

tell us a little bit about the impact of jazz on his Velvet Revolution, President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic.

[President Havel made brief remarks, after which the program continued with a question-and-answer session with participants linked to the performance around the world.]

The First Lady. This is from Sarah Miles in Havasu, Alberta, Canada. Subject: Influences of jazz. Question: Mr. President, how did jazz influence your choice of going into public service over private business? We love you in Alberta. Respectfully. *[Laughter]*

The President. Well, my first thought is that when I was younger in my teens, I used to do this a lot. And I was honest enough to know when I was doing it that while I was never happier doing anything else, I knew I'd never be as good as these guys, so I figured I had to get a day job. *[Laughter]*

That's a very good question. I had never thought about it before, but I think the answer is, my association with music and the discipline and long hours of preparation it took and the joy it brought, particularly when I got into jazz, had a lot in common with what I love about public service. It is about communication; it's about creativity but cooperation, as Wynton said earlier. And like jazz, I don't think you can be really, really good at it unless you care about other people and have a good heart, like these guys do. Thank you.

[The question-and-answer session continued.]

The President. Well, we should probably end with the question. You know, one of the things that I'd like to say, I'd like to compliment the recording companies who have put out CD's recently, of all of Ella Fitzgerald's recordings for example. And I would like to encourage all the people who are involved in this business to think about, as a way of celebrating the millennium, to look at all the great jazz music that is still available in any condition over the last decades and think about packaging anything that is not yet now in mint condition—the best available condition—in making it widely available, because I think that is very, very important. A lot of young people will listen to this, will carry it on, will imagine it and

play it—as Marian said—if they have access to it. So that's a great, great question and a great way to end.

We can't know everything that will happen in the new millennium, but I'll bet you one thing we know. When you hear American jazz coming back transformed as Brazilian music or African music, as Hillary and I have in our trips around the world, I think jazz will be a big part of it. And all of you who are part of this night tonight will know that all of your work will live well into this new century and into this new millennium. And the world will be a better place because of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic and his wife, Dagmar Havlova; jazz vocalist Dianne Reeves; and jazz pianist and historian Billy Taylor. These remarks were not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *September 19, 1998*

Good morning. I want to talk to you this morning about what I believe we must do to continue building a stronger America for our children and our grandchildren in the 21st century.

We're in a time of great prosperity and even greater promise. For nearly 6 years I've done everything in my power to create the conditions for that prosperity and to make sure all Americans can share in it. Today, we have nearly 17 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest inflation in 32 years, the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, and the highest homeownership in history.

All Americans have a right to be proud of what together we have achieved. But we can't let these good times lull us into a dangerous complacency. The turmoil we see today in economies all around the world reminds us that things are changing at a rapid rate. We can't afford to relax. Instead, we must use our new prosperity, the resources it produces and the confidence it inspires to

build a more prosperous future for all our people.

In just 12 days now we will have the first balanced budget and the first budget surplus since Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon in 1969. This remarkable achievement is the product of hard work by the American people, by lawmakers of both parties who put progress ahead of partisanship. We have waited 29 years for this moment. Now we must ask ourselves, what should we make of it.

Above all, I believe we must use this moment of prosperity to honor the duty across generations and strengthen Social Security for the 21st century. Seventy-five million baby boomers will be retiring over the next two decades. We must act now across party lines to make Social Security as strong for our children as it has been for our parents.

In my State of the Union Address I said we should reserve every penny of that hard won surplus until we had taken the steps to save Social Security first. At the same time, I did propose tax cuts for education, for the environment, to help families pay for child care. But not a penny of these cuts comes out of the surplus. Every one is fully paid for in my balanced budget.

My plan also provides tax relief to families while preserving the strength of the Social Security system. That is very important. When all the baby boomers retire, there will only be about two people working for every person drawing Social Security. We can make moderate changes now and make sure that those who retire will be able to retire in dignity, without imposing on, burdening, or lowering the standard of living of their children and grandchildren.

Unfortunately, the Republicans in Congress have a different idea. The black ink in the budget hasn't even had a chance to dry; indeed, it hasn't appeared yet. But they already want to drain the surplus to fund a tax plan before we make the most of our opportunity, our historic opportunity to save Social Security.

I've already made it clear that if Congress sends me a bill that squanders the surplus before we save Social Security, I will veto it. But Republicans in the House of Representatives are proceeding anyway and will

try to pass their tax bill next week. I believe strongly that this is the wrong way to give American families the tax relief they deserve, the wrong way to prepare our Nation for the challenges of the future.

So today I say again to the Republican leadership: Go back to the drawing board. Look at the targeted tax cuts for working families I proposed, and we all passed last year: \$500 per child; a HOPE scholarship for the first 2 years of college and college credits thereafter; IRA incentives to save for children. They all take effect this year. They'll all be on your tax forms in April, and all of them are fully paid for.

So I say to Congress send me a plan like that, a plan with targeted tax relief while preserving all the surplus until we have saved Social Security. Send me a plan that rebuilds our crumbling schools, that helps working families with child care, and supports small businesses in getting pension plans—and pay for it.

Send me a tax cut that keeps us on the path of fiscal responsibility, that honors our obligations to our parents and our children. If Congress sends me a tax cut plan like that, I'll gladly sign it. This is a time of great hope for our Nation but a time where continued global economic growth demands continued American economic leadership. Fiscal responsibility has created our prosperity, and fiscal irresponsibility would put it at risk.

Let's do the right thing to provide for the security of our parents and opportunity for our children into the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

September 19, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you. You know, Maxine Waters would be so much more effective as the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus if she weren't so shy and retiring—[laughter]—so reluctant to express her opinion. [Laughter]

Thank you, my friends, for years of friendship. Thank you for the work we began back