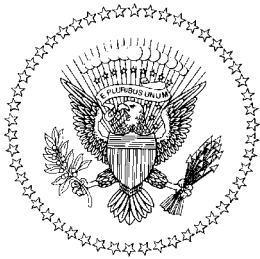


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, December 27, 1999
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Editor’s Note: In order to meet publication and distribution deadlines during the Christmas holiday weekend, the cutoff time for this issue has been advanced to 5 p.m. on Thursday, December 23, 1999. Documents released after that time will appear in the next issue.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, December 24, 1999

**Statement on Flooding and
Mudslides in Venezuela**

December 17, 1999

I was deeply saddened to learn of the loss of life and physical devastation caused by flooding and mudslides in Venezuela. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses. We stand ready to help with rescue and relief efforts in any way we can.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on Signing the Ticket to
Work and Work Incentives
Improvement Act of 1999**

December 17, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1180, the "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999." This landmark legislation will remove barriers that have placed many individuals with disabilities in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and work. It also improves and expands vocational rehabilitation and employment service options for this talented, but as yet not fully tapped, workforce.

This new law represents one of the most important legislative advances for people with disabilities since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I have urged its passage for 2 years and was proud to include full funding for it in my FY 2000 Budget. The enactment of this law well illustrates what we can accomplish when we work together on a bipartisan basis to expand employment opportunities and affordable health-care options.

The Act will ensure that individuals with disabilities have a greater opportunity to participate in the workforce and in the American Dream. It offers new ways for the Federal

Government to partner with the States and the private sector to help people with disabilities to work and to keep their health care coverage. Most significantly, H.R. 1180:

- Expands States' ability to provide a Medicaid "buy-in" to individuals with disabilities who return to work.
- Creates a new Medicaid demonstration to assess the effectiveness of providing Medicaid coverage to people whose condition has not yet deteriorated enough to prevent work, but who need health care to prevent or forestall that level of deterioration. This provision will allow States to help those individuals with diseases such as muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's Disease, diabetes, and HIV.
- Lengthens from 4 years to 8-½ years the period for which Social Security disability beneficiaries who return to work can continue to receive reduced-cost Medicare coverage.
- Provides grants to States to design and administer infrastructures to provide services that support working individuals with disabilities.
- Provides Social Security disability beneficiaries a choice of providers for employment-related services.
- Authorizes the Social Security Administration to test new and innovative ways to enable individuals with disabilities to return to work and make economic independence a reality.
- Enables individuals with disabilities to reestablish eligibility for Social Security disability benefits on an expedited basis if their attempts to return to work prove to be unsuccessful. These individuals will be able to request reinstatement of benefits without having to file a new disability benefits application—thereby reducing the risk of returning to work.

These provisions give people who want to work a chance to do so by ensuring access

to health care insurance and modernizing the employment services system for people with disabilities. Together, these provisions affirm the basic principle manifested in the Americans with Disabilities Act: that all Americans should have the same opportunity to be productive citizens.

The Act also contains several provisions to extend expiring tax laws. These provisions continue incentives for the advancement of several national priorities and reaffirm our commitment to help American families and businesses. Most importantly, the bill extends the research and experimentation tax credit for 5 years, encouraging companies to undertake new multi-year research activities. This crucial tax credit will help innovative American companies build on my Administration's impressive economic achievements and will lead to new products and technologies to improve people's lives. In addition, H.R. 1180 extends for 3 years the provision that allows America's middle-income taxpayers full use of important personal tax credits—such as the child credit, the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning credits, and the child and dependent care credits—without limitation by the alternative minimum tax. This also will allow tens of millions more taxpayers to forgo performing complex calculations.

The Act extends a provision that will help improve school facilities in low-income communities by providing no-interest loans to school districts in needy areas for rehabilitation and repairs, educational equipment, curriculum development, and teacher training.

The Act will provide more economic opportunity to Puerto Rico by extending application of the research and experimentation tax credit to such activity undertaken in Puerto Rico, as I proposed. In response to another of my proposals, H.R. 1180 also will provide a greater transfer of excise tax revenue on rum not made in the States to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for 2½ years to provide aid that the islands urgently need.

Furthermore, H.R. 1180 extends through 2001 critical tax provisions to:

- Encourage employers to pay for their workers' continuing education.
- Help disadvantaged people, including welfare recipients, find jobs.

- Encourage businesses to clean up polluted "brownfields".
- Stimulate low- and no-emission production of power.
- Assist first-time home buyers in purchasing a home in the District of Columbia

It is unfortunate, however, that the revenue losses resulting from these provisions were not fully offset.

I am pleased that H.R. 1180 will do much to improve the lives of people with disabilities and will extend important tax provisions. I am deeply disappointed, however, that the bill includes a provision for a special allowance adjustment for student loans. This provision will expose the Federal Government, rather than lenders, to substantial financial risk due to the difference between Treasury and commercial paper borrowing rates, and will provide unnecessary and costly new benefits to the student loan industry with no benefit whatsoever to students.

My Administration has a deep and long-standing commitment to promote and increase the independence of individuals with disabilities. I would like to thank each individual who has been involved in the challenging work of developing this landmark legislation. Special thanks should be given to the congressional leaders, who have contributed so much to the passage of H.R. 1180, particularly Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan, as well as Representatives Dingell, Archer, Rangel, Stark, Waxman, Thomas, Matsui, Bliley, Shaw, Bilirakis, Nancy Johnson, Cardin, Sherrod Brown, and Lazio. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of Alexis Herman, Secretary of Labor; Kenneth S. Apfel, Commissioner of Social Security; and Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services; as well as Tony Coelho and other members of my Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. These individuals, as well as many others throughout my Administration, worked tirelessly to bring this legislation forward.

Many individuals with disabilities want to work and become independent, and many can work if they receive the critical support they need. For too long, the fear of losing health and cash benefits and the inability to

obtain rehabilitation and employment services has prevented such individuals' work efforts. As a Nation, we are best served when all our citizens have the opportunity to contribute their talents, energy, and ideas to the workplace. I am pleased to sign into law today this important step to empower more Americans with disabilities to take their rightful places in our Nation's workforce.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1180, approved December 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-170. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on the Use of Information Technology To Improve Our Society

December 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Use of Information Technology to Improve Our Society

The Internet and other information and communications technologies are changing the way we work, learn, communicate with each other, and do business. These technologies are shaping our economy and our society in the same way that the steam engine and electricity defined the Industrial Age.

In recent years, information technology has driven the U.S. economy. Businesses are scrambling to use the Internet to increase productivity, boost exports, cut the time required to develop new products, and forge closer relationships with customers and suppliers. My Administration has pursued a market-led approach to global electronic commerce that relies whenever possible on private sector leadership and seeks to eliminate legal and regulatory barriers to electronic commerce while protecting the public interest.

The Internet has the potential to enhance civil society as well as to boost commerce. Used creatively, the Internet and information technology can be a powerful tool for tackling

some of our toughest social challenges as well as fostering economic growth. Information technology can and is being used to make it easier for working adults to acquire new skills, increase access to healthcare in isolated rural communities, improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, and strengthen our democracy.

My Administration has led the effort to explain and support the commercial and societal benefits of information technology to the American people. However, we can and must do more. To that end, I am directing executive department and agency heads in this memorandum to take certain actions. As they carry out these actions, they should: (a) adopt policies that will remove barriers to private sector investment in Internet applications; (b) explore partnerships with companies, State, local, and tribal governments, and other entities, such as nonprofit organizations and universities; (c) explore innovative mechanisms for fostering a national discussion on the potential of the electronic society; (d) consider other policies to promote the electronic society, such as the establishment of national goals; and (e) review the recommendations of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee, particularly as they relate to support for information technology applications with broad societal benefits.

Therefore, to further promote the broader social benefits of the Information Age to the American people, I direct the officials in this memorandum to take the following actions:

1. The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify additional steps that can be taken to promote expanded access to higher quality, cost-effective health care to underserved rural communities and inner city clinics, and other health-care applications of information technology.
2. The Secretary of Education shall support and encourage States and local communities to make "school report cards" available on the Internet. The Secretary of the Interior shall make it possible for "school report cards" on Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and tribally controlled schools to be available on the Internet.

3. The Secretaries of Education and Labor shall work with States and institutions of higher education to remove legal and regulatory barriers to high-quality distance learning, to increase awareness of the availability of distance learning as an alternative means of education and training, and to find ways to promote the earning of credentials through distance learning. The Secretary of Education shall assist the Tribal Colleges and Universities in developing associate and baccalaureate programs in information technology, using innovative distance learning technology.
4. The Secretary of Education shall propose the next phase of my Administration's Educational Technology Initiative. The next phase should address teacher training, the integration of technology in the curriculum, the evaluation of technology, the market for educational software and web content, the need for more multimedia computers in the classroom, and the need for investments in educational technology research and development.
5. The Secretary of Labor shall determine how telecommuting might be used to help more disabled Americans get jobs and to provide jobs for Americans located in geographic regions outside traditional commuting areas, including isolated tribal communities.
6. The Secretary of Education and the Director of the National Science Foundation shall develop a research agenda for making the Internet and information technology more usable by persons with disabilities. The Secretary of Commerce shall encourage the private sector to make web content, software, and development tools more accessible for people with disabilities by adopting technical standards consistent with the Web Accessibility Initiative.
7. The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall develop a national strategy for promoting environmental applications of information technology (such as disseminating information about manufacturing techniques that reduce pollution, and increasing the timeliness of environmental information).
8. The Secretary of Agriculture shall identify services that can be delivered electronically to rural Americans (such as the results of Federally funded research at our Nation's land-grant universities), and develop the policies needed to promote the availability of advanced telecommunications services in rural and tribal communities.
9. The Secretary of Commerce shall identify policies that will encourage more effective use of information technology by nonprofit organizations.
10. The Secretary of the Treasury, in coordination with appropriate Federal agencies and private sector stakeholders, shall identify policy initiatives that promote greater access to financial services through the use of information technology.
11. The Secretary of the Interior shall identify policies that will accelerate the use of unclassified geospatial information systems at the State, local, and tribal level.
12. The Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall work with research universities and the private sector to apply advances in information technology to managing the consequences of natural and man-made disasters.
13. The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Director of the National

Science Foundation, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services shall work with the private sector and cultural and educational institutions across the country to create a Digital Library of Education to house this country's cultural and educational resources.

