

century, the community of nations may see more and more the very kind of threat Iraq poses now: a rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists, drug traffickers, or organized criminals, who travel the world among us unnoticed.

If we fail to respond today, Saddam and all those who would follow in his footsteps will be emboldened tomorrow by the knowledge that they can act with impunity, even in the face of a clear message from the United Nations Security Council and clear evidence of a weapons of mass destruction program. But if we act as one, we can safeguard our interests and send a clear message to every would-be tyrant and terrorist that the international community does have the wisdom and the will and the way to protect peace and security in a new era.

That is the future I ask you all to imagine. That is the future I ask our allies to imagine. If we look at the past and imagine that future, we will act as one together. And we still have, God willing, a chance to find a diplomatic resolution to this and, if not, God willing, a chance to do the right thing for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Honoring the 1997 World Series Champion Florida Marlins *February 17, 1998*

The President. Well, welcome to the White House. Mr. Smiley; Mr. Leyland; glad to be joined by the executive director of the players association, Don Fehr; Congressman Deutsch; Congressman Foley; Congressman Wexler. I think I should also say—I see my EPA Administrator, Carol Browner, here. You should know that this administration has three members—along with Carol Browner, Attorney General Janet Reno and the Secretary of the Treasury, Bob Rubin—who all grew up in south Florida. They're fairly happy about the outcome of the World Series.

You can tell that I am not running for office anymore; I might not have said that here. [Laughter] But we are delighted.

When I was first elected President, I never could have dreamed that a lot of the things that would occur in the last 5 years have occurred. I didn't imagine then that millions of people would be using the Internet every day. When I was first elected President, there were only 50 sites, and they were all the province of physicists. I couldn't have imagined that the deficit would come from \$300 billion to zero in 5 years. And I could not have predicted that the Florida Marlins would be here because they hadn't even played a game yet. [Laughter] That is a truly astonishing achievement.

But what you did in a short time was a gift to your magnificent leader, Jim Leyland, for a lifetime in professional baseball. And all of us who are baseball fans of whatever team had to be happy about that.

And of course, a manager can't win without talented players and without teamwork. Livan Hernandez dazzled us with his pitching and became only the second rookie ever to win the World Series MVP Award. Charles Johnson's defense earned him the Gold Glove as catcher for the third year in a row. Edgar Renteria's name will live in baseball history forever for ending one of the most exciting World Series in history with his two-out single in the bottom of the 11th. You know, those games got so long, some of us really did want them to go on forever after a while. [Laughter]

Baseball, I think, made a huge comeback as America's national pastime in this World Series, thanks to the magnificent competition which you won deservedly.

You know, a lot of the players on this team are newcomers to our country, and so are many of the fans of the Florida Marlins. I suppose it's only right that the capital of the Americas would take its turn as the baseball capital of the world. But even more importantly, we should be proud of the example this team set, proving once again that people of very different ethnic backgrounds can play together and win together. Now, it may not be the precise same Marlin team that played the Indians last year that takes the field on opening day, but if the players keep the same

spirit they'll be sure to be in the hunt again when the season comes to a close.

Congratulations. For all of us who grew up with baseball as a national pastime, you gave America a great gift last year that none of us will ever forget. Thank you.

[At this point, Florida Marlins president Don Smiley, manager Jim Leyland, and third baseman Bobby Bonilla made brief remarks. Mr. Leyland noted that the President was the most important person he had ever played golf with, and Mr. Bonilla presented the President with a World Series jersey.]

The President. Thank you. Since you mentioned our golf game, I want to make two brief points before we adjourn—*[laughter]*—we're going to take a picture. Number one is I want you to get another ring so you can quit about the time I quit, and then we'll go on the senior tour together. *[Laughter]*

Secondly, if you really thought of that line about the budget, we have a position open in the speechwriting staff that you'd be welcome to anytime. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:42 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Donald Fehr, executive director, Major League Baseball Players Association; and shortstop Edgar Renteria. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Messrs. Smiley, Leyland, and Bonilla.

Remarks on the Children's Health Care Initiative

February 18, 1998

Thank you. Didn't she do a good job? Give her a hand. *[Applause]* Thank you, Linda. Ned Zechman, thank you. Thank you, Secretary Shalala, for your wonderful work. And I thank the First Lady for what is now a more than 25-year crusade to bring quality health care to children. We're delighted to be joined by Mayor Barry and members of the DC City Council; Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton; and Congresswoman Diana DeGette, from Colorado; and many, many child advocates in this audience who have been working on these issues a long, long time.

Last month in the State of the Union Address I asked the American people to work together to strengthen our Nation for a new century, and especially to build the right kind of future for all our children, with world-class education and quality, affordable health care.

Let me begin by thanking the men and women who work in this hospital for their efforts to restore our most fragile children to health, to give many of them second chances at life. This is a place where medicine shines and miracles happen every day. But it should not take a miracle to ensure that children like Linda's children have the care and insurance they need to stay healthy and to be treated when they're sick.

I still have a hard time believing that this country, with the finest health care system in the world, cannot figure out how to give affordable, quality health insurance coverage to every single child in America.

Step by step, we are working hard to make sure all Americans get the health care they deserve. Two years ago we passed a law, and I signed a law, to make sure every American could keep his or her insurance when they change jobs or when someone in the family is ill. Last year, in the historic balanced budget agreement, we extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for more than a decade. We also made this unprecedented \$24 billion commitment to provide health care to up to 5 million more children, and I want to say more about that, obviously.

In addition to implementing the provisions of the balanced budget law to cover children, this year we're also going to attempt to pass a health care "Consumer Bill of Rights," which is all the more important since 160 million Americans are now in managed care plans. We want to extend Medicare to Americans age 55 to 65 who have lost their health insurance who can buy into the program. And of course we want to protect all our children from the dangers of tobacco, and we're hoping and praying for a comprehensive resolution of that issue.

But let's go back to the question of covering children. Congress appropriated the money, \$24 billion over 5 years, with the goal of insuring 5 million of the 10 million children who don't today have health insurance.