

to have to do that all over again, and that's what we're trying to avoid. And I believe we have taken an appropriate step to do that.

Q. Is there a breakdown in communications between you and Capitol Hill? They act like they don't know what's going on.

The President. Well, I can't comment on that. We've done our best to keep them very carefully informed, and I expect to have some personal consultations in the next few days, and we'll see about that. But I believe we did the right thing, and I think it was the appropriate course. And I will do everything I can to answer whatever questions any Member of Congress has.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at a Rally for Senator Tom Harkin in Indianola, Iowa

September 15, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. It's good to be back. How many of you were here 4 years ago? [Applause] How many of you weren't here 4 years ago? [Applause] Four years from now, we're going to have to rent the next farm to have this. Let's keep going.

Let me say to all of you how very happy I am to be here. I'm sorry I wasn't here from the beginning. I'm sorry I missed Tom Arnold and my buddy Jerry Jeff Walker. Maybe they'll play a little on the way out while I'm shaking hands. But I'm glad they came here and thank them both for being here.

I want to thank those who are here to support us: Attorney General Tom Miller, Agriculture Secretary Dale Cochran. Mike Peterson gave a heck of a speech up here a few minutes ago. He'll be a good candidate someday. I want to thank Mayor Kelly of Indianola, Mayor Davis of Des Moines.

I want to thank Tom and Ruth and Jenny and Amy for serving the State of Iowa. I want you to know that Ruth Harkin has played a major role in the efforts that our administration have made to sell more American products around the world and get more American investment and have fair as well as free trade. And I thank her. You should all be

very proud of her for the work she did as head of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

I thank Senator Harkin for what he said but, more importantly, for what he has done and been to the people of Iowa, to the people of the United States, and to the President. He has been nothing short of magnificent in his service to our country and to this State in the last 4 years since I've been in Washington.

I can't tell you all the times that I have turned to Tom Harkin in the last 4 years when things were on the line for America, when we had to pass an economic plan to get the deficit down, to get the interest rates down, to get the economy going again. And Iowa is a strong two-party State; we're going to try to change that a little this time. And our friends in the other party were saying, "Oh, the President's economic plan is just awful. It will increase the deficit; it will bankrupt the economy; it will hurt people." Every single one of them to the person lined up and said no. It's unfortunate for them because 4 years later we got 10½ million new jobs, lower interest rates, record numbers of small businesses, American exports at an all-time high, businesses owned by women and minorities at an all-time high. They all said no, but Tom Harkin said yes. We got a 7½-year low in our unemployment rate. Thank you, Tom Harkin, for making the difference and for fighting for us.

Then there was the family and medical leave law. They all said—their nominee is still saying, "It was a terrible mistake, that law, bad for business. Glad he led the fight against it." We just had a bipartisan survey about the family and medical leave law, and the 12 million American families that got to take a little time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick without losing their jobs, they said it didn't hurt. And I say one of the biggest challenges you have today, every one of you, is to create a country in which families can succeed at home and at work. It's good for the economy to help people be good parents, good children, good family members. Thank goodness we had Tom Harkin to fight the good fight.

We said the crime rate was too high in America and we needed to do something to

bring it down. We ought to put 100,000 police on the street. They didn't like that idea very much. And I might add, in the last 2 years, for reasons that totally escape me, they've tried to stop us from continuing to finish the job. But for the first time in who knows how long, the crime rate has gone down in America for 4 years. And if you leave Tom Harkin on the job and give us a little help, we'll take it down for 4 more years, so the American people can feel safe on their street.

I thank you for what you said, Tom, about the flood. When I was a Governor in a State that had a lot of natural disasters, I learned that the Federal response was too often disorganized and inadequate, driven by appointees who got the job because of their politics instead of their knowledge about the issue. So I put a person in charge of our emergency management who had done it for me at home and, before that, had been a county judge dealing with disasters and didn't care anything about the politics of it; he just wanted the American people in their time of need to be well-served, taken care of, and thought somebody in Washington ought to understand what it takes to get the job done. That's why we were able to serve Iowa and the rest of the Middle West well in that 500-year flood.

And I thank you for what you said, but when I ran for President I wanted to make good things happen. And when I look at the farm prices, when I look at farm assets, when I look at the direction of the economy here, I'd say we're a lot better off than we were 4 years ago and we ought to keep going in the same direction.

Let me say to you, to echo what Senator Harkin said, this is a huge election. This is the last election of the 20th century, to elect the first President of the 21st century.

Audience member. And you're going to win!

The President. I am if you keep that same attitude for the next 51 days. But I want all of you to think about this.

Audience member. We love you, man!

