to all the good things that have happened in this administration.

Yes.

### **President's Legacy**

**Q.** Mr. President, many young Americans learn the importance of telling the truth based on an allegory about our very first President; George Washington reportedly said, "I cannot tell a lie." What do you think your legacy will be about lying? And how important do you think it is to tell the truth, especially under oath?

**The President.** I think it's very important, and I think that what young people will learn from my experience is that even Presidents have to do that. And that there are consequences when you don't.

But I also think that there will be a box score, and there will be that one negative, and then there will be the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times when the record will show that I did not abuse my authority as President, that I was truthful with the American people; and scores and scores of allegations were made against me, and widely publicized without any regard to whether they were true or not; most of them have already been actually proved false. And it's very hard to disprove every false allegation against you.

But we have had more success, frankly, than I was afraid we would when we started. So I would hope that there would be a higher regard for truth telling by all people in public

life and all those who report on it. I think it would be a very good thing.

Yes.

### **Kosovo**

**Q.** Mr. President, you said on Kosovo that if we don't act, the war will spread. That's very similar to what we said when we went into Bosnia several years ago. Our troops are still there. How can you assure the American people that we're not getting into a quagmire in Bosnia?

**The President.** Well, first of all, in Bosnia we have brought about 70 percent of our troops home. It has not been a quagmire. I told the America people we might well have some loss of life there, but I was convinced we would lose fewer lives and do more good over the long run if we intervened when we did.

I feel the same way about Kosovo. The argument that I tried to make for our putting troops there, if we could reach a peace agreement, was that we were moving in the right direction; the Europeans had been willing to shoulder a much bigger share of the responsibility; we were only going to be asked to put up about, oh, 15 percent of the troops.

But I don't want to get in the position in Kosovo that I was in in Bosnia, where the Pentagon came to me with a very honest estimate of when they thought we could finish. And we turned out to be wrong about that. We were not able to stabilize the situation as quickly as we thought we could. And this business in Kosovo is not helping any. Keep in mind, there could be some ramifications in Bosnia, as well as in Macedonia, where we have troops.

So I can just tell you that I think that we have tried to limit our involvement, we have tried to limit our mission, and we will conclude it as quickly as we can. I think that in all these cases, you have to ask yourself, what will be the cost and the duration of involvement and the consequences if we do not move. And I have asked myself that question as well.

Again, I would say to you, I would not be doing this if I did not think, number one, whenever we can stop a humanitarian disaster at an acceptable price, we ought to do it. Two, I'm convinced we'll be dragged into

this thing under worse circumstances, at greater cost if we don't act. And three, this is, to me, a critical part of the objective I brought to the Presidency of trying to leave office with an alliance between the United States and a more unified, more prosperous, more peaceful, more stable Europe. And this is one of the big three questions still hanging out there, as I said in my opening remarks, and I'm trying to resolve this.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Network]. And then Mr. King [John King, Cable News Network].

### **Police Brutality/Race Initiative**

**Q.** Mr. President, for many years, civil rights leaders have called for White House help in cases of police brutality and police profiling. Now, civil rights leaders say more needs to be done, like opening old brutality cases. Will you listen to those calls and expand your recent proposals allowing that, and when will you receive your completed draft of the race book?

**The President.** Let me answer the second question first because it's an easier question to dispose of. I have received and gone over a number of drafts of the race book, and I'm fairly pleased with where it's going. And one of the things we'll attempt to address is this whole issue of civil rights and law enforcement. And I would hope that it will be ready sometime in the next couple of months. I hope we'll have it finished, because we're rushing and we're trying to get it done.

Now, on the question of reopening old cases, I have to be candid with you and tell you that you're the first person who has ever mentioned that to me. I know that there must have been something in the letters about it. I will have to discuss that with our advisors and see what the appropriate thing to do is. But I would like to make a general statement about it, maybe to try to emphasize some of the points I attempted to make in my radio address on Saturday.

I've been involved in law enforcement for more than 20 years now, since I became attorney general of my State in 1977. Even before that, when I was in law school, and later when I was a law professor, I used to spend a lot of time teaching criminal law, criminal

procedure and constitutional law to law enforcement officers. I think that the police of this country know that I honor them and that I support them and that I think what they're doing is profoundly important.

I am very proud of the crime bill we passed in '94, not only because it was—along with the Brady bill—it banned assault weapons, but because it put 100,000 police on the street. And we're ahead of schedule and under budget on that goal. And my present budget called for putting 50,000 more out there in community policing in the highest crime areas of the country.

But I think that—and I am mindful of the fact that when you put on a gun, no matter how well trained you are, you have to be very careful about being under great stress and fear and making mistakes. But it seems to me that just as this administration has strongly supported law enforcement in every way to try to give us a safer country and a country where the law enforcement was closer connected to the community, we have a responsibility to deal with these issues of brutality when they arise and the whole question of policies of profiling, of presuming that people are more likely to be criminals because of their racial background or some other characteristic.

And I hope that our administration, working with civil rights groups, civil liberties groups, and law enforcement groups, will be able to really get a genuine debate on this and a resolution of it that is satisfactory, because we cannot have the kind of country we want if people are afraid of those folks who are trying to protect them.

Now, but in terms of opening the old cases, I just have to look at that. I don't know enough about the facts to give you an informed opinion.

Mr. King. And then Mr. Cannon [Carl Cannon, National Journal]. Go ahead.

### **Russia**

**Q.** Mr. President, the Russian Prime Minister will be here next week seeking your support for another very large installment in international economic assistance. Yet, leading officials in your own administration say there has been a retreat, if not a reversal, in the pace of market reforms in Russia. Are

you prepared to support the new installment of IMF funding? And are you on the verge of an agreement with Russia regarding its nuclear transfers to Iran?

**The President.** Well, first, let me say that Mr. Primakov is coming here at an important time. And I have urged all of us in the administration, our economic team and our political team, to be acutely aware of the fact that the first thing he had to do was to try to stabilize his own situation when he took office.

In terms of the economic reforms that he needs to pursue, he needs some help from the Duma. And I would be a poor person to be unsympathetic with a man who is having trouble getting a certain proposal through a Congress. But I think it is important, if we are going to help Russia—and we should; we should do everything we can—that we do things that are actually likely to make a difference, instead of things that will undermine confidence over the long run in Russia and in the ability of others to invest there.

So I'm hoping we can reach an agreement which will permit the IMF program to go forward, because I think that is important. But it will only work if the money doesn't turn around and leave the country as soon as it's put in.

In other words, that's what—what we have to persuade the Russians of is that we're not trying to impose some economic theory on them. We're not trying to impose more—I don't mean just "we," the United States; I mean "we," the international financial institutions, of which the United States is a part—and that we want to see the back wages paid. We want to see the standard of living of the Russian people rise. We want to see more investment go in there.

But there have got to be some changes, some of which require legislative action in the Duma in order for this to work. Otherwise, even if we put the money in, it will leave. And so that's what we're working on. And I'm hopeful that we'll also get a resolution of the second issue you mentioned, and I'm optimistic about that.

**Q.** Mr. President—

**Q.** Mr. President—

[Laughter]

**The President.** I said Mr. Cannon could go next. I want to honor my commitment there. Oh yeah, yeah, I forgot Wendell [Wendell Goler, Fox News Channel]—go ahead. Wendell's next.

### **China**

**Q.** We're jumping around a lot, and I apologize, but I'd like to return to China for just a minute. Officials with your administration have said that China's size, that it's so big, it's just difficult to ignore, that you can't just pretend they don't exist. But in terms of human rights, that merely underscores the magnitude of the problem. That's a billion people who don't have freedom of worship, freedom of the press, the right to peaceably assemble, the right to redress their government, the right to form their government. And you often talk about values when you talk about public policy. Does our relationship with China now reflect your values?

**The President.** I believe our policy toward China does. Our relationship is not perfect, but I think it is the correct course.

First of all, I believe that the principal problem, human rights problem in China is the absence of political rights and the civil rights associated with them. There are some examples of religious—denial of religious freedom. There's also a lot of religious expression there. You remember, I went to church in China, to a church that has regular services every week, whether we're there or not.

And there is the special problem of Tibet, which I engaged President Jiang about in our press conference and on which we continue to work.

So to me, it's very important, and we have to continue to press ahead on that. I think the question is, what is the best way for the United States to maximize the chances that China will become more open in terms of political and civil rights, that any vestiges of religious oppression will be dropped, that Tibet will have a chance as soon as possible to preserve its unique culture and identity? I think—and all these questions like that.

And it seems to me that the best way to do it is to work with the Chinese where it's in our interest to do so and to frankly and forthrightly state our differences where they

exist. If we were to reach a point where we were convinced that no agreement we made ever would be kept, where no progress could ever be made, then I would ask the American people to reassess that.

But I believe that the evidence is—and I cited some specific examples earlier in this press conference—the evidence is that the Chinese would like a constructive relationship with us. Keep in mind, the same sort of debate that's going on in this country, there is a mirror image of that debate going on in China today.

And there are people in China that are not at a press conference, but they're saying, "You know, the Americans cannot exist without an enemy; you know they've got to have an enemy; they've got to have somebody to dominate the world against; and what they really want to do is to contain us; they don't want us to flower economically; they don't want us to have influence, even if it's non-aggressive influence. And therefore, we need to build up our military. Therefore, we need to fight them at every turn. We need to oppose them at every turn."

These sorts of debates are going on in their country. And what I have said to President Jiang, to Premier Zhu, to everyone who is involved on the trip—and I look forward to the Premier's trip to the United States—is that we still have to define what kind of future we're going to have, how we're going to share it, what is the proper arena for competition, what is the proper arena for cooperation. And we have to judge China as we would judge anyone else and as we would expect to be judged by our actions.

What you have here is a relationship that is profoundly important, very large and inherently frustrating because it has many different elements, some of which we like, some of which we don't. And it requires a constant evaluation to see whether we're on the right track, whether we're doing the right things, whether we're going in the right direction. And because it doesn't fit within neat or calming categories, it can be a source of difficulty.

But I believe that I've done the right thing for America over the long run by trying to establish a positive but wide-open—I mean

eyes wide open—with no illusions relationship with China where we explicitly put our differences on the table; where we pursue them to a point of resolution if possible; where we don't give up on what we believe if we can't resolve them; and where we do work on the things that we have in common. I believe this is the right thing to do. But it is inherently frustrating at the points of difference.

Wendell, go ahead.

**Press Secretary Joe Lockhart.** This is the last question warning.

### **Chinese Nuclear Espionage**

**Q.** Thank you, Joe. Mr. President, you said just a short while ago that no one has reported to you they suspect Chinese espionage at U.S. nuclear labs during your administration, sir. But sources tell Fox News, and we are reporting this evening, that China stole the technology for electromagnetic pulse weapons from several nuclear labs during your first term in office, sir, and that the Chinese have successfully tested these weapons in China. And the sources also say that the administration, at least, was aware of this.

Can you tell us, sir, were you not personally aware? Are you concerned about this? And what will be your administration's response to the report?

**The President.** Well, you didn't say what the source of what they sold was. You say they "stole," is that the word you used?

**Q.** Yes, sir, the technology for EMP weapons, from 4 of the 11 nuclear labs.

**The President.** To the best of my knowledge—and, you know, I try to—not only do I spend a great deal of time every day on national security measures, I try to prepare for these things. To the best of my knowledge, no one has said anything to me about any espionage which occurred by the Chinese against the labs during my Presidency.

I will—if you report that, then I'll do my best to find out what the facts are, and I'll tell you what they are. And if I have misstated this in any way because I don't remember something, then I will tell you that. But I don't believe that I have forgotten.

Yes, ma'am. One more.

### **Treasury Secretary/Federal Reserve Board Chairman**

**Q.** Mr. President, can you put to rest rumors—you were talking earlier about the stability of your Cabinet. Can you put to rest rumors on Wall Street that Treasury Secretary Rubin is going to be leaving soon? Has he had any discussion about a departure with you? And in a related question, have you had any conversations with Fed Chairman Greenspan about his reappointment?

**The President.** The answer to the second question is, no, I have not. You should draw no conclusion about that one way or the other. It's just not come up. And I have not discussed Mr. Rubin's plans personally with him in quite a long while—maybe a year—I can't remember; it's been a good long while. He has served well. He has worked hard. I hope he will stay. Goodness knows, he's given his country a great deal, and he's served us very well. But I do not know what his specific plans are. I'm aware of all the rumors, but we've not had a conversation about it.

Yes ma'am, in the back. You had your hand up for a long time.

### **Bosnia**

**Q.** Mr. President, I'm a Bosnian journalist, and my country before war was almost unknown, during the war, for a long time neglected. And now we feel a little bit forgotten, if you don't mind, sir. You're going to go to Slovenia soon, and you're talking about European security and stability as a priority of your foreign policy.

I'd like to know, and I believe that Bosnians would appreciate that, if you can say if you have any new initiative to boost a peace process in Bosnia. Bosnian dream of a united country is dying slowly—country is dying slowly. So if you're going to change some people, as New York Times reported, or the State Department hints, sir, what would be your next step in Bosnia, sir?

**The President.** The Bosnian peace process has been put under stress recently because the Brcko decision was made and had to be made within the time frame in which it was made. And I think the most important thing now is that we try to get beyond that and go on with the business of building the

common institutions and trying to get more economic opportunity there.

I'm very concerned that the politicians who still want to chip away at the idea of a united Bosnian nation will be able to do it principally because we're not able to show the benefits of peace to ordinary citizens. It seems to me that is the most important thing we can do once we stabilize the situation in the aftermath of the Brcko decision. And I think we're on the way to doing that.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 171st news conference began at 4:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); convicted spy Aldrich Ames; former Senator Warren B. Rudman, Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board; David E. Kendall, the President's personal attorney; Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov of Russia; and President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji of China. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Proclamation 7174—National Poison Prevention Week, 1999**

*March 19, 1999*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

During National Poison Prevention Week, Americans focus on the progress we have made in reducing the number of accidental poisonings that occur each year and reaffirm our commitment to preventing further tragedies.

We can be heartened by the progress we have made. In 1962, when President Kennedy proclaimed the first National Poison Prevention Week, 450 young people died due to poisoning. That number has fallen dramatically. There are many who share the credit for this growing success story: responsible parents and caregivers, who keep medicines, cosmetics, household cleaners, insecticides, and other poisonous substances out of the reach of children; the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which requires the use of child-resistant packaging on poten-

tially dangerous materials; the Poison Prevention Week Council, which annually distributes poison prevention information to pharmacies, public health departments, and safety organizations; and our Nation's poison control centers, which provide lifesaving emergency first aid information. Working together, these dedicated individuals and organizations have saved hundreds of lives each year.

But we cannot relax our efforts, because each life we lose to accidental poisoning is one too many. We must all do our part to protect our Nation's children by selecting and properly using child-resistant packaging, keeping poisonous substances accurately labeled and locked away from children, carefully reading and following all directions and caution labels on packages, and keeping the number of a poison control center close to the telephone. If a poisoning incident does occur, we need to respond quickly by contacting the poison control center, relaying the appropriate information—such as the age and weight of the poisoning victim and the type and amount of substance he or she has ingested—and heeding instructions. These simple safety measures can mean the difference between life and death.

To encourage the American people to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take responsible preventive measures, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of each year as "National Poison Prevention Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning March 21, 1999, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and activities and by learning how to protect our children from poisons.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**



[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 23, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 24. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception**

*March 19, 1999*

Thank you very much. You know, this is my second public event today. I earlier did a press conference, and I like this a lot better. I want to join all of you in thanking Steve Grossman for a job superlatively well done. Thank you, Steve. Thank you, Barbara. Thank you for being there. He's come a long way since he took over the leadership of the Democratic Party, thanks to all of you, and I appreciate that.

I want to thank Roy Romer, Mayor Archer, Loretta Sanchez, and all of our other officers who are here. I want to thank Carol Pensky and Len Barrack and those who are going out. I want to thank Joe Andrew, Andy Tobias, Beth Dozoretz. I want to thank Gloria Molina, Lottie Shackelford, Linda Chavez-Thompson, Joan Menard. I want to thank all of you who are members of the DNC.

I want to thank the people from our administration who are here and those for whom they stand. We have Aida Alvarez, our Small Business Administrator; Janice Lachance, the Director of OPM; John Podesta, my Chief of Staff; and many people from the White House; and Buddy MacKay, the former Lieutenant Governor of Florida and our new Special Envoy to Latin America. Thank you all for what you have done.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to the Vice President for being my partner and being our leader in everything we have done together. This country is a better place in the last 6 years, because we've done the right things, and most of them would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the partnership that I have enjoyed with Al Gore, and I thank him very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will be fairly brief tonight. I want to make about three points,

as clearly and forcefully as I can. First of all, you know what we can do now when we're united and when we're clear and when we take a message to the American people that resonates with them. You know that no one believed that we could win seats in the House in 1998. It had only been done in a midterm election twice in this century, twice since the Civil War, and not in the second term of a President since 1822.

You know something that never gets written when people mention this: We did it while being outspent by \$100 million. Equally remarkable was the fact that we did not lose seats in the Senate, even though we had more Senate seats up and more people retiring, and just a few months before the election the other side was saying they would pick up between four and six Senate seats and probably end the threat of a filibuster so they could have all their way. You did that. We did that together.

And I want to say two things about that. First, we can do even better next time if—if—we go out and get good candidates. And I want to give exhibit A here for Joe Andrew: the Governor of Indiana, Frank O'Bannon, is here, and he won against all the odds in Indiana because he is a good leader; he is a good candidate. He was doing the right things. He succeeded a man who was doing the right things.

The Democratic Party and the Republican Party don't mean a great deal to a lot of people most of the time. They show up on election day; they want to look at a flesh-and-blood man or woman, and they want to know what does this person stand for—what is going to happen if I give that person my vote? And so I say to you, we have to be about the business of asking more and more people to join our ranks and to put themselves on the line.

If you live in a State where there's a Senate seat up, you shouldn't rest until you believe you have the best people asking for the Democratic nomination. You shouldn't rest until you have the best people asking for the Democratic nomination to run for the House of Representatives, to run for the open Governorships, to run in the legislative races, to run in all these races. You cannot beat somebody with nobody.

