

Boxer, Senator Feinstein, and of course, to John Garamendi for their work in this whole process.

And let me also say that—I want to say a word of thanks to the Corps of Engineers and others who have done all the work in rebuilding after last year's floods. Within the next few weeks, the Corps will finish all remaining repairs. It's the most extensive flood reparation ever done in this short of time and another reason we should thank the Corps of Engineers for what they've done here.

We're working hard across America on projects like this. We're making progress in reclaiming the Florida Everglades, in restoring Lake Tahoe, in saving Yellowstone. We have funds in this latest bill, in our balanced budget plan, to continue this work. But I now can go around the country and talk to other people about what you've done here and tell them you believe in it so much you all showed up and stayed in the wind and the rain in sunny California. *[Laughter]*

Well, I've seen the wetlands here today, and some of you may have seen more than you wanted to see. But I'll tell you what else I've seen: I've seen a glimpse of America's future, and I like it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas P. Wheeler, California Secretary for Resources; John Walker, chairman of the board, Ducks Unlimited; Sarah Jullian, volunteer, Robin Kulakow, executive director, and Greg Schmid, farmer, Yolo Basin Foundation; and Col. Dorothy F. Klasse, USA, District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Sacramento** *November 15, 1997*

Thank you very much. Eleni, thank you very much for your remarks and for the hard work that you have done. Thank you, Angelo and Sophia. Congressman Matsui, when he stood up and said that he was speaking on behalf of the Tsakapoulous family, I thought we were taking ethnic diversity a little far there. *[Laughter]* But you know me; as far as I'm concerned, it should have no limits. So I liked it.

I want to thank Bob Matsui and Vic Fazio for the wonderful work that they do in Congress. I have wished on many days—privately, so I might as well say publicly—that a higher percentage of people in both parties were more like Bob Matsui and Vic Fazio. They always try to find common ground, and they're always willing to stand tough and fight if necessary. They get a lot done, and they're always looking to the future. And I'm very grateful to them.

I'm also glad to be back in Sacramento and back here with your mayor, who has been a good friend of mine and a good leader. And I thank him for that. And Phil Angeledes, good luck to you in your endeavor this year. Most people should trust you to handle the money. *[Laughter]* You've had a lot of experience at it. *[Applause]* Thank you. I'd also like to thank my good friend Dan Dutko for coming all the way from Washington, DC, to be part of the Democratic Party's efforts today. And let me thank all of you.

Congress has just gone home, and this was a remarkably good year; It's a 2-year congressional session; we have a lot to do next year; but we did pass the first balanced budget in a generation. We ratified the chemical weapons treaty, which will help to protect our children and our grandchildren and involves a lot of what is at stake in Iraq today. We made progress on expanding NATO in ways that will give us a chance to have a 21st century where Europe is a source of peace and prosperity, not a cause for war that involves Americans. We passed a wonderful adoption bill that I will sign in the next few days to facilitate adoptions in many ways in America. We passed a huge increase in medical research in all kinds of areas and the best package to help families with diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association, since the discovery of insulin 70 years ago. So it was a very good year for the American people in the Congress.

What I'd like to talk to you about a little bit today is how that year is a part of what we've been doing for the last 5 years and what I hope to be doing for the next 3, how it fits in with what we celebrated just a few moments ago when I went out, literally, to the wetlands area today—*[laughter]*—to celebrate this joint partnership to try to restore

wetlands and to preserve some of your precious environmental heritage, even as you permit the economy to grow and the uses of water to proliferate.

When I started running for President about 6 years ago, our country was not in very good shape. California was in terrible shape economically. But times come and go. In every person's life, in every country's life, there are times that are better than other times. There will never be a period where we have complete, unbounded, uninterrupted good news. I used to have a set of rules of public life I kept with me, and one of them said, "You're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. Something is always going to happen. It's endemic to the human condition."

But what a free people must always have is a vision of where they're going, a strategy to get there, and the concentration and discipline to pursue the strategy through the tough times. That's what I didn't think we had in 1991 and why I ran for President. And my goal as a Democrat was basically to take the mainstream values of our party and our country and marry them to modern ideas and policies that would move the country forward and that would take us into the 21st century with the American dream alive for everybody responsible enough to work for it. It would help us to create a country where we were coming together, across all the lines that divide us, into one America and would keep us strong enough to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity.

As you see from the events of the last week, I think it is clear that at the end of the cold war not all of the dangers of the world have gone away. And it is very important that the United States be strong enough to do what is necessary to stick up not only for our own interests and our own security but for the kind of world we are trying to create. And that's what we have been doing for the last 5 years.

And what I want you to understand that is so often overlooked is that there is a direct connection between your presence at this lunch here today and what we have been doing and what we will be able to do because, in the end, the people who make decisions are those that are put there by the American

people. They are put there after elections. And if you don't have the capacity to communicate your message to be heard and to answer the charges against you in this world today, you'll be in a lot of trouble.