The President. You have to understand what is at stake. That's why this Senate race is so important. That's why these five fine people behind me who are running as our

candidates for the House are so important. If you look at the challenges facing our country, in spite of everything, we clearly had the ability to balance the budget in the last 2 years. And they said, "We're going to shut the Government down if you don't do it our way. We're going to give you a tax cut, Mr. President, and people in your income group whether you want it or not. And we're going to cut Medicare. We're going to walk away from the guarantee Medicaid has given for 30 years to middle class families whose parents were in nursing homes and had children with disabilities. And if you don't like it, we're going to increase the cost of student loans. We're going to cut Head Start. We're going to cut the safe and drug-free schools program. We're going to wreck 25 years of bipartisan commitment to preserving our environment. We're going to raise taxes on the 9 million Americans with the lowest incomes with children in their house. That's our balanced budget plan. If you don't like it, we're going to shut the Government down." And I said, "The Democratic Party does not love the Government; it loves the people. The Government should serve them. Shut her down. Shut her down."

And yes, after you and the people of this country all over the country got their attention with repeated public opinion polls and strong disapproval of what was going on, they said, "Oh, well, maybe we'll allow some good things to happen." So we got the minimum wage increase, and we got the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill. And we made it easier for small-business people to take out retirement plans. And we did a lot of good things. But don't forget what is really hanging in the balance.

Don't forget what the budget battle said. I'm telling you, folks, there is a new Democratic Party. We have proved that we are the party of responsibility when handling people's money. We did lower the deficit 4 years in a row for the first time since before the Civil War. I'm proud of that. But we did it in a way that kept faith with the children of America and the parents of America and the disabled of America and the people who deserve to go forward with us together. We need more help in that way.

We proved that we would bring the crime rate down. They tried to convince every hunter in my State that they were going to lose their guns if we banned assault weapons and passed the Brady bill. And by the votes in '94, they did a good job of their efforts. They've got a real problem now. We've had two hunting seasons; there hasn't been a hunter in America lose their rifle. It's inconvenient for their rhetoric. But you know what, 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers did lose the right to get a gun to keep brutalizing the American people. We were right, and they were wrong.

They talked a lot about welfare. Finally they passed a bill I could sign. But while they were talking, we were working on it. You know, there are nearly 2 million fewer people on welfare today than there were when I was here 4 years ago, 2 million people moving into jobs, working, supporting their families.

So I say to you, we need people who believe in work and family, who believe in opportunity and responsibility, who believe in community and the Congress. And therefore, I want you to send Tom Harkin back to the Senate with the largest margin he has ever received and send these folks to the House of Representatives to help us do the job.

There are—at times like this when countries have to make big decisions that will affect the lives of people far into the future and when things are changing greatly—and believe me, things are changing greatly—these students in the crowd in 10 years, they will be doing jobs that have not been invented yet. Some of them will be doing jobs that have not even been imagined yet. We have to make the right decisions. And there are some big decisions to be made.

And I have to say with all respect, I agreed with one thing my opponent said in his speech in San Diego—and what I said, this really is an election where you have to choose whether you want a leader who says, "You're on your own," or one that says, "My wife is right, it does take a village to raise a child and build a community and build a country."

You have to choose. You have to choose. You have to choose whether you believe, as Senator Harkin said, in those politicians who are always looking for what they call wedge issues, "Oh, this is a great wedge issue. We

can divide the American people, get them all torn up and upset, and we can get in power," or whether you believe, like me, that we've had enough of that "who's to blame" business. And it works better, and we've proved it works better if you say, "Forget about who's to blame. What are we going to do to make a greater country for all the American people and pull the American people together?"

We have to choose—most important of all—we have to choose whether you believe this election is about trying to build a bridge to the past, which nobody has ever done or ever will succeed in doing, or whether you're willing to join with me to build a bridge to the future we can all walk into the 21st century across proudly, together.

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century with a strong and growing economy. That means balance the budget, all right, to keep these interest rates coming down. But it means do it in a way that continues to invest in education and the environment, in medical research and technology and protects our obligations to those who need our help through Medicare and Medicaid. Will you help me build that bridge to America's future? [*Applause*]

I want to build a bridge to the future that will help our economy to go through the right kind of tax cut. It is in this administration that we have increased by 250 percent the tax cuts available to small businesses who invest more in their business to grow the business, to hire more people, to become more productive. But it has to be the right kind.

I want a tax cut that's targeted to people who will use it for education, for raising their children, for buying that first home, for dealing with medical emergencies, an IRA that you can withdraw from without any tax penalty for education or medical cost or buying a first home, a \$500-a-child tax credit, an education credit, things that we can do that will grow this country.

But I'll tell you something, folks, mine are paid for, and we've got to pay for them. We don't want to go back to that old time when we promised you a tax cut on the one hand and wrecked the economy on the other.