We have wonderful people in this country who believe as we do, who have the same dreams for America. We have got to persuade them to put themselves on the line. It's not easy to run for public office. You know, the person that I have shared my home with for over 20 years now said to me the other day, as she was doing all these calls to people in New York—I have to reiterate my statement at the press conference; I have no idea what she's going to do. And I don't. [Laughter] But she laughed at me the other night. We were talking about this, and she said, "You know, this is a lot harder when it's you instead of somebody you're helping." [Laughter] And so I say to all of you, I understand what a sacrifice it is to seek public office. And having run several times, and having been defeated twice, I can tell you that it's not fun to lose. But you can't win if you're afraid to lose.

And so when the Democratic committee leaves here with a new set of leaders—I'm glad we're putting in a slate unopposed, but we won't be so fortunate in the Senate races, the House races, the Governors races, the legislative races. And as I repeatedly tell anyone who ever asks me, the last honest draft of a politician for public office was when the Romans took Cincinnatus out of the field over 2,000 years ago. [Laughter] Ever since then, people more or less have to ask for the job.

So go home inspired by what we have done and what we're fighting for and what we stand for, and make sure that we show up in all these elections. You can do that.

The second point I want to make is this: We won the elections in 1998 because we had a message for the country. It wasn't simply because the American people disapproved of what the other party was doing; it was because we said, "Vote for us, and we will save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century; we will be for a Patients' Bill of Rights; we will be for 21st century schools with more teachers, smaller classes, modernized facilities; and we will do the things necessary to keep our economy growing." And the American people said, "It sounds good to me. That's what I want to be part of."

And so for the next 2 years, we are going to be working as hard as we can and in good faith with the Republicans for principled compromise that reflects our values and our positions to honor the commitments we made in 1998. Make no mistake about it: We have to be caught trying hard to do exactly what we promised to do.

So if anybody asks you, if anybody asks you what the President said when you were in Washington, you tell them he said we're going to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century. We're going to pay the debt of this Government down to insure the health of the American economy for our children and our grandchildren for 20 or 30 years. We're going to pass a good Patients' Bill of Rights, not another patients' bill of goods, like—one more time—the other party voted out of committee yesterday, that leaves out 100 million people and doesn't guarantee you the specialist or emergency room treatment you deserve and won't protect your rights even if they're written into law.

Tell them we're going to fight for more teachers and smaller classes and modernized schools. Tell them we're going to stick up for the environment, everything from global warming to the livability agenda to make all of our communities more livable in the 21st century, that the Vice President did so much to develop.

And tell them one more thing: the Democratic Party is determined to go into the 21st century taking everybody along. We did it in 1993 when we passed, by the narrowest of margins, the deficit reduction plan that began our efforts to double our investment in education and training; that gave tax cuts to 15 million working families; that did more than any budget bill had in a long time to create empowerment opportunities for ordinary citizens, including our empowerment zone initiative that Mayor Archer has done so much with in Detroit, and that we see revitalizing urban and rural areas all across America.

And in this budget, we have the next big step. We have, in this budget, something—I want everybody to go home and talk about this. There's not a State in America that doesn't have a community somewhere that has not yet fully participated in this economic

growth. And if you want America to keep growing, we have to find new markets, and we ought to find them here at home. There are cities; there are rural areas; there are Native American reservations. There are places from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, to south Texas to east Los Angeles, and all across the northern tier of this country that haven't been a part of that.

Here's what our initiative does: It uses tax credits and loan guarantees and other incentives to give Americans the same incentive to invest in America we give them to invest overseas. It's high time we did it, and I want you to help us pass it.

And finally, let me just say one last point. In the last 2 days, we have had amazing things happening under this tent. Night before last, we celebrated Saint Patrick's Day, and I gave the Medal of Freedom to George Mitchell of Maine for his role in helping us to promote peace in Northern Ireland. Last night the widow of Prime Minister Rabin, his daughter, his granddaughter were here. And they said they were going to dedicate a garden at the Rabin Center in honor of Hillary and me, and they gave us a little award.

The award is not important. The important thing is that the people of Israel were recognizing once again that the people of the United States, and that this administration—not just me but all of us—are irrevocably committed to the proposition that people can live in peace together in the Middle East if they can live in justice and fairness together in the Middle East.

I just had a distinguished group of American women into the White House to see me, to talk about the problems of the oppression of women and girls by the Taliban in Afghanistan—over one million refugees in Pakistan. America cares about those women. America cares about the little girls. America cares about the male sons of the widows who have been plundered there. That's what your country stands for.

The First Lady's not here tonight because she's in the Vice President's home State, at a dedication of Alex Haley's farm, to remember the roots of 30 million African-Americans.

Why do I say this? Because when you go home, and people ask you why you're a Democrat, I want you to tell them that you're a Democrat because you believe that every responsible person in this country should have opportunity, the chance to develop, the chance to grow, the chance to live out their dreams, and because you believe that every individual can only achieve it if we are committed to doing it for each other together. That we believe in a profound way in the idea of community—not some sappy, purely altruistic idea, but that we ourselves cannot have the lives we want unless we give our brothers and sisters around this country, and like-minded people all around the world, the same opportunity.

I am so grateful that I have had 6 years, and have nearly 2 more, to fight for those opportunities and to fight for that idea of community. That is what distinguishes the Democratic Party. It is what has made America great. In some ways, it is what makes us today not only the party—as I have repeatedly said—of Jefferson and Jackson and Roosevelt and Kennedy and Johnson but also the party, today, of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. We embody the best in America and in America's future.

So go home full of energy. Have a great meeting tomorrow. Have your uncontested election. And then go home and find Democrats who will contest the elections of 2000. Go home and tell people we mean to do what we said in 1998, and the Democratic Party is in Washington fighting to save Social Security and Medicare, to pay the debt down, to keep the economy going, and to take everybody into the 21st century. And go home and tell them you're proud to be a part of the oldest party in the entire world, because it believes in opportunity for all and a community in which we all help each other to be what God meant us to be.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. in the South Lawn Pavilion at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the following Democratic National Committee officials: Steve Grossman, national chair, and his wife, Barbara; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, general cochair-

designate; Representative Loretta Sanchez, general cochair-designate; Carol Pensky, treasurer; Leonard Barrack, national finance chair; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair-designate; Andy Tobias, treasurer-designate; Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair-designate; and Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, Lottie Shackelford, and Linda Chavez-Thompson, vice chairs. The President also referred to Massachusetts State Democratic Party Chair Joan M. Menard, president, Association of State Democratic Chairs; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multi-party talks in Northern Ireland; and Leah Rabin, widow of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, her daughter, Dahlia Rabin-Pelossof, and her granddaughter, Noa Pelossof. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **The President's Radio Address**

*March 20, 1999*

Good morning. Today I want to talk with you about the next important steps we can take to rid our streets of gun violence and to make our communities even safer for our families. I'm proud to be joined today in the Oval Office by Attorney General Janet Reno, Treasury Under Secretary Jim Johnson, AFT Director John Magaw, Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, Police Chief Jerry Oliver of Richmond, and Chief Robert Olson of Minneapolis, Congressman Anthony Weiner, as well as four of our United States attorneys who are leading this fight across America.

Over the last 6 years we've worked hard to fight crime, putting in place a strategy of more prevention, stricter enforcement, tougher punishment. We funded more than 92,000 police officers for 11,000 communities, taken more criminals and deadly assault weapons off the street, and with Brady background checks, stopped more than a quarter of a million handguns from falling into the hands of convicted felons and other prohibited persons.

As a result, the crime rate has dropped by more than 20 percent, to the lowest level in a generation. Gun crimes have declined by more than 25 percent. Gun murders have fallen by a third. Slowly but surely, neighborhoods once abandoned at the crack of gunfire and the wail of ambulance sirens are coming

alive with the sounds of children playing freely in the streets.

This is indeed encouraging news. But we must do more. In 1997, 14,000 people were murdered by guns. While the numbers are declining, any child caught in the crossfire of a gang shootout, or a police officer struck down by a criminal's bullet, or a store clerk murdered in a robbery is one tragedy too many.

That is why today I'm directing Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Attorney General Reno to use every available tool to increase the prosecution of gun criminals and shut down illegal gun markets. I'm asking them to work closely with local, State, and Federal law enforcement officials and to report back to me with a plan to reduce gun violence by applying proven local strategies to fight gun crime nationwide.

Look at what Federal prosecutors and the ATF are doing in Richmond, Virginia, in an effort they call Project Exile. Under the leadership of U.S. Attorney Helen Fahey, Project Exile has used the threat of tough Federal statutes—statutes that require stiff sentences and deny bail to offenders—to reduce gun crime and take serious gun criminals off the street. And gun murders are down in Richmond by a remarkable 41 percent.

My balanced budget will help to hire more Federal prosecutors and ATF agents so we can crack down on even more gun criminals and illegal gun trafficking all across America.

After 6 years of hard work, America is winning the war against crime. But we're a long way from declaring victory. We must keep even more guns from falling into the wrong hands by requiring background checks at gun shows and banning violent juvenile offenders from owning guns for life. And I ask you to support our 21st century policing initiative to give law enforcement the manpower, the high-tech tools, and the prevention strategies they need to keep us safe.

Unfortunately, the Republicans in Congress have proposed a budget that would dramatically cut back our investment in community policing, just when we're trying to increase it. That would be a big mistake. We must move forward in our fight for safer streets and safer families.

Over the years, the proliferation of guns in our streets, of criminals packing pistols instead of switchblades, have made crime deadlier than ever. Guns have magnified the malevolence of crime. That is why disarming criminals has been and must continue to be a top crime-fighting priority. Let none of us rest until every American is safe from gun violence.

Thanks for listening.

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

### **Memorandum on Deterring and Reducing Gun Crime**

*March 20, 1999*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General*

*Subject: Deterring and Reducing Gun Crime*

Since the start of my Administration, we have developed and implemented a number of effective national strategies to reduce crime. We have provided funds to over 11,000 communities to hire and deploy more than 92,000 local law enforcement officers; we have prevented more than a quarter of a million illegal handgun sales through Brady background checks; and we have developed a coordinated attack on the illegal sources of guns used in crime. Dozens of other smart, tough, crime-fighting strategies have been put in place throughout the country through the leadership and dedicated efforts of State and local police and prosecutors, Mayors, U.S. Attorneys, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), and community leaders.

During this period, the Nation's crime rate has dropped by more than 20 percent, and crime committed with guns has dropped 27 percent. In certain communities, where Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials have worked with other community leaders, violent crime rates have gone down even more dramatically. In Boston, Massachusetts, for example, when law enforcement and community leaders worked together to reduce violence by youth gangs, they reduced the number of homicides among youth by 70 percent in just 2 years. In Minneapolis,

Minnesota, effective law enforcement and prevention efforts conducted by public-private partnerships have reduced homicides by 30 percent and summertime homicides by 75 percent. And in Richmond, Virginia, effective and coordinated law enforcement, including stepped up enforcement of gun crimes through the program known as Project Exile, has reduced the homicide rate significantly.

Still, the number of people killed with firearms remains unacceptably high. More than 14,000 people were murdered with guns in the United States in 1997. We must redouble our efforts to deter and further reduce gun crime—and work to make every neighborhood and community free of gun violence.

I therefore direct you to develop an integrated firearms violence reduction strategy that draws on the proven measures and innovative approaches being demonstrated by communities throughout the country. We know that gun violence issues differ in each community, and no single program or strategy will be right for every community. Therefore, in developing the strategy, you should consult closely with U.S. Attorneys and ATF Special Agents in Charge, as well as other Federal, State, and local law enforcement, elected officials, and other leaders. The strategy should consider the special needs of local communities and strike an appropriate balance between Federal and State law enforcement. I ask that the strategy specifically include elements to:

- (1) Increase investigation and prosecution of significant firearms violations, including illegal possession, use, and trafficking of guns, through innovative programs such as Project Exile and Boston's Operation Ceasefire;
- (2) Expand comprehensive "crime gun" tracing, analysis, and mapping; increase use of ballistics identification technology; and coordinate use of crime gun information to identify illegal gun markets, gun "hot spots," and illegal gun traffickers;
- (3) Strengthen the coordination of law enforcement and regulatory enforcement efforts to ensure compliance with all applicable laws by federally licensed gun dealers and prospective gun purchasers;

- (4) Implement targeted deterrence of violent offenders through (a) improved coordination with probation and parole officials supervising such offenders, and (b) swift and certain punishment for those found to have violated the conditions of their parole or probation; and
- (5) Promote problem-solving analysis and innovative strategies to work closely with community members to identify gun criminals, remove weapons in the hands of juveniles, search for and seize crime guns, and increase the public's knowledge of their community's gun-related crime and violence problem.

Finally, I direct you to make recommendations on how best to allocate Federal resources to support the goals of the strategy you develop. I further direct you to provide me with your report on this integrated firearms violence reduction strategy within 90 days of the date of this memorandum.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Remarks on Returning From Camp David, Maryland**

*March 22, 1999*

#### **Kosovo**

I want to give you a brief update about the situation in Kosovo and make a few comments.

It is clear that Serb forces are now engaged in further attacks on Kosovar civilians. Already more than 40,000 Serb security forces are poised in and around Kosovo, with additional units on the way. These actions are in clear violation of commitments Serbia made last October when we obtained the cease-fire agreement.

As part of our determined efforts to seek a peaceful solution, I asked Ambassador Holbrooke to see President Milosevic and make clear the choice he faces. That meeting is either going on now or should start in the next few minutes. If President Milosevic continues to choose aggression over peace, NATO's military plans must continue to move forward.

I will be in close consultation with our NATO allies and with Congress. Over the weekend, I met with my national security

team to discuss the military options. I also spoke with other NATO leaders by telephone. There is strong unity among the NATO allies. We all agree that we cannot allow President Milosevic to continue the aggression with impunity. I have also sent a letter to President Yeltsin about the urgency of the situation.

Our objective in Kosovo remains clear: to stop the killing and achieve a durable peace that restores Kosovars to self-government, the self-government that President Milosevic stripped away from them a decade ago. We and our NATO allies, and Russia, all agree that this is the right goal. The Kosovar Albanians have accepted this course. Only President Milosevic and Serbia stand in the way of peace. Serbia's mounting aggression must be stopped.

Since the adjournment of the peace talks in Paris less than a week ago, an estimated 30,000 more Kosovars have fled their homes. The number now exceeds more than a quarter of a million people, one out of every eight people in Kosovo. Many of them now are in neighboring Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, all of which could be quickly drawn into this conflict. So could other nations in the region, including Bosnia where allied determination ended a terrible war, and our allies Greece and Turkey.

Seeking to end this tragedy in Kosovo and finding a peaceful solution is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do, very much in our national interests, if we are to leave a stable, peaceful, and democratic Europe to our children. We have learned a lot of lessons in the last 50 years. One of them surely is that we have a stake in European freedom and security and stability. I hope that can be achieved by peaceful means. If not, we have to be prepared to act.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

**Remarks at the Legislative  
Convention of the American  
Federation of State, County,  
and Municipal Employees**  
*March 23, 1999*

**The President.** I ought to be late more often. [Laughter] Well, let me thank you for the wonderful welcome. And Gerry, Bill, Glenn, Charles, Carol, ladies and gentlemen, it was—it's hard to believe; it's been 7 years ago when I first began talking to Gerry and Bill and other members of your union. I spent about 5 minutes with Gerry McEntee, and I thought, boy, this is going to be a hard sell. [Laughter] But I also thought to myself, I believe this guy would be for me; he'd stick. And boy does he stick. [Laughter] I tell you.

Even though I was a dues paying member of AFSCME when I was Governor, I never—therefore, I knew who Gerry McEntee was, you know, and I sort of felt like I was getting my money's worth. [Laughter] There are a lot of things I didn't know. Like, I never knew why green was the official color of AFSCME. [Laughter] Until I saw the smile on McEntee's face on Saint Patrick's Day. [Laughter] And I realized that was not a democratically arrived at decision. [Laughter] And being Irish, I liked it that way.

In a way, public employees and the Irish are a lot alike. They're integral to everything that's really important in our country, and both have had to fight real hard to get the necessary respect in the United States. And so I came here also to say thank you, thank you, thank you. I should be thanking you, not the other way around. All I did was what I told you I would do, but if you hadn't helped me, I wouldn't have been here in the first place. And I thank you.

I would also like to remind you that we have almost 25 percent of the life of this administration still left, and it ought to be the best part for America if we do the right things.

Now, you all know why I'm late today. I've been in a meeting with a very large number of Members of Congress in both Houses and both parties, including the leadership, to talk about the problem in Kosovo. And one of the Members who was there, a man from my part of the country, he said, "You know,

Mr. President, I support your policy, but most of my folks couldn't find Kosovo on a map. They don't know where it is, and they never thought about it before it appeared on CNN. And you need to tell people what you're doing there and why—why it's important to us."

So I need to talk about that today. But I also need to talk about the domestic issues that we're working on—about Social Security, about Medicare, about education. And so I would like to begin by going back to 1992 and to try to ask you to do something that most of the time I can't persuade the American people to do, which is to think about our foreign policy and our domestic policy as two sides of the same coin in a world that is growing smaller and smaller and more and more interconnected.

Most Americans think about politics in terms of putting bread on the table, educating their children, owning a home, being able to have health care, looking forward to a secure retirement, dealing maybe with environmental issues that are immediate and real, like clean air and clean water. And we're all that way about everything, even our own jobs. The further something gets away from us, the harder it is for us to imagine that it is directly important to us.

But when I ran for President in 1992, one of the things I said over and over and over again was that in the 21st century the dividing line between foreign and domestic policy would blur. Now, I'd like to just take you back 7 years to what ideas I brought to this job, talk a little bit about this matter in Kosovo, and then move into the domestic issues that we're so concerned about that are being debated in the Congress now.

