

Week Ending Friday, June 19, 1998

**Remarks to the National Oceans
Conference in Monterey, California**

June 12, 1998

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you for the wonderful welcome. Let me begin by saying how great it was to see and hear the Watsonville Marching Band again and my good friends there. You're always welcome back at the White House. And I like those uniforms. I liked them then; I like them now.

I want to thank Secretary Daley and Secretary Dalton for sponsoring this conference. I thank Secretary Slater and Secretary Babbitt, who was here; Administrator Browner, Dr. Baker, Katie McGinty. And I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to the Commandant to the Coast Guard and all the Coast Guard personnel, and the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and all the Navy personnel for what they have done to help this be a success.

I thank all the Members of Congress. The Vice President has introduced them, but I am delighted to see them here, and I'm very proud of them. I thank the mayor of Monterey and all the State and city and county officials who are here. And I also want to say, it's good to see our old friend, citizen Panetta here. [Laughter] Leon and Sylvia have earned the right to come home, and after spending the day here, I don't know why they ever left. [Laughter] But I'm very grateful that they did. He made us a better administration.

Let me say a special word of appreciation to the award winners here today: My good friend, Ted Danson, the president of American Oceans Campaign—[applause]—thank you. He has to go to a middle school graduation, but I think he may still be here. Dr. Sylvia Earle of National Geographic, Jean-Michel Cousteau, Bob Talbot, and Moss Landing Marine Lab, thank you all for your wonderful work and congratulations on your awards.

I owe a lot of whatever good we have been able to do in this position on the environment to my wife, who has always cared about this and expanded my horizons, and to the Vice President. I was sitting there listening to him talk, and my mind wandered back—no offense, Mr. Vice President, I was gripped by your speech. [Laughter] But my mind wandered back to the conversation we had when I asked him if he would join me on the ticket in 1992.

And I was remembering that, fittingly enough, when I called him to ask if he would come talk to me, he was at Rio, at the wonderful conference there on climate change, biodiversity. And I was thinking how influenced I had been already by his writings and his speeches. Even though we were neighbors, we didn't know each other particularly well. I knew him more through his work and the stands that he had taken. And I have to tell you, I was thinking again today as he stood up here, that's one of the two or three best decisions I ever made in my life.

Sometimes I think Presidents like to pretend their jobs are more special and unique and their insights more impenetrable by others than they may be. But I'll tell you, there is one subject on which I think perhaps only Presidents can really know the truth. And I can tell you that the scope, the depth, and the quality of the influence in a positive way that Al Gore has exercised on this country in the last 5½ years literally dwarfs that of any other Vice President in the history of the United States. And I am very proud of what he has done.

Now, I thought Sylvia Earle made a very interesting presentation, and now I understand that why, when she was the chief scientist at NOAA, her friends called her the United States Sturgeon General. [Laughter] I had never thought about the idea that there are more fish than people in my domain. [Laughter] Now that I know it, I'm trying

to figure out some way they can be represented in the Congress. [Laughter] That's no offense to those folks over there. They just need a little more help. [Laughter]

I also want to say hello to Tony Coelho and all the people watching us from the United States Pavilion in the Expo '98 in Portugal. It is a remarkable coincidence and a wonderful thing that the World's Fair this year is dedicated to the preservation of the oceans.

I first came to Monterey in 1971 in the summertime. And again, I owe my introduction to Monterey indirectly to my wife because she was then working in Northern California, and I was home in Arkansas, and I drove out here to see her. And I drove across the desert, and it was hot. And believe me, when I got here, I was happy. [Laughter] But I had always been entranced by this community ever since I first saw it.

Monterey's favorite son, John Steinbeck, as all of you know, was a serious student of the seas. In his masterful account of the 4,000-mile marine expedition he launched, just about a half mile from here, he summed up what for me is at the root of the work done at this conference, the understanding that man is related to the whole, inextricably related to all reality. Our abiding links to the world, to nature, and to the oceans, our mystic and mysterious seas, has led us to this historic conference.

We come to Monterey, all of us, with an appreciation for the divine beauty of this patch of coast which Al and I had a chance to see a little more of today with two bright young people, who showed us the harbor seals, and the sea otters, and some of the smaller life there. That's good. But we have to leave with a renewed determination to maintain the living, thriving seas beyond, not only for Americans but for the whole world.

When astronomers study the heavens for life, what do they look for? Water—the single, nonnegotiable ingredient. Our planet is blessed with enormous sources of water. Our oceans are the key to the life support system for all creatures on this planet, from the giant tube worms in deep sea vents to cactuses in the most arid deserts.

In our daily lives, the oceans play a crucial role. They can drive our climate and our

weather. El Niño taught us all about that and made people in Northern California wonder if the sun would ever come back for a while. They allow us global mobility for our Armed Forces. The fish from the sea are among the most important staples in our diet. And as the Vice President has just said, through fishing, shipping, and tourism, the oceans sustain one in six American jobs.

These oceans are so vast and powerful that I think most people still blithely assume that nothing we do can affect them very much. Indeed, that assumption has made its way into our common vernacular. How many times have you said in your life that something you did was a mere drop in the ocean? Well, now we know, and as many of you have highlighted over the last day and a half, something you do may be a mere drop in the ocean. But millions, even billions, of those drops in the oceans can have a profound effect on them and on us.