14. The Attorney General shall work with Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to use information technologies to make our Nation's communities safer.
15. Items 1–14 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations, consistent with the agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
16. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of the memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group (ECWG) in its annual report. To the extent that substantial new policy issues emerge, the analysis and action on those policies will be coordinated in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of the ECWG, the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council, as appropriate.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on Electronic Government

December 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Electronic Government

My Administration has put a wealth of information online. However, when it comes to most Federal services, it can still take a paper form and weeks of processing for something as simple as a change of address.

While Government agencies have created "one-stop-shopping" access to information on their agency web sites, these efforts have not uniformly been as helpful as they could be to the average citizen, who first has to know which agency provides the service he or she needs. There has not been sufficient effort to provide Government information by category of information and service—rather than by agency—in a way that meets people's needs.

Moreover, as public awareness and Internet usage increase, the demand for online Government interaction and simplified, standardized ways to access Government information and services becomes increasingly important. At the same time, the public must have confidence that their online communications with the Government are secure and their privacy protected.

Therefore, to help our citizens gain one-stop access to existing Government information and services, and to provide better, more efficient, Government services and increased Government accountability to its citizens, I hereby direct the officials in this memorandum, in conjunction with the private sector as appropriate, to take the following actions:

1. The Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, the Chief Information Officers' Council, the Government Information Technology Services Board, and

- other appropriate agencies shall promote access to Government information organized not by agency, but by the type of service or information that people may be seeking; the data should be identified and organized in a way that makes it easier for the public to find the information it seeks.
2. The heads of executive departments and agencies (agencies) shall, to the maximum extent possible, make available online, by December 2000, the forms needed for the top 500 Government services used by the public. Under the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, where appropriate, by October 2003, transactions with the Federal Government should be available online for online processing of services. To achieve this goal, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall oversee agency development of responsible strategies to make transactions available online.
 3. The heads of agencies shall promote the use of electronic commerce, where appropriate, for faster, cheaper ordering on Federal procurements that will result in savings to the taxpayer.
 4. The heads of agencies shall continue to build good privacy practices into their web sites by posting privacy policies as directed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and by adopting and implementing information policies to protect children's information on web sites that are directed at children.
 5. The head of each agency shall permit greater access to its officials by creating a public electronic mail address through which citizens can contact the agency with questions, comments, or concerns. The heads of each agency shall also provide disability access on Federal web sites.
 6. The Director of the National Science Foundation, working with appropriate Federal agencies, shall conduct a 1-year study examining the feasibility of online voting.
 7. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, Veterans Affairs, and Agriculture, the Commissioner of Social Security, and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, working closely with other Federal agencies that provide benefit assistance to citizens, shall make a broad range of benefits and services available through private and secure electronic use of the Internet.
 8. The Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Government Information Technology Services Board, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and other appropriate agencies and organizations, shall assist agencies in the development of private, secure, and effective communications across agencies and with the public, through the use of public key technology. In light of this goal, agencies are encouraged to issue, in coordination with the General Services Administration, a Government-wide minimum of 100,000 digital signature certificates by December 2000.
 9. The heads of agencies shall develop a strategy for upgrading their respective agency's capacity for using the Internet to become more open, efficient, and responsive, and to more effectively carry out the agency's mission. At a minimum, this strategy should involve:
 - (a) expanded training of Federal employees, including employees with policy and senior management responsibility;
 - (b) identification and adoption of "best practices" implemented by leading public and private sector organizations;
 - (c) recognition for Federal employees who suggest new and innovative agency applications of the Internet;
 - (d) partnerships with the research community for experimentation with advanced applications; and

- (e) mechanisms for collecting input from the agency's stakeholders regarding agency use of the Internet.
10. Items 1–8 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations and consistent with agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
 11. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of executive departments and agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of this memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group in its annual report.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner

December 17, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, say how profoundly grateful I am to be ending 7 years in the Presidency with the support of people like you, in the home of my great friends Terry and Dorothy, with allies like Patrick Kennedy and Dick Gephardt. This is a holiday season, and it's most important for us to express our gratitude. And I am grateful, and I want to say thank you.

I also will give you a gift—a brief speech. [Laughter] All of you heard it before, anyway. [Laughter] That reminds me of a great moment in my political education. In the mideighties, Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert; she was making her comeback. And she had just put out that “Private Dancer” album. And she had a saxophone player who was a weight lifter—I don't know if you remember that—the guy could bench press me on a cold day. [Laughter]

So I went to this concert, and I took a bunch of friends of mine. And I was sitting on the front row because the guy that ran the place knew I liked her. So she sings all her new songs, and she does real well, and the crowd goes crazy. And in the end, the band starts playing her very first hit, “Proud Mary.” And she comes up to the microphone, and the crowd goes crazy, and she said, “You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it.” [Laughter] So maybe you'll put up with this speech one more time. [Laughter]

I wanted to say very briefly why I'm here. I'm not running for anything; I'm here because none of the things that our administration has been able to do for America would have been possible if it hadn't been for the support of the Democrats in the Congress. Whether in the majority, when we passed the economic plan of '93 without a single vote from the Republicans, when we passed the crime bill in '94 with just a few votes; or when we were in the minority in the Congress, but because they stuck with me—if the Republicans didn't want me fixing them Christmas dinner, they had to make a deal with us and continue to move this country forward. None of it would have been possible without them.

I'm here because of what Dick Gephardt said. I'll say it in blunter terms. I think I owe him. We would never have lost the House of Representatives if they hadn't had to vote alone on an economic plan that revitalized this country. We'd never have the balanced budget; we'd never have the surplus; we'd never have the low interest rates and the high investment and the economic growth if we hadn't announced, and then they hadn't ratified by voting for, that economic plan in 1993. And they did not deserve to lose the House because of the deliberate misrepresentations about what was in the plan and what it would do to America that the people on the other side made before—to be fair to the voters—they could know one way or the other whether it was going to work; they weren't feeling it.

I'm here because they had the guts—including a lot of Congressmen from rural areas—to say to the NRA, “There's nothing wrong with the Brady bill. We ought to do background checks before we give people

handguns; there's nothing wrong with a waiting period. We ought to get rid of these assault weapons; kids don't need them on urban streets so that country kids can take a .22 or a 12 gauge and go hunting. This is crazy."

But when they voted for it in '94 they had to go right into the teeth of an election with people telling them they'd voted to take their guns away, and before the voters could possibly know. You have no idea. I'm here because they were brave enough to take on with me the problem of trying to extend health insurance to all Americans, and then they had to put up with having our efforts mischaracterized. One member of the Democratic caucus told me the other day, he said, "You know, they said if I voted for the President's health care plan, it would lead to a big increase in uninsured Americans; and I voted for his plan, and sure enough, we had a big increase in uninsured Americans." [Laughter] So I think they got a raw deal after doing a great job for America.

But the third thing and by far the most important reason I'm here is, after January 20, 2001, I won't be President anymore, but I'll still be an American. And almost more than anybody else, because of the life I've lived, I have an informed opinion about what is necessary to make the most of the new century for these children here. And by far the most important reason to give the Democrats a majority; to give Jane Harman from California, who's here, her old seat back; and to restore them to the majority—you'd be amazed how many Senate seats we can win. This Senate thing is shaping up pretty well. Because we're going to make some decisions in the next 5 years that will have a big impact on the next 50 years. And I want the members of my party, who have brought the country to where it is today from where it was 7 years ago, to be the leaders in making those decisions.

Now, little Mary was sitting here a minute ago. I've told this story a lot, but I've never fingered her before, so I'm going to finger her tonight. [Laughter] Terry and Dorothy and their kids came up and spent some time with us in the weekend after Thanksgiving. And we were all playing and having a big time. And little Mary looked up at me, and

she said, "How old are you anyway?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] And I had to admit that it's a lot. [Laughter]

And I just want to echo something Dick Gephardt said. Never in my lifetime—never, not once, ever—has our country had the combination of economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence with the absence of an internal crisis or an external threat. We have, in other words, the best chance we have ever had—maybe in our history, but certainly in my "that's-a-lot" 53 years—to shape the future of our dreams for our kids.

Are we going to give all of them a world-class education, or not? Are we going to take the burden of the baby boomers' retirement off their shoulders by fixing Social Security and Medicare, or not? Are we going to help all these working people who aren't as fortunate as those of us who can be here tonight balance work and family so they can succeed at home raising their kids and succeed at work, or not? Are we going to prove that we can grow the economy and preserve the environment, or not? Are we going to prove that we can continue to integrate the world's economies and expand trade but put a more human face on it so that everybody is benefited, or not? Is America going to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom, or not?

I'll just give you one example, and I hope you agree with me. I'm really grateful that in 1999 the United States led our NATO Alliance and all of our European Allies in stopping cold the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and letting over 800,000 people go home. I'm grateful for that.

The other day I heard one of the candidates, prominent candidates for President on the other side said, "Well, boy, if he got elected, they surely wouldn't be using American military resources to fool around in trivial, insignificant places." I think standing against ethnic cleansing, racial cleansing, religious cleansing, standing up for human rights is not trivial. I also think, to my Republican friends, well, it's good economics in the long run. It's morally right, but it happens to be good economics; because if you put the fire

out when it starts to burn, before the house has burned down, you're way ahead.

But these are big questions. And what I want you to do for the next year is not just to come to these parties where we're all preaching to the saved, but every one of you has a span of influence, a circle of friends, people that you meet in nonpolitical context. And you ought to tell them, first of all, that 7 years ago—people actually don't remember; it's been so good so long people don't remember—you've got to remind them that in 1992 we were facing economic distress, social decline, political division, and government was discredited. And now we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years. And the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer, and we've put aside more land than any administrations in the history of America, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've got 150,000 young people who have served our country in AmeriCorps, and 90 percent of our kids are immunized for the first time against serious illness, and over 2 million children now have gotten health insurance under our Children's Health Insurance Program. And that's just half the story—and that we are asking the right questions, and we're the people to answer them for the future. They need to remember what it was like, what we've done, but, more important, what we think this election is about and why we're all running.