I ran for President in 1991 and 1992 because I believed our country lacked a unifying vision and strategy for 21st century America. And I knew what I wanted America to look like and to be like. I wanted an America where the American dream was alive and well for every citizen responsible enough to work for it. With all of our increasing diversity in America, I wanted an America that really reaffirmed the idea of community, of belonging; the idea that none of us can pursue our individual destinies as fully on our own as we can when we want our neighbors

to do well, too; and that there is some concrete benefit to the idea of community that goes beyond just feeling good about living in a country where you're not discriminated against because of some condition or predisposition or anything else that has nothing to do with the law and nothing to do with how your neighbors live their lives; and that what we have in common is more important than what divides us.

I still believe that's going to be one of the major questions facing this country in the 21st century, which is why I devoted so much time to that initiative on race, and why I keep fighting for passage of the hate crimes legislation, the employment nondiscrimination legislation—all these things. Because I am telling you, you look all over the world—that's what Kosovo's about—look all over the world. People are still killing each other out of primitive urges because they think what is different about them is more important than what they have in common.

So I wanted a country where opportunity was real for every responsible citizen. I wanted a country where community was real and we were growing closer together, not further apart. And I wanted America to be a leading force in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity in a world that was becoming more of a community, where we were sharing more burdens and responsibilities.

And so I set to work. And at home, I had an economic policy that was partly domestic and partly foreign. The economic policy was: fix the budget, get the deficit down, get interest rates down, get investment up, create jobs, grow the economy, invest in education and technology, so everybody could be a part of it. And, since we were only 4 percent of the world's population, with 22 percent of its income, we had to sell more around the world if we wanted to keep growing our economy. And we worked hard at that for 6 years now with, I think, nearly everybody would admit, reasonably good results, although we have more to do. And I'll say more about that in a minute.

In foreign policy, what I wanted to do is to say, look, okay, the cold war is over, but we're more interconnected with all parts of the world than ever before. How are we

going to create a world that is more peaceful, prosperous, and free?

Now, one of the things that we had to do was to look at Europe. Why? Because the whole 20th century is, in large measure, the story of slaughter that started in Europe. World War I started in the Balkans—in Bosnia, next door to Kosovo. World War II engulfed the Balkans. The cold war saw the Balkans, where Kosovo is, at the edge of the Communist empire and the clash of Slavic civilization with European Muslims and others. Now, if we have learned anything after the cold war, and our memories of World War II, it is that if our country is going to be prosperous and secure, we need a Europe that is safe, secure, free, united, a good partner with us for trading—they're wealthy enough to buy our products—and someone who will share the burdens of taking care of the problems of the world.

We're working hard to have that kind of Europe. I supported the union of the European countries, economically, the union of Germany. I supported very strongly the expansion of NATO. Next month we're going to have all these countries come here; we'll have the largest number of world leaders ever assembled in Washington, DC, next month for the 50th anniversary of the NATO summit. And we're bringing in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

And I supported the idea that the United States, Canada, and our European allies had to take on the new security challenges of Europe of the 21st century, including all these ethnic upheavals on their border. Why? Because if this domestic policy is going to work, we have to be free to pursue it. And if we're going to have a strong economic relationship that includes our ability to sell around the world, Europe has got to be a key. And if we want people to share our burdens of leadership with all the problems that will inevitably crop up, Europe needs to be our partner.

Now, that's what this Kosovo thing is all about. And so I want to talk to you about Kosovo today, but just remember this: It's about our values. What if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolph Hitler earlier? How many people's



lives might have been saved? And how many American lives might have been saved?

What if someone had been working on the powder keg that exploded World War I, which claimed more lives than World War II for most European countries, what would have happened? What if we had not been there in the cold war, when it cost Americans a lot of money to go over there and to say, okay, we're not going to let communism go any further—what do you think would have happened? And wouldn't we have been drawn into another war that would have been a shooting war? And wouldn't more Americans have died? And wouldn't it have cost even more?

What I want you to think about—you may not know a great deal about Kosovo, and I'll try to talk a little about that today—but I want you to see this in terms of the big picture. I want our children to have a Europe—I want this young girl here to grow up in a world that is safer and more secure and more prosperous. To get that done, we need a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and free. I want us to live in a world where we get along with each other, with all of our differences, and where we don't have to worry about seeing scenes every night for the next 40 years of ethnic cleansing in some part of the world.

I have worked against ethnic and religious warfare in Africa, in Asia, in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland. But today its most virulent manifestation is right there in Europe. So that is what I am trying to do here. I don't ask you to agree with every decision I make. I am responsible for it; if I turn out to be wrong, I bear the responsibility for that. But you have to understand what the big picture here is.

There are three big obstacles to an undivided, democratic, free Europe that is totally secure. One is, we've got to build the right kind of partnership with Russia, and we've got to help them come back economically. They have kept their democracy alive. They are suffering terribly economically. Some of it, of course, is like everybody else's problems; some of it's their own doing; some of it beyond their control. We've got a big stake in that. They've got 40,000 scientists that were part of their cold war arsenal. We'd like

them to be doing peaceful, good things, not bartering their services to other countries to cause trouble. So it's in our immediate interest, and they could be great partners for us, economically and otherwise.

The second is the problem of Greece and Turkey. Why should that matter to you, unless you're Greek or Turk? Because Turkey has been a moderate Muslim state, a buffer between the West and radical, revolutionary—and I think, perverted—theories of Islam that are bubbling up in the Middle East, which is right next door. And we've got a lot of difficulties working all that out. We've got to keep working until we get it done.

And the third is all this turmoil in the Balkans, where all of it comes together. And I'll try to explain it, so you can understand what we're trying to do. But there is a humanitarian reason why I believe we need to take a stand there. There is a practical reason. If we don't do it now, we'll have to do it later, more people will die, and it will cost more money. And there is a long-term, strategic reason for the United States: Our children need a stable, free Europe.

Okay. So let me just go through the facts. The leader of Serbia, after the cold war ended and Yugoslavia began to break up—keep in mind, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, all these places were part of Yugoslavia—Tito dies; the cold war ends; Yugoslavia begins to break up. There are Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Albanians, Montenegrans, and Hungarians, all kinds of different ethnic groups in what was the former Yugoslavia. They also—the Croats are basically Roman Catholic, predominantly. The Serbs are basically Orthodox Christian; they're part of the Greek and Russian and other Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Bosnians have all three ethnic groups, but there are a lot of Muslims in Bosnia; and the Kosovar Albanians are predominantly Muslim. And so there was a religious and ethnic difference there.

Now, the source of the problem has been that the leader of Serbia has tried to dominate the former Yugoslavia by starting wars in Croatia and Bosnia in the last decade, and stripping from Kosovo, which is legally a part of Serbia, but constitutionally autonomous—it means they're entitled to self-government and to preserve their culture, their religion,

their institutions. He sought to reassert his authority by starting wars in Croatia, wars with Bosnia, and repressing the autonomy of the Kosovars.

Now, you know we had a lot of problems there over the last year and there were all these refugees building up in Kosovo, just like you saw in Bosnia a few years ago—ethnic cleansing, people being driven out of their villages and their homes. You've been seeing it on television, if you've been watching, the houses being burned and all that.

We negotiated a cease-fire last year—late last year—that saved thousands of people from starvation and freezing because they'd left their homes and they'd gone up into the mountains and the winter was coming. And we did it because we were not just the United States; it was we and our NATO allies, and Russia supported us. And we said, "Look, here's the deal." And NATO said, "We'll use force if you don't do this." So they withdrew some of their security forces, and the thing calmed down, and we got some folks back in their homes. And we thought we were on the way to getting this solved.

Then the tensions flared again recently—another 30,000 refugees, people being driven from their homes and villages. So we had this peace conference in Rambouillet, in France, just a few days ago, in March, that had the potential to end the fighting for good. But we had to get both sides to sign it. And like any fight, you know, nobody is totally pure and everybody has got their own axe to grind. But the Kosovar Albanians signed the agreement last week. They signed the agreement last week. Even though it doesn't give them everything they want—they wanted a referendum on their own independence, as opposed to autonomy, I think largely because even though they are afraid they may be too small and economically weak to be an independent country, they're afraid that the Serbs will never honor their autonomy.

But they didn't get that. Even though their people are still being savaged, in violation of the agreement that Mr. Milosevic made, they still said a just peace is better than a long and unwinnable war. Milosevic, on the other hand, President Milosevic refused even to discuss key elements of the agreement. The

Kosovars said yes to peace; Serbia put 40,000 troops and 300 tanks in and around Kosovo.

Now, if you've been watching on the television, you know they've now started rolling from village to village, predominantly in north central Kosovo, shelling civilians, torching their homes so they can't come back. In a number of villages, Serbian police have dragged the male members of Kosovar families from their homes, lined up fathers with sons, and shot them in cold blood.

This is not a traditional war. It is a conflict between artillery and heavy weapons on the one hand, against, essentially, a guerrilla war for independence. And when the guerrillas disappear, the Kosovar guerrillas, what the Serbian police and military do is come in and just take it out on defenseless people, whose representatives have already agreed to a peace. And let me say this: If we don't do something—they have 40,000 troops there, and a bigger offensive could start any moment.

This is not the first time—let me remind you—this is not the first time we've faced this kind of choice. When President Milosevic started the war in Bosnia 7 years ago, the world did not act quickly enough to stop him. Let's don't forget what happened. Innocent people were herded into concentration camps. Children were gunned down by snipers on their way to school. Soccer fields and parks were turned into cemeteries. A quarter of a million people—in a country with only 6 million population—were killed. And a couple of million refugees were created—not because of anything they had done, but because of who they were, and because of the thirst of Mr. Milosevic and his allies to dominate, indeed, to crush people who were of different ethnic and religious affiliations.

Now, this was a genocide in the heart of Europe. It did not happen in 1945; it was going on in 1995.

Now, at the time, a lot of people said, "Well, there's nothing you can do about it, Mr. President. That's the way those people are. They've been fighting for hundreds of years." So I heard all that, and I actually started reading up on the history of that area. And I found out that in fact they had been fighting on and off for hundreds of years, but

there was more off than on. And it was an insult to them to say that somehow they were intrinsically made to murder one another. That was the excuse used by countries and leaders for too long—“Well, they’re just that way.”

Gerry and I, that’s what they said about us, about the Irish in Northern Ireland. They said, “Oh, they’ve been arguing over things for 600 years.” And they have, but they’re not arguing all the time.

You just think about that. Every one of you who ever raised a child that misbehaved, think about if you just said, well, that’s—they’re just that way. Right? [Laughter] They’re just that way. Well, if every parent said that, the jails would be 5 times as big as they are.

**Audience member.** They already are. [Laughter]

**The President.** They’re too big because some people think they’re just that way. That’s not true. I just don’t believe that.

So you’ve got to decide what you believe. I don’t believe that. And I know what happened in Bosnia. The United States and our allies, along with courageous people in Bosnia and in Croatia who refused to be subdued and fought back, found the unity and the will to stand up against the aggression, and we helped to end the war. And later, to make sure the peace would last, we agreed to send troops in, with our allies—including the Russians, Ukrainians, others. We’ve got people from all over Europe and the United States and Canada in Bosnia.

And everybody said, oh, it was going to be just like Vietnam. It was going to be a bloody quagmire, even though there was a peace agreement. And now we’ve withdrawn 70 percent of our troops. And there are still difficulties, but we’ve preserved the peace, and the slaughter hasn’t come back. And I think it was a good investment. And I hope the American people are proud of what they did to end the war in Bosnia. They should be.

So what do we learn from Bosnia? We learned that if you don’t stand up to brutality and the killing of innocent people, you invite the people who do it to do more of it. We learned that firmness can save lives and stop armies.

Now, we have a chance to take the lessons we learned in Bosnia and put them to work in Kosovo before it’s too late. But make no mistake about it, this is a country that already has a quarter of a million refugees. This is a country that’s had 30,000 refugees since they stopped the peace talks, just a few weeks ago. One in eight of the people who lives in this little country have already been run out of their homes.

Now, I think if the American people don’t know anything else about me, they know that I don’t like to use military force, and I do everything I can to avoid it. But if we have to do it, then that’s part of the job, and I will do it.

We have done everything we could do to solve this issue peacefully. Sunday, Secretary Albright dispatched Ambassador Dick Holbrooke to Belgrade to talk to President Milosevic one last time. I believe Mr. Holbrooke is on his way back, because I can tell you as of last night, as of this morning, as of an hour ago, we got nowhere. He is still denying his responsibility for the crisis, defying the international community, and destroying the lives of more people. Not just the United States, but all our NATO allies have warned him that he will have to honor the commitments he has made one more time. All this stuff he’s doing is in violation of commitments he made to withdraw his forces.

And we said if he didn’t do it, we would have to take action. NATO is now united and prepared to carry out its warning. If President Milosevic is not willing to make peace, we are willing to limit his ability to make war on the Kosovars.

What we are trying to do is to limit his ability to win a military victory and engage in ethnic cleansing and slaughter innocent people and to do everything we can to induce him to take this peace agreement, which is the only way in the wide world over the long run he’s going to be able to keep Kosovo as an independent part of this country, or an autonomous part of this country.

Now, I want to level with you. You’ve been very good. You’ve listened to me very closely. You’ve let me make my argument to you about why this is a humanitarian issue and

why it is an issue that is in the personal interest of the United States.

Now, let me tell you that this is like any other military action. There are risks in it, if we have to take this action. There are risks every time our young people get up and fly jet airplanes at very high speeds. Most of us could not begin to do that. Most of us don't even have the reflexes or the eyesight or the hearing, never mind the skills to do it. We lose a substantial number of our men and women in uniform every single year in training operations. It is inherently dangerous work. Plus, the Serbs have an air defense system and it has a considerable capacity. There are risks to our pilots and there are risks to people on the ground who, themselves, are innocent bystanders.

But the dangers of acting must be weighed against the dangers of inaction. If we don't do anything after all the to-and-fro that's been said here, it will be interpreted by Mr. Milosevic as a license to continue to kill. There will be more massacres, more refugees, more victims, more people crying out for revenge. And they'll be spreading out to these nearby countries, where they have their own ethnic tensions. So instead of just this problem in Kosovo, you'll have the same sort of instability and tensions and the financial burden of refugees in the places around it.

The firmness of our allies and ourselves now, I believe, is the only hope the people of Kosovo have to be able to live in their own country without having fear for their own lives. We asked them to accept peace on terms that were less than perfect, and they said yes. We said if they would do it, we would stick by them—not "we," the United States, "we" 19 countries in NATO. We cannot run away from that commitment now.

And we ought to consider what would happen if we and our allies were to stand aside and let innocent people be massacred at NATO's doorstep. That would discredit NATO because we didn't keep our word. But that's not important, except insofar as what it means to you. You've got to decide, my fellow Americans, if you agree with me that in the 21st century, that America, as the world's superpower, ought to be standing up against ethnic cleansing if we have the means to do it and we have allies who will help us

do it in their neighborhood. And you have to decide whether you agree with me that we have a clear interest, after what we saw in World War I, World War II, in the cold war and all the people who died, in a Europe that is united, not divided; democratic, not dictatorial; and secure and at peace, not racked by ethnic cleansing—and if you believe that's good for us economically and politically, over and above the humanitarian issue.

I do. I believe the case is clear. Especially when you remember—let me say one more time—if you go home and look at a map tonight, you ought to get down and look at it. This is a conflict with no natural boundaries. If it continues, it could spread to neighboring Albania, just to the south. Most of the Kosovars are Albanians. What if they flood Albania with refugees? Albania has a Greek minority. What are they going to do? Are we going to recreate this all over again?

Then it could put massive numbers of refugees in Macedonia, where you have both a Slavic majority and a Muslim minority; a country now with a President and a Prime Minister that have worked with us and taken our NATO troops in and worked with us, putting enormous pressure on them. Believe me, it could draw in even Greece and Turkey.

So, apart from the humanitarian issue and apart from our interest in Kosovo, this thing has no natural boundaries. The whole Balkans area have all these people of different ethnic and religious groups, and if we just say, "Well, that's just the way they are," then that's they way they'll be. And there's a good chance when this young woman is an adult, voting citizen of this country, that she will have to be worried still about whether the politicians are going to deal with innocent people getting killed in that part of the world. I would like to lift that burden from their generation because I think it is morally right and in the vital interest of the United States. And I hope you will support me.

Now, I will say again, this is not a slam dunk. This is a difficult issue. This is a difficult decision. I believe that the position I have taken is the best of a lot of bad alternatives. But you didn't just hire me to make the easy decisions. And so I just would say

to you—I ask you to talk to your friends and neighbors about this. I ask you literally to go get down an atlas and look at the map, pay a little closer attention to the news reports, think about the arguments that I've made. Think about whether you really agree with me, and say a prayer for the young men and women in uniform who are going to be there to do what I, as their Commander in Chief, order them to do.

Now, let me go back to the point I started with, and I'll get to the domestic issues. We're living in a global society where there is no easy dividing line between what is foreign and what is domestic. I'll give you another issue: Social Security. You think, what in the world could be more of a domestic issue than Social Security? But the truth is, every wealthy country in the world is suffering the challenge of an aging crisis. Japan is facing it even more than we are, because their life expectancy is higher, and their birthrate is lower, and their immigration rate is much lower. A lot of the European countries are facing it because their life expectancy is more or less the same, and their birthrate is lower.

So we're not the only country in the world facing this Social Security issue. And I would argue to you, my fellow Americans, that this is a high-class problem. I hear people wringing their hands about Social Security; I say, hallelujah, give me more of those problems! Why do we have this problem? Because we're living longer. The older I get, the better that looks. [*Laughter*]

This is a high-class problem. But by 2030, we'll only have two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And so, we've either got to put more money in the system, cut benefits, increase the rate of return on the investment we're making in Social Security, or do a combination of all three if we want to maintain a system that, today, keeps one-half of the people in this country over 65 out of poverty.

And I would argue that we ought to start, since we have reduced the deficit, and we now have a surplus, and we are projected to have surpluses for the indefinite future—of course, it will go up or down with the condition of the economy, but the structural deficit has been eliminated. What I have said

to the American people is that we ought to set aside the majority of this surplus, 62 percent of it, for the next 15 years to stabilize Social Security. We can extend the life of the Trust Fund to about 2050 if you do that.