So every time you hear—if you've been out here helping us all these years—every time you hear of a new breakthrough, a new movement forward for the United States, you should feel that you are a part of that. And you should be under no illusion that if there were not people like you around to help us, that all these ideas, all these policies, and all these people would be around anyway; it's not so. I've seen elections conducted in an atmosphere of unilateral disarmament, and I wasn't very satisfied with the results. It doesn't work very well in politics, and it doesn't work very well in other areas of human endeavor. So I'm glad you're here.

What is it that's changed in the last 5 years? Well, the first thing we had to do was to make up our mind in Washington what the Government's job was. What's the President supposed to do every day when he gets up? What's the Congress supposed to do? What is our job? What is the role of Government, and what must our priorities be?

The old debate seemed to me to be a little bit artificial, where some people said, "Well, the Government has to try to do everything when there's a problem," and others would say, "The Government is the problem and should do nothing, and we hope everybody will come out all right." Neither one of those was consistent with the way I saw people living in my State and my hometown or everything I knew about how you build an economy or a society.

So I tried to reformulate what I believe the mission of Government is, and I think it is—and I hope it is—the philosophy of the Democratic Party on the edge of a new century. We believe the role of Government is not to do everything or to sit on the sidelines but to give people the tools and conditions they need to make the most of their own lives. If you think about it in that way, it tells you what to do and what to stop doing.

Now, that doesn't answer the question, so what should your economic policy be? We believe that there was a false choice put before the American people: Should we cut

taxes and run a huge deficit, or don't cut them and spend a little more money and run a slightly smaller deficit? Our country's debt quadrupled in the 1980's, and it was wrong. We said, "We're going to cut the deficit. We're going to cut spending, but we're going to spend more on education, on technology, on medical research, on the things that are key to our future. We're going to make choices."

The strategy worked. Before the balanced budget kicks in, the economic plan adopted by Democrats only, including the two Members of Congress in this room, had reduced the deficit by 92 percent—92 percent—from where it was the day I took office.

What was our crime policy? I was amazed when I got to Washington, there were people who actually wrote in newspapers and respectable journals that, if I talked about crime, I was trying to get a Republican issue. And I was not aware that Democrats were pro-crime. [*Laughter*] Nor was I aware that the Republicans had done such a great job, since the crime rate was—had gone up quite a lot.

Now, most anti-crime work is done at the community level—in the city of Sacramento, in this county. But it was obvious there were things the National Government could do that would make a difference. And I went all across the country looking at things that were working, talking to people. And I said our crime policy is not going to be caught in the old debate, lock them up and throw away the key or hope things get better, and when things get better, the crime rate will go down. Neither one was, I thought, particularly accurate. I thought we ought to be tough and smart and do what works: Put 100,000 more police on the street; take assault weapons off the street; keep handguns out of the hands of crooks; give kids something to say yes to so they don't get in trouble in the first place; and punish people who are really bad. That's what I thought our policy ought to be. And the crime rate has dropped now for 5 years in a row, and we played a role in it, and I feel good about that.

Our welfare policy—the old policy was encourage people to do better, or cut them off, and who cares. That was the old debate. Our theory was require people who can go to

work to go to work, but don't ask them to give up their most important job, which is raising their kids. And we started working with States from the day I got there on moving people from welfare to work. The Republicans said, when they got a majority in Congress, they wanted to pass a welfare reform bill. I said, "Fine, we'll work with you on it." They passed two bills that I vetoed. Why? Because they were more than happy to be tough in cutting people off of welfare, but they did not want to give them the tools they needed to get in the work force, and they were willing to hurt their kids by taking away the guarantee of food and medical care.

So I vetoed those two bills; they put the guarantees of food and medical care back in, gave me some money for job training and child care—we're off to the races. The result? Welfare rolls have dropped by 3 million people. And it's working; it's working.

What I want you to understand is there's a direct connection between you being here at this lunch and that happening. And I thank you for it. We are changing the nature of politics in this country.

We had a big reaction to a lot of what we did in '93 and '94, and the benefits of it weren't apparent. The Republicans won the Congress in '94. The American people got to see what they wanted to do in '95 and '96. We beat back the contract on America. It didn't happen by accident. It was a lot of hard, disciplined work, putting our message out against their message. And it's a good thing for the country that we did.

What we celebrated today at that wetlands project was people who want to grow the economy and people who want to preserve the environment working together to do something at the grassroots level. That's how we ought to be doing this. Their idea on the environment was it was a nice thing if you could get it, but it was really an irritant that shouldn't get in the way of people going about their daily lives.

