

the Congress will work with me in that same spirit and with the same eye toward achievement.

This is a good day for America. We have proved that we can lift all boats in a modern, global, information-based economy. But we have a lot to do. The success and the progress should urge us on.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

## Remarks at Georgetown University Law School

September 26, 2000

Thank you very much. Father O'Donovan, thank you for giving me another chance to come back to Georgetown and for your extraordinary leadership over these many years. And Dean Areen, thank you for giving me a chance to come to the law school.

I have to tell you that when they told me I was coming into the moot courtroom—[laughter]—my mind raced back 30 years ago—almost 30 years ago. When we were in law school at Yale, Hillary and I entered the moot court competition, and it was sort of like the Olympics. There were all these trial runs you had to get through, and then you got into the finals, and you tried to go for the gold.

So we finished first and second in the trial runs, and then we got into the finals. And the judge, the moot court judge, was Justice Abe Fortas. You've got to understand, this was the early seventies; it was a sort of irreverent time. [Laughter] Fashion was not the best. [Laughter] Some of us made it worse. [Laughter] And anyway, I had a bad day. [Laughter] Hillary had a good day. I thought she should have won. But Justice Fortas thought that her very seventies outfit, which was blue and bright orange suede—[laughter]—was a little out of order for a trial. And so he gave the award to a guy, a third person, who is now a distinguished trial lawyer in Chicago. And for his trouble, he has had the burden of contributing to all my campaigns and now to hers. [Laughter] So I suppose it all worked out for the best. [Laughter]

Mr. Hotung, Mrs. Hotung, I thank you for your generosity. I loved your speech. [Laughter] And I'd like to thank you, especially, for what you've tried to do for the people of East Timor. It means a lot to me because I know how important it is to the future of freedom throughout Southeast Asia and, indeed, throughout all East Asia, that we come to recognize that human rights are not some Western concept imposed upon the rest of the world but truly are universal as the United Nations Declaration says.

East Timor is a small place, a long way from here, that many people thought the United States should not care about. And the fact that you did and continue to care about them and the enormous odds they have to cope with still is, I think, a very noble thing, and I thank you very much for that.

I'd like to thank the faculty and staff and students who are here and all the members of my administration and administrations past who are here and my friends from Georgetown days who are here. Georgetown Law School has given more talent to this administration than any other single institution in America. And I'm almost afraid to mention some for fear that I will ignore others or omit them, anyway.

But among the people in the administration who are Georgetown law grads are: my Chief of Staff, John Podesta; my White House Counsel, Beth Nolan; my Deputy Counsel, Bruce Lindsey; former White House Counsel Jack Quinn; Budget Director Jack Lew; former Trade Ambassador and Commerce Secretary Mickey Kantor; Counselor to the Chief of Staff Michelle Ballantyne; Deputy Communications Director Stephanie Cutter. They're all graduates of Georgetown law. And I've had various Ambassadors and other appointees, and Lord knows who else you gave me. So I'm grateful for that.

It's also quite interesting to me that Beth Nolan's assistant, Ben Adams, and my personal aide, Doug Band, are actually working full-time at the White House. In Doug's case, he's working around the clock, because we're traveling and we're working. We haven't slept in 3 weeks. And they're enrolled right now in Georgetown law. [Laughter]

Now, therefore, I would like to make a modest suggestion, and that is that when they take their exams in December, they be judged not only on the basis of legal reasoning but creative writing. [Laughter]

I also want to credit one other person for the remarkable fidelity Georgetown students and Georgetown lawyers have had to public service over the years. My freshman philosophy teacher, Father Otto Hentz, used to say that the Jesuits are convinced there was only one serious scriptural omission on the first chapter of Genesis: God created politics, and God saw that it was good. [Laughter] You would get quite an argument, I think, from some people on that. But Georgetown has always been there for America's body politic, and we are a better nation because of it.

The Eric Hotung International Law Center Building will house work that will, in no small measure, shape the kind of nation we are and the kind of world we live in, in the 21st century.

The 20th century raised a lot of questions of lasting concerns: of ethnic and religious conflict; of the uses and abuses to science, technology, and organization; and of the relationship between science and economic activity and the environment.