I'll tell you, I knew Dick Gephardt before I became President. He was my neighbor. He'd been to the Governor's Mansion to see me in 1988, when he was running for President. We were both less health conscious then—remember, we sat and ate french fries from McDonald's. [Laughter] Dick spoke at this Democratic event where he was competing with an in-State basketball rivalry on television that night and he still did a good job. And he didn't eat, and so we sat in my big kitchen at the Governor's Mansion, and

we stayed up half the night talking. He is a profoundly good human being.

The thing that I am so impressed about is that he continues to grow every year as a leader. You know, once you reach a certain age and you realize that physically you're not going to get any stronger and you've got to keep working just to keep up, it's easy to stop growing personally. It's easy to stop growing in your interpersonal skills, in your leadership skills, in what you know and what you think about. This guy just keeps on going and keeps on growing. He has been indefatigable. And I trust him with the future of this country.

So I want you all to think about this. And I want you to be able to go out, every one of you, and say, "Remember what it was like? Here is what they've done. Here is what they're going to do." Elections are determined by three things: the quality of the candidates; whether you've got enough money to be heard—it's okay if the other guys have more, you just have to have enough; and, third, and most important, once those two baseline things are satisfied is what do the voters think the election is about, what is the subject of the election?

If the subject of the election is whether America is going to use this once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the big challenges of the future, we will win because you've given us the resources to be heard and he's found the candidates to run. And believe me, you owe it to these little kids in this room and people like them all across this country.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Terence and Dorothy McAuliffe and their daughter Mary; and former Representative Jane Harman. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Excerpts of an Interview With Peter Jennings of ABC News

December 16, 1999

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Mr. Jennings. This room, sir, this fireplace and others in the White House obviously remind me of President Roosevelt. His relationship with the public was of such a

magnitude that people, in many cases, thought he was a god, placed absolute faith in him. Do you think there will ever be a time when another American President gets that kind of commitment?

The President. If the country is under that kind of threat. It was in this room that President Roosevelt gave his fireside chats. And keep in mind, he took our Nation through two huge threats: first, the Depression, where 25 percent of our people were out of work, for the only time in our history; and second, in the Second World War, with Hitler and the Axis powers.

I think the people in this country are—they nearly always get it right if they have enough information and enough time. They're very hard to stampede. And I think they would follow a good leader in a tough time like that.

Cynicism

The President. When I leave the White House, I will be more idealistic about the American people and the American system of government than I was when I showed up here. And I think cynicism is a cop-out and a refuge now. I think skepticism is good. I think demythologizing is good. I think cynicism, because it's fundamentally a negative and self-defeating emotion and it gives you an excuse not to think, is stupid.

Mr. Jennings. I don't mean to belabor the point, nor will I, but I think many Americans believe that you contributed to cynicism about politics. And I assume if there's anything you could take back over the last several years it would be the Lewinski affair.

The President. Why should you be cynical? If someone makes a mistake, and they say they make a mistake, and they do their best to atone for it, then you can say, "Well, people aren't perfect, and I'm disappointed." But that shouldn't make you cynical about the American political system, the American system of government.

Berlin Wall

Mr. Jennings. I'd just like to pick a couple things that the century will always be remembered for and get your take on them. What did the Berlin Wall mean to you?

The President. It was the symbol of what was wrong with communism. It was about control and keeping people back and keeping people in. You know, John Kennedy had that wonderful line in his speech, "Freedom has many difficulties, and our democracy is far from perfect. But we never had to put up a wall to keep our people in."

Atomic Bomb

Mr. Jennings. What difference did the atomic bomb make?

The President. It reminded us that we had the capacity to destroy ourselves completely, and it humbled people. And I think that's very important, because people with power—and I include myself—you give anybody a lot of power, and if they're not careful, they will make arrogant decisions, unheeded of the most fundamental desire of people—to have life and liberty and to enjoy the blessings of normal life.

The President. We will look back at the development of the atomic bomb in some ways as one of the most humbling events in all of human history, because we finally had to come face to face with the fact that we could take it all away. You know? Beyond the gas chambers, beyond the pogroms, beyond the killing fields of the Somme and the Marne in World War I, we could actually make it all go away. And I think it sobered the world up in a way that was oddly reassuring.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 10 a.m. on December 16 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. The transcript of these excerpts was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

**Memorandum on Suspension of
Limitations Under the Jerusalem
Embassy Act**

December 17, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 00-08

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Suspension of Limitations Under the
Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in section 3(b) and 7(b) of the Act.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with section 7(a) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

This suspension shall take effect after transmission of this determination and report to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18.

The President's Radio Address

December 18, 1999

Good morning. The holiday season is a time when America's remarkable religious diversity shines brightest in so many homes and different places of worship and schools. Today I want to talk to you about the role of faith in our lives, in all of our religious diversity, and, particularly, in the education of our children.

America's founders were men and women of faith, many of whom fled oppression overseas to find freedom on our shores. They believed the best way to protect religious liberty was to guarantee, first of all, the right to practice religion by the dictates of their own conscience; and second, to forbid our Govern-

ment from imposing or establishing any religious belief. In their wisdom, they enshrined these two principles in our Constitution.

But, of course, reconciling these principles has not always been easy, especially when it comes to our education system. Finding the proper place for faith in our schools is a complex and emotional matter for many Americans. But I have never believed the Constitution required our schools to be religion-free zones or that our children must check their faiths at the schoolhouse door.

Americans expect our schools to teach our children the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. We also trust our schools to strengthen the moral foundation of our society, to reinforce the values taught at home and in our communities.

Studies show that children involved in religious activities are less likely to use drugs. Experience tells us they're more likely to stay out of trouble. Common sense says that faith and faith-based organizations from all religious backgrounds can play an important role in helping children to reach their fullest potential. That's why I've always supported individual students' rights to voluntarily practice religious beliefs, including prayer in school or to engage in religious activities on school grounds, but not to have any kind of enforced such activities.

Now, in 1995 our administration released a set of principles for protecting religious freedom in our public schools. We did so in response to parents and educators who asked for help in knowing what kinds of religious activities are permissible in public schools and what is not permissible. They asked for help in respecting the rights and beliefs of all students, from the most observant from all religious backgrounds to those who choose freely, as is their right, to completely abstain from any religious activity.

Those guidelines we issued make it clear that students do have the right to pray privately and individually in school, the right to say grace at lunch, the right to meet in religious groups on school grounds and to use school facilities just like any other groups do. They have the right to read the Bible or other religious books during study hall or free class time and the right to be free from coercion to participate in religious activity of any kind.

Now, since we first issued those guidelines, appropriate religious activity has flourished in our schools and continuing in our country. Today I'm announcing the release of expanded guidelines, more practical help for teachers and principals, for parents and students, for the whole community. Guidelines like this will help teachers better understand how to teach about religions and help faith-based organizations join the effort to improve public education.

Across America, schools and faith-based organizations are telling us they want to build new and effective partnerships, like the large number of faith-based groups involved in America Reads or the Shiloh Baptist-Seaton Elementary School partnership, which offers after-school activities here in Washington, DC. Faith-based organizations in schools, though different in many ways, do often share important goals: expanding opportunities to learn, lifting children's lives. Our new guidelines will help them work together on common ground to meet constitutional muster, to avoid making students uncomfortable because they come from different religious traditions, while helping students make the most of their God-given talents. These guidelines also tell us that a consensus is emerging among educators and religious leaders and among defenders of the first amendment. So many of them have endorsed our efforts. Their voices echo the words of George Washington who said that Americans have, and I quote, "abundant reason to rejoice, that in this land every person may worship God according to the dictates of his own heart."

Today, as we count the days down to the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, we know that this fundamental and precious liberty is still strong. We are determined that it will remain so, not just for our own children but for generations yet to come.

Thanks for listening.

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

Statement on the Death of Grover Washington, Jr.

December 18, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Grover Washington, Jr., one of America's greatest musicians. I will always be grateful for the honor of playing saxophone with Grover back in 1993, after a White House jazz concert, and for the wonderful music he performed at my Inaugural celebrations and my 50th birthday celebration. Grover Washington was as versatile as any jazz musician in America, moving with ease and fluency from vintage jazz to funk, and from gospel to blues to pop. "I want to be able to visit any genre," he once said, "and converse there with my horn." Grover Washington did exactly that, and beautifully. I will miss both the man and his music. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Christine, and their two children, Grover III and Shana.

Statement on the Death of C. Vann Woodward

December 19, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the passing of C. Vann Woodward, one of the most important and influential historians of our time. A native of Arkansas, Woodward not only wrote about history; he helped shape it. From living through and witnessing the era of Jim Crow to marching on Selma for racial justice, he brought a unique perspective to the teaching and analysis of Southern history. While in the eyes of most he will best be remembered for his many books, his Pulitzer prize, and his long and distinguished teaching career, I believe his greatest gift was his tenacious pursuit of the truth and his warm and generous spirit. Dr. King once called one of Woodward's books the historical bible of the civil rights movement. His work influenced generations of Southern historians and social activists and had a major impact on my own thinking. All Americans should look to the life and work of C. Vann Woodward, as we rededicate ourselves to

building one America in the 21st century. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Remarks at Maury Elementary School

December 21, 1999

Emissions Standards for Cars and Sport Utility Vehicles

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank the principal of this school, Dale Talbert, for welcoming all of us here. And all the members of the Maury school community, thank you, and thank you for the nice sign there. And I want to thank the kids back here for being with me and with you today.

I want to thank Gloria Hackman for the fine statement that she made and for 20 years of dedication as a nurse. As a son and the grandson of a nurse, I liked hearing her speak. And I also want to say a special word of appreciation for the work being done here.

I want to thank Ed Zechman, the CEO of the Children's National Medical Center, for the wonderful work he does every day and, in particular, the last 7 years, the work that he and the First Lady have done together. And most of all, I want to thank Carol Browner, the EPA Assistant Administrator, Bob Perciasepe, and all the other people at EPA who worked so hard to make this day come about.

