

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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**Editor's Note:** The President was in Los Angeles, CA, on February 26, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 26, 1999

**Remarks on the Posthumous Pardon  
of Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper**

*February 19, 1999*

Thank you. First of all, I'd like to welcome this distinguished assemblage here: Dr. King and the members of the Flipper family and your friends, Secretary West, Congressman Clyburn, General Powell, Deputy Secretary Hamre, Under Secretary de Leon, General Ralston, General Reimer, Secretary Caldera. I understand we're joined by Clarence Davenport, the sixth African-American graduate of West Point, other distinguished West Point graduates who are here. Welcome to all of you.

There's one person who could not be here today—Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, I'm glad to see you—the one person who could not be here today I want to acknowledge, and that is Senator Max Cleland from Georgia, who has done a lot to make this day possible. We thank him in his absence.

I welcome you all to an event that is 117 years overdue. Here in America's house of liberty, we celebrate ideas like freedom, equality, our indivisibility as one people. Great leaders lived here, people like Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Lincoln, the Roosevelts, after whom this room is named. All of them deepened the meaning of those words while they lived here. But we must be candid and say that the special quality of American freedom is not always extended to all Americans.

A word like "freedom," to be more than a slogan, requires us to acknowledge that our "more perfect Union" was created by imperfect human beings, people who did not always define freedom in the ways that we would, and in ways that they knew they should. For this word to live for ourselves and our children, we must recognize it represents a difficult goal that must be struggled with every day in order to be realized.

Today's ceremony is about a moment in 1882, when our Government did not do all

it could do to protect an individual American's freedom. It is about a moment in 1999 when we correct the error and resolve to do even better in the future.

The man we honor today was an extraordinary American. Henry Flipper did all his country asked him to do. Though born a slave in Georgia, he was proud to serve America: the first African-American graduate of West Point; the first African-American commissioned officer in the regular United States Army. He showed brilliant promise and joined the 10th Cavalry. While stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, he perfected a drainage system that eliminated the stagnant water, and malaria, plaguing the fort. Still known as "Flipper's Ditch," it became a national landmark in 1977.

He distinguished himself in combat on the frontier and then was transferred to run a commissary at Fort Davis in Texas. In 1881 Lieutenant Flipper was accused by his commanding officer of improperly accounting for the funds entrusted to him. A later Army review suggested he had been singled out for his race, but at the time there wasn't much justice available for a young African-American soldier. In December a court-martial acquitted him of embezzlement, but convicted him of conduct unbecoming an officer. President Chester A. Arthur declined to overturn the sentence, and in June of 1882 Lieutenant Flipper was dishonorably discharged.

His life continued. He became a civil and mining engineer out West. He worked in many capacities for the Government, as special agent for the Department of Justice, as an expert on Mexico for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as a special assistant to the Secretary of the Interior. He died in 1940 at the age of 84.

But even after his death, this stain of dishonor remained. One hundred and seventeen years have now elapsed since his discharge. That's a long time, even more than the span of his long life, more than half the

history of the White House, indeed, of the Untied States itself—and too long to let an injustice lie uncorrected.

The Army exonerated him in 1976, changed his discharge to honorable, and re-buried him with full honors. But one thing remained to be done, and now it will be. With great pleasure and humility, I now offer a full pardon to Lieutenant Henry Ossian Flipper of the United States Army. This good man now has completely recovered his good name.

It has been a trying thing for the family to fight this long battle, to confront delays and bureaucratic indifference, but this is a day of affirmation. It teaches us that, although the wheels of justice turn slowly at times, still they turn. It teaches that time can heal old wounds and redemption comes to those who persist in a righteous cause. Most of all, it teaches us—Lieutenant Flipper's family teaches us—that we must never give up the fight to make our country live up to its highest ideals.

Outside of this room, Henry Flipper is not known to most Americans. All the more reason to remember him today. His remarkable life story is important to us, terribly important, as we continue to work—on the edge of a new century and a new millennium—on deepening the meaning of freedom at home, and working to expand democracy and freedom around the world, to give new life to the great experiment begun in 1776. This is work Henry Flipper would have been proud of.

Each of you who worked so hard for this day is a living chapter in the story of Lieutenant Flipper. I thank you for your devotion, your courage, your persistence, your unshakable commitment. I thank you for believing and proving that challenges never disappear, but in the long run, freedom comes to those who persevere.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William C. King, Lieutenant Flipper's great-grandnephew; and former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.). This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **Remarks at a Dinner Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the NAACP**

*February 19, 1999*

I have been friends with Chairman Bond a long time. We have had many interesting conversations; not all of them have been that laudatory. But Julian, I have that on film now, and I'm going to play it—[laughter]—whenever I need a little boost in life, I'm just going to turn that film on. [Laughter]

Thank you. I want to say publicly something I said to Julian Bond privately when he agreed to become the chair of the NAACP. I called him, and I thanked him. And I thank him again. And I thank all of you for what you are doing.

When Kweisi Mfume agreed to become president of the NAACP and leave the Congress, I wept. [Laughter] But he told me, he said, "Now, don't worry." He said, "I'll have a good replacement in Congress"—and he did—"and I need to do this. It's the right thing for my country and for my people." And he, too, has served well. And I'm very proud of our friendship and of the service.

I thank all of you who are helping. When Suzanne DuBose was up here talking about scientists slowing down the speed of light and the rest of us speeding up the speed of justice, I wish I had thought of that myself. [Laughter] That line won't rest. It will be used again and again. [Laughter]

I want to thank Bell Atlantic and all the other companies who are standing with the NAACP. I am delighted to see Bishop Graves and the other officers here. And Bishop, thank you for your friendship.