If we invested just a small percentage of it in the stock market or other private sector options—just a small percent—through a completely independent body, insulated from politics, you could put another 5 years on it. And I'll guarantee you, every State, county, and local worker represented by AFSCME that has a retirement plan, that that pension fund is doing some investing in the private sector. They don't have it all in government securities, and they've probably invested a whole lot more than I suggest in the private sector. And that's probably why your retirement funds are all in good shape, because the stock market has been doing well.

Now, the stock market doesn't always do well historically throughout the country, but over any 30-year period, it always outperforms just 100 percent guaranteed government investments. So what I've tried to do is get a little bit of the best of both worlds.

Now, what we've tried to do with Social Security, historically, is to have 75 years of life on the Trust Fund, which is what I would like to do. I would also like to lift the earnings limitation because as people live longer, more and more people will want to work. If they pay in, they ought to be able to draw out, I think. And eventually that will bring money into Social Security. And I think we have got to provide greater benefits to elderly, single women who still have a poverty rate of over 18 percent—almost twice the overall poverty rate of the senior population. That's very, very important.

So we need to get together in a decent, open, honest bipartisan fashion and figure out what other steps we need to take to close that gap. But believe me, you can't get there unless you first set aside 62 percent of the surplus to save Social Security.

The second thing I want to do is set aside 15 percent of the surplus for the next 15 years for Medicare. And again, there are a lot of those who don't want to do that. But keep in mind, you may not agree with everything I do, but at least I ought to have some

credibility on this. We did have a \$290 billion deficit when I took office, and we do have a \$70 billion surplus now. You've got a big stake in this. A lot of the people that are members of your union deal with people who depend upon Medicare to survive. A lot of you have parents who depend upon Medicare to survive.

Now, again, Medicare is falling victim to the aging of America, because the older you get the more you need some kind of health care, right? I mean, I have to stretch for 20 minutes or more just to get up and get around anymore. [*Laughter*] I mean, it's a big deal. The older you get—you do. We know that. And also modern medicine and technology—we're living longer. And if we really do finish this genome project by 2000, 2001, unlock all the secrets of the human gene, you're going to see life expectancy go up exponentially.

But anybody in this room today that's over 60 years old, is still in good health, and if you know that—if you don't know of any health problem you have, you have a life expectancy right now of over 80 years. The life expectancy in America today is over 76 years, and that includes everybody that gets killed by accidents, violence, early childhood disease, everything else. So again, this is a high-class problem, folks. This is not the end of the world. It's good news. We're living longer, and there are medical advances.

But we cannot sustain Medicare; it's going to run out of money in 2010 or a couple years after that, 2 or 3 years after that. We've done our best to manage it. We've added years to it. But we need to take it out for another decade or so. And we need also to make some provision for seniors on Medicare to get some help to buy prescription drugs.

Now, again, that will be a costly program, although, you know, we have to ask people who can afford to pay to pay what they can afford to pay. But think about it over the long run. Over the long run, you can buy a lot of drugs in a year for what a week in a hospital costs you.

So if we get the right kind of system in place and we don't encourage over-utilization, and we ask people to pay what they can afford to pay, but we help them, you'll get out of these horror stories where you've got

seniors in America still making a choice between the food they eat and the drugs they need, without bankrupting the system.

Now, there have been a lot of proposed reforms to Medicare. There was that Commission, you know, and they had different approaches and they didn't—issued a report—Senator Breaux's Commission. They had some pretty good ideas about making the system more competitive and all that. But my issue there is, I want a defined set of benefits, first of all. I want to make as much provision as we can for prescription drugs.

And secondly, I don't want to do something that will, in effect, break down the system, because there is no set of reforms that will meet the financial needs of Medicare without putting some more money in it. I've not seen any; I have not seen any independent expert who says that. And since I don't think we should raise taxes when we have a surplus, we ought to dedicate 15 percent of the surplus to Medicare and make some reforms which would enable us to lengthen the life of Medicare and begin to deal with this prescription drug issue. And so I ask you to work with me on that.

Now, there are some people who believe that these programs ought to be more privatized, who won't support the money for that reason. But there are some people—most of them in our party—who believe that since we've got this money, we don't have to make any changes in the program. Both sides are wrong. So we're going to have to work together—and you all need to listen to me—we're going to have to work closely together.

For example, I'm against raising the retirement age for Medicare to 67 because—let me tell you why—because the fastest-growing group of people without health insurance are people between 55 and 65. And so I can't imagine why we would want to have more elderly people without health insurance.

Now, I've offered Congress a proposal to help plug that gap a little bit, and I hope they'll take it this year. But that does not mean we can be against all reform. We have to be prepared to eat a few lemons, too. But we ought to do it with our goals in mind: preserving the integrity of Medicare, the guaranteed set of benefits; doing something

on the prescription drugs that will really make a difference; and making sure that we have held together a program that has been a lifesaver for this country for 30 years.

So that's what we've got to do. Now, let me just say one third thing about this. Again—and there's another—this is why I tell you all this foreign business and the domestic business are all related. If we put aside 62 percent for Social Security and 15 percent for Medicare, we can do it in a way that enables us to pay down the national debt for 15 years.

If we pay down the national debt, here's what will happen: Interest rates will be lower; more investment will come; there will be more jobs created; incomes will stay up; it will protect us from bad things that happen overseas and it will make it more likely that good things will happen overseas—because if we don't have to borrow this money for our own debt, then other people around the world will be able to get money at lower rates. They will grow more; they'll buy more of our products. And you'll be better off because in all your States and cities, people will be earning more money, paying more taxes, more money for AFSCME employees who work for the public—all this stuff is connected.

All this is connected. You have to see the connection between what we do and what it impacts on us and how it impacts around the world. So I ask you to support that.

Finally, I believe we should have a tax cut, but I think it ought to be targeted to middle-income families and lower-income working families. In my balanced budget, we've got tax cuts for child care—very important; substantial—for long-term care, to help people pay for long-term care expenses for their families, very important; for training costs and any number of other things. And then, in this balanced budget, I propose to set aside about 11 percent of the surplus to help people set up their own savings accounts so they can save for their retirement, and have the Government take this money and give it back to people, so over and above their Social Security and their retirement plans and their pensions, they can save more money for their future. Now, I think this is a good idea.

Now, let me say we have some agreement and a lot of disagreement with the Republican majority on this. They have agreed we should invest more money in education, which I think is good, but we differ about how to spend it. They have agreed that they should set aside some money for Social Security, but they haven't agreed to do it in a way that will pay down the debt yet. They have not agreed to devote any of this surplus to Medicare, which I think is a terrible mistake.

Now, they say I'm going to use the surplus so we don't have to make any of the hard choices on Medicare. I will say again, that is not true. You heard me tell you, we're going to have to get together and make some changes in the Medicare program. But we could make every change they propose and the thing would still not last very long unless we put some more investment in it. And every expert knows that.

So, the third thing I want to say is, as usual, for the last, now more than 16 years, the bulwark of their plan is a large tax plan that disproportionately benefits people like me who don't need it, and that will explode, in the out-years—the very years that I want us to be paying that debt down, keeping interest rates down.

You talk to any person who's made a lot of money in America in the last 6 years, and they'll tell you that they'd a lot rather have a growing stock market and low interest rates than a tax cut, because we already—not because everybody wouldn't like to have a tax cut. The people we ought to be focusing on cutting taxes for are the people that cannot pay their kid's way to college and take care of their parents who are sick and make ends meet. That's what we ought to be doing.

So I say again, I'm somewhat encouraged by where we are with the Congress now, because there is a general feeling we're going to do something about Social Security. But we ought to do it in a way that brings the debt down. We've got to do something about Medicare. We ought to have the right kind of tax cut, and it shouldn't be so big it keeps us from making the economy strong.

I want to work with you on this. You've been good to me. You helped me get elected.

We've done a lot of things together. And believe me—the 25 percent of our time we've got left together—if we save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century, if we agree to pay down the national debt, if we make a historic commitment to the education of our children, if we do something about long-term care, if we do something about child care—the best is yet to come.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Presidential Suite of the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gerald W. McEntee, international president, William Lucy, international secretary-treasurer, Glenard S. Middleton, Sr., international vice president, Charles M. Loveless, legislative department director, and Caryl Yontz, legislative affairs specialist, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner**

*March 23, 1999*

Thank you so much. Walker, if I had any sense, I'd just quit while I'm ahead. That was a wonderful introduction. Thank you for your years of support and for being there for us when we couldn't have had such a successful dinner.

I thank my longtime friend Governor Roy Romer who like me, put in a dozen years as the Governor of a State, and on the bad days I still think it was the best job I ever had. [*Laughter*] But there aren't many of them.

I thank my longtime friend Mayor Archer, whom I met when he was an august judge working with my wife with the American Bar Association, for his service and, in her absence, Congresswoman Sanchez. And I know Congressman Matsui and Congressman Menendez meant to be here tonight, but they're still voting. And we're glad Congressman Menendez's daughter joined us. She'll be more affected by the decisions we make this year than most of the rest of us will.

I'm glad all the young people who are here tonight are here. I would like to thank our

new officers, Joe Andrew, Andy Tobias, Beth Dozoretz. I thank Janice Griffin, who is the vice chair of our Women's Leadership Forum. And I was glad that Roy acknowledged the presence of former Congressman Dave McCurdy here, and also our former DNC chairman Chuck Manatt who, if everything works all right, will be an Ambassador pretty soon. And you ought to talk to him tonight. I'm sure once he gets the title he'll be insufferable, but anyway—[*laughter*].

Let me say, when Walker was up here talking and Roy mentioned Dave McCurdy, I thought about the years when some of you in this room worked with Dave and me and others on the Democratic Leadership Council. One of our goals was to try to prove that the Democrat Party could be a genuinely progressive party and be good for American business. But I want to make a larger point here and try to just talk for a few moments tonight.

When I ran for President in 1991 and '92, I did so because I thought that the natural rhetoric of Washington, DC, had become increasingly polarized and divorced from the real experiences of ordinary Americans, and that there was—and I felt a lot of sympathy because I had spent enough time here as a Governor to know that Members of Congress, even the President—Congressman Menendez, welcome; I didn't know you were back. We're glad to see you. Thank you. But anyway, I spent enough time up here and then going back home to Arkansas to know that it was so hard on a daily basis for people in public life to get their message out, that you knew maybe you would get your 10 seconds on the evening news.

And it led to the sort of natural impulse to sharpen the rhetoric and to stay within the comfortable contours of conflict that had defined the two parties for so long, that it maybe worked for individual people in public life, but it wasn't working very well for America. And it didn't really match up to the world we were living in, and certainly not to the world that these young people will dominate when they come of age.

And yet I saw people like Roy Romer in Colorado, a predominantly Republican State, mayors like Dennis Archer, finding ways to pursue progressive politics that try to include



everybody and give everybody a stake and take care of people that needed to be taken care of and give people opportunity who didn't have it and still make the trains run on time, pay the bills, get the economy to work, deal with the difficult issues that keep our system going strong and growing and changing.

And so what I tried to do in 1992 was to tell the American people there were enough hard choices in life to make that we shouldn't be going around making a lot of false choices. We shouldn't be defeating ourselves before we started by saying, for example, if you want to have a compassionate social policy, you have to run a big deficit. Why? Because sooner or later you don't have any money left to spend anyway, even with a deficit.

And meanwhile, the very people you say you're trying to help, you're hurting, because every year the Congress has to spend more and more money they could spend on education or housing or health care, paying interest on the national debt—it was up over 14 cents on the dollar when I got here—keeping interest rates high, keeping economic growth low, depriving people of the best social program of all, a decent job.

And the same thing was true about business and labor. It seemed to me that in a global economy, with also a phenomenal increase in productivity being driven by technology, with more and more benefits to labor being added by higher levels of education, and a lot of external challenges—not only competition but these environmental challenges that I'll say more about in a minute, just to mention a few—that the best course was to find out what was good for business and labor, and that the best companies in America had figured that out decades ago.

And I could give you just example after example after example where I thought, yes, there were hard enough choices to make, but if we kept ourselves within these categories we were doomed to defeat. And so my idea was that, if I could ask America to join with me in a common vision, then we could ask ourselves, what will work to achieve that? And forget about the fights we've been having. Let's have some new fights.

I once—the late Edmund Muskie, who was a distinguished Senator from Maine,

nominee for Vice President, Secretary of State, once spoke to a Governors' Conference in Maine in 1983, and I'll never forget what he said. He said, "In all my years in public life, I defined my success by whether I left my successor a new set of problems." You think about that. He said, "You know, life is full of problems." There will never be an end to human challenges as long as people are around on this Earth. But if we had to keep retreading the same old ground, we'd never get anywhere. So, we said, "We'll have an economic policy that will reduce the deficit and increase investment in education and technology and the other things that are important. We will have a trade policy that will expand trade but value environment and humane labor conditions."

"We'll have an environmental policy that will clean up the environment, but will emphasize, insofar as humanly possible, market mechanisms and incentives, and technology and creativity to clean the environment up, so that we don't overly burden the economic machine when we're doing it."

And to be fair, a lot of these things are possible today, and they might not have been possible in former years. For example, it is now literally possible, as a lot of our most innovative utilities have proven, to generate more energy capacity through conservation, through alternative sources of energy, through partnering with your customers, than ever before.

It is also now possible to grow an economy without increasing the use of fuel that burn greenhouse gases. But most people don't believe it still, even in America, and certainly not in a lot of developing countries.

And what I'd like to ask you to think about tonight just briefly is: Okay, I'm grateful, we've had a good economic policy. And Walker did a better job of bragging on it than I should. And we did have something to do with that. So did all of you, and millions of other people in this country. And we've got crime at a 30-year low. Why? Because we said that this is a false choice between whether you're going to try to rehabilitate people or keep them out of trouble in the first place or punish people who do wrong.

The vast majority of serious crimes are committed by a very small number of people.

They ought to be identified. They ought to be punished. Then we ought to kill ourselves trying to keep our kids out of trouble in the first place. And we ought to try to prevent as much crime as possible.

That's why we put these 100,000 police out there on the street and sponsored after-school programs and other kinds of preventive programs. I'm glad that welfare is at a 30-year low. Almost half—it's been cut almost in half—partly by the growing economy and partly by a new welfare strategy that says: Now we should keep the guarantee poor families have for health care and nutrition for the kids, but if a person is able-bodied, the person ought to go to work if there's a job.

You know that one of the things that got lost in a lot of the rhetoric—the two welfare bills I vetoed would have taken away the guarantee of food and medicine and medical care for children. But I told the Congress if they would put those things back in, I would give the States the power to create their own designs, to figure out the most innovative ways of putting people to work.

And these kinds of things actually do work. And for progressives, I would like to say we have the lowest poverty rate we've had in quite a long time. We have much lower poverty rates among minorities than we've recorded in 30 years. We're finally beginning to see in wages an increase in equality, with wages growing more rapidly for people in the lower income rungs. We've got 90 percent of our children immunized for the first time. The budget in '93 really worked to relieve the tax burden on the hardest pressed working families. The Family and Medical Leave Act has done the same thing. So it is possible to have a good economic policy, to be tough where you ought to be tough, and to have a more humane society.

And what I have been trying to do is to get—not to say that I'm right about every issue but to get people to think in those terms. What kind of America do we want to leave our children in the 21st century? I think we want a country where every responsible person has an opportunity to live out his or her dream. I think we want a country that is genuinely committed to the idea of community.

And I want to tell you what I mean by that. I mean a sense of belonging, a sense of being responsible to other people, not only because it's morally right but because we believe we do better individually when our friends and neighbors are doing better and because we believe that our differences, whether they're racial, ethnic, religious, or whatever, are quite exciting and interesting, but they're not nearly as important as the humanity we share.

And that is a profoundly important issue as we become more and more diverse in a world that is being consumed, as you see in the Balkans, in the Middle East, in Africa, and elsewhere, by ethnic and regional—ethnic and racial and other kinds of divisions.

And I think it is very, very important that America recognize that another false choice is trying to say, "Well, I'm going to concentrate on domestic policy but not foreign policy." I said this all during the '92 campaign, and I don't think anyone ever heard this, but there is no longer an easy dividing line between our policy at home and our policy around the world—that the world is becoming a smaller place.

And that's why we tried to establish new partnerships with Africa, with Latin America, a whole new, broader relationship with a lot of Asian countries we weren't involved with before, and a lot of other things that I've tried to do, to work with the Europeans to help them deal with these horrible problems in the Balkans and become united and free—because I know that if we want good trading partners, we've got to be good citizens of the world.

And America, still—we've got 4 percent of the world's population and 22 percent of the income. If we want to keep it, the only way we can keep it is to sell some of what we provide to people beyond our borders. And for them to buy it, they need to be doing well, and they need to be safe and free and secure. And so, very often what is the right thing to do is also economically the right thing to do.

Now, having said that, I'd just like to say that that is the perspective—that's the world I've tried to leave for our children. And what I hope that all of you will be able to do as members of our Business Council is to keep

us moving down that path. Keep us making the tough decisions but not with false categories, not with presuppositions about what has to be done, not with the idea that we can't reconcile a lot of these internal difficulties that are there.

If you look ahead at the big challenges facing us in the 21st century—and I'd just like to mention a few of them, not all of them, but a few of them, and what I'm trying to get this Congress to help me do. I think they are as follows, in no particular order: Number one, how to keep the economy going at home and how to build a better economy in the world; how to keep the difficulties in Asia from biting us here and taking America's economic engine down and, instead, how to grow together. And I would just say I think there are three things we have to do.

One, abroad, I think we need to continue to expand trade. I think we have got to find a new consensus in America on trade. The Democratic Party should not be afraid of trade. It has generated more jobs than it has cost, and the jobs it has generated have higher wages. The Republican Party should not be afraid of the notion that we need new international understandings, just like we have national understandings, that lift environmental standards and lift labor standards, even as we expand trade so we have a race to a higher level of life, a higher quality of life—not a race to the bottom. And we've got to find a new consensus on it. But we can't run away from it.

The second thing we need to do is to deal with the world financial problems. And I won't bore you with the long exegesis on that, but the G-7 countries, the big economies, are going to meet in Germany this summer, and I'm hoping that we will have the next big step to take there to try to stabilize the world financial system so we don't have the kind of rampant crash we had in Asia in the last few years.