If you knew how many times over the last 7 years, in how many different contexts, Carol Browner had said to me, "You have got to do something to reduce incidents of asthma and other respiratory diseases among young children. We've got to keep doing it. It's the biggest problem out there most kids face." If you had any idea how many private encounters we had had on that that led to this happy day, you would be very grateful that someone like her is in public service in the United States, I'll tell you—thank you.

Vice President Gore has given me a lot of good ideas, as he always reminds me when we're together—[laughter]—but the recommendation to appoint her is surely one of the best.

Let me say another word about Gloria Hackman. She was here speaking not only for herself and out of her own experience

but in a way for all the children and families of this school and schools like it all across America and, particularly, on behalf of the children and families who struggle each day with the challenges of asthma. I want to commend everyone here who is working in the American Lung Association's Open Airways program for all that you do to help our children breathe a little easier. As these children know only too well, a simple breath of fresh air is not something you can take for granted.

You know, back at the beginning of our century, a little air pollution was considered a small price to pay for the bright economic future the industrial revolution was bringing us. In countless communities, in fact, black smoke billowing from the factory smokestack was a welcome symbol of newfound prosperity. It went on a long time. I remember when I first entered politics in Arkansas, there was a papermill you could smell 80 miles away. And people didn't like it 80 miles away, but where it was really strong in the community they'd say it was the smell of money. And that's what people believed.

But after a while, the air became so fouled in places like Pittsburgh that the streetlights had to be kept on during the day so people could see. Businessmen traveling to New York knew to bring along a second white shirt, even if they were staying just a day, because by the afternoon the first one would be coated with soot. Americans soon came to realize that dirty air was not just a nuisance, that it threatened their health and their lives.

In the decade since that realization came to pass, through the actions of Government and the ingenuity of American industry, we have made tremendous strides. In the last 30 years, we have reduced air pollution in the United States by nearly a third, even as our economic output has more than doubled. Over the past 6 years alone, 43 million more Americans breathe air that meets Federal standards. Every day, thanks to these efforts, we are preventing as a society 600 premature deaths and 2,000 cases of asthma and bronchitis—every single day. And I want to say—I'm going to say this 15 times before I sit down—if you have noticed, it hasn't done any harm to the economy. I am very grateful for the opportunity that Vice President Gore and

I have had to work with Americans in industry and environmental groups to make our air even cleaner, from taking actions to reduce powerplant emissions and clean the air over our national parks to setting the toughest standards ever for soot and smog.

Again, I say, as with all of our other efforts in the environment over the last three decades, America has proven wrong the skeptics who claim that the cost of fighting pollution would be ruinous. In fact, listen to this, since 1970 the direct benefits of the Clean Air Act—lower health costs and fewer days work lost, for example—have outweighed the cost of the Clean Air Act by more than \$1 trillion.

Still, even as our city skylines emerge from the haze and even as millions of Americans are spared from debilitating disease, these hard-won gains could soon be put at risk. Why? A big part of the reason is that we Americans love to drive, and we are driving more than ever. A new car rolling off the assembly line today is 95 percent less polluting than the typical new car was back in 1970. But there are more than twice as many cars on the road today, and the number of miles driven each year has grown even faster.

What's more, fully half the new vehicles sold today are sport utility vehicles, minivans, and pickups, which produce 3 to 5 times as much pollution as the average passenger car. Driving now accounts for 30 percent of the total air pollution in America. And unless we take additional measures, air quality in many parts of our country will continue to worsen in the coming decades.

That is why today I am honored to announce the boldest steps in a generation to clean the air we breathe by improving the cars we drive. Working closely with industry, we will ensure both the freedom of American families to drive the vehicles of their choice and the right of American children to breathe clean, healthy air.

First, we're setting tough new standards that, over the coming decade, will reduce tailpipe emissions as much as 95 percent. Second, for the first time, we are applying the same stringent standard to cars and to sport utility vehicles, including the largest models. And third, because cleaner fuels also are critical to achieving cleaner air, we're cut-

ting the sulfur content of gasoline by up to 90 percent.

These measures will assure every American cleaner air well into the 21st century. It will prevent thousands of premature deaths and protect millions of our children from respiratory disease. It will be the most dramatic improvement in air quality since the catalytic converter was first introduced a quarter century ago. And manufacturers will be able to meet these new standards while still offering the kinds of models popular with consumers today.

I want to say a special word of appreciation for all those that worked with EPA in developing this new strategy. I thank the auto and the oil industries, the States, the environmental communities, the leading public health experts. The issues were not always easy, to put it mildly. But working together we have, I am convinced, come to solutions that are best for our Nation's health and for our Nation's economy. We will continue to work together also—and this is very important—to create cleaner diesel fuel, our next big challenge in this area. And I will do all I can to expand our efforts with the auto industry, which have already borne a lot of fruit, in the same spirit of collaboration to provide our consumers with vehicles that are not just less polluting but also far more fuel efficient. Yes, you can clap for that. [*Applause*] It won't be long until you'll be amazed what will be available on the market on that score.

It seems impossible to believe, but in just 10 days, we will close out a century of remarkable progress on a high note, and we will begin a new millennium. We will have new opportunities and new challenges. We—all of us, I think—wonder what the future holds for our children. As we unravel the mysteries of the human gene and search the outer reaches of black holes in the universe, there's no telling what's just around the turn in the new century. We are very fortunate that we end the century and begin the millennium with, really, an unprecedented level of economic prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence, with the absence of overwhelming internal crisis or external threat. This combination of conditions has not existed before, at least in my lifetime.

But I would argue to all of you that because of the good times, we have a peculiar responsibility to think about the big long-term issues that will frame the lives that we dream for our children. And we have an opportunity to shape the future in a way that perhaps no generation before us has ever had. One of the things that we ought to do first is to make sure as many children as possible have a full future.

You know, any of us who have ever been in a hospital delivery room know that when a baby comes into the world, the first thing that's done is to make sure the infant can draw its first breath. As we embark on a new millennium, among all of our other responsibilities, surely it is our sacred obligation to ensure that each and every child, from the first breath on, will be drawing the cleanest, purest, healthiest air we can provide. Today's a big step in the right direction, and I thank all of you who have been involved in it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the multipurpose room. In his remarks, he referred to Gloria Hackman, nurse, Maury Elementary School.

Videotape Remarks on the "America's Millennium" Celebration *December 21, 1999*

I want to invite all Americans to join Hillary and me for "America's Millennium," a spectacular 3-day celebration in our Nation's Capital to ring in a new year, new century, new millennium. Join us in honoring our past and imagining the future, by kicking off the celebration at 11:00 a.m. on December 31st with an opening ceremony at the Main Street Millennium stage at 12th and Constitution. Enjoy free performances and programs at many of the Smithsonian museums, and food and fun at the city's block party.

Usher in the year 2000 at America's Millennium Gala at the Lincoln Memorial, beginning at 9:00 p.m. It will include a stirring concert, a premiere of a film on the 20th century by Steven Spielberg, and a spectacular finale of lights and fireworks. All events are free and open to the public. For more

information, call 1-888-294-2100, or log onto Americasmillennium.gov.

From my family to yours, Happy New Year—and a happy new millennium.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 10 a.m. on December 16 in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on Gun Control Legislation

December 21, 1999

Today Senator Schumer released an important new report that shows us how vital it is for us to change the way the gun industry does business. The report contains more evidence that a very small proportion of gun dealers is linked to a very high proportion of crime guns traced by police. It also shows that most of the guns that end up in the hands of criminals first pass through a middleman—for instance, a straw purchaser or an illegal gun trafficker. That is why I have pushed Congress to pass commonsense gun measures to crack down on traffickers who supply guns to criminals. And that is why my administration has begun to engage the gun industry on a range of steps the industry itself can take.

Thanks to the Brady law, our increased support for State and local law enforcement, and other steps we've taken, gun violence in America is down. But no one believes it is down far enough. The message of today's report is simple: It's time for Congress and the gun industry to help clamp down on bad dealers and stem the flow of guns to criminals. It's time for Congress and the gun industry to help us make our country safer. I hope this report will help push that cause forward.

Executive Order 13144— Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay *December 21, 1999*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the

United States of America, including the laws cited herein, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Statutory Pay Systems. The rates of basic pay or salaries of the statutory pay systems (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 5302(1)), as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5303(a), in accordance with section 646(a) of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000, Public Law 106-58, are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The General Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5332(a)) at Schedule 1;

(b) The Foreign Service Schedule (22 U.S.C. 3963) at Schedule 2; and

(c) The schedules for the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. 7306, 7404; section 301(a) of Public Law 102-40) at Schedule 3.

Sec. 2. Senior Executive Service. The rates of basic pay for senior executives in the Senior Executive Service, as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5382, are set forth on Schedule 4 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 3. Executive Salaries. The rates of basic pay or salaries for the following offices and positions are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The Executive Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5312-5318) at Schedule 5;

(b) The Vice President (3 U.S.C. 104) and the Congress (2 U.S.C. 31) at Schedule 6; and

(c) Justices and judges (28 U.S.C. 5, 44(d), 135, 252, and 461(a)) at Schedule 7.

Sec. 4. Uniformed Services. Pursuant to section 601(a)-(b) of Public Law 106-65, the rates of monthly basic pay (37 U.S.C. 203(a)) for members of the uniformed services and the rate of monthly cadet or midshipman pay (37 U.S.C. 203(c)) are set forth on Schedule 8 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 5. Locality-Based Comparability Payments.

(a) Pursuant to section 5304 of title 5, United States Code, and in accordance with section 646(a) of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000, Public Law 106-58, locality-based comparability payments shall be paid in accordance with Schedule 9 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

(b) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall take such actions as may be necessary to implement these payments and to publish appropriate notice of such payments in the *Federal Register*.

Sec. 6. Administrative Law Judges. The rates of basic pay for administrative law judges, as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5372(b)(4), are set forth on Schedule 10 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 7. Effective Dates. Schedule 8 is effective on January 1, 2000. The other schedules contained herein are effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2000.

Sec. 8. Prior Order Superseded. Sections 1 through 7 of Executive Order 13106 of December 7, 1998, are superseded.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 21, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 22, 1999]

NOTE: This Executive order and the attached annexes were published in the *Federal Register* on December 23.