Now, last year the leaders of the other party said something that I agreed with, and

I want to tell you what they said last year before the election started. They said if we get off of this balanced budget plan, if we don't have a plan to keep bringing this deficit down, interest rates will be 2 percent higher. Now, I want every farmer in this crowd, every business person in this crowd, every student in this crowd, every family in this crowd to think what that means. Think what it would mean to have 2 more percent on your credit card payment, your car payment, your home payment, your farm loan, or your business loan. I don't think we want that.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Let's have a tax cut we can afford. Let's help the folks that need it that are building this country. Let's create opportunity and strengthen families with our tax cut, but let's keep on the work of balancing the budget until we get the job done and we keep the interest rates down and we keep the economy going.

And I want to build a bridge to the 21st century where America continues to sell its products around the world. I'm proud of the fact that our exports and, yes, our agricultural exports, are at an all-time high. If you'll give us 4 more years we'll add pork to those exports. We'll be selling them all over the world, and Iowa will be better. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

But let's face it, you and I know the most important thing we could do to build the right kind of bridge to the 21st century is to give every single child in America the opportunity to have a world-class education. And I just want to mention, Iowa for years and years and years had led the way in proving that a good education builds good citizens, strong families, strong communities, successful careers, and a greater country. Iowa has led the way. Every child in America deserves the education that the people of Iowa have given their children for decades. And I'm going to do my best to give it to them if you'll give us 4 more years.

And I just want to mention two things that I think are important parts of building that bridge. We have the opportunity right now, because of technology, because of the Internet, because of the World Wide Web, because of all these things that all these

young folks know a lot more about than I do—we have a chance to do something that this country has never done. If we will do what Al Gore and I have been calling for and connect every school and every library, every classroom to the information super-highway by the year 2000, for the first time in the history of America, children in the most isolated rural districts, children in the poorest urban districts will have access to the same learning at the same quality at the same time in the same way that the richest classes in America have. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And I want to build a bridge to the 21st century that says to every person in America of any age who needs to do it, we will make a college education available to you.

Our plan is pretty simple. First of all, we say, do no harm. Continue to resist the efforts of the other party to make it harder to get student loans and to raise the cost of the student loans. We want to keep that direct loan program. I pledged to you 4 years ago when I came here, if you voted for me I would pass a student loan program that would reduce the cost of student loans and let people pay it back as a percentage of their income, so no matter how much they had to borrow they would always be able to afford to go to college. We kept that commitment, and I want to keep it going.

Now what I want to do is two simple things. First of all, let's make a commitment that in the next 4 years we'll make at least a 2-year community college education as universal in America as a high school diploma is today. And here's how to do it. We can do that simply by giving the American people a \$1,500 tax credit so they can reduce the cost of tuition at the typical community college, dollar for dollar from their tax bill, for 2 years. If we do that, we can say—and we can afford that; it requires no bureaucracy, no nothing; almost every American is within driving distance of a good 2-year education—we can say, we're going to make this as universal in 4 years as a high school education has been for the last 20. Will you help me do that? [Applause.]

And finally, we ought to say, we believe that people should be able to deduct the cost of tuition up to \$10,000 a year for any education after high school, 4 years, post-graduate, medical school, you name it, whatever it takes. Let's pay and let people go to college and get the education they need. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause] Will you do that for your children and your grandchildren? [Applause] That is the kind of opportunity agenda that will get us into the next century able to say with a clear conscience and absolute certainty: The American dream is alive and well for everyone who's willing to work for it.

The second thing I want to say about that is, we've got to have more responsibility. We've got to continue to work to drive the crime rate down, as I said. We passed the welfare reform bill. I want to tell you about it because I want all of you to support what we have to do. The new bill says we'll still give poor families medical care, nutrition—if they go to work, guaranteed child care because they need that. But the check is now going to go to the States and the local communities, and they have to use that check to create jobs for able-bodied people.

Now here's what it's going to take. We can use that money—I was in Kansas City last week, and they're using that money. They say, "Will you hire somebody on welfare and create a new job? If you will, we'll give you the check as a wage supplement. We'll guarantee their health care." But you cannot tell people, folks with little kids, they have got to work, unless there is work for them to do. Will you help me create jobs so that we can prove that welfare reform is a second chance, not a way of life, a way to dignity and work and integrity? [Applause] That is important if we're going to build a bridge to the 21st century.

Perhaps the deepest and longest and most intense fights of the last 2 years have been over the environment. I grew up in a farming State like Iowa. I governed one. I know that we can find ways to preserve the environment and grow the economy, whether it's a farm economy or an industrial economy or a small-business economy. But that's exactly what we've got to do.