But the 20th century resolved one big question, I believe, conclusively. Humanity's best hope for a future of peace and prosperity lies in free people and free market democracies governed by the rule of law.

What Harry Truman said after World War II is even more true today. He said, "We are in the position now of making the world safe for democracy if we don't crawl in the shell and act selfish and foolish." Sometimes his unvarnished rhetoric was more effective than more strained eloquence. We are, today, in a position to make the world more free and prosperous if we don't crawl in the shell and act selfish and foolish.

The scope of the challenge is quite large. In the 1990's, more people won their freedom than ever before in human history. People in nations like Russia, Ukraine, Nigeria, Indonesia now elect their own leaders. But it is just a first step. Without a strong and independent judiciary, civil society, transparent governance, and a free press to hold leaders accountable, the world's new democ-

racies easily could sink under the weight of corruption, inequity, and poor government.

I read an op-ed piece by the New York Times columnist Tom Friedman a few months ago, which captured the experience I've had in this job for nearly 8 years now when he said, "Americans were born as a nation skeptical of government." Our Constitution was designed to limit government, and then we had a decade when we were told by all of our politicians how bad government is. But the truth is that in many parts of the world today, human freedom is limited by weak and ineffective government, without the capacity to deliver the good, honor the rule of law, and provide a transparent environment so that investment can come in to lift the lives of people. Without democratic elections, laws can too easily be a tool of oppression, not an instrument of justice. But without the rule of law, elections simply offer a choice of dictators.

Building a rule of law is hard work. If you just look at our own history, you get, perhaps, the most persuasive illustration. We established our right to elect our leaders before independence. Even with independence, we still, in 1776, had no national executive, no system of courts, only a weak legislature.

The Articles of Confederation came 5 years after independence but failed. The Constitution was ratified 13 years after independence and was quickly amended. And it was not until *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803, 27 years after the Declaration of Independence, that the courts established their rights to check the power of elected leaders.

Of course, when we started, only white male property owners could vote. It wasn't until the end of the Civil War that African-Americans were treated as citizens. Women didn't gain the right to vote until the 20th century. We are still very much a work in progress, and we need to take that humbling thought into account when we give advice to others in building their future.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, it had no laws relating to private property or public elections or freedom of the press. In 1993 we launched a rule-of-law project that helped Russia draft a new civil code, a criminal code, a tax code, and bankruptcy law. We also helped Russia to separate its judicial system

from the executive branch, train judges in commercial law, support Russian law schools. It was not a panacea, but it did help to create the foundation on which Russia can build.

The same need for stronger legal institutions is apparent in China, especially because of its impending entry into the World Trade Organization, which, as all of you know, I think is a very, very good thing. It's more than an economic opportunity, because it can set China on a course that will diminish the role of government in its economy and its people's lives, while involving China in an international system of rules and responsibilities and mutual interdependence.

China will have to make fundamental changes to meet its WTO obligations: restructure its industries, publish laws that have long been secret, establish procedures for settling disputes, create a level playing field for foreign firms. China has asked us for help in developing its legal expertise and legal system. We should provide it. And I expect Georgetown will be part of that effort.

This past summer Professor James Feinerman and Professor John Jackson and other Georgetown faculty met with some 25 senior Government officials in China—from China, to advise them on structural reforms they will be making as they become fully participating members in the World Trade Organization.

Since a Georgetown law professor helped Germany draft its democratic articles of government after the Second World War, Georgetown law professors have been active the world over, helping nations to establish democratic legal structures, from Estonia to Mexico, from South Africa to Mongolia. Next summer, you will begin an international judicial, educational, and exchange program, to allow judges from other countries to come here to discuss with United States judges how to build a judiciary that is both independent and competent.

These efforts illustrate how America's experience should be put to use to advance the rule of law where democracy's roots are looking for room and strength to grow. But in many parts of the world, people still struggle just to plant the seeds of democracy. For the last decade, one of the most important and gripping such places has been the former

Yugoslavia. Eight years ago, the region was engulfed by war, caused by Mr. Milosevic's desire to build a Greater Serbia. It's easy to forget how very close he came to succeeding. If he had, it would have led to a permanent humanitarian tragedy and an end to the vision of an undivided, democratic Europe.