Message on the Observance of Christmas, 1999

December 21, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

Saint Matthew's Gospel tells us that, on the first Christmas 2000 years ago, a bright star shone vividly in the eastern sky, heralding the birth of Jesus and the beginning of His hallowed mission as teacher, healer, servant, and savior. Jesus' birth in poverty proclaimed the intrinsic dignity and brotherhood of all humanity, and His luminous teachings have brought hope and joy to generations of believers. Today, as the world stands at the dawn of a new millennium, His timeless message of God's enduring and unconditional love for each and every person continues to strengthen and inspire us.

During this blessed season and the Jubilee Year it inaugurates, let us share the gift of God's love by giving of ourselves and by sharing generously with those in need. Let us

reach out to those who are different from us, yet one in the human family, by living the profound and universal lesson Jesus taught us: that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us, like Jesus, become true peacemakers, bringing the gift of peace to our homes, our schools, our communities, and our nation. And let us continue to reach out when and where we can to give new hope to the most impoverished and to help resolve conflicts, both ancient and new, in regions around the world.

Love, peace, joy, hope—so many beautiful words are woven through our Christmas songs and prayers and traditions. As we celebrate this last Christmas of the 20th century, let us resolve to build a future where all people learn to love one another and to live together in harmony; where our children know true joy; and where our hopes for peace, freedom, and prosperity for all are finally realized.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a wonderful Christmas celebration and every happiness in the new year.

Bill Clinton

Exchange With Reporters at the D.C. Central Kitchen

December 22, 1999

Terrorist Activities

Q. Mr. President, how concerned should Americans be about terrorist attacks in the U.S. as we approach the new year?

The President. Well, because of the incident which has been widely reported, we, the authorities, are on a higher level of alert. For the citizens, I would say they ought to go about their holidays and enjoy themselves and make the most of it. But I would ask them to just be aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything suspicious to report it immediately, and meanwhile, to know that we are doing everything we possibly can. We're taking extraordinary efforts in the Government to act, based on the incident out in the Pacific Northwest and what we know, and we're going forward.

I don't think the American people should stop their holiday activities. I think they ought to go on and enjoy the season. But

because we, the Government, are taking extra steps and we're on alert, I think it would be good for them and good for us if they would just be careful and—not suspicious but aware—aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything that doesn't look right, to report it to us. And if they do that, I think we'll have a good holiday, and I think we'll maximize our safety.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:40 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the D.C. Central Kitchen *December 22, 1999*

Thank you so much. Well, let me begin by thanking Robert Egger and all the students, the graduates, the staff, the volunteers who have made D.C. Central Kitchen one of the greatest sources of community strength in our entire Nation. I want to thank Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, your Member of Congress; and Representative Tim Roemer from Indiana, for joining us today. I want to thank my longtime friend, your D.C. Council Chair, Charlene Drew Jarvis. And I think we have four other city council members here; thank you all for coming. And I want to thank Harris Wofford, the gentleman who runs our national service effort, and the AmeriCorps members who are here today. And Harris, thanks for the jacket. We now have over 150,000 young Americans who have served in AmeriCorps since we established it in 1994. That's a pretty good record, and I'm very proud of them.

I just wanted to also say, most importantly, thank you to Donna Simon. I am very proud of her. And she did a good job today, didn't she—and her daughter. Now last year we made lasagna. Today I had to put the filling in the bell peppers. And I did it with Steve, Melody, and Michele—they're all better than I am. But I love working again this year. I had a good time, and I learned about three other people.

I want to say three things about D.C. Central Kitchen and its recipes. First of all, this place offers a recipe for opportunity. It's an empowerment classroom. You heard Donna's story, and one of the things I

learned a long time ago in life is that everybody's got a story. Everybody's got a story. And most of them are pretty interesting. And they're all still being written. And the nice thing about your life story is you get to get up and write a page every day, and you have to decide—no matter how bad things are, no matter what bad has happened to you, no matter what mistakes you've made, you still get to get up and write a new page every day. And this place helps people write good pages in that story.

I want to tell you, last year, in addition to Donna, I met a lot of other interesting people here last year. I met a man last year named Francis Hill—stand up here. I want to tell you about this guy. He had been living on the streets for 10 years before he got into this program. Right after he graduated he went to work at the Cafe Atlantico, a pretty high-tone joint not very far from here. [Laughter] Within weeks he was promoted. In fact, someone on my staff talked to his boss, who said he is by far the best worker he has ever had. He has now moved into his own apartment, bought his own car, just got engaged to his long-time girlfriend, Wanda—good for you, that was a good thing to do. And he proposed while cooking a meal for her at home, a side benefit of being in this program here. [Laughter] So this place is a recipe for opportunity. Thank you for being Exhibit A.

The D.C. Central Kitchen also offers a recipe for service. Every year—listen to this—every single year here, 5,000 volunteers roll up their sleeves and give something back to their community, people like Jose Andres, one of the premier young chefs in America. Is he here today? Stand up here, Jose. Now, despite the, literally, crazy demands of his job, he comes here every single week to share his passion and skills with all the students, and he encourages other friends to join him every time he comes.

Just imagine what we could achieve if everyone in this community and in every community where there is a need like this rose to the call of citizen service the way you have. Thank you very much. We honor you, sir.

Finally, I'd like to point out D.C. Central Kitchen also does offer a recipe for alleviating hunger. And I want everyone in

America to pay attention to this, too. We're ending this century on a very high note. We have the strongest economy in my lifetime. We have the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. All those statistics are very good and it's all true and it's wonderful.

But when I left church Sunday morning, there were still a lot of people in Lafayette Park lined up behind those vans waiting to get fed. And I think it is very important that we not forget that with all of the increasing number of jobs—and some of you represent that—with a decreasing poverty—some of you represent that—the number of people that are in really dire straits is still very, very significant, for—a lot of them have a lot of medical reasons, mental health reasons, other reasons. But they're still out there. They're on the streets. They have no food to eat. Requests for emergency food in this community have, in fact, been increasing in recent years. So I want to thank you for that.

This place takes food that would otherwise go to waste, and provides 3,000 meals a day—think of that—just the D.C. Central Kitchen, 3,000 meals a day. Now, I want to send out another message to America. There are people who need food in every community of any size in this country. The Department of Agriculture estimates that 96 billion pounds—let me say that again, 96 billion—not million—billion pounds of food is lost every year that could be consumed, from slightly bruised fruit at wholesale markets to unsold trays of lasagna at restaurants—not my lasagna. [Laughter]

So you remember what Mr. Egger said at the beginning of this. He said, "You know, last year when I was here there were 21 community kitchens like this one around the country. Now there are going to be more than twice that many in this year." And you should be very proud of that. Among all the other messages, I hope this message will get out: In every community, civic-minded people ought to take an inventory of how much food is being wasted, where it is, how to gather it up, how to give it to the churches, the synagogues, the mosques, and whoever else has a homeless mission that will take care

of that food and get it out. When you think about the amount of food that has been wasted and the number of people you see lined up at every soup kitchen, at every community stop, at every place, not just here but around the country, it is appalling.

And all we need is a system like you have in every community in America, and there wouldn't be any hungry people in this country. Ninety-six billion pounds of food is more than enough to feed all the hungry people in America, and it's just being wasted.

So I hope that communities—I hope that where this message goes out, if this is a problem in other communities, they'll look at the D.C. Central Kitchen model, and they'll go to work trying to save the wasted food. This is a job that all of us have to do—government but also community service organizations. And I think that what we've tried to do is to emphasize the role of the community organization and to make sure that they knew what we had in terms of resources that could help.

A few years ago, I signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which now makes it a lot easier for private companies to donate food and for people like you to prepare and distribute it. Our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, has gotten the whole Government working on food rescue programs like this one. And now the Agriculture Department is working around the country to form new grassroots partnerships to fight hunger, to increase local food production, and to help low income families move into independence. But we've got to have the support of volunteers, and we have to have the willingness of the community.

We come here at holiday season because everybody's thinking about this. But what we should do at holiday season is to make commitments that last all year long, not just at the holiday season. The AmeriCorps members here—I want to say again how proud I am of you and what a testament you have been to the proposition that working with others is not a burden, it is a joy; it is not just a duty, it is a privilege. And whether you are preparing meals or teaching a child to read or painting an old school, you always get more than you give. And most of us get out of this life ahead of where we would be

if all we got is just what we deserve. [*Laughter*] And I think this is really an important thing to remember at this season.

So again, I want to thank all of you. Thank you, Robert Egger; thank you, graduates; thank you trainees; thank you, staff and volunteers and supporters of the D.C. Central Kitchen. You have captured the spirit of the season, and I hope others will catch it from you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Harris Wofford, chief executive officer, Corporation for Public Service; and Robert Egger, director, Donna Simon, graduate, and Steve Pritchett, Melody Swint, and Michele Rhyne, trainees, D.C. Central Kitchen.

Radio Remarks for the 1999 Walt Disney World Holiday Celebration

December 22, 1999

Hello, this is President Bill Clinton. I'm sure everyone around the world appreciates how special this year's holiday celebration is. We're about to enter a new millennium, an era of tremendous promise and opportunity. There is no better time than now to reflect on our hopes and dreams and the gifts we want to leave for the future. We can all do something to make the world a better place.

Hillary, Chelsea, and I want to wish everyone listening the happiest of holidays. And as we celebrate the future, it is our hope that your dreams for the new millennium will come true.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10 a.m. on November 29 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on Lifting the Ban on Direct Flights Between the United States and Nigeria

December 22, 1999

Earlier today, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater announced that the United

States is lifting our ban on direct flights to Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, Nigeria.

I congratulate President Obasanjo and his government for taking the steps necessary to remove this ban, including the overhauling of Nigeria's airport security system. These important reforms provided one more indication of the Nigerian administration's commitment to good governance. They offer new evidence that Nigeria is reversing the damage that years of corruption and mismanagement inflicted upon its international reputation.

I am deeply gratified to see a government chosen by the Nigerian people earning the trust and respect of the world. I look forward to strengthening our partnership with Nigeria even further over the coming year.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1999

December 22, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Kwanzaa.