Two-thirds of the world's people live within 50 miles of a coast. Too much pollution from the land runs straight to the sea. One large city can spew more than 9 million gallons of petroleum products into the ocean every year. That's roughly the amount spilled by the Exxon *Valdez*. Polluted runoff from watersheds has led to deadly red tides, brown tides, and pfiesteria. Runoff from thousands of miles up the Mississippi River has been so severe that now there is a dead zone the size of the State of New Jersey in the Gulf of Mexico. Ten percent of the world's coral reefs have been destroyed, another 30 percent will all but disappear within 20 years. We have not learned everywhere the lessons of Cannery Row. For more than two-thirds of the world's fisheries are overexploited, more than a third in steady decline.

As the Vice President highlighted at the White House earlier this week, we are also changing the temperature of the seas, something else the young people told me they had measured here. We've just learned that our oceans are the warmest they've been in 104 years. That's as long as we've been taking their temperature. It must be longer, since we now know that the 5 hottest years since 1400 have all occurred in the 1990's, and if the first 5 months are any indication, this will be the hottest year ever measured.

We know that greenhouse gases are heating our planet and our oceans. Fortunately, we have learned that, along with the ability to harm, we also have the ability to heal. Through innovation and prudence, we've proved we can clean the water, the air, protect marine sanctuaries and wildlife refuges, phase out deadly pesticides and ozone-eating chemicals, and do it while still producing the world's strongest, most competitive economy.

With partnerships and persistence, we must extend this record of success to our oceans. If we want our children to inherit the gift of living oceans, we must make the 21st century a great century of stewardship of our seas.

Today I propose to intensify our efforts with a \$224 million initiative to enhance the health of our oceans while expanding ocean opportunities in responsible ways for the environment.

First, it is clear we must save these shores from oil drilling. Here in California, you know all too well how oil spills from offshore drilling can spoil our coasts, causing not just the death of marine life but the destruction of fragile ecosystems—also, economic devastation in tourism, recreation, and fishing. Even under the best of circumstances, is it really worth the risk? In a few moments, I will sign a directive to extend the Nation's moratorium on offshore leasing for an additional 10 years, while protecting our marine sanctuaries from drilling forever. [Applause] Thank you.

As I do this, I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator Barbara Boxer, who has lobbied me relentlessly for years—[laughter]—who tracks me down every chance she gets, who has even used her grandson, who is my nephew, as an emotional wedge to make sure I do the right thing on this issue. [Laughter] And I thank her for it.

I'd also like to thank Sam Farr for his leadership in this conference and on this issue; Congresswoman Capps and all the other Members of the California delegation who have expressed their opinion so clearly; and my good friend Lieutenant Governor Davis, who has talked to me about this personally.

Now, by standing firm against offshore oil drilling here in California and around the Na-

tion, these people have helped to protect the most beautiful shores anywhere in the world, and we can continue to do that.

Second, we must do more to restore precious marine resources. To help create sustainable fisheries, we will help to rebuild fish stocks within 10 years, work with industry to develop new technologies to net only targeted species of fish, ban the sale and import of undersized Atlantic swordfish, and protect essential fish habitats.

To protect and restore coral reefs, I have signed an Executive order to speed our efforts to map and monitor our reefs, research causes of their degradation, revive damaged reefs, and promote worldwide efforts to do the same. To reduce land-based pollution—[applause]—thank you—to reduce land-based pollution that threatens marine life, which is a horrible problem, I have got to have some help from the Congress. So again, I ask the Congress to fund my \$2.3 billion clean water action plan to reduce the diffused pollution that has been running into our streams and oceans unchecked. [Applause] Thank you.

Third, we must deepen our understanding of the seas. As the Vice President announced yesterday and mentioned again today, the United States military will release previously classified data to help researchers track marine mammals, predict deadly storms, detect illegal fishing, and gain new insights into the complexities of climate change.

By the year 2000, we will complete an advanced ocean monitoring system that will also provide data for climate change studies. And as Dr. Earle said, we must do more to explore the ocean depths. We propose to provide new submersibles and other advanced tools for mapping and exploring the world's last great frontier. I'd kind of like to go down there myself someday.

Fourth, we must create sustainable ports for the 21st century. International trade will nearly triple over the next two decades, and more than 90 percent of this trade will move by ocean. I propose a new harbor services fund to help our ports and harbors remain competitive in the new century, by deepening them for the newest and largest ships, and by providing state-of-the-art navigation

tools for preventing marine accidents. We must do both.

Just last week I released, or pledged, some extra money to the New York-New Jersey harbor project in the face of clear evidence that if we do not do it, the harbor will not remain competitive and thousands of American jobs could be lost. We can do this and make those harbors environmentally safer at the same time.

Fifth, we must join the rest of the world in ratifying, at long last, the Convention on the Law of the Sea. [Applause] Thank you. The character of our country and, frankly, the nature of a lot of the economic and political success we have enjoyed around the world, has rested in no small part on our continuous championing of the rule of law at home and abroad. The historic Convention on the Law of the Sea extends the rule of law to the world's oceans.