But with our allies, we stood against ethnic cleansing and stood by democratic forces fighting for change. From Sarajevo to Pristina, the carnage has ended. Croatia is a democracy. Bosnians are now waging their battles at the ballot box. The control of Milosevic and his dictatorship is now limited to Serbia, and this weekend, it appears, because of brave people casting their ballot, he has lost the last vestige of legitimacy.

The OSCE and the EU have concluded that this election was marred by widespread irregularity. Experienced international observers were prevented from monitoring the election. But still, the people of Serbia showed up in overwhelming numbers. And despite the Government's attempt to manipulate the vote, it does seem clear that the people have voted for change. And the question is, will the Government listen and respond?

I do not underestimate Mr. Milosevic's desire to cling to power at the expense of the people. I have witnessed it, lived with it, and responded to it firsthand. But after this weekend's vote, we should not underestimate the people of Serbia's determination to seek freedom and a different and more positive force in the face of violence and intimidation.

Neither should Americans underestimate the extent to which this vote is about Serbia, its people, and its future. Indeed, the opposition candidate also disagreed with our policy in Kosovo. I am under no illusions that a new Government in Serbia would automatically lead to a rapprochement between the two of us, and any new leader of Serbia should pursue, first and foremost, the interests of its own people. But if the will of the people is respected, the doors to Europe and the world will be open again to Serbia. We will take steps with our allies to lift economic sanctions, and the people of Serbia, who have suffered so much, finally will have a chance to lead normal lives.

I hope that day is arriving, and when it does, people of good will will, around the world, help the people of Serbia to build and strengthen the institutions of a free market democracy. Some of you in this room will be needed in that effort. The persistence of people with your expertise, the institutions of our country, especially the Georgetown Law Center, will make an enormous difference in the future.

Let me close with just one very personal thought. The law gives people a way to live together, to resolve their differences, to be rewarded when they should and punished when they're particularly destructive. But the idea is, it embodies our most fundamental values and applies it to practical circumstances so that even when we have differences, we find a way to abide a decision that is made.

It will be more and more important in the years ahead because the world is growing more interdependent. It embodies the idea, just because there are rules, that all of us are created equal and that we should be treated blindly, without regard to our race, our religion, our ethnicity, our condition of ability or disability, whether we're straight or gay, whether we're Asian or European or African or Latin American.

The whole idea of the American law, embodied in the ideals of our Constitution and continuously perfected, is that we are all equal and that we are growing more interdependent. If we were completely independent, we'd have no need for law. We'd just be out there doing our own thing. And if we weren't equal in the eyes of the law, the law would be a monster and an instrument of oppression.

So the law is our society's attempt to reconcile our deep belief in independence and our understanding that interdependence is what enables us to make progress and to give our lives more meaning. The world is more interdependent than ever before. If we can find a way for people to believe that through the law we can create an environment in which everybody is better off, in which no group or individual is seeking to make unfair gains at anyone else's expense, then the world's most peaceful and prosperous and exciting time lies ahead.

Then I'm not worried about what use we will make of the marvelous mysteries of the human genome. I'm not worried about whether some nation will abuse what they find out in the deepest depths of the ocean or the black holes of outer space. I'm not even worried about our ability somehow to find a way to deal with the terrorists and their ability to use the marvels of new technology for biological, chemical, and other weapons. We'll deal with it fine, as long as we remain committed to the integrity of the individual but the interdependence within and beyond our borders, or to go back to Mr. Truman's words, if we're not too stupid and too selfish, the best is still out there, and the law will lead us.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Moot Court Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; Judith Areen, dean, Georgetown University Law School; Eric Hotung, Georgetown University alumnus and benefactor, and his wife, Patricia Anne Shea; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and Yugoslav opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica.

### **Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Violence Against Women Act**

*September 26, 2000*

Yesterday I called on Congress to act quickly to strengthen and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. More than 900,000 women across the country suffer violence at the hands of an intimate partner each year, demonstrating the continuing need for this legislation. I am very pleased that today the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. This vote affirms our commitment to support the work of State and local prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and health care and social service professionals throughout the country who every day respond to women who are victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault.