would be the most important thing. And I really very much believe that today.

This was a remarkable Olympic experience. And I think in many ways it was fitting that the centennial Olympics were held in the United States because we do represent so many nations. When I leave you, I'm going out to California. There were 197 teams in the Olympics. In one county in California, there are people from the same places as over 150 of those teams. That's what's special about our country. And you gave that to the world when we saw you, when we saw you compete, when we saw you win. And we're very grateful to you.

I'm also very grateful to the people in Atlanta who did a magnificent job in organizing the games and for the community spirit there after the bombing. I thought it was magnificent.

There may have been some discussion about this, but I believe that since more people saw these games than any games in history, both in person and on television, because they were so well organized, because there were so many countries represented, because you were so magnificent, and because of the way people reacted to the tragedy, as far as I'm concerned, these Atlanta games were the best. They were the greatest games in the history of the Olympics.

I also would like to say a special word of appreciation to all the athletes who competed and all those who won. But let me say, when I looked at our team, I couldn't help as the father of a daughter of whom I'm very proud, I couldn't help but note that over 20 years ago in a complete bipartisan commitment here in Washington the United States Congress passed something called title IX which made it possible for a lot of the women athletes to be here today.

There were 77,000 spectators at the women's soccer finals. There were a lot of men basketball players watching the women's basketball finals thanking God they weren't on the court that day. [*Laughter*] We should be on the forefront always of bringing more people into the world of sport, more people into competition, more people having a chance to live out their dreams whatever they are.

And yesterday, we saw off the torch for the Paralympics which will be starting in Atlanta soon. And I know everyone of you support that. One of our runners in the Paralympics actually is on an NCAA Division I track team at my alma mater Georgetown University. So, we ought to be for more and more and more people having a chance to participate.

And let me finally say that I had very high hopes for all of you and for our country. They were exceeded not only by the medals you won but by the way you won them. And you gave something very special to the American people. I'm glad you can be here today. And we'd like to just have a chance to give a small portion back to you through your tour of your house that you gave to all of us for those wonderful 17 days.

Thank you all. God bless you, and good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to LeRoy T. Walker, president, and Richard D. Schultz, executive director, United States Olympic Committee; and Maynard Jackson, former mayor of Atlanta, GA.

Remarks on Departure for San Jose, California, and an Exchange With Reporters

August 7, 1996

NASA Discovery of Possible Life on Mars

The President. Good afternoon. I'm glad to be joined by my science and technology adviser, Dr. Jack Gibbons, to make a few comments about today's announcement by NASA.

This is the product of years of exploration and months of intensive study by some of the world's most distinguished scientists. Like all discoveries, this one will and should continue to be reviewed, examined, and scrutinized. It must be confirmed by other scientists. But clearly, the fact that something of this magnitude is being explored is another vindication of America's space program and our continuing support for it, even in these tough financial times. I am determined that the American space program will put it's full intellectual power and technological prowess behind the search for further evidence of life on Mars.

First, I have asked Administrator Goldin to ensure that this finding is subject to a methodical process of further peer review and validation. Second, I have asked the Vice President to convene at the White House before the end of the year a bipartisan space summit on the future of America's space program. A significant purpose of this summit will be to discuss how America should pursue answers to the scientific questions raised by this finding. Third, we are committed to the aggressive plan we have put in place for robotic exploration of Mars. America's next unmanned mission to Mars is scheduled to lift off from the Kennedy Space Center in November. It will be followed by a second mission in December. I should tell you that the first mission is scheduled to land on Mars on July the 4th, 1997, Independence Day.

It is well worth contemplating how we reached this moment of discovery. More than 4 billion years ago, this piece of rock was formed as a part of the original crust of Mars. After billions of years it broke from the surface and began a 16-million-year journey through space that would end here on Earth. It arrived in a meteor shower 13,000 years ago. And in 1984 an American scientist on an annual U.S. Government mission to search for meteors on Antarctica picked it up and took it to be studied. Appropriately, it was the first rock to be picked up that year, rock number 84001.

Today, rock 84001 speaks to us across all those billions of years and millions of miles. It speaks of the possibility of life. If this discovery is confirmed, it will surely be one of the most stunning insights into our universe that science has ever uncovered. Its implications are as far-reaching and awe-inspiring as can be imagined. Even as it promises answers to some of our oldest questions, it poses still others even more fundamental.

We will continue to listen closely to what it has to say as we continue the search for answers and for knowledge that is as old as humanity itself but essential to our people's future.

Thank you.