And let me just tell you what the basic problem is—and some of you who are involved in trading understand this. But if we're going to have a global economy where we have global trade and global investment, you have to move money around. And money is like anything else; if you move around enough of it, there will be a market for

money. And farmers have known this for years with their crops, where they have to hedge against their crops.

But today \$1.5 trillion—trillion—is exchanged around the globe every day in currency exchanges. That's many, many times more than the aggregate value of total trade in goods and services every day. And when the people that set up this system 50 years ago—and those of us who have been working in it for many years never focused clearly enough on that until the last couple of years. But that's going to be very important, because you're not going to be able to keep support for free markets and maybe even for freely elected governments in some of these countries if they think in a month they could lose what they worked for 10 years for, and all these people in the middle class all of a sudden are plunged into poverty.

The third thing we have to do is to recognize that a lot of people in America have not yet been touched by our recovery, as sweeping as it has been, and that they offer us a market to continue to grow our economy in a non-inflationary way, whatever is happening overseas. That's the new markets initiative I talked about in the State of the Union. Essentially, what I have asked the Congress to do is to pass a series of tax credits and loan guarantees to get private capital into poor inner-city and rural areas that are underinvested in, where the unemployment rate is too high.

The unemployment rate in this country is 4.4 percent. But here are neighborhoods in New York where it's 12 or 15 percent—and in most big cities in this country and in an awful lot of rural counties in this country, which are capable of getting investment and putting people to work.

And let me just tell you how it works. For example, suppose—I'll just take—suppose Newark, New Jersey, wanted to build some big facility in an area of high unemployment, and it cost \$100 million. If my proposal were adopted by Congress, the investors—if they put it in a high unemployment area and guaranteed a certain percentage of the jobs; people would be trained for them, and then the permanent jobs would be given to people who could compete in that area—would get a 25 percent tax credit and would get then

two-thirds of the remaining investment with a guarantee. The investment would be guaranteed.

That's just what we do with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Export-Import Bank, other things. It seems to me that it's the least we can do in America is to give the same incentives to people who invest in underinvested areas in America we do to get them to invest in underinvested areas around the world. And I think that we ought to be for that.

The second thing I think we ought to do is to continue our work in education. We've got the best system of higher education in the world. One of the proudest achievements of this administration is that we virtually opened the doors of college to all with the tax credits and loans and scholarships and the AmeriCorps program and all that. But nobody thinks that every American child has the best access to elementary and secondary education. So we need to have higher standards.

And I recommended five things in the State of the Union Address, including ending social promotion, but giving children—all children—the right to go to summer school and after-school and mentoring programs if they're not learning, in return for the continued investment of Federal money. But I also want to continue putting more teachers in the classroom, to have smaller classes, and modernizing schools, hooking them all up to the Internet.

I think we have to deal with the—[*ap- plause*]. Thank you. I think—but see? That's the false—are you going to be for spending more money on education or higher standards? Why should we make that choice? Why shouldn't we be for spending more money and having higher standards? You know, a lot of people say it's not a money problem, but it's been my experience in life that anytime somebody tells you it's not a money problem, they're usually talking about someone else's problem, not theirs. So why should we make that choice?

And I'll just give you one last issue, which goes back to economics, and that's dealing with the aging of America. There's been a lot of hand-wringing in our country for years about Social Security and increasingly about

Medicare. But I hope you will forgive me when I tell you that these are very high-class problems. First of all, they're problems that we share with every other wealthy country in the world, because life expectancy is going up just at the time the baby boomers are aging. And medical science is providing people the opportunity to extend their lives and to extend the quality of their lives. But as you get older, you consume more health care, and if you access technology, it costs more.

So we have to make some fundamental changes in both the Medicare program and the Social Security program. But first we have to recognize that we have to put some more funds in them, because by 2030, there will be twice as many people over 65, only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security.

And what I've recommended is that we, in effect, use the surplus—77 percent of it—over the next 15 years to pay the debt down in a way that, in effect, gives claim on that money in the ensuing years when it will be needed for Medicare and Social Security. Now, if you do that, we can take the amount of money we're spending on debt service in the budget—it will make it a lot more fun to be in Congress—you can take the amount of money you're spending on debt service from about, now, down to 13 cents, down to 2 cents in 15 years. We'll have the lowest debt as a percentage of our income we've had since World War I. And whatever happens to the global economy, interest rates in America will be lower; investment will be higher; incomes will be higher; and jobs will be more plentiful.

So I think this is a very important thing. Now, it will sound a lot better when somebody else who comes along and the other party says, "No, let's give half of it away in a tax cut." But we can give tax cuts to people who need it to keep body and soul together or who need it for specific purposes, like to deal with the climate change challenge or to deal with the challenge of long-term care in their families or to deal with the child care challenge and their families or to help more people save for their own retirement, and still save this money, save the bulk of this surplus.

Look, we were in debt for 30 years; we had a structural deficit for 12 years, and during that 12 years we quadrupled the national debt. If we were to pay it down two good things would happen to us economically. First, what I just said—we'd pay down the debt and have lower interest rates and higher investment. Secondly, we'd make it a lot cheaper for our trading partners to borrow the money in the world. And these poorer countries would get more money, get more investment. They would grow faster, and they'd buy more of our goods.

We've got someone here from Boeing tonight. You just talk to them about what the global financial crisis has done to them. Talk to the farmers in this country about what the global financial crisis has done for them. If our trading partners aren't doing well, they don't have the money to buy our output.

So these are the kinds of things that I want to do, deal with these big challenges—the aging of America, the education issues, keeping the economy growing, the challenge of climate change—these huge, big challenges in a way that benefits all people, because we do recognize we're in a community.

Now, I may not be right about all of this. But on the Social Security and Medicare and budget deficit, which will be the big questions we have to face this year, I think this administration is at least entitled to the benefit of the doubt based on the consequences of the policies of the last 6 years.

On the other issues that are very important—the trade issues, particularly—I asked the members of the Democratic Business Council to work with our friends in labor, work with our friends in the Democratic Party, and remind everybody that one of the reasons we got where we are in the last 6 years is we became the greatest trading nation in the world again. And that's one of the reasons we're here.

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't do something for El Paso, Texas, if they lose 6,000 jobs. It's not a choice. You don't have to say, "Oh, goodness, too bad about them. We're doing great." You should say, "We should do what's best for the country as a whole and help them—because they're smart, too; they're hardworking, too; they're entitled to have their chance in the Sun, as

well." So these are the kinds of thing we're trying to do.

And one last thing. I gave a long speech about Kosovo today, and I don't want to talk about that in any detail tonight, but I will say this: It is interesting that at the end of the cold war with this incredible explosion of technology and opportunity to create wealth, that the world is convulsed by people obsessed with making their lives on holding other people down because they're different. That's why I think it's important that we continue the President's Initiative on Race, which we're doing; why I think it's important that we pass the employment nondiscrimination act and the hate crimes law that I put before the Congress; why I think it's important we stand up against ethnic cleansing and keep fighting for peace in the Middle East.

And the darkest nightmare—I told you my happy dream for the future—the darkest nightmares of the future are the marriage of modern technology and primitive hatred, because terrorists can figure out how to get on the Internet and make bombs. You can get on the Internet and figure out how to make that bomb that blew up the building in Oklahoma City. You can have a little biological lab in a garage somewhere if you know enough.

And what we don't want to do is to leave our children with a world in which we've done a whiz-bang job with all the mechanical and economic things, but we haven't done anything to purge the collective spirit of our country and, insofar as we are able, the world of the foolish notion that our lives only can count when we've got our heel on someone else's neck, and we can say we're better than they are. This is a profound thing.

This is—this goes back to prehistory, folks. When people first aggregated themselves in tribes, they had to be suspicious of the other. And we have different skin pigmentations today and different facial features and all that for reasons that go back thousands, even tens of thousands of years.

And it falls now to America not to be a wild-eyed idealist but just to remind the people that we are trying to set a model for the world. And we're not perfect, but we're trying to say that any responsible citizen can be part of our community. And if we're going

to have the world we want, that has to be true everywhere. America has to try to be good at home and to be a force for good abroad.

And all the work we do on economics and technology and trade and everything else will, in the end, also have some very twisted manifestations, which will bedevil our children unless we also stand up for old-fashioned ideals. We believe in equality and freedom and our common humanity.

That's what I want the Democratic Party to be in the 21st century, and I want you to be a big part of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:21 p.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Andy Tobias, treasurer, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Chuck Manatt, former chairman, and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, general cochair, Democratic National Committee; Alicia Menendez, daughter of Representative Robert Menendez; and Walker Nolan, founding member, Democratic Business Council, who introduced the President.

### Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

March 23, 1998

**The President.** Thank you so much. I want to thank, first of all, Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz, and all the people with the Democratic Party for their work. But especially I want to thank Tom and Chris for having us here tonight. When I drove up in the backyard and I was walking up through the kitchen, which is bigger than my first house—[laughter]—Tom and I have been friends a long time, and I saw Tom, I said, “Tom, I have one question.” I said “You really want to do something great for the Democrats?” He said, “Sure.” I said, “Don’t let any incumbent Member of Congress come to your house. They’ll all quit.” [Laughter] He wouldn’t give me that commitment. [Laughter]

It’s a beautiful home. It’s a warm atmosphere, and I know that we all thank Tom and Chris for having us here. I’d also like to thank the people who prepared and served

our food, and the wonderful musicians who entertained us before. Their songs were better than mine will be. But they’re out there. Thank you very much for the music. You were great. Thank you. [Applause]

I want to thank you for your contributions, for your support for our party tonight. I would like to begin with a brief retrospective. In 1992 I ran for President because I wanted to change the direction of national politics, because I felt that there was a lot of rhetoric and not very much action being generated in Washington. And I thought the two parties were like locked gears, locked into sort of a rhetorical argument that just kept repeating itself over and over and over again, without allowing us ever to actually deal with something like the debts that are—deal with what national policy on education ought to be or deal with what national environmental policy ought to be or deal with what national health care policy ought to be.

And the people were kind enough to elect me President in '92. And then in '94, when we got beat in the congressional races, I thought they were saying they really didn't mean it, after all. [Laughter] Part of the reason we took such a licking is that we tried to break the mold. We tried to pass a deficit reduction plan which raised taxes on 1½ percent of the people that had the highest incomes—cut taxes, as Tom said, through the earned-income tax credit on the 15 percent of the people with the lowest incomes who were working for a living, so we could say nobody who works 40 hours a week and has a child in the house would be in poverty. And we cut a lot of spending.

And the economy had not turned around enough. And the Republicans offered their Contract With America. By 1996, thanks to the recovery of the economy, the passage of the crime bill, the family leave law, the Brady bill, a lot of the other things that were done, and a lot of the other initiatives in the administration, the efforts we made for peace from the Middle East to Bosnia to Northern Ireland, the country felt pretty good about itself, and we were given another term.

In 1998, under circumstances which appeared on the surface to be exceedingly difficult, in an election in which our party was

outspent by more than \$100 million, our party's candidates for the House of Representatives picked up seats in the sixth year of a President's term for the first time since 1822. And we had no losses in the Senate when, just 3 weeks before, most experts thought we would lose between four and six seats.

Now, what I would like to say is—about that is, I believe that selection in 1998 came out the way it did and the one in '96 came out the way it did and the one in '92 came out the way it did, because we ran on Democratic values and new ideas, because we ran on our willingness to be held accountable for results, and because we tried to build new coalitions and asked people to think about the future and not the past.

And what I want to say to you tonight is, I—first of all, I am profoundly grateful for your generosity and your support. But I also ask you to bring to the Vice President and me and our administration, to Joe Andrew and Roy Romer and Beth, and all the members of the Democratic Party the benefit of whatever you know that you think would help us do a better job serving America, because we'll win more elections if people think we're standing for the right things and they think we deliver.

I told any number of people that I was convinced that the real reason we won in '98 was not so much a reaction against the Republicans; it was that there was a reaction, coupled with the fact that we said, "Hey, vote for us; our policies are working; and if you vote for us, we will keep the economy going, save Social Security and Medicare before we squander the surplus, pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, and modernize our schools and give you smaller classes." We had an agenda. People could remember what we stood for, and it resonated out there. And it was not the same things that people had been saying year-in and year-out.

Therefore, I say to you tonight, the reason I ask for your help and your ideas is I think it is quite important that we make every effort to produce. I try—the closer I get to the end of my term, the less time I try to spend talking about what we have done and the more time I try to spend talking about what we ought to do. We still have about 25 percent of the time that this administra-

tion has been given by the American people, almost half of a full Presidential term. And I think it is absolutely imperative that we take advantage of this enormous prosperity that we have been blessed with, with the first surplus we've had in 30 years now 2 years in a row and say, "Hey, we're a year from a new century and a new millennium, and we're living and working and relating to each other in a very different way now. We need to deal with the great unmet challenges that are before us."

And there are many. And I won't—I don't want to give you a policy speech tonight, but I just would say this. I think we owe it to the American people to make the reforms necessary to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century. I think we also owe it to the American people to set aside a significant portion of the surplus, about three-quarters of it, to fund those programs along with the reforms and to pay down the debt at the same time.

Now, a lot of you have followed this Social Security and Medicare debate. Let me just say this: There is not a single expert I have talked to who seriously believes that we can reform Medicare and keep it going without putting more money in it, because we're living longer and older people use more medicine. The only way to fix Social Security when there are only two people working for every one person drawing, you either have to cut benefits, put more money in the program, or raise the rate of return on the money you've got in the program.

To do everything we want to do, we might have to have an amalgam of that. But first and foremost, before we raise the payroll tax, which is already too high, I think we ought to take some of this surplus, pay down the debt, and do it in a way that obligates that money as it repeats itself to go into—to pay for Social Security obligations in the out-years. We still have to make some changes. It's important.

Let me also say to you, if we use the money—if we set it aside for Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt, we can, in 15 years, have the lowest debt we've had since World War I, since the beginning of World War I. Now, a lot of you are in international business. I'm doing my best to

fix the international financial system. I'm going to do my best to do whatever I can to bring the Asian countries back, to help Russia restart its economy, to keep Latin America from being totally afflicted by what happened in Asia. I'm going to do my best.

But whatever happens, we need to make America as strong as possible. If we were to pay down the debt over the next 15 years, if we would go from spending 13 cents of every tax dollar you spend on debt service down to 2 cents, we would have lower interest rates, higher investment, more jobs, lower car payments, lower college loan payments, lower home mortgage payments, lower credit card payments, higher incomes. Simultaneously, we would be freeing up that money to be borrowed by others in other parts of the world, at lower interest rates. And they need the money. And their incomes would rise in a way that would permit them to buy more of what we have to sell.

And I cannot tell you how important I think it is for the Democratic Party that gave the people of this country Social Security, that gave the people of this country Medicare, and now has brought this country back to fiscal sanity, to say, "Hey, we can fix Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and do it in a way that dramatically increases the prosperity of the American people for the next 20 years." And we have no excuse for not doing it, unless our friends in the other party stop us. We should be focused on getting these big things done. And I want you to help us.

I also believe we have a very ambitious education agenda, that I think also goes beyond another choice. People—I used to hear this debate all the time. Every time I'd come to Washington, my friends in the Democratic Party back in the eighties would always want to help me with more Federal aid to education. And then the Republicans that I knew would always say they would want to be for higher standards, back then; they've abandoned that now, unfortunately. I hate that, but they have if you look at the debates.

But anyway, they were for higher standards back then. But they would say it's not a money problem. And as I've said many times, one of Clinton's laws of politics is whenever you hear somebody stand up and

tell you it's not a money problem, they're talking about somebody else's problem. [Laughter] That's a lecture we like to give to other people; we never look in the mirror and say it's not a money problem.

And our approach is to increase our investment in education. We nearly doubled the investment of the Federal Government in education in the 5 years that we were balancing the budget. We were cutting other things enough to dramatically increase it. So we should have smaller classes. We ought to hire 100,000 teachers. We ought to have modernized school buildings. We ought to have Internet access for every classroom in the country. But we also ought to stop giving money away without saying, "Look, here are basic standards that we know work every place they've been tried. End social promotion, but don't brand the children failures——"

[At this point, a cell phone rang in the audience.]

**The President.** ——and don't give every kid a cell phone." [Laughter] Don't be—I'm just glad it didn't happen to me. [Laughter] This is—I was just really trying to see if you all were paying attention. [Laughter]

This is a big deal. The United States Government has never been for both approaches. We have never done both at the same time. We've had periods where we really thought we were coming out for education reform. Then we've had periods where we knew we had real needs, and we provided funds. We've never been serious about saying, "We're going to raise the standards. We're going to judge results. We expect children to learn. We're tired of patronizing poor kids and saying they can't learn, but we're not going to brand them failures. We're going to have more after-school programs. We're going to have more mentoring programs. We're going to have more summer school programs. We're going to give them the chances they need."

This is a huge deal. No serious person believes that America has an adequate system of elementary and secondary education for every child in this country. And as we get more and more diverse, it will become more and more important that we do that. Every



one of you know about the additions to economic value that all people have when they have a better education.

So this is a big issue. We've got the best system of higher education in the world. It's open. We've now made it pretty much affordable for everybody, with the tax credits, the HOPE scholarships, the student loans, the work-study programs, the AmeriCorps program. Now we've got to spend 2 years really doing some things. And I'm telling you, it won't be popular. There are people who are going to scream to high heaven when I—we've got to reauthorize the \$15 billion we're spending on schools. And they'll say, "Okay, we'll give it to you again next year, but we would like you to show some results to keep getting it or at least get caught trying." And I don't mean to denigrate—most people do a good job. But the people that do a good job don't need it one way or the other. What we want to do is to make sure we take what works and replicate it throughout the country.

Any person who's ever spent any serious time working on education reform will tell you two things. One is that every challenge in American education has been met superbly by somebody somewhere. Two is, we are not very good at replicating what works. Most of you who have been in entrepreneurial, competitive environments would quickly go broke if somebody did what you were doing better and you didn't figure out how to at least meet the competition. We do not do that. And we have to find a way to do it. And I think I've given some good ideas here.