With roots in the ancient history and cultural traditions of Africa and celebrating such fundamental American values as unity and self-determination, this joyous annual festival reflects the diversity that gives our nation much of its strength and resilience. Each year during Kwanzaa, millions of African Americans gather with family and friends to celebrate their rich heritage, to reaffirm the bonds of family and community, and to give thanks to our Creator for the beauty and bounty of life.

As we look forward to the new millennium, we must not lose sight of the values and traditions that have strengthened and sustained us in the past. The seven principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—can be invaluable tools in teaching us how to live together in the 21st century as a community, in harmony with one another and our environment and in humility before God.

Hillary joins me in extending warmest wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa and every happiness in the coming year.

Bill Clinton

Interview With Larry King of CNN's "Larry King Live"

December 22, 1999

Cabinet Room

Mr. King. Good evening. We're in the Cabinet Room at the White House in this Christmas season. It's a great pleasure to have as our special guest, as part of our millennium month, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton. Do you spend a lot of time—do you have a lot of Cabinet meetings?

The President. I do. And I have a lot of other meetings in here, like with individual Cabinet members. I met this week with three or four different Cabinet members and extended staff here. So we have large meetings in here.

Mr. King. This room is, like, right off the Oval Office?

The President. That's right, right off the Oval Office.

Mr. King. Did they plan it that way so the President could run right in and meet with—how often do you have Cabinet meetings?

The President. I don't have too many full Cabinet meetings, because we have 23 members of the Cabinet plus Chief of Staff. So I have a few of those a year, when we have to do a review and get all geared into one issue or another. But I have a lot of meetings with various Cabinet officials in this room and with maybe more than one who are all working on a common project.

Year 2000 Problems

Mr. King. We have a lot to talk about, and I want to get an overview as we look ahead to this millennium but cover some current things. I guess the thing everybody is talking about is, should we be frightened? That's the basis of the State Department yesterday—should we travel; should we stay home? We're told the Cabinet members have

been asked to stay home or stay in Washington. Is that true?

The President. The Cabinet members are staying here, but it's really just as a precaution, because we feel a high level of confidence about where we are with the Y2K problems. We've been working on this for years. We've spent a lot of money on it; we've tried to get all the private sector involved. All the big systems in this country, I think—airline travel, banking systems, electrical systems, Social Security checks—all those things I think are in good shape. We're here partly as a precaution and partly so, if any of our friends in other parts of the world have any trouble, we can all be there to give whatever help we can.

Year 2000 Terrorism

Mr. King. And how about the terrorism threat, where people are asked to be careful, especially overseas, and we have these arrests occurring in Washington and Vermont?

The President. Well, what I would say to the American people about that is that we know that at the millennium, a lot of people who may even be a little crazy by our standards or may have a political point to make, may try to take advantage of it. So we are on a heightened state of alert. We're working very hard on it. No one can guarantee that nothing will happen. But all I can say is we're working very hard.

And my advice to the American people would be to go on about their business and do what they would intend to do at the holiday season but to be a little more aware of people and places where they find themselves. And if you see something suspicious, well, call us and let us know. Call the authorities. We're working very, very hard on this. And if it were me, I would not just refrain from activities. I'm going to go out and do my Christmas shopping. I'm going to do what I normally do.

Mr. King. Are you saying if you have a hunch about something, go to the hunch?

The President. If you have a hunch about something, if you see something that's suspicious, you should report it, just to make sure that we do everything we possibly can to maximize our protection. But I wouldn't just hunker down until it was all over.

Mr. King. Colin Powell says that maybe by doing all this, you've scared them off. You know, if you make people fear the alert so much, that might cause terrorists to have a second thought.

The President. Well, they should have a second thought, because we're working it hard.

Mr. King. In cooperation with other nations?

The President. Absolutely.

Vice President Al Gore's Offer To Debate

Mr. King. All right. Let's discuss some things political—one of your main—you know that. Do you agree with Al Gore's request to have debates? "Forget all the advertising. Let's debate."

The President. Well, I think it's an interesting idea. I don't want to get into hand-capping the campaign. I think that the more debates they have, the better. I'm very proud to be a member of my party when I see those two debate. They're smart. They have their ideas. You know I favor the Vice President and not just because I feel personally loyal to him. I think he's been by light-years the best Vice President this country has ever had, by a long, long way. But I think the fact that he and Bill Bradley are out there talking about education; they're talking about health care; they're talking about biomedical research; and they know what they're talking about; and they've thought about these things—I think it's a very substantive, good thing. And that's what I think elections ought to be about, so I'm proud of that.

Mr. King. Were you surprised at the idea, though, to say, let's forget—you know, Goldwater and Kennedy were going to do that.

The President. I was surprised. And I must say I find it quite interesting. I was intrigued by it. If someone had offered me that in 1992, I probably would have done it.

Mr. King. Would have taken it?

The President. Yes, probably, because I think we need to find out whether we can have elections without the kind of money that they cost today, and we can't have them without that kind of money unless people can have access, the candidates can have access to the voters. That is, what costs all the money is access to the voters.

Mr. King. Barry Goldwater had told me that he and John Kennedy had arranged that if Goldwater would be the nominee in '64, had Kennedy lived, they were going to travel around together.

The President. I think it would have been wonderful. I still think it would be great. And I'd like to see it happen in a general election. I don't think it's necessary for the voters to be for one person but think that the other person is a bad person. And I think it's very bad development in our politics. I think it's one reason that the voting percentage goes down; people think, ugh. So if there could be a way to be more and more debates, not only now but in the general election, I think it would be a good thing for American democracy. I did three last time and three the time before, but I would have done six or seven or however many. I believe in this.

Candidate Bill Bradley

Mr. King. You say, of course, you're supporting your Vice President. What do you think of Bill Bradley, though?

The President. Oh, I've known him for many years. I like him. He's a very smart man. He's had a very interesting life, and he's got an interesting take on things.

Mr. King. Do you ever think they might run together?

The President. They'd be a good ticket. [Laughter] It would be a good ticket.

Challenges of a Vice Presidential Campaign

Mr. King. Kennedy could run with Johnson. You picked a man from a neighboring State to run with you. Do you understand the difficulty of a Vice President running?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. That's not easy, is it?

The President. No. But it gets easier as time goes on, and people focus on it. And it's easier now than it was 100 years ago, I think. But I think that, as I said—when Harry Truman became President, he didn't even know about the atomic bomb.

Mr. King. Did not.

The President. And we had already lost five or six Presidents in office by the time he became President. Since then, there has

been an increasing level of seriousness given to the job. Lyndon Johnson was a major figure, and Richard Nixon was a major figure. Both of them had responsibility in office. Then President Carter upped the ante more; Vice President Mondale had far more responsibility than anybody had before. President Reagan, to his credit, gave President Bush a lot of responsibility. But no Vice President has ever had the range of responsibility and the level of achievement, accordingly, that Al Gore has had, whether it was in our technology policy, our environmental policy, our foreign policy, the economic empowerment of poor areas. I could just go on and on.

Mr. King. So there is nothing he isn't abreast of?

The President. No.

Mr. King. If something happened to you, there's not surprise we have to tell him?

The President. No. There would be nothing—if something were to happen to me tonight, he could become President, and there would be nothing he wouldn't know, no person he hadn't met, no issue he hadn't dealt with.

Mr. King. We'll be right back with the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, at this Christmas season. Don't go away.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Trade Debate and the Seattle Round

Mr. King. Speaking of debates, it was Vice President Gore's idea, we just reminded each other, to debate Perot. And I understand you were the only one here that agreed with that.

The President. In the beginning.

Mr. King. There was a lot of disagreement.

The President. They all thought there was a lot of downside to it. But I wish we had more debates in recent years on trade policy, because it's such a controversial thing. Everybody is for selling more of our exports. Everybody has the feeling, because we have a big trade deficit, that people take advantage of us. People are worried about losing their jobs, even though the unemployment rate is at a 30-year low. And I think we need to continue to debate this. I wish we had more

of them. I hope there will be some trade debates in this election.

Mr. King. Did Seattle throw you, Mr. President? I ask that because Governor Bush was with us last week, and he agrees completely with you on the trade issue, but he said he thought—I'm paraphrasing—that you kind of copped out, that you didn't forcefully attack those people who were demonstrating, you sort of rode the middle.

The President. Well, first of all, I attacked those who were violent in no uncertain terms. And I said to those who were demonstrating for a cleaner environment or for decent labor standards that I thought their concerns were legitimate but their opposition to the trade agreement was wrong. And that's what I believe. And I think that we're a little different on that. I mean, I strongly agree, and most Republicans that apparently agree with me that we ought to have expanded trade.

We benefit, not just from the exports; we also benefit from the influence. You've got an—time, so do I. We benefit in that an open market enables us to grow and still have to compete, and that keeps inflation down. One of the reasons—in February we're going to have the longest economic expansion in the history of the country, and we did it with three things. We did it with getting rid of the debt—deficit; we did it with investing in technology and people; and we did it with opening our borders in trading and continuing to compete, because usually, when you have this kind of economic growth, inflation takes over and kills the recovery. That hasn't happened. So I think this is very important.

But the difference between me and most Republicans is that I believe that globalization is inevitable. But people are scared of all this change, and what we have to do is to convince them that change can be their friend. And the way to do it is to say, "Okay, we're going to compete, and we're going to win over the long run, and we're going to win in the short run, but we should grow the economy in a way that improves the environment, and we should do it in a way that respects core labor standards: no forced labor, no child labor, no abusive working conditions."

Mr. King. Did Seattle surprise you?

The President. No. I think—I knew there would be a lot of people there. I was surprised the first night at the level of violence. I didn't know that there would be so many, basically, creeps there who would try to—

Mr. King. Who instigated it, you mean?

The President. Yes, throw rocks—there was just a very small percentage of those thousands of people who were doing this. There were probably a couple of hundred people who were prepared to throw rocks at stores and take other violent action.

Most of them were there to express their opposition to some aspect or another of this process of globalization, but they cannot turn the clock back. The world is better off than it would have been if we hadn't had 50 years of increasing economic integration, and America has won big these last 7 years by being involved. And we are making a huge mistake, in my judgment, if we don't continue to both expand trade and work for better core labor standards in a better environment.