Republican Abortion Debate

Q. Mr. President, Republicans right now are going through a wrenching abortion debate. At the same time, pro-choice advocates have created the pro-choice public education project, they're calling it. They say abortion rights are under a very grave danger. Would you agree with that assessment? And what do you think of the Republicans' troubles?

The President. Well, they are only under grave danger if the election results in a change in the occupant of the White House. But what I think about the—I'd like to just compare it with what we did in the Democratic Party. Some of our pro-life members asked for a conscience clause in the Democratic platform. And I thought it was a good idea. I recommended it. The platform committee unanimously embraced it. And the Democratic Party was proud to do it. We believe this is a matter which should be left to private conscience. And we believe that people who have pro-life convictions should be respected.

What you see here in the Republican Party is more of the extremism that we saw manifested in their budget proposals, their environmental proposals, their opposition to sensible crime proposals in the previous 2 years. And it's lamentable. It's not good for the country. And I would just say that in this convention season, we would welcome thoughtful, moderate, concerned Republicans, independents, to join our party this year and to help keep moving America forward and bringing America together.

Q. You do not feel the rights are under grave danger at this point?

The President. Well, right now we have a Supreme Court decision and an administration committed to the pro-choice position and committing to doing whatever we can to keep the Government out of that decision but to take initiatives that would reduce the number of abortions in America, including the recent tax credit for adoption that we strongly supported that will be part of minimum wage bill when it comes to me for signature.

So I'm determined to protect those rights and to keep the Government out of it. But it is fair to say that in this election that is one of the matters at issue. Yes, it is fair to say that.

Thank you.

President's Olympic Tie

Q. Where did you get that tie?

The President. It's an Olympic tie. I got it down at the Olympics. Do you want to trade? [*Laughter*] Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks to the Community in San Jose, California

August 7, 1996

Thank you. Thank you so much. First of all, I think we ought to give David Auberle another hand. I thought he did very well, didn't you? When he said he gave his 8th grade graduation speech just a few feet from here and the only difference was I wasn't there then, I thought to myself, if I'd known you were this good a speaker I might have been there. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Glen Toney for being here today and for his work for Joint Venture Silicon Valley. It's good to see you again, Glen. Larry Kubo, thank you for what you said, for your work as a parent and as a business leader. Carol Summers, thank you for your remarks today and for devoting your life to teaching.

I'm delighted to be here with so many of my friends from Silicon Valley and throughout California. I thank Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis and Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren for being here, and Mayor Susan Hammer, thank you. I know there are a lot of people here from the school and the school district: your principal, Mike Carr; your superintendent, Linda Murray; Dr. Bill Erlendson and Victor Freitas, the board president of San Jose Unified School District. Thank you for being here.

We also have Joe Simidian, who is from Palo Alto, a Palo Alto City Council member. Somebody must be here from Palo Alto besides Joe.

I want to thank the students who spoke in the pre-program, Sarah Sandower and Marianna Dominquez. Thank you for doing that.

I want to tell you, it's wonderful to look out here and see a crowd like this during summer vacation in a school. [*Laughter*] And I thank the students especially for being here; it shows you really are concerned about your future. And it's a great honor for me as President to be here and to hear a little about this program.

I'd like to explain to you why I'm here at this moment to talk about this issue. The first, and maybe most important, I hope that my presence here will give your efforts greater publicity throughout the United States, because I believe this is the sort of thing that school districts all over America should be doing to give our children the kind of opportunities they need.

Secondly, I want to explain why that is so, and I'd like to take just a few minutes—I know it's warm, and I nearly went blind in the sun, I can only imagine how much trouble you're having—but I want to take a few minutes to explain why that is so, what the national significance of efforts like this are at the grassroots level, at local schools throughout our country in terms of what I am trying to achieve for America as your President.

First of all, let me say that I started off today in a very happy way. Hillary and our daughter, Chelsea, and I were able to welcome the United States Olympic team to the White House to congratulate them on their remarkable accomplishments. I think in many ways, at least from my point of view—and I realize I'm prejudiced, being an American and being the President—but these were the greatest games that I have ever seen because of the quality of the competition, because of the numbers of nations involved—people from 197 different countries were there—because so many people were able to watch around the world, and because there were more people who actually came and personally participated in Atlanta. There were 77,000 people watching the women's soccer final, for example, a remarkable thing in the United States.

And I was thinking to myself, why is it that we love the Olympics so much, apart from the thrill of seeing these magnificent athletic achievements. And I think the reason is that they work the way we think the world ought to work. That is, you have all these people who come from all over the world, from different races and cultures and religions and