Let me just mention one last issue. I think that we have convinced the American people that we can bring the benefits of free enterprise to people who have not previously enjoyed it. You have poverty rates going down. You have the lowest unemployment rates among minorities ever recorded in this country. We finally have wages going up.

But we should be under no illusion that everybody in America has participated in this recovery. It is simply not true. In almost every big city in the country, there are huge census tracts—big blocks of areas where there has been no new investment. There are rural areas where the unemployment rates

are still quite high. And because of the financial crisis overseas and a few other factors, our farmers are facing the worst financial crisis they've had in 20 years, at a time when we've got this record low unemployment.

And I have asked the Congress to pass a series of tax credits and loan guarantees which would give incentives to people like a lot of you in this room, like take Mr. Titelman here from Philadelphia, to go to the—let's say there's a big section of Philadelphia that hasn't had any new investment in a long time and if it can qualify—kind of like the empowerment zone program that the Vice President is already doing such a good job of running the last several years. But let's suppose you could get a \$300 million investment in a place like that. If this bill passes there would be a 25 percent tax credit on the first \$100 million for the investment. And the next two-thirds of the investment would be subject to getting a loan guarantee, just like American investment in designated foreign countries is today. It just seems to me that it is elemental good sense to set up the same sort of financial incentive structure for people to invest in underdeveloped markets and people in the United States that we give our American investors to invest overseas.

And I hope this has great appeal to the Republicans, because it gives us a real chance. You just think about it. Think about how many places in this country you could say, "If we raise \$300 million and we invest it in place X in a viable-going concern that meets all the criteria for getting credit, we only have \$75 million at risk." That's not a bad deal. That's not a bad deal.

If we can't take a few chances to develop the rest of America now, when will we ever get around to it? The unemployment rate in New York City is still too high—the unemployment rate in a lot of rural communities, not just out in the South and the Mississippi Delta or in Appalachia but in the Mid-Atlantic States, in New England, other places. We need to do these kinds of things, face the big challenges, get them right.

The last point I want to make is this—I don't want to talk about Kosovo tonight, for obvious reasons—I made the best argument I could today when I spoke to the AFSCME group, and they, I understand,

showed extensive coverage of it on the media. But I will say this. I want to make two points only.

One is, I talked until I was blue in the face when I ran for President in 1992 about the fact that we can no longer make a clear distinction between domestic and foreign policy. We live in not just a global economy, a global society. We are being drawn closer together in ways that are good, in ways that are uncomfortable or potentially dangerous. And we have got to stop as a people putting this little box over here and calling it “foreign policy” and having a big box over here and calling it “domestic policy” and every now and then say, “Oh, I’ve got to go pick up this other box.” We have to see it together.

What does that mean for the Democrats? It means, number one, I’ve got a responsibility to do everything I can to modernize the financial architecture of the world so we don’t have another crisis like the one we had in Asia. It means, number two, we have got to find a consensus on trade, because a big part of our growth has come from selling more things overseas. We’ve got 4 percent of the population and 22 percent of the wealth. It’s not rocket science to figure out, if that’s where you are, you’ve got to sell something to somebody else.

But on the other hand, we have been caught in the vice where some Members of Congress, representing a lot of people in America, are worried about the dislocations of trade, and other Members, many in the other party, see the benefits of trade but don’t worry about the dislocation. So we wind up, well, are you going to get the benefits and say too bad about these people, or are you going to protect these people but slow down the economic prospects of the country? This is a dumb thing to do. It is very wrong to make either one of these decisions.

We need to build an American consensus in which we say “We’re going to reach out. We’re going to lead the world. We’re going to open up our borders.” We’ve got a lower unemployment rate than any other advanced country, for the first time in decades, even lower than Japan. But we ought to say, we also—“We’re the party that believes in preserving the environment. We’re the party that believes in the dignity of labor and ele-

mental labor standards, and we’re going to create a global economy where we lift people up instead of hold them down.” And we just ought to do it and quit wringing our hands about it. It’s very important.

And the last thing that I would say about that is, I think it is terribly important that we recognize that economics cannot exist in a global context in the absence of security and peace and freedom. So that if you really believe that our future depends on that and that Europe is a big trade and investment partner of ours, we have to ask ourselves, don’t we have a responsibility when our friends in Europe ask us, through a group that we all belong to, NATO, to help end the kind of chaos we see that we had first in Bosnia and now that we have a chance to prevent the most severe manifestations of in Kosovo—isn’t that more than just a foreign policy issue? Even though I think there’s a huge moral component there, it will have direct personal benefits to Americans if we have a stable, free, united Europe.

The last point I want to make is this—and then I’ll stop. Both at home and abroad, there are two great dynamics going on in the world today. One are the forces of integration that you see most positively in the growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web and everybody sharing information and everybody knowing—you know, pulling us together. Secondly, there are great forces of decentralization, when they’re positive, and disintegration when they’re negative. And you see that in the decentralization of all kinds of operations.

When I ran for President in 1992, 3 million people were making a living primarily out of their own home. When I ran for reelection in 1996, 12 million people were. In 1998, by the mid-term elections, 20 million people were. Rising exponential—decentralization, that’s all the flexible work rules, and all the stuff you know about. And all ethnic groups, you know, recovering their heritage in a happy way, having festivals. And you know, Hillary’s from Chicago. I love to go to Chicago every year, when they have the ethnic festival, because I can eat for 3 miles—*[laughter]*—and never have the same thing twice. *[Laughter]*

You know, decentralization—you have all these little companies coming up, fitting certain niches in the market, all these specialty magazines, everything—and you see it all over the world. That's the good news. The bad news is, decentralization when you see the ethnic fights in the Balkans, or people unable to get along. They want to be apart.

The American idea, modernized for the 21st century, is that out of many, one. *E pluribus unum*. Believe me, the Founding Fathers never had a clue what they were talking about. They could never have—I don't mean that in a pejorative way. They weren't thinking about the Fairfax County school system in Virginia, right across the river from me, that has children from 180 different racial and ethnic groups, speaking 100 different native languages. They never—they didn't have a clue about that. That's not what they were thinking about. You had to be a white male property-owner to vote when they started. But they had the right idea. And we've been struggling for over 200 years, now, to cram the new facts and our new perceptions and our true values, into that idea.

And so that's the last thing I want to say to you. I think that—if somebody asked me why I was a Democrat now, in 1999, I would say, because I really believe everybody who's responsible enough to work for it ought to have the opportunity to live out his or her dreams, and because I really believe in the idea of community, of belonging, of mutual responsibility. I do not believe that my life or my child's life will be as good as it would otherwise be, unless everybody else has a chance to fulfill themselves.

I believe we can do more together than we can apart. I like the fact that we all look different from each other, but I think what we have in common is more important than even all the interesting things that we have that are different about us.

And believe me, the big threat the world faces today is the marriage of modern, integrating technologies, with the negative, disintegrating forces of people with primitive notions that their lives only matter when they've got somebody they can look down on, somebody they can put their foot down on their neck on, somebody they can—lift themselves up by pushing somebody else down,

whether it's in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Bosnia, the tribal wars in Africa, or you name it.

You plug all that negative stuff into access to how to make missiles, how to make chemical weapons, how to make biological weapons, how to jam records, computer records and banks, or powerplants, or all these sort of—you know, what may seem like fictional scenarios. That is the threat our children will face, the combination of primitive disintegration with modern, integrating technology.

And we, America, we have to say, "Hey, the people that started us were right." We have—out of many, we must be one. And we've got to be willing to carry our load in the world. And today, I can tell you that the Democratic Party, by far, is more likely to bring that kind of approach to the world, and home to every American community. And in the end it counts more than everything else.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Tom and Chris Downey, dinner hosts; and William Titelman, executive vice president, managed care and government affairs, Rite Aid Corp.

## **Memorandum on Delegation of Authority**

*March 23, 1999*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject: Delegation of Authority Under Section 577 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (as enacted in Public Law 105-277)*

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby delegate the functions and authorities conferred upon the President by section 577 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (as enacted in Public Law 105-277) to the Secretary of State, who is authorized to

redelegate these functions and authorities consistent with applicable law. This delegation shall apply to the enterprise funds established by the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989, Public Law 101-179, as amended, and the FREEDOM Support Act, Public Law 102-511, as amended. The functions and authorities under section 577 shall be exercised in consultation with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provision of any Act shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter-enacted provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provision.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 26, 1999]

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 24, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 29.

### **Remarks on the Unveiling of a Portrait of Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown**

*March 24, 1999*

Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, say I thought Secretary Daley did a remarkable job today, and he was the funniest I have ever heard him—[*laughter*—which means either that the Commerce Department has been very good for him, or he has found an extraordinary speechwriter. [*Laughter*] If it is the former, I thank you. If it is the latter, I would like that person dispatched to the White House this afternoon. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Congressman Ford and Mr. Mayor and all of our Cabinet for being here. And Mickey, Heidi, thank you for being here—members of the Brown family. This is both a happy and a bittersweet day. We are now in the springtime, even though Washington is not quite behaving like it yet. Soon the dogwood that we planted on the back of the White House lawn will be blooming for Ron again. And now this portrait will

be here forever, to remind us all of his service and his spirit. Mr. Polson, I think you did a terrific job, and I congratulate you. We love it.

If Ron Brown were here, I know exactly what he'd say. He'd say, "Well, you did well. I'm dressed well"—[*laughter*—“and I look very strong. But you could have made me a little thinner.” [*Laughter*]

And I'd just like to just take a minute to remind all of you about the spirit. Secretary Daley was kind enough to say that I have tried to elevate the Commerce Department. I think that is true, but I would like to just say a word about it as it relates to Ron Brown.

After the election of 1992, when we were putting together our economic team and I had been listening rather carefully to what others had said and what I had seen about previous administrations and how they ran their economic policy, it seemed to me that, by and large, previous administrations had lodged the making of economic policy too much either in Treasury or the White House, or both, and had sort of overlooked the integral role of Commerce and our Trade Ambassador, on a daily basis, to the development of our long-term economic well-being.

Same thing could be said of other departments, the Agriculture Department, the Energy Department—how they were needed to make a joint economic policy. And so we put together this National Economic Council to integrate all the Departments. And then we decided to elevate the economic role, particularly of the Commerce Department, and to try to bring the Trade Ambassador into the daily work of the economic life of the administration, not just when there was some big trade negotiation going on.

And I think the evidence is, it worked pretty well. But it worked pretty well in no small measure because Ron Brown was here and Mickey Kantor was our Trade Ambassador and because Ron Brown believed me when I told him that I thought the Commerce Department had been grossly underutilized, at least in recent history, in terms of building the economic potential of America, within our country and beyond our borders. So he bought the big idea, and then he sold the big idea.

But the second point I want to make is that he did it, in no small measure, because of the spirit you see reflected in the set of the jaw and the glance of the eyes in this fine portrait. He basically believed there was no mountain that couldn't be climbed. He believed that American businesses had a responsibility to act in their enlightened self-interest to help themselves and others, here at home and around the world.

He also believed that people driven by ancient hatreds could find a way to put them aside. I will never forget how excited he was in the last conversation we had right before he left for Bosnia, how proud he was that he could lead a delegation of American business people to the Balkans to try to make peace.

Well, the peace process is working in Bosnia. As all of you know, it's under siege again in the Balkans because of what is going on in Kosovo. I don't want to talk about that here today except to say that there are basically two kinds of people that are dominating the public discourse around the world today: There are people that are determined to divide and drive wedges between and depress people because they're of different ethnic and racial and religious groups; and then there are people like Ron Brown, who believe that everybody ought to be lifted up and brought together and don't understand why anyone would waste lives and take other people's lives to gain a false sense of power in a smaller and smaller life based on oppression.

And when you look at this picture today, when you go out, first of all, I want all the members of the Commerce Department to be proud of what you are doing, proud of what he did, and proud of what you are doing under Secretary Daley, who has also, in my judgment, done a magnificent job. And I want you to think about the troubles of the world today, and I want you to see your life as an instrument of bringing out the spirit that Ron Brown brought to his life and his work in this Department every day and think about it for what it is, the principal opposing force to all this destructive racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural destruction we see all over the world today.

Every country has to make that choice, and in a way, every business has to make that choice and every person has to make that choice.

We're all blessed that we knew Ron Brown. We're glad that his family is here today. We're glad we've got Alma right where we want her; she can't talk back. I could have given her a whole lecture today. [Laughter] But I know Ron Brown would want me to say, to use this moment to say, "Look at this picture. Look at this life. Look at the troubles of the world." The choice is clear: America needs to stay on the path that he blazed.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. in the Herbert Hoover Building Auditorium at the Department of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; former Trade Ambassador Mickey Kantor and his wife, Heidi; artist Steven Polson, who painted the official portrait; and Alma Brown, widow of Ron Brown.

### **Remarks Announcing Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)**

*March 24, 1999*

Good afternoon. United States forces, acting with our NATO allies, have commenced airstrikes against Serbian military targets in the former Yugoslavia. I will address the Nation more fully tonight on why this action is necessary, but I wanted to say a few words now.

We and our NATO allies have taken this action only after extensive and repeated efforts to obtain a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo. But President Milosevic, who over the past decade started the terrible wars against Croatia and Bosnia, has again chosen aggression over peace. He has violated the commitments he, himself, made last fall to stop the brutal repression in Kosovo. He has rejected the balanced and fair peace accords that our allies and partners, including Russia, proposed last month, a peace agreement that Kosovo's ethnic Albanians courageously accepted.

Instead, his forces have intensified their attacks, burning down Kosovar Albanian villages and murdering civilians. As I speak, more Serb forces are moving into Kosovo, and more people are fleeing their homes—60,000 in just the last 5 weeks, a quarter of a million altogether. Many have headed toward neighboring countries.

Kosovo's crisis now is full-blown, and if we do not act, clearly, it will get even worse. Only firmness now can prevent greater catastrophe later.

Our strikes have three objectives: First, to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's opposition to aggression and its support for peace; second, to deter President Milosevic from continuing and escalating his attacks on helpless civilians by imposing a price for those attacks; and third, if necessary, to damage Serbia's capacity to wage war against Kosovo in the future by seriously diminishing its military capabilities.

As I have repeatedly said to the American people, this action is not risk-free. It carries risks. And I ask for the prayers of all Americans for our men and women in uniform in the area. However, I have concluded that the dangers of acting now are clearly outweighed by the risks of failing to act, the risks that many more innocent people will die or be driven from their homes by the tens of thousands, the risks that the conflict will involve and destabilize neighboring nations. It will clearly be much more costly and dangerous to stop later than this effort to prevent it from going further now.

At the end of the 20th century, after two World Wars and a cold war, we and our allies have a chance to leave our children a Europe that is free, peaceful, and stable. But we must—we must—act now to do that, because if the Balkans once again become a place of brutal killing and massive refugee flights, it will be impossible to achieve.

With our allies, we used diplomacy and force to end the war in Bosnia. Now trouble next door in Kosovo puts the region's people at risk again. Our NATO allies unanimously support this action. The United States must stand with them and stand against ethnic violence and atrocity.

Our alliance is united. And I am particularly grateful for the support we have received from Members of Congress from both parties. As we go forward, I will remain in close contact with Congress—I have spoken with all the leaders today—and in contact with our friends and allies around the world. And I will have more to say about all of this tonight.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

### **Statement on the Tenth Anniversary of the *Exxon Valdez* Oilspill in Prince William Sound, Alaska**

*March 24, 1999*

Ten years after the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in Prince William Sound, the lingering effects of the worst oilspill in U.S. history are a compelling reminder that we must be ever vigilant in the protection of America's natural treasures.

The spill caused grievous damage to an extraordinary web of nature and to the communities and livelihoods it sustains. A decade later, the healing is well under way, and tough new rules ensure that our entire coast is better protected against the threat of oilspills. With the State of Alaska, we have converted the large penalty paid by Exxon into lasting protection for salmon streams, fragile coastline, and old-growth forest around Prince William Sound.

Still, more time must pass before the communities and wildlife of Prince William Sound can fully recover. And some of the damage may never be undone. This awful disaster was a wake-up call. And we must work to ensure that its true legacy is a renewed commitment to protect our environment for generations yet to come.

**Statement on the Murder of Vice President Luis Maria Argana of Paraguay**

*March 24, 1999*

I want to express the profound sadness of the United States for the death earlier yesterday of the Vice President of Paraguay, Luis Maria Argana, and offer our condolences to the people of Paraguay and especially to the family of Vice President Argana. Vice President Argana was shot and killed yesterday by unknown assailants while on his way to the office. We strongly condemn this brutal murder, which occurred against the backdrop of continued political turmoil in Paraguay. I join the President of Paraguay, Cubas Grau, in urging all Paraguayans to put aside politics and draw together in the interest of all Paraguayans to support the democratic process.

**Statement on Legislation To Strengthen Medicare**

*March 24, 1999*

Today, the Senate Democrats introduced important amendments to address the major defect of the Republican budget: its complete failure to address Medicare. The majority's budget fails to set aside even one penny of the surplus to strengthen Medicare and does not extend its solvency by a single day. Yet, Medicare faces the same demographic challenges as Social Security and is projected to become insolvent even sooner. Instead of putting Medicare first, the Republican budget puts top priority on a tax cut that explodes in cost just at the time that baby boomers retire.

I applaud Senate Democratic efforts to fix the Republican budget by putting a higher priority on strengthening Medicare and by making sure that any lock-box includes Medicare. I urge Congress not to miss this historic opportunity to strengthen Medicare.

**Proclamation 7175—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1999**

*March 24, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

America has deep roots in Greece, and today we celebrate the friendship, values, and aspirations our two countries have shared for more than 2 centuries. Greek thought and the passion for truth and justice deeply influenced many of our Nation's earliest and greatest leaders. The documents our founders wrote to establish our democracy and the political and legal institutions they created to preserve our independence and protect our rights reveal that influence.

Later, recognizing this profound debt to Greek thought and culture and inspired by the struggle of modern Greece in the War of Greek Independence, many Americans left home to join in that distant fight for freedom between 1821 and 1832. In this century, the relationship between the Greek and American peoples deepened as we fought together in two world wars. The U.S. desire to help preserve freedom in Greece after the devastation of World War II moved President Truman to stand firm against isolationism and for postwar engagement abroad. Our nations stood together in Korea and in the Gulf War, and we continue to work shoulder-to-shoulder today in our efforts to find a lasting solution in the Balkans and to promote democracy around the world.