Mr. King. Do the unions then not understand this? They're the biggest supporters your party has—the trade unions in America have been.

The President. They're divided. If you look at Seattle, for example, there are 170,000 union members in and around Seattle. And most of them have jobs in part because their companies are so tied to trade. I went to York, Pennsylvania, the other day to the Harley Davidson motorcycle factory, something most—at least most guys and an increasing number of women can identify with. They've got a year's backlog, and 25 percent of the Harleys are sold overseas, and the biggest foreign market is now Japan, which makes the only competitors to Harley and motorcycles. So I think it just depends.

Some unions feel that their jobs might be undercut by the importation of textile or clothing goods or shoes or whatever, but on balance, we have won big as a country by opening our markets, showing we're not afraid to compete, and asking others to open their markets, too, to be fair, whether it's farmers or manufacturers or people in entertainment or people in the information technology business.

Final Year of the President's Term

Mr. King. Is it tough going into a last year? I ask that because we sat together here quite a few times. I remember once we were looking out, and you said to me, "You know, my bad days are good days."

The President. Absolutely. I love this job.

Mr. King. You love this job.

The President. I do.

Mr. King. You—

The President. And I'll miss it. People ask me all the time, "What will you miss most? Will it be living in the White House, going to Camp David, getting on Air Force One?" The job is what I'll miss most, the work. There is no place in the world where you can come in contact with so many different kinds of people and so many different kinds of issues and have so much opportunity to do good or stop bad things from happening.

But the hard thing about it now is you want to do everything, and you have to be disciplined. You have to figure out what can I do, what can I put out there that the country ought to do that maybe can't be done while I'm here. I never want to sleep. I realize the days are going by, and I just want to keep working. I just want to do everything I can.

Mr. King. We'll be back with the working President right after this.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Gays in the Military

Mr. King. We are reevaluating, are we, "don't ask, don't tell"?

The President. Well, I think the candidates are. A lot of them are saying it should be changed.

Mr. King. What do you think?

The President. I tried to have a different policy. I tried to say gays should be able to serve in the military—

Mr. King. Period?

The President. Without lying about it. But if the military code of justice says that homosexual acts are illegal, if they keep it, then they'd have to observe that. But when we went to "don't ask, don't tell," it was all we could get through the Congress. The Congress had a veto-proof majority to reverse the policy I recommended.

Now a new administration and new Members of Congress, they're free to do something different. What we're doing now—in August, we issued some new guidelines to try to correct some of the abuses, because the policy, as it was articulated in '93, has been often abused, and that's what's led to some of these expulsions, some of this harassment.

The Secretary of Defense is absolutely committed to faithfully implementing the policy. It's really "don't ask, don't tell," don't pursue, under those circumstances.

Mr. King. So it's not the policy that's wrong?

The President. No, I didn't say that. I recommended a different policy, but the policy is better than the results. That is, if the policy were faithfully applied, we would not have many of the problems that we've had these last few years, and I think the Secretary of Defense and the leadership of the Pentagon is now—with these new guidelines and with the work they're doing to try to make sure people are trained and they understand they're not supposed to go in and harass people and what can and cannot trigger an inquiry, I think we can make it better now.

Gay and Lesbian Rights

Mr. King. How much—we know about your interest and the gains we've made in the racial area and still a long way to go. How are we doing in that area, in the homosexual area in this country, with regards to acceptance, do you think?

The President. I think we've come a long way. We're a long way from where we were just in '92 and '93. I think vast majorities of the American people support hate crimes legislation that protects gays as well as people with different racial and religious backgrounds. I think most Americans strongly support nondiscrimination in the workplace and would vote for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" if they were in Congress. I hope that the Congress will vote for it this year, this next year.

I think that—the real problem, I still believe, is the absence of open, personal contact. I think—

Mr. King. We don't know it—

The President. I think there are too many people who don't know gay men and lesbian women in the ordinary course of their lives, and they don't see that there are people who—their friends, their sisters, their brothers, their sons, their daughters, their co-workers, and that it is—my judgment is, it's not a lifestyle people choose. It is the way people are. It's too hard—it's too hard a life for people to just up and—

Mr. King. Why choose it?

The President. —up and choose it. I think that—and I think that my view is that every American that works hard, obeys the law, plays by the rules ought to be treated with dignity and respect and have a part in our American family. That's what I believe.

Mr. King. Do you agree with the Vermont judiciary that while marriage may be wrong, they are entitled, couples who live together who are gay, to equal benefits?

The President. I do. I think that's a good thing. That's always been my position, that—you've got gay couples that, for example, have been together for years now. One of them—and I'm beginning to think about this, because I'm moving into this age bracket now—one of them has a heart attack; one of them gets sick; one of them is in the intensive care unit in the hospital; and only family members can come in; and sometimes they're not allowed in—that kind of thing.

You know, I think that—in terms of health care coverage at work or in terms of property and willing of property to your closest family member, that sort of thing, I think they ought to be able to do that.

Mr. King. But not marry?

The President. Well, marriage in our culture and to me has a certain connotation, meaning for me, that has not gotten me to where I could accept that, because I think it's basically a union for the purpose of, among other things, having children and—so that's why I've never supported the term of marriage, although there are a lot of increasing numbers of people, even in the clergy, who believe that they should be able to do that.

Mr. King. We'll be back with more of President Clinton. We've got an overview here on the millennium and some other things after this.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Reimbursement of Legal Fees

Mr. King. We're in the Cabinet Room at the White House with President Clinton. Touch some other bases. The Washington Post said that you're applying to the Government to reimburse for legal fees. True?

The President. That's not true.

Mr. King. Not true?

The President. Not true. I've never—I've never considered doing that.

Mr. King. So where did that story come from?

The President. I think it was leaked from the Independent Counsel's Office. That's the way the story read to me. But—

Mr. King. You don't want—

The President. I think that they've cost the taxpayers enough money already.

Mr. King. So even if you were entitled legally—

The President. I may be entitled to it, but my instinct is not to do it. But I've really never had a discussion about it. My instinct is not to do it. I've been very fortunate. I've had this legal defense fund; people have helped me pay for my legal fees. The travesty in this thing is the way the law is written. You can only get your legal fees if you're a target of an investigation but you're not charged. So if you're charged and acquitted, you can't get them, and if you never were a target, you can't get them.

So the thing that I think is just tragic is you have no idea how many completely innocent people that were harassed repeatedly and called into hearings and called into this, that, and the other thing—everybody knew they never did anything wrong, but I mean, not just one interview which you could understand but over and over and over again, so that they have these massive legal bills, and they're not eligible for any reimbursement at all.

So I've been trying to figure out how to help them pay their legal bills. That's what I wish I could apply for. I wish there was some fund where I could get some money for them to pay their bills, because a lot of these people—they're not President; they're

not like me; they can't have a legal defense fund that would pay their bills off.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. King. How did you emotionally hold up through all that?

The President. I'm here. [Laughter]

Mr. King. I know. What is it? Some sort of inner thing in you, get up off the floor, the comeback kid approach? Is that part of your structure? Where does that come from?

The President. I think there are two things, really. One is what you said. All my life, I was raised to believe that you should never give in and never give up. If somebody hits you and knocks you down, you were supposed to get up, not give up. And I also deeply believed—one thing I knew, the White-water thing was a total fraud, and I thought the people who were pursuing it knew it was a fraud at some point. They had to, especially 4-something years ago, when the Government report came out, the RTC report saying that neither my wife or I had done anything wrong and had detailed millions of dollars in explanations showing that.

The other thing was that I'm—in the last couple of years, I had to come to terms with a lot of things. I prayed a lot; I thought a lot; I sought a lot of advice; I had a lot of help from really good people, here and around the world. A lot of the people I served with, world leaders, called and talked to me.

Mr. King. Are you surprised at that?

The President. I was touched by it beyond belief. Some of the conversations I had with people like Nelson Mandela, I've carried with me all my life. It's just unbelievable.

Mr. King. They were there for you?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. And that was part of the—

The President. But here—but also, letters I got from, you know, kids around America. You wouldn't believe the letters I got from—

Mr. King. Really?

The President. Yes, unbelievable letters. And letters I got from religious leaders and people that taught philosophy and thought about these things. It was just—and I also had a lot of counseling, a lot of help from these ministers who came in and met with me, and my wife and daughter had a lot to

do with it. Hillary and Chelsea had a lot to do with it.

Former Advisers in the Media

Mr. King. Are you hurt by the Dick Morrises, the Stephanopouloses who write books, who write columns, become part of the media sometimes, in Morris's case, often a very critical—a guy you were pretty close to? Does that hurt you?

The President. Well, first of all, I am very grateful for the overwhelming loyalty that I've enjoyed from people who could have made a lot of money by dumping on me because that's what sells and the kind of media culture they were in. And I have enjoyed an extraordinary degree of it.

I've also had a lot of stability. A lot of people have stayed with me the whole time. So let me start with my gratitude. When Dick first started going on television and saying those things, he used to call somebody here in the office and apologize in advance and just say, "You know, I've got to do this. It's the only way I can get on television."

Mr. King. Really?

The President. Oh, sure. I mean, it's a game. It's a game. I know that. And so it's hard for me to take it seriously. I think that a lot of the things that he has said, he knows downright aren't true, and I feel bad for him because I think you pay a terrible price when you do that over and over and over again.

Mr. King. You feel bad for him?

The President. Yes, I do. I feel really bad for him.

Mr. King. He's attacked your wife a lot, too.

The President. Yes. And he's said a lot of things that he just knows aren't so. And so I feel badly for him. But I don't—I can't be mad at him.

With George, it's a different story. I think he's a brilliant man and basically a good person. But when George entered politics, he entered as a boy wonder. He came right in with Dick Gephardt, you know, and he assumed great responsibilities because he's a person of—he works like crazy, and he's smart, and he's basically good-hearted in a lot of ways. But he was, I think, always affected by being basically a Washington politician.