I signed a bill the other day, the pesticide protection act, which will improve the quality of our food, supported by every farm group in America because it also gives more reasonable regulations to farmers across a broader range of activities. We can do this right. We have worked hard.

We've worked hard with the auto industry to produce a clean car that will get triple the mileage of the present car. We're making progress. But we also worked with them to bring back the auto industry so that today the United States auto industry is number one in sales around the world for the first time in nearly 20 years. We can do both things. Only they believe—only they believe you have to hurt the environment to grow the economy. That is not true. And let me just give you one example.

We closed more toxic waste sites in the last 3 years than they did in 12. But it's not enough. There are still 10 million—think of this; look at these kids here—there are still 10 million American children living within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. So if you give us 4 more years, we'll close 500 more, the two-thirds worst, and our kids will be growing up next to parks, not poison. Will you help us build that kind of bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

Well, that's it. We're in better shape than we were 4 years ago: 10½ million more jobs, 12 million people using family leave, 15 million families with a tax cut that need it the most, every small business in the country eligible for one if they invest more in their business, 40 million more Americans with their pensions protected, 50 million more Americans breathing cleaner air, 10 million Americans on October 1st will get an increase in the minimum wage, and that's a good, good thing. This country is moving in the right direction.

But there is so much more to do before we can say we have preserved the American dream for everybody who is willing to work for it, we have maintained the leadership of our country for peace and freedom and prosperity, and we are doing it by building the American community.

You know, one of the biggest problems in this old world today—you look at Bosnia; we had these elections in Bosnia yesterday.

Thank goodness, we've had 9 months of peace. And we had these elections, and they did pretty well, considering what they've been through the last 4 years. And I thank all of you who supported what I tried to do there. But you think about the world that we're living in. Look at Bosnia; look at Northern Ireland; look at the Middle East; look at what South Africa went through. Look at what happened in Burundi, for goodness sakes, over tribal differences. Why?

All over the world there are people who make a living getting political power, getting military power, staying in power by inflaming the passions of people, by trying to get them to look down on their neighbors. "You really matter because you're not them; you're not them." That's what they say in the Middle East, "You're not them." That's what they said in Bosnia. They were slaughtering each other's children because they weren't Croatian or Serbian or Muslim. And they were biologically completely indistinguishable. It was an accident of history that got them into different so-called ethnic or religious groups.

And you look around this crowd today—I see Asian-Americans. I see African-Americans. I see Nordic-Americans. I see Irish-Americans. I see German-Americans. I see Americans of Central European descent. I see Indian-Americans and Pakistani-Americans and Native Americans and you name it. You know why? Because we are trying to beat that curse that is bedeviling the rest of the world and threatens the 21st century.

And so when you see—[*applause*—that's the last thing I want to leave you with. I don't want to build a bridge that you only get to walk across because you're better than somebody else because of an accident of birth. I want to build a bridge that anybody can walk across if they say, "I believe in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights. I believe in the fundamental dignity of all people." And if you're willing to show up for work tomorrow, play by the rules, and love this country the way I do, I'll hold your hand, and we'll build a bridge we can walk across together. And if you'll do that, we'll have a great victory in November.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at Senator Harkin's 19th annual steak and pork-chop fry held at National Balloon Classic Field. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Tom Arnold and Jerry Jeff Walker; Mike Peterson, chair, Iowa Democratic Party; and the Senator's daughters Jenny and Amy Harkin.

Remarks Announcing Anticrime Initiatives and an Exchange With Reporters

September 16, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Let me just make a couple of comments about this. First of all, I want to thank the Attorney General for the extraordinary effort that she has made to deal with the problems of youth violence and particularly gang-related violence and crime in our country. This report is further evidence that our efforts are actually working and that we can bring down the level of youth violence and gang-related violence in our country if we'll work at it in a systematic, disciplined, tough way.

We have a straightforward approach: more police on the street, guns and drugs off the street. We are putting 100,000 police in our neighborhoods, and that's a job we need to finish. The assault weapons ban, the Brady bill are making a difference. We've just established a registry for sex offenders; that will make a difference. "Three strikes and you're out"—that law is being implemented, and it is making a difference.

We've also advocated community-based solutions: curfews, strict truancy enforcement, school uniform options. Last week I announced an initiative for comprehensive drug testing for prisoners and parolees in State prisons that access the Federal funds for prison building. This will make a difference.

Now, there's no question that the battle against violent crime and drugs begins with neighbors looking out for neighbors, parents looking out for their children, citizens linking arms with law enforcement. We have to have a community-based approach to this. But the Federal Government must do its part as well.

The level of violent crime in our country has gone down for 4 years in a row. The level of killing by juveniles has gone down now