I think that's wrong. I think we have proved conclusively—you have cleaner air today, cleaner water, more toxic waste dumps cleaned up, a safer food supply, all through major initiatives of this administration, and a stronger economy. We have got to do it in the right way. We don't want to do things

that are stupid. We don't want to shoot ourselves in the foot, but we know we have got to preserve public health and the environment and grow the economy. That is the policy of our party. And we are determined to do it, and we are making progress on it, and your presence here today contributes to the triumph of that idea. And you should be proud of that, and you should talk about it, and you should help us to refine it.

I don't mean there aren't tough decisions out there. This climate change issue, for example, is a very difficult, challenging issue that will occupy us for the rest of my term in office. But I know that the technology, the know-how, the creativity is out there in the American people to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and grow the economy. We've already done it in two other areas—you know these chlorofluorocarbons and CFC's that were in all the spray cans—they said, "Oh, they'll do terrible damage to the economy if we get rid of them." Well, we got rid of them, and the American economy is doing just fine. They say we do terrible damage to the economy if we took sulfur dioxide out of the atmosphere. We found a pro-business, market-oriented way to do it; we're getting it out of the atmosphere at less than half the cost I was told it would cost, and we're doing just fine.

And we'll solve this problem, and we'll do just fine if we'll all work together and realize that we cannot be forced into a position where somebody says, "If you want to save the environment, you have to tank the economy," or, "If you want a good economy, you just have to turn your back on the environment." That is wrong. And it's one of two big choices that I think we can't afford to make.

The other one, and the last issue I want to emphasize domestically, is the choice that I alluded to earlier, welfare. That's the choice between work and family. When I signed the family leave law, a lot of people said, "You're going to hurt a lot of small businesses," even though we exempted people with under 50 employees. For 5 years we've had a record number of new small businesses formed in every single year. It is a good thing to allow people who go to work every day not to have to worry themselves sick about their children

at home or at school. It is a decent thing to do that.

I will say again, every society's most important job is raising healthy, good, strong children with good values. There is no more important work. More than half of the children in this country under the age of one have mothers in the work force. And since I have had a wife, a mother, and a grandmother in the work force—as long as I have been alive, that is what I have known—I do not think that is a bad thing. But I think it is a very bad thing when people who are working are worried sick about their children.

And so as we look ahead to the future, our party has to find a way to provide more affordable child care. Our party has to find a way to provide health insurance for these children, all of them—we're going to cover half of them with this balanced budget this year—all these children who live in families where their parents are working in lower income jobs and they can't afford health insurance. Our party has to find a way to help the American people balance the demands of raising their kids and going to work every day. And if we have the same approach that we've had for the last 5 years, we can do that as well.

Lastly, let me just say very briefly, because I think you can understand that I don't want to talk about this in any detail, we've got all kinds of other challenges. We've got to make sure that Medicare and Social Security are there for the baby boom generation and for their children and their children's children. And we have to do it in a way that doesn't—where people my age, of the baby boom generation, don't ask the smaller generation of our children to bankrupt themselves and not take care of their kids to preserve these institutions. We can do all that.

We also, though, have to have a framework in our mind for what it means for America to be secure in the 21st century. National security during the cold war was pretty straightforward. We wanted to keep a big strong military and plenty of nuclear weapons, and we wanted to have a system that existed between ourselves and the Soviet Union so that either side thought that, if they launched nuclear weapons, the other side would be destroyed, so no one would ever

do it. And then we'd fight around the edges in various places around the world, to try to keep them from getting much of a toehold.

With the decline of the cold war, with the Russians becoming our partners and our soldiers standing side by side in Bosnia, we now know that national security has to be defined somewhat in different terms. To be sure, there's a lot of problems still with nuclear weapons. We're doing our best to continue to work with the Russians to get rid of more and more nuclear weapons and actually destroy them and make sure that the nuclear materials don't fall into the wrong hands. And we've gotten a wonderful amount of support around the world for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

We're working hard to deal with the after-effects of these civil wars, the worst of which is landmines. And while I do not agree with all the terms of the Ottawa convention on landmines, it is encouraging that over 100 nations are willing to say that they will never build, buy, or use any kind of landmines. The United States has destroyed a million and a half such mines; we're going to destroy another million and a half while I'm President. And this year we'll spend slightly more than half the money spent in the entire world to go get those landmines out of the ground so kids don't walk on them and blow their lives away in the years ahead. This is a good thing.

But the most likely problems—there are a couple little babies in this audience, or there were today, and some children—the most likely problems these children will face when they come of age will be problems that cross national borders: terrorism, organized crime and drug running, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological weapons, and maybe small-scale nuclear weapons—this much nuclear cake put in a bomb would do 10 times as much damage as the Oklahoma City bomb did—the spread of environmental problems or diseases across national lines. We are going to have to, in other words, find ways to cooperate, to keep the organized forces of destruction that are taking advantage of the Internet, the technological revolution, the freedom of travel and the freedom of movement, access to computers, and moving money around and

all that—there will always be organized forces of destruction.