I remember when I was attacked in the New Hampshire primary, and everybody said, "He's dead, and he ought to get out," and all that, George was asking, "Well, should we withdraw?" And James Carville and I, who grew up in the country, you know, out there with the folks, we looked at him and said, "George, if the people want me to withdraw, they will withdraw me at election time. That's what you've got elections for."

And I think that—I think he's probably more comfortable now being a part of the professional critics of the Washington establishment, the media establishment. I think that's where he's—I think he's comfortable there. That's where he started in politics, and I think that's just where he is.

Criticism of the President

Mr. King. Do those pundits in general bother—do they get at you? Some guy—Truman wrote that famous note when he got mad. Some people let it slide off—

The President. I've got that note, you know.

Mr. King. You have the actual note?

The President. Yes. One of the great little stories of my Presidency is Steve Forbes gave me that letter that Truman wrote.

Mr. King. Steve Forbes?

The President. I've always been grateful to him.

Mr. King. SOB he called that writer.

The President. Yes, he said, "You'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a"—[laughter]—

Mr. King. Do you ever watch "Larry King Live" or "Meet The Press" or somebody—do you get mad?

The President. No, the truth is I never watch them. I never watch the Sunday talk shows.

Mr. King. You don't watch Sunday morning?

The President. Never. And the only time I ever see any of these other programs is if I'm channel surfing late at night and I happen to run into them. I watch your program sometimes when you're interviewing somebody I want to hear from.

Mr. King. But basically, you don't turn on "Meet The Press" or—

The President. Never. Never. And if I did, what good would that do me? I mean—

Mr. King. Except make you mad.

The President. Yes. If someone—if I read a column, like an op-ed column, of someone who says, I think the Clinton administration policy is all wet on this for these reasons, I read that, because Benjamin Franklin said, "Our critics are our friends. They show us our faults." But I cannot—you can't afford to be angry as President. If you're angry all the time over things people say about you—you can be angry about what happens to the American people. But if you're angry about what happens to you, then you're wasting a lot of time and emotional energy that belongs to the American people. And you're not going to make good decisions. So nothing really good can come with that.

Mr. King. You really feel like an employee of the people?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. We'll be back with some more moments with President Clinton from the Cabinet Room in the White House. Don't go away.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

President's Legacy

Mr. King. We're back with President Clinton. I want to read something that was given to me today. The last time—not the last time, we've been together many times, but the night Vince Foster died, you were on television together, in this building. We were the last two to know about it.

The President. Yes. We were going to go another half hour, and McLarty came on and said, "You can't do it."

Mr. King. Mack McLarty came in and said, "You've got to get off now." And you were mad. Why? Because you even said, "Am I not doing well?" But anyway, that aside, the last question to you that night was called in by someone asking you, even though you had only been a year, less than a year in office, what do you think your legacy will be. Here's what you said: "I'll be happy to tell you. Number one, I'd like to get the economy moving again." This is 6 years ago. "Number two, I'd like to provide health security for

all Americans. Number three, I want my national service plan to pass to open doors of college education to millions of Americans. Number four, I strongly want to pass a welfare reform bill that will move people from welfare to work. And five, I want to reform the political system.”

Reading this, how have you done?

The President. We’ve done well.

Mr. King. Three out of five.

The President. Yes. And we’ve made—we’ve done some really good things in health care; we just haven’t been able to have universal access. And I finally got—I’m very proud of this—we had 100 percent of my party vote for the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform. So we now have unified the Democratic Party for our campaign finance reform, and it’s just a question of whether the other party will come along now. So I think that will happen.

I feel very good about what’s happened these last 6 years. We’ve done a lot of other things as well, and we’ve been able to advance the cause of peace in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, the Balkans.

President’s Disappointment

Mr. King. Biggest disappointment?

The President. I don’t know what the biggest disappointment is. I’m sorry we were not able to have more progress in health care, but we may have some this year. The main thing is I feel this enormous gratitude because I think our country is ending this century on such a high note, and I really do think we built our bridge to the 21st century.

Hillary Clinton’s Senate Campaign

Mr. King. And are you going to campaign for Hillary?

The President. If she wants me to, and if I can be helpful, I am. But I think that there’s a time for that. I think in the beginning people want to know who she is, what she believes, what she will do as a Senator, and they’ll want to see her. And I need to be as supportive of her as I can. There will come a time when I can perhaps help her in the campaign. The people of New York have been wonderful to me, and I’m very grateful for that. But they want to make an

independent judgment about her, so I have to be careful about when I do it and how I do it. But if and when I can help, I will do whatever I can to help, because first of all, for her, I want her to win. But secondly, she would be absolutely unbelievable if she were a Senator. I mean, it would be unbelievable. It would be such a gift for the people of New York and America. I’ve never known anybody, ever, who had her combination of intellect and passion and organizing ability and absolutely consuming devotion to public service.

Mr. King. Our common friends in California tell me you were going to move to New York, you and Hillary, no matter what.

The President. That’s correct. She told me—when we got elected in ’92, I said, “Okay, ever since we’ve been married, we’ve lived where I wanted to live; we’ve done what I wanted to do. Now, when we get out of here, I’ve got to go home; I’m going to build my library and build my center, but that’s my gift to my State. And I’m going to spend some time there, and we’ll spend the rest of the time wherever you want to say.” And she said, “I want to go to New York.” That’s what she told me when we moved up here. I bet it was the first week or 2 we were here.

Mr. King. Seven years ago.

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. Happy holidays.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 5:56 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), chairman, America’s Promise—The Alliance For Youth; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; the President’s former political consultant Dick Morris; former Senior Adviser for Policy and Strategy George Stephanopoulos; and former Chief of Staff Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty. The President also referred to Vice President Al Gore’s debate with Reform Party candidate Ross Perot on the North American Free Trade Initiative on November 9, 1993. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical Weapons

December 22, 1999

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

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal, and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and,

The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

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: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23.

Statement on the Death of Tom Henderson

December 23, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Tom Henderson, a

member of my Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS and a senior staff person at the Environmental Protection Agency. Tom was a longtime friend to both of us and combined great intelligence with a sharp Texas wit. He was a strong and effective advocate for our efforts to combat AIDS, the disease that eventually took his life. We will miss Tom, as will members of the Council, his colleagues at the EPA and the White House, and the hundreds of people around the country who were blessed to know him as a friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his partner Michael, his daughter Melissa, and all of those like us who grieve his loss.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation

December 24, 1999

The President. On this holiest of holidays, Hillary and I would like to wish all of you a very merry Christmas. This is a season of joy, a time for family and friends to rejoice in one another's company and in the magic of Christmas. This is also the season of peace.

On behalf of all Americans, I'd like to send a special greeting to the brave men and women in uniform who are serving our country in lands far from home. Thank you for the greatest gift of the season, for protecting our Nation and safeguarding the blessings we all hold dear.

The First Lady. At the dawn of this new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, and the gifts we can give to the future. So let all of us cherish the gift of every child among us and pledge to build a world where all children, no matter where they are born, can make their dreams come true.

The President. From our family to yours, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast and was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m., December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation

December 24, 1999

The President. On this holiest of holidays, Hillary and I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas. This is a season of joy, a time for family and friends to rejoice in one another's company and in the magic of Christmas.

The First Lady. At the dawn of this new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, and the gifts we can give to the future. Let us all cherish the gift of every child among us and pledge to build a world worthy of all our children.

The President. May the spirit of the season be with you today and throughout the new year. From our family to yours, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast and was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m., December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

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Radio Remarks for the "Lost Lives" Christmas Eve Broadcast

December 24, 1999

3625, Maura Monaghan, from Tyrone. A Catholic girl, just 18 months old. To her family, little Maura Monaghan was known simply as "Mossie." She was the youngest victim of the Omagh bombing. Her mother, Avril, her grandmother, Mary Grimes, and her unborn twin sisters also were killed on that Saturday afternoon, the 15th of August, 1998, at 10 past 3 p.m., when that terrible bomb exploded.

They had gone to Omagh town as a special treat, to celebrate Mary Grimes' birthday. They had even been to church earlier that day, the same church where their funeral services would be held just a few days later.

I still feel a personal connection with this tragedy. Two weeks later, Hillary and I visited Omagh. We saw the scene where 31 people were killed in the worst, single incident of The Troubles. And then we went to the Leisure Center, where the families of the victims had had to wait for news of their loved ones. They were again to meet us, as were many victims who had been terribly injured on that day.

That meeting was one of the most difficult and moving experiences of our lives. But I have to say, it was also one of the most uplifting. Again and again, people who had been injured or lost loved ones said, "Keep going with the peace process. Keep going, and don't give up on it. Do whatever you can to make sure that nobody else suffers as we are suffering."

I know they suffer still. I know the first dawn of the new millennium will be a sad time for those who remember the family and friends who should still be with them. But I never forgot their courage and their faith in the new beginning for Northern Ireland and neither did so many of you, who raised your voices and said, "Enough is enough."

And so we kept going. And now it looks as though, after all the difficulties, the new day we've been talking about for so long is finally at hand.

And so today, on Christmas Eve, we remember little Maura Monaghan, Mossie, a beautiful, curly-haired angel who was loved

by everyone. She lives not only in our memory but in our determination to build a better Northern Ireland for all the children of tomorrow.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 11:28 a.m. on December 18 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast on RTE in Ireland. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 3:30 a.m., December 24. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line. Maura Monaghan was the 3,625th victim of The Troubles.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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.

December 20

In the morning, the President met with First Minister David Trimble of Northern Ireland in the Oval Office on the Northern Ireland peace process.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a Christmas celebration for children in the East Room.

The White House announced that the President expressed his deep condolences and quick recovery wishes to those killed or injured in the two bomb blasts at election rallies in Sri Lanka.

December 21

In the morning, the President met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Samuel H. Preston and Mary Lou Zoback as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

December 22

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Clifford Gregory Stewart as General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Mark L. Schneider as Director of the Peace Corps.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Luis Lauredo as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to designate Robert M. (Mike) Walker as Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

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.

Released December 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the bombing in Sri Lanka

Released December 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner on tougher emission standards for cars and sport utility vehicles

Fact Sheet: U.S.-EU Joint Statement on Northern Europe

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Statement of Common Principles and Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Released December 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.