There is not a scientist here in any discipline who seriously believes that we will ever turn the tide on these dangerous trends until we have a uniform legal system that can provide a framework necessary to give us a global approach to this problem. This convention assures the open seaways that our Armed Forces and our fishing telecommunications and shipping industries require. But it also, I will say again, gives us the framework to save the oceans while we grow as a people and while we grow economically.

This year, during this legislative session, the United States Senate should and must confirm its leadership role by making America a part of the community of nations already party to the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Finally, we must continue the critical dialog that has begun at this conference and build together across party, regional, economic, and other interests, a comprehensive oceans agenda for the 21st century. Like every other great leap forward in environmentalism in the last 35 years, if we're going to do this right, we're going to have to do it together. We have to make this an American issue that transcends party and other philosophical differences, that is at the core of our own humanity and our obligation to our children and our grandchildren.

Today, I am directing my Cabinet to report back to me one year from today with recommendations for a coordinated, disciplined, long-term Federal oceans policy. And I want to work with the Congress to create an oceans commission so that all the interests that have been represented here will have a voice on a permanent, ongoing basis as we forge a new strategy to preserve the incomparable natural resources of our oceans and seas. And I hope you will help me get that done. [Applause] Thank you.

During the marine expedition in the Gulf of Mexico, which I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, John Steinbeck called hope, the idea that tomorrow can be better than today, the defining human trait. Now, just about every American knows that I believe that. And I've been reading Steinbeck for most of my life. I didn't know about that until I began to prepare for this conference. In spite of the fact that I agree with that, I think it's important to point out that we are also blessed as a species with two other crucial traits which make hope possible: creativity and imagination.

All of these traits—hope, creativity, imagination—will be required to meet the challenges that we face with our oceans. But they are, after all, the traits that first enabled and inspired explorers to take to the sea. They are traits that allowed us to look at our inextricable ties to our environment and invent new ways to protect our natural wonders from harm in the last three decades.

In the 21st century, these traits: hope, creativity, imagination, they must—they must—lead us to preserve our living oceans as a sacred legacy for all time to come. You can make it happen.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. at San Carlos Park. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley and Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton, conference cochairs; Mayor Dan Albert of Monterey; former White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta, and his wife Sylvia; actor Ted Danson, president, American Oceans Campaign; Dr. Sylvia Alice Earle, explorer in residence, National Geographic Society, and chair, Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, Inc.; marine photographer Bob Talbot;

oceanographer Jean-Michel Cousteau; Tony Coelho, U.S. Commissioner General, 1998 World Exposition in Lisbon, Portugal; Lt. Gov. Gray Davis of California; and graduate students Nancy Eufemia and Raphael Sagarin, researchers, Hopkins Marine Station. Dr. Earle, Messrs. Talbot and Cousteau, and the staff, faculty, and graduate students of Moss Marine Laboratories were awarded the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Environmental Hero Award. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition

June 12, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior

Subject: Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition

Under the authority granted in section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing through June 30, 2012, those areas of the Outer Continental Shelf currently under moratoria pursuant to sections 108–111 of Public Law 105–83.

I further withdraw from disposition by leasing for a time period without specific expiration those areas of the Outer Continental Shelf currently designated Marine Sanctuaries under the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1431–1434, 33 U.S.C. 1401 *et seq.*

Nothing in this withdrawal affects the rights under existing leases in these areas. Each of these withdrawals is subject to revocation by the President in the interest of national security.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Barbara Boxer in San Francisco, California

June 12, 1998

The President. Thank you very much. First, let me say that I'm not sure it evidences good judgment to try to follow Barbara and Hillary to the microphone. [Laughter] But they certainly did a good job, and I enjoyed listening to them. Let me also thank, before I go too far, the San Raphael High School Advanced Jazz Band. They did a great job, and thank you all for playing.

I thank our State Democratic chair, Art Torres, for being here, and all the candidates and officeholders who have come to support Barbara. When I was listening to Senator Barbara and the First Lady talk, and I was watching you listen to them talk, I said to myself, "Well, all these people are for her anyway." [Laughter] "So what should I say that would help them get other people to be for her?" And that's what Hillary was trying to do.

Why should a farmer in the San Joaquin Valley vote for this not very tall sparkplug from Northern California who is supposed to be so liberal? [Laughter] Why should a businessman in the Silicon Valley? Why should a woman running a small tourist inn in the redwood forest? Why should someone struggling to make ends meet in Los Angeles? Why should someone in San Diego worried about whether there's too much pollution or illegal immigration or whatever on the border? Why should everybody else vote for her, people that aren't here today? That's the case you have to make, you know.

And if you think about the nature of our political debates and the nature of the way the political parties behave in Washington and what our administration has tried to do, I think it really comes down to whether you want progress or politics to dominate the national arena.

Barbara said some of this, and at the risk of being self-serving—I don't want to be—but I want to read this to you, because when I came to you in California in 1991 and '92, I said, "Look, you guys are having a tough time out here, and I know this is the biggest