The bonds of family have further reinforced our ties of friendship and shared ideals. All across our Nation, Americans of Greek descent have brought their energy, grace, and determination to every field of endeavor, and they have added immeasurably to the richness and diversity of our national life. The sons and daughters of Greece have flourished in America, and with their help, America too has flourished.

Today, as we celebrate the 178th anniversary of the onset of modern Greece's struggle for independence, let us celebrate as well the great partnership between our nations and the precious heritage of freedom and democracy we share.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1999, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:33 a.m., March 25, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 24, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 26.

**Address to the Nation on Airstrikes  
Against Serbian Targets in the  
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia  
(Serbia and Montenegro)**

*March 24, 1999*

My fellow Americans, today our Armed Forces joined our NATO allies in airstrikes against Serbian forces responsible for the brutality in Kosovo. We have acted with resolve for several reasons.

We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive. We act to prevent a wider war, to diffuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results. And we act to stand united with our allies for peace. By acting now, we are upholding our values, protecting our interests, and advancing the cause of peace.

Tonight I want to speak to you about the tragedy in Kosovo and why it matters to America that we work with our allies to end it. First, let me explain what it is we are responding to. Kosovo is a province of Serbia, in the middle of southeastern Europe, about 160 miles east of Italy. That's less than the distance between Washington and New York and only about 70 miles north of Greece. Its people are mostly ethnic Albanian and mostly Muslim.

In 1989 Serbia's leader, Slobodan Milosevic, the same leader who started the wars in Bosnia and Croatia and moved against Slovenia in the last decade, stripped Kosovo of the constitutional autonomy its people enjoyed, thus denying them their right to speak their language, run their schools, shape their daily lives. For years, Kosovars struggled peacefully to get their rights back. When President Milosevic sent his troops and police to crush them, the struggle grew violent.

Last fall our diplomacy, backed by the threat of force from our NATO alliance, stopped the fighting for a while and rescued tens of thousands of people from freezing and starvation in the hills where they had fled to save their lives. And last month, with our allies and Russia, we proposed a peace agreement to end the fighting for good. The Kosovar leaders signed that agreement last week. Even though it does not give them all they want, even though their people were still being savaged, they saw that a just peace is better than a long and unwinnable war.

The Serbian leaders, on the other hand, refused even to discuss key elements of the peace agreement. As the Kosovars were saying yes to peace, Serbia stationed 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo in preparation for a major offensive—and in clear violation of the commitments they had made.

Now they've started moving from village to village, shelling civilians and torching their houses. We've seen innocent people taken from their homes, forced to kneel in the dirt, and sprayed with bullets; Kosovar men dragged from their families, fathers and sons together, lined up and shot in cold blood. This is not war in the traditional sense. It is an attack by tanks and artillery on a largely



defenseless people whose leaders already have agreed to peace.

Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative. It is also important to America's national interest. Take a look at this map. Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and Orthodox branches of Christianity. To the south are our allies, Greece and Turkey; to the north, our new democratic allies in central Europe. And all around Kosovo there are other small countries struggling with their own economic and political challenges, countries that could be overwhelmed by a large, new wave of refugees from Kosovo. All the ingredients for a major war are there: ancient grievances, struggling democracies, and in the center of it all a dictator in Serbia who has done nothing since the cold war ended but start new wars and pour gasoline on the flames of ethnic and religious division.

Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia, is where World War I began. World War II and the Holocaust engulfed this region. In both wars, Europe was slow to recognize the dangers, and the United States waited even longer to enter the conflicts. Just imagine if leaders back then had acted wisely and early enough, how many lives could have been saved, how many Americans would not have had to die.

We learned some of the same lessons in Bosnia just a few years ago. The world did not act early enough to stop that war, either. And let's not forget what happened: innocent people herded into concentration camps, children gunned down by snipers on their way to school, soccer fields and parks turned into cemeteries, a quarter of a million people killed, not because of anything they have done but because of who they were. Two million Bosnians became refugees. This was genocide in the heart of Europe, not in 1945 but in 1995; not in some grainy newsreel from our parents' and grandparents' time but in our own time, testing our humanity and our resolve.

At the time, many people believed nothing could be done to end the bloodshed in Bosnia. They said, "Well, that's just the way those people in the Balkans are." But when

we and our allies joined with courageous Bosnians to stand up to the aggressors, we helped to end the war. We learned that in the Balkans, inaction in the face of brutality simply invites more brutality, but firmness can stop armies and save lives. We must apply that lesson in Kosovo before what happened in Bosnia happens there, too.

Over the last few months we have done everything we possibly could to solve this problem peacefully. Secretary Albright has worked tirelessly for a negotiated agreement. Mr. Milosevic has refused.

On Sunday I sent Ambassador Dick Holbrooke to Serbia to make clear to him again, on behalf of the United States and our NATO allies, that he must honor his own commitments and stop his repression, or face military action. Again, he refused.

Today we and our 18 NATO allies agreed to do what we said we would do, what we must do to restore the peace. Our mission is clear: to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo. In short, if President Milosevic will not make peace, we will limit his ability to make war.

Now, I want to be clear with you, there are risks in this military action, risks to our pilots and the people on the ground. Serbia's air defenses are strong. It could decide to intensify its assault on Kosovo or to seek to harm us or our allies elsewhere. If it does, we will deliver a forceful response.

Hopefully, Mr. Milosevic will realize his present course is self-destructive and unsustainable. If he decides to accept the peace agreement and demilitarize Kosovo, NATO has agreed to help to implement it with a peacekeeping force. If NATO is invited to do so, our troops should take part in that mission to keep the peace. But I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war.

Do our interests in Kosovo justify the dangers to our Armed Forces? I've thought long and hard about that question. I am convinced that the dangers of acting are far outweighed

by the dangers of not acting—dangers to defenseless people and to our national interests. If we and our allies were to allow this war to continue with no response, President Milosevic would read our hesitation as a license to kill. There would be many more massacres, tens of thousands more refugees, more victims crying out for revenge.

Right now our firmness is the only hope the people of Kosovo have to be able to live in their own country without having to fear for their own lives. Remember: We asked them to accept peace, and they did. We asked them to promise to lay down their arms, and they agreed. We pledged that we, the United States and the other 18 nations of NATO, would stick by them if they did the right thing. We cannot let them down now.

Imagine what would happen if we and our allies instead decided just to look the other way, as these people were massacred on NATO's doorstep. That would discredit NATO, the cornerstone on which our security has rested for 50 years now.

We must also remember that this is a conflict with no natural national boundaries. Let me ask you to look again at a map. The red dots are towns the Serbs have attacked. The arrows show the movement of refugees north, east, and south. Already, this movement is threatening the young democracy in Macedonia, which has its own Albanian minority and a Turkish minority. Already, Serbian forces have made forays into Albania from which Kosovars have drawn support. Albania has a Greek minority. Let a fire burn here in this area, and the flames will spread. Eventually, key U.S. allies could be drawn into a wider conflict, a war we would be forced to confront later, only at far greater risk and greater cost.

I have a responsibility as President to deal with problems such as this before they do permanent harm to our national interests. America has a responsibility to stand with our allies when they are trying to save innocent lives and preserve peace, freedom, and stability in Europe. That is what we are doing in Kosovo.

If we've learned anything from the century drawing to a close, it is that if America is going to be prosperous and secure, we need

a Europe that is prosperous, secure, undivided, and free. We need a Europe that is coming together, not falling apart, a Europe that shares our values and shares the burdens of leadership. That is the foundation on which the security of our children will depend.

That is why I have supported the political and economic unification of Europe. That is why we brought Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO, and redefined its missions, and reached out to Russia and Ukraine for new partnerships.

Now, what are the challenges to that vision of a peaceful, secure, united, stable Europe?—the challenge of strengthening a partnership with a democratic Russia that, despite our disagreements, is a constructive partner in the work of building peace; the challenge of resolving the tension between Greece and Turkey and building bridges with the Islamic world; and finally, the challenge of ending instability in the Balkans so that these bitter ethnic problems in Europe are resolved by the force of argument, not the force of arms, so that future generations of Americans do not have to cross the Atlantic to fight another terrible war.

It is this challenge that we and our allies are facing in Kosovo. That is why we have acted now—because we care about saving innocent lives; because we have an interest in avoiding an even crueler and costlier war; and because our children need and deserve a peaceful, stable, free Europe.

Our thoughts and prayers tonight must be with the men and women of our Armed Forces who are undertaking this mission for the sake of our values and our children's future.

May God bless them, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and U.S. Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke.

**Remarks Prior to a Briefing With the National Security Team and an Exchange With Reporters**

March 25, 1999

**Airstrikes on Serbian Targets**

**The President.** I'm about to receive a briefing from the national security team, as you can see. I'm very grateful that our crews returned home safely after their work last night. And I'm very grateful that the United States Congress has expressed its support for them.

I want to say again that our purpose here is to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe or a wider war. Our objective is to make it clear that Serbia must either choose peace or we will limit its ability to make war. And we're going to get a briefing and lay further plans today.

**Q.** Mr. President, yesterday you listed in the briefing room three objectives of the airstrikes, but among them was not a demand that Milosevic return to the negotiating table if he signed a peace agreement. Yet, others in the administration are saying this morning that is a precondition for ending the strike. What are the facts?

**The President.** Well, he has to choose peace, or we have to try to limit his ability to make war. That's what we're trying to do. And I think that's been very clear. If you look at what happened at the Rambouillet talks, the arrangement was basically supported by all of Europe, the United States, the Kosovars. The Russians agreed that it was a fair agreement. They did not agree to the military involvement of NATO, but they agreed that it was a fair agreement. Only Mr. Milosevic and the Serbs declined to deal with the evident responsibility they have to choose the path of peace instead of the path of aggression and war.

So I think that it is clear—I don't know how to make it any clearer—that we either have to have a choice for peace by Serbia, not just stopping the killing for an hour or two but a choice for peace, or we will do our best to limit their ability to make war on those people.

**Exit Strategy**

**Q.** What is the exit strategy?

**The President.** The exit strategy is what it always is in a military operation. It's when the mission is completed.

**NATO Ground Troops**

**Q.** Do you believe the Kosovars can be safe without the intervention of ground troops from NATO? Can your goals be achieved just through airstrikes?

**The President.** I do. I believe we can create a situation in which we have limited their ability to make war and thereby increase the prospects that they can protect themselves better. I do believe that.

**Russia**

**Q.** What about Russians threatening to arm Belgrade?

**The President.** Well, you know, they have quite a lot of arms on their own. They made a lot of arms in the former Yugoslavia. I told the American people they had a very impressive air defense system, and they had lots of other arms and weapons. I have no intention of supporting any lifting of the arms embargo on Serbia. I think that would be a terrible mistake. We would be far better off if they didn't have as many arms as they do; then they would be out there making peace and accommodating these ethnic differences and figuring out ways they can live together.

**Domestic Support**

**Q.** Are you concerned that the American people aren't more strongly behind you on this?

**The President.** No. I believe that many Americans really had not thought a lot about this until the last 2 days. I hope that a lot of them heard my presentation last night. I did my very best to explain what we were doing and why, and I believe that a majority of them will support what we're trying to do here. I also believe very strongly that it is my responsibility to make this judgment based on what I think is in the long-term interests of the American people.

**Kosovo Peace Process**

**Q.** [Inaudible]—achieve peace or you will limit his ability to make war, but need he come back to the conference table?

**The President.** I think he knows what needs to be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## **Videotape Address to the Serbian People**

*March 25, 1999*

As you know, the United States and its NATO allies have begun a military campaign to reduce President Milosevic's ability to make war on the people of Kosovo. I want to speak candidly to all Serbian people, to explain our reasons for this action and how there could be a quick resolution of the crisis.

First, I cannot emphasize too strongly that the United States and our European allies have no quarrel with the Serbian people. We respect your proud history and culture. We joined together on many occasions, including our victory over nazism in World War II. Our own history has been honored by the contributions of Serb families who came to America to start a new life.

But our common future has been put in jeopardy by a war that threatens the peace of Europe and the lives of thousands of innocent people in Kosovo. After exhausting every other option, all 19 members of NATO—from France to Poland, from Italy to Greece, from across Europe to Canada and the United States in North America—all of us agree that only swift action can save peace in the Balkans.

Let us turn from Serbia's history to the facts of the last 10 years. There has been too much propaganda and too little plain truth. President Milosevic has spoken often of Serbia's standing in the world, but by his every action he has diminished your country's standing, exposed you to violence and instability and isolated you from the rest of Europe. He waged senseless wars in Bosnia and Croatia, which only ended after enormous bloodshed on all sides. And he lost a cruel campaign against the Albanian people of Kosovo. It was not simply a war against armed Kosovar forces but also a campaign of violence in which tanks and artillery were unleashed against unarmed civilians.

Now, one out of eight people in Kosovo have been driven from their homes, entire villages have been burned and cleared of their people. Thousands of Serbs also have suffered and been forced from their homes. As a result, the bitterness in Kosovo is deeper than ever, and the prospect that Kosovars and Serbs will be able to live together in the same country has been harmed. No one has benefited from all this, certainly not Serbia.

We understand the region has more than its share of painful history, and we know that all peoples of the former Yugoslavia have their legitimate grievances. The NATO allies support the desire of the Serbian people to maintain Kosovo as part of your country. With our Russian partners, we insisted on that in the peace talks in France. The result was a fair and balanced agreement that would guarantee the rights of all people in Kosovo, ethnic Serbs and Albanians alike, within Serbia.

The Kosovar leaders accepted that. They agreed to demilitarize their forces and to end the paramilitary attacks on Serbs that also have contributed to the crisis. At the invitation of Serbs and Kosovars, NATO troops, under the agreement, would be deployed in Kosovo as keepers of the peace, not as some occupying force.

Now, I know the Serb Government and many Serbian people may not see NATO that way. And it is true that it was the Kosovar Albanians who insisted on NATO peace-keeping forces but largely because of President Milosevic's violations of his own commitments regarding the use of police and military units.

Nevertheless, I want you to understand that NATO only agreed to be peacekeepers on the understanding that its troops would ensure that both sides kept their commitments and that terrorism on both sides would be brought to an end. They only agreed to serve with the understanding that they would protect Serbs as well as ethnic Albanians and that they would leave when peace took hold.

Now, only President Milosevic rejected this agreement. He could have kept Kosovo and Serbia and given you peace. But instead, he has jeopardized Kosovo's future and brought you more war. Right now he's forcing your sons to keep fighting a senseless

conflict that you did not ask for and that he could have prevented. Every time he has summoned Serbia's history as a justification for such action, he has imperiled your future. Hopefully, he will realize that his present course is unsustainable; ultimately, it is self-destructive.

The sooner we find a peaceful resolution of this dispute, preserving Kosovo within Serbia while guaranteeing the rights of its people under your law, the sooner Serbia can join the rest of Europe and build a nation that gives all its citizens a voice and a chance at prosperity.

The NATO nations have tried to avert this conflict through every means we knew to be available. Each of us has ties to Serbia. Each respects the dignity and the courage of the Serb people. In the end we decided that the dangers of acting are outweighed by the dangers of allowing this conflict to continue, to worsen, to claim the lives of more innocent civilians, including children, to result in tens of thousands of more homeless refugees.

Now all of us—Americans, Europeans, Serbs, Kosovars—must join together to stop driving wedges between people simply because they belong to different ethnic groups and to start accepting that our differences are less important than our common humanity and our common aspirations.

I call on all Serbs and all people of goodwill to join with us in seeking an end to this needless and avoidable conflict. Instead, let us work together to restore Serbia to its rightful place as a great nation of Europe; included, not isolated, by the world community; respected by all nations for having the strength to build peace.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 7:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast on the United States Information Agency Worldnet. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

## **Statement on Congressional Action on the Republican Budget Proposal**

*March 25, 1999*

The budget that congressional Republicans passed today is a series of missed opportunities. It fails to lock in debt reduction, fails to extend the solvency of Social Security and Medicare, and fails to protect key investments for the American people—from Head Start to clean water and law enforcement. While this budget marks a reversal from last year's failed effort by Republicans to drain the entire surplus for a tax cut, it still does not do enough to pay down the debt and strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

This year, we have a unique opportunity to build on our success by passing a fiscally disciplined budget that pays down the debt, strengthens Social Security, shores up Medicare, and protects key investments in our children, the environment, and law enforcement. I am committed to accomplishing these goals to give the American people a budget that prepares for the future.

## **Proclamation 7176—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 1999**

*March 25, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Our Nation was founded at a time of extraordinary change, as the world began to move from an agrarian to an industrial economy. Today, as we approach the 21st century, exciting innovations in science and technology are revolutionizing our society, and once again Americans must adapt to the demands of a new era. Beckoning us with exciting new challenges and far-reaching opportunities, our future depends as never before on our Nation's commitment to excellence in education.

Americans have met the dynamic changes in our society not only through education but also by finding strength in our shared goals

and values. And, as we prepare for the challenges of a new millennium, these time-honored principles must remain an important part of our children's education. Far more than the accumulation of facts and figures, a well-rounded education that will serve our children throughout their lives must also include the wisdom and insights of past generations. Family members, teachers, administrators, and neighbors should share their experiences and ideals with young people to help them develop into mature, confident, and responsible adults.

An esteemed scholar and inspired religious leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, devoted his life to empowering young people through education. His belief in the importance of intellectual and spiritual enlightenment led him to establish more than 2,000 educational and social institutions around the world. Promoting faith, family, and community, his work enriched our society and helped to lay the foundation for our continued progress.