That is fundamentally what is at stake in the standoff we're having in Iraq today. I don't want you to look at this backward through the prism of the Gulf war and think it's a replay. I want you to look at it forward and think about it in terms of the innocent Japanese people that died in the subway when the sarin gas was released; and how important it is for every responsible government in the world to do everything that can possibly be done not to let big stores of chemical or biological weapons fall into the wrong hands, not to let irresponsible people develop the capacity to put them in warheads on missiles or put them in briefcases that could be exploded in small rooms.

And I say this not to frighten you. The world will always have challenges. I think the chances are quite good that we can organize ourselves for this challenge and deal with it very effectively. I personally believe that the next 50 years will be far more peaceful and less dangerous for our children and our grandchildren than the last 50 years were. I also believe they will be the most prosperous and interesting time in all of human history but only if we do the right things.

And so I say again to you, this is an exciting time to be alive. There have only been maybe four periods like this in American history over our 220-year history, where we are really being called upon to rethink what we want of our Government, rethink what we want of our Nation, meet a whole set of new challenges and, in effect, recreate the American dream. It can only happen once every generation, sometimes once every two or three generations. You are living in that kind of America. In that kind of time, political participation is more important; the integrity and validity and strength of your ideas are more important; and your passionate willingness to stand up and defend what you believe in is more important.

So I thank you for being here today because I believe that what you are doing is helping to build an America that your children and your grandchildren will be very proud of and will thank you for.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the Sacramento Capital Club. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon organizer Eleni Tsakapoulous and her parents, Angelo and Sophia; Mayor Joseph Serna, Jr., of Sacramento; Phil Angeledes, candidate for State treasurer; and Dan Dutko, chair, Victory Fund.

**Remarks at a Rock the Vote Reception in Beverly Hills, California**

*November 16, 1997*

Thank you very much. I love Rock the Vote. [Laughter] I liked it the first time I heard about it. I pledged to support the motor voter bill when I ran for President in 1992, and I was thrilled when it passed. And we had a great signing ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, a real tribute to the efforts of all those who started Rock the Vote and were so involved in it.

And I want to thank Dan for those fine remarks. I want to thank Dan and Jenna and Jeff and Hilary and my great friend Ricki Seidman, for all the work they've done for Rock the Vote over the years. Good luck, Donna. You gave a good speech up here; that's a good start.

Let me say that—oh, I also want to thank Wolfgang and Barbara for having us here at this wonderful place. We should probably be sitting down and eating instead of standing up and talking, but I'm delighted to be here.

Let me say to all of you, when I ran for President, I did so out of an urge, a compassion, almost a compulsion to try to change this country, to give it back to the people and to make it work again, to basically reclaim the future for your generation and for the young children who are here. And I've tried to continue to always think every day about how whatever I do will affect not just the moment, not just a month or a year from now, but what will be the impact 10 or 20 or 30 years from now.

Most of what we do today will become only clear in its impact when I'm long out of the White House. Part of that is a function of the time in which we're living when things are changing so dramatically. But I've tried to stay in touch with young people and their concerns throughout my Presidency. As a

matter of fact, the last meeting I had before I left for the west coast, at the White House, was one of my regular roundtables. We don't call them coffees anymore—[laughter]—although we can—now I insist that we have a reporter in every one; I wish we'd had one in all the others—but anyway, with a lot of young people. And these young people came, and they talked to me about a number of different things. And then a young man who used to work for me—now works for MTV—reported on a survey that had been done by MTV about the attitudes of young people and how basically optimistic they were about their prospects and how well things were going in the country. And they had some concerns, and they were the ones you would expect.

But there was one sort of dark spot in this survey I want to bring up, because it seems to me to undercut everything that Rock the Vote stands for, and I say it to throw it down as a challenge tonight and to thank the people who have organized this event and to thank all of you who have come here. Basically, young people were upbeat about the country, skeptical about the political system, skeptical about whether it was really working for them, skeptical about whether they could make a difference. And what I would like to say to you is, no serious student of the last 5 years could possibly believe that. Therefore, we have a lot of work to do if you expect your generation to completely fulfill its promise and if you expect to have this democracy work for you.

Just consider where we started in '92. I said that I wanted to be President because I wanted to reverse trickle-down economics; it wasn't working for America. I wanted to go to a strategy I called invest-and-grow. I said that I wanted to replace welfare dependency with a system that emphasized work and childrearing. I said that I wanted to change our crime policies away from hot air and tough talk toward a strategy based on police, prevention, and punishment. I said that I wanted to try to find a way so that we could support families both in raising their children and in succeeding at work, because nearly every family I know, even upper income people, find conflicts repeatedly between their