On this day and throughout the year, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals of education and sharing that were championed by Rabbi Schneerson and are embraced by compassionate leaders across our country. As our society continues to change and evolve, let us work with keen minds and warm hearts to forge a future of peace and prosperity for all our children.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 28, 1999, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I invite Government officials, educators, volunteers, and all of the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate activities, programs, and ceremonies.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 29, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 30.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on the Strategic Concept of NATO**

*March 25, 1999*

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

In accordance with Condition (1)(D) of the resolution of advice and consent to the ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, adopted by the United States Senate on April 30, 1998, I transmit herewith the attached unclassified report to the Congress on the Strategic Concept of NATO.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

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

### **Executive Order 13115— Interagency Task Force on the Roles and Missions of the United States Coast Guard**

*March 25, 1999*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1.** (a) The Interagency Task Force on the Roles and Missions of the United States Coast Guard is established.

(b) The Task Force shall be composed of one representative from the:

- (1) Department of State;
- (2) Department of Defense;
- (3) Department of Justice;
- (4) Department of Commerce;
- (5) Department of Labor;
- (6) Department of Transportation;
- (7) Environmental Protection Agency;
- (8) Office of Management and Budget;
- (9) National Security Council;
- (10) Council on Environmental Quality;
- (11) Office of Cabinet Affairs;
- (12) National Economic Council;

- (13) Domestic Policy Council; and
- (14) United States Coast Guard.

The Secretary of Transportation shall select from among the Task Force members a Chair and Vice Chair for the Task Force.

(c) The members of the Task Force shall be officials or employees of the Federal Government.

**Sec. 2. Functions.** (a) The Task Force shall report to the President through the Secretary of Transportation, and shall provide advice and recommendations regarding the appropriate roles and missions for the United States Coast Guard through the Year 2020. While the Task Force will comprehensively review all Coast Guard roles and missions, it will give special attention to the deepwater missions, which are those that generally occur beyond 50 nautical miles from U.S. shores.

(b) The Chair shall consult with the Secretary of Transportation, Commandant of the Coast Guard, and, as appropriate, other heads of departments and agencies. The Chair may invite experts to submit information to the Task Force and hold field briefings or visits.

(c) The Chair may acquire services or form teams to carry out the functions of the Task Force. The Task Force and/or the Task Force staff may travel as necessary to carry out the Task Force's functions.

**Sec. 3. Methodology.** (a) The Task Force will seek to identify and distinguish which Coast Guard roles, missions, and functions might be added or enhanced; might be maintained at current levels of performance; or might be reduced, eliminated, or moved to other private organizations or Government agencies. The Task Force also will consider whether current Coast Guard roles, missions, and functions might be better performed by private organizations (by contract or otherwise), public authorities, local or State governments, or other Federal agencies. The Task Force will provide explicit reasons for its recommendations.

(b) The Task Force will establish explicit criteria for screening roles, missions, and functions to determine how and by whom they would be best performed.

(c) For those roles, missions, and functions that the Task Force recommends be per-

formed by the Coast Guard, the Task Force will advise as to how they might be performed most effectively and efficiently.

(d) The Task Force will consider the impact on Coast Guard roles, missions, and functions of future prospects in various areas, including technology, demographics, the law of the sea, marine pollution, and national security.

(e) The Task Force shall review each of the Coast Guard's law enforcement and national security missions and functions according to the methodology described in this section. However, in conducting that review, the Task Force shall assume that the Coast Guard will remain a law enforcement agency and an armed force of the United States.

**Sec. 4. Administration.** (a) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide the Task Force such information with respect to the roles and missions of the Coast Guard as it may require to carry out its functions.

(b) The Coast Guard shall support the Task Force administratively and financially.

(c) The Secretary of Transportation shall appoint a Staff Director for the Task Force.

(d) Assigned staff shall possess a balanced and broad base of experience to include persons of experience in national security, military operations, foreign and domestic policy, international affairs, economic policy, environmental protection, and law enforcement. Staff members may include military members on active duty, Reserve members of any component, and Federal civilian employees.

**Sec. 5. General.** (a) The Task Force shall exist for a period of 6 months from its first meeting unless extended by the Secretary of Transportation and, at the conclusion, submit a written report as discussed in section 2 of this order.

(b) The recommendations of the Task Force will be considered in determining the appropriate level of investment in the Coast Guard's Deepwater Capability Replacement Project, a system of cutters and aircraft with an integrated command, control, communications, and sensor infrastructure. The Task Force may provide an interim report

for use in preparation of the Federal budget for Fiscal Year 2001.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
March 25, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:01 a.m., March 29, 1999]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30.

**Memorandum on a Military Drawdown for Jordan**

*March 25, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99-18

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense*

*Subject: Military Drawdown for Jordan*

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including Title III of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as enacted in Public Law 105-277 ("Title III"), I hereby direct the drawdown of defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense, defense services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training of an aggregate value of \$25 million for Jordan consistent with the authority provided under the heading "Foreign Military Financing Program" in Title III for the purposes of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Decision To Send Certain United States Forces to Macedonia**

*March 25, 1999*

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

This is a report under section 8115 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-262), to inform you of my decision to send certain U.S. forces to Macedonia to enhance force protection for U.S. and other NATO forces in that nation, to support U.S. and NATO military activities in the region, to deter attacks on U.S. and NATO forces already in Macedonia, and to assist in preparing for a possible NATO peace implementation force in Kosovo. Over the past several weeks, non-U.S. NATO countries began a consensual deployment of national forces to Macedonia to prepare to implement a peace agreement in Kosovo, should one be signed. Approximately 10,000 non-U.S. NATO forces are now deployed to Macedonia and have been placed under NATO's operational control.

As you know, the mandate for the U.N. Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) expired on February 28, 1999. Approximately 400 U.S. personnel are currently stationed in Macedonia in Task Force Able Sentry (TFAS). We expect that some elements of these forces will redeploy out of the area and that others, together with certain of the enabling forces described below, will continue to maintain the current TFAS infrastructure and will begin to prepare Camp Able Sentry as a potential staging area in Macedonia for a U.S. contribution to a NATO-led implementation force in Kosovo, if it is decided to provide one. Operational control of these forces for force protection purposes only has been transferred to NATO, as has been the case for the forces of certain other nations whose forces are participating in UNPREDEP.

NATO, during the past month, decided to deploy elements of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Headquarters (ARRC HQ) Rear Command Post to provide a command element in Macedonia and to ensure that there will be unity of command and a single NATO commander on the ground who will be in



a position to allocate infrastructure, coordinate training facilities, and provide a single point of contact for liaison with the Macedonian authorities. In addition, the ARRC commander has been designated as the NATO commander responsible for protection of forces and reaction to possible threats in Macedonia. The ARRC HQ's Rear Command Post element includes approximately 30 U.S. personnel who occupy key positions on the staff, but who have not yet deployed to Macedonia to assume their roles there. Having those officers serving in their regular positions will enhance the safety of U.S. and other friendly military personnel and increase the effectiveness of the NATO presence.

Sound military planning may also call for sending a limited number of additional U.S. military personnel to Macedonia in support of ongoing operations including Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), intelligence support, surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, and logistical support, and selected forces and equipment to deter Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) attacks on NATO personnel in Macedonia. In addition, it may be become advisable to send U.S. military personnel to Macedonia as part of an enabling force in anticipation of the possible signing of a peace agreement, which remains our ultimate objective. These forces could include (besides those U.S. forces attached to the ARRC HQ), logistical support and survey elements and liaison officers, CSAR, intelligence support, surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, as well as U.S. forces conducting rotational training at facilities in Macedonia. Their presence would not commit the United States to participating in a possible NATO-led peace implementation force; but prudent and limited preparatory activities in Macedonia would enhance the effectiveness of such a force, should we decide to participate, as well as enhance the effectiveness of NATO's air campaign and protection of the U.S. forces in TFAS that are already there. In regard to the elements of section 8115(a)(1)-(8), I am providing the following information:

1 & 2. *National Security Interests.* I hereby certify that the deployment of additional personnel to Macedonia as described above is

necessary in the national security interests of the United States. These actions will preserve and protect critical infrastructure and Camp Able Sentry facilities, and will enhance the effectiveness of NATO's air campaign by ensuring U.S. forces are fully integrated into the ARRC HQ command and control structure; improving CSAR, reconnaissance and surveillance, and other capabilities to support the air operations by enhancing force protection from U.S. and other NATO personnel in Macedonia by helping deter attacks on Macedonia and NATO forces there, and by strengthening U.S. leadership in NATO.

3. *Numbers.* The number of U.S. personnel who will assume their functions in the ARRC HQ is approximately 30. At this point, no decisions have been made on numbers of personnel who would be deployed for other functions. I will ensure that the Congress is informed in a timely manner about such additional deployments described in this report if these prove necessary. If U.S. personnel were sent as part of an enabling force, the number would likely not exceed 2,000.

4. *Mission/Objectives.* The overall objective of our efforts with our allies is to maintain stability in the region and prevent a humanitarian disaster resulting from the ongoing FRY offensive against the people of Kosovo. The specific military mission of the forces to be deployed would be to enhance force protection both for NATO (including U.S. former UNPREDEP) military personnel in Macedonia and for allied fliers participating in the air operations, to contribute to the effectiveness of those operations, and to help deter FRY attacks on Macedonia and on NATO (including U.S.) forces in Macedonia. In addition, these forces will likely assist in preparations necessary for a NATO-led implementation force to be effective, if a decision were made to deploy one, after an agreement was reached.

5. *Schedule.* At this point, it is not possible to determine how long NATO air operations will need to continue, and therefore how long the support and deterrence functions will need to be maintained. However, it is important to be clear that it is the U.S. position, shared by our allies, that NATO will continue air operations as long as necessary to meet

the military objectives to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo; and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo.

6. *Exit Strategy.* The duration of the requirement for U.S. military presence in Macedonia will depend on the course of events, and in particular, on Belgrade's reaction to the air operations. So long as air operations continue, force protection, support for those operations, and deterrence from possible FRY acts of violence will continue to be required.

7. *Costs.* The costs of the deployments covered by this notice like other costs of the air operations will be paid initially from FY99 Defense O&M appropriations. An estimate of likely costs for these limited deployments is being prepared, and I will ensure that it is provided to the Congress as soon as it is available.

8. *Effect on Morale, Retention and Readiness.* In the first instance, these deployments will have a positive effect on morale, retention and readiness because they will demonstrate the commitment of the necessary resources to maximize force protection for our personnel engaged in the air operations. United States forces participating in Task Force Able Sentry, as well as U.S. forces deployed to other locations in the region, are dedicated professionals serving with great pride and enthusiasm. Given the importance of the mission in Macedonia, we anticipate that U.S. forces would maintain the highest morale and effectiveness, just as they have in respect to other missions in the Balkans. Indeed, it has been our experience that personnel serving in these important and demanding positions experience higher retention rates than in other, less challenging assignments. However, we recognize that even deployments for the best of reasons increase the periods of separation from family and add other burdens to military service. The Department of Defense has underway extensive and effective programs to do what is necessary to manage personnel and other resources so as to reduce these problems. As

with any operational deployment, the effects on readiness for other operations are mixed. On the one hand, the personnel involved gain invaluable real world experience. On the other hand, normal training programs are interrupted. The numbers of personnel covered by this report are sufficiently limited, however, that any effect on the overall readiness of our U.S. Armed Services to meet other requirements, including major theater war contingencies, will be marginal. Finally, in accordance with sections 8115(b)(2) and (c), I have determined that it is necessary to order a Marine FAST team to Skopje, Macedonia, to protect our Embassy and U.S. persons at the Embassy. This team will remain deployed for as long as is necessary to protect our Embassy and U.S. persons.

Sincerely,

**Bill Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26.

### **Radio Remarks on Emergency Farm Measures**

*March 26, 1999*

Today I have directed Secretary Glickman to take immediate measures to provide urgently needed resources to our Nation's farmers as they enter the spring planting season. I asked Congress to pass emergency funding of \$150 million to provide more than \$1 billion in loans for farmers and ranchers. Unfortunately, Congress did not complete action before leaving for a 2-week recess, in spite of the fact that many of our Government's critical emergency farm loan programs are set to run out of funds in the next several weeks.

Therefore, I am taking this immediate stop-gap measure so that our farmers, who face continuing low crop prices and difficulty in securing private loans, will be able to finance spring planting. This action will make more than \$300 million in loans available to farmers and ranchers. I urge Congress when

it returns from its recess to move immediately on our emergency request for funds for farm loans.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 12:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actuality Line.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Reporting on Airstrikes Against  
Serbian Targets in the Federal  
Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and  
Montenegro)**

*March 26, 1999*

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

At approximately 1:30 p.m. eastern standard time, on March 24, 1999, U.S. military forces, at my direction and in coalition with our NATO allies, began a series of air strikes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in response to the FRY government's continued campaign of violence and repression against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo. The mission of the air strikes is to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo; and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo. In short, if President Milosevic will not make peace, we will limit his ability to make war.

As you are aware, the Government of the FRY has been engaged in a brutal conflict in Kosovo. In this conflict, thousands of innocent Kosovar civilians have been killed or injured by FRY government security forces. The continued repression of Kosovars by the FRY military and security police forces constitutes a threat to regional security, particularly to Albania and Macedonia and, potentially, to Greece and to Turkey. Tens of thousands of others have been displaced from their homes, and many of them have fled to the neighboring countries of Bosnia, Albania, and Macedonia. These actions are the result of policies pursued by President Milosevic, who started the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, and moved against Slovenia in the last decade.

The United States, working closely with our European allies and Russia, have pursued a diplomatic solution to this crisis since last fall. The Kosovar leaders agreed to the interim settlement negotiated at Rambouillet, but the FRY government refused even to discuss key elements of the peace agreement. Instead, the Government of the FRY continues its attacks on the Kosovar population and has deployed 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo in preparation for a major offensive and in clear violation of the commitments it had made.

The FRY government has failed to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions, and its actions are in violation of its obligations under the U.N. Charter and its other international commitments. The FRY government's actions in Kosovo are not simply an internal matter. The Security Council has condemned FRY actions as a threat to regional peace and security. The FRY government's violence creates a conflict with no natural boundaries, pushing refugees across borders and potentially drawing in neighboring countries. The Kosovo region is a tinderbox that could ignite a wider European war with dangerous consequences to the United States.

United States and NATO forces have targeted the FRY government's integrated air defense system, military and security police command and control elements, and military and security police facilities and infrastructure. United States naval ships and aircraft and U.S. Air Force aircraft are participating in these operations. Many of our NATO allies are also contributing aircraft and other forces.

In addition, since this air operation began, the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia, has been subjected to increasingly hostile demonstrations by a large number of Serbian sympathizers. In response, I have authorized a unit consisting of about 100 combat-equipped Marines from USS NASSAU (LHA 4), which is supporting the air operations in Kosovo, to deploy to Skopje to enhance security at our embassy. These Marines will remain deployed so long as is necessary to protect our embassy and U.S. persons.

We cannot predict with certainty how long these operations will need to continue.

Milosevic must stop his offensive, stop the repression, and agree to a peace accord based on the framework from Rambouillet. If he does not comply with the demands of the international community, NATO operations will seriously damage Serbia's military capacity to harm the people of Kosovo. NATO forces will also use such force as is necessary to defend themselves in the accomplishment of their mission.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. In doing so, I have taken into account the views and support expressed by the Congress in S. Con. Res. 21 and H. Con. Res. 42.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available to verify the content of this letter.

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## **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### **March 20**

In the evening, the President attended the annual Gridiron Club dinner in the Presidential Ballroom at the Capital Hilton Hotel.

### **March 21**

In the afternoon, the President went to Camp David, MD, where he spent the day

meeting with members of the foreign policy team and had telephone conversations with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, President Jacques Chirac of France, and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany on the situation in Kosovo.

The White House announced that the President sent a letter to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia concerning the situation in Kosovo.

### **March 22**

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

### **March 23**

In the morning, the President met with members of the foreign policy team in the President's Study. Later, he met with Members of Congress in the Yellow Oval Room.

In the afternoon, the President met with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intent to nominate T. Michael Kerr to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Labor Department.

The President announced his intent to nominate Irasema Garza to be Director of the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department.

The President announced his intent to nominate Edward B. Montgomery to be Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Labor Department.

### **March 24**

In the morning, the President met with his national security team in the Oval Office. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia concerning the situation in Kosovo. Later, the President was briefed again by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger in the Oval Office.

### **March 25**

The President announced his intent to nominate Johnnie E. Frazier to be Inspector General of the Commerce Department.

**March 26**

In the morning, the President met with members of the national security team in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Harold Hongju Koh as Commissioner on the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The White House announced that the President will host an official visit by the Premier Zhu Rongji of China on April 6–14, including a White House visit on April 8.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

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**Submitted March 23**

Gary L. Visscher,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2001, vice Daniel Guttman.

**Submitted March 24**

William Haskell Alsup,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice Thelton Eugene Henderson, retired.

J. Rich Leonard,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina, vice W. Earl Britt, retired.

Carlos Murguia,  
of Kansas, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Kansas, vice Sam A. Crow, retired.

Marsha J. Pechman,  
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Washington, vice William L. Dwyer, retired.

**Submitted March 25**

Johnnie E. Frazier,  
of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Commerce, vice Frank DeGeorge, resigned.

Ellen Segal Huvelle,  
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice John Garrett Penn, retired.

James W. Klein,  
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Stanley S. Harris, retired.

Barbara M. Lynn,  
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, vice Harold Barefoot Sanders, Jr., retired.

Marshall S. Smith,  
of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Education, vice Madeleine Kunin.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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**Released March 22**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

**Released March 23**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by Vice President Gore on his telephone conversation with Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov of Russia

**Released March 24**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of the nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Eastern District of

North Carolina, the Western District of Washington, the District of Kansas, and the Northern District of California

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Gore at the presentation of the Ron Brown Awards

***Released March 25***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

Announcement of the nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Northern District of Texas and the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia

***Released March 26***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Official Visit by Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji

Statement by the Press Secretary: Farm Loan Assistance

Statement by Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board Warren B. Rudman on the review of security and counterintelligence at the Energy Department weapons labs

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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***Approved March 23***

S. 447 / Public Law 106-3  
To deem as timely filed, and process for payment, the applications submitted by the Dodson School Districts for certain Impact Aid payments for fiscal year 1999

***Approved March 25***

H.R. 540 / Public Law 106-4  
Nursing Home Resident Protection Amendments of 1999