Most of the people with our administration have been introduced, but I want to thank Secretary and Mrs. West and Secretary Slater and Bill Lann Lee for being here, and Judy Winston, who did such a good job with our initiative on race. I want to acknowledge, also, the presence in the audience of Mary Beth Cahill, our new Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison. And I want to recognize Ben Johnson, and many of you know he is the first Director of the White House Office on our Initiative for One America, and I thank him for doing that. Since Bell is so well recognized, there's one other former member of the White House staff

here, Eric Eve, who went on for the money and the fame of Bell. I want to thank him.

Ladies and gentlemen, I came here tonight for two purposes. One is to say a simple thank you. Thank you for what you've done for America, and thank you for being my friends. I am grateful. I am very grateful. The second is to say that—as Suzanne said so eloquently—we're in a lot better shape than we used to be, but nowhere near where we ought to be. And what we have to do as a people, as a whole country—but especially you, because you know—you know things about where we are and where we need to go that not every American does, because of the life you've lived and the things you've seen and the work you do. You know that no great nation, and certainly not this one, can afford to say, well, we're a lot better off than we used to be, so let's take a vacation from progress. Let's take a vacation from our struggle for liberty and equality. Let's take a vacation from our attempt to spread the reach of prosperity and freedom to Africa, to the Caribbean, to our friends in the Americas.

You know that this is not a time to take a break; it is a time to thank God for our prosperity and our opportunities and make the best use of them. The Sun is shining, and we need to make hay. We need to work while the Sun is shining.

And to do what I would like to do in these last 2 years of my Presidency, just like the last 6, we need the help of every one of your 2,200 branches. We need to forge new coalitions across the lines of race and class and religion. We need to close America's remaining opportunity gaps.

A lot of you have lived in homes when you were younger—and not so well off and prosperous as you are now—[laughter]—where there were literally gaps in the walls or the windows, and you could feel the wind blowing. Well, there are a lot of people still getting blown by those kinds of winds and the opportunity gaps of America.

Kweisi said, as all of you know, that the NAACP was formed 90 years ago. It was founded, as all of you know, I'm sure, in direct response to a riot in Springfield, Illinois. Now, I learned something in getting ready to come here tonight that I did not know.

I had always thought it was simply a cruel irony that this riot occurred in Abraham Lincoln's hometown and where he was buried. I learned that the white mob was actually, deliberately conducting the riot there, trying to make Mr. Lincoln turn over in his grave. They yelled, storming through the black neighborhoods, "Lincoln freed you; we'll show you where you belong."

Well, quite to the contrary, it was the NAACP that helped to show you where you belong. On any bus and any lunch counter and any voting booth, in any school, in the Armed Forces, in the highest echelons of Government and business, you belong everywhere. And so do your friends. And we will never make what Congressman John Lewis so beautifully called the "beloved community" until everybody who belongs can be wherever they belong.

I am very grateful for the work we have done together in these last 6 years. Previous speakers commented on all these folks from our administration, and how our crowd looks like America. What I would like history to say is, "They had the administration that looked the most like America and that did the most for America, proving that excellence and diversity and community all go hand in hand."

I am grateful that we have stronger communities, with a dropping crime rate; that there are only about half as many people on welfare as there were 6 years ago; that the doors of college are open to every high school student who will work for it through the HOPE scholarship and the other academic aid that we have provided; that we have the longest peacetime expansion in history and the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957. I am grateful that the prosperity is wider, with the lowest African-American unemployment rate ever recorded, the highest African-American homeownership rate ever recorded, record numbers of new African-American businesses every year.

But it takes a long time to get it all fixed. Just before I came over here tonight, 117 years too late, I awarded a pardon, posthumously, to Lieutenant Henry Flipper, who, because of racial prejudice, was wrongfully convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and dismissed from the Army more than

a century ago. He was born a slave. He was the first African-American graduate of West Point. He served with great distinction in the 10th Cavalry. In Fort Sill, Oklahoma, he eliminated the cause of malaria as a civil engineer by digging what is still called "Flipper's Ditch," and is now a national monument. He lived to be 84. He served as an adviser to a Cabinet Secretary; he did all kinds of wonderful work throughout the world. He was cleared of wrongdoing 20 years ago, but he was never, never fully restored in his good name, until about an hour and a half ago, when, in the presence of 16 of his family members, several African-American graduates of West Point, General Colin Powell, and a number of others who are here, I signed his pardon.

Now, we don't want the rest of America to have to wait 117 years for justice. And we don't want people to have to wait until they're gone for people to say something halfway nice about them. We don't want to have America outraged, even though we honor the outrage, by another killing like the killing of James Byrd.

We know still, every day there are qualified African-Americans who are turned away from home loans or business loans; African-American drivers pulled over because they look suspicious. Some of you call it the offense of "driving while black." We know every day there are African-American children who are stuck in failing schools when they're entitled to good schools.

So we've been working at it for 6 years, to try to bring a special focus to the need to build one America, and to deal not only with the problems of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans and Native Americans but the fact that we are now becoming the most diverse democracy in the world—California, 10 percent Asian-American, soon to have no majority race. We started the initiative on race in 1997 to institutionalize the work of building one America. I appointed Ben Johnson to continue our work, in an organized, specific, and concrete way. And I want you to help us do that.

I would like it very much if, after the next Presidential election, the new President is asked repeatedly. "Now who is going to head your One America office?" I don't want this

to be a one-shot deal. I want this to be a journey, not a destination. And I want it to be something that makes us think more and more every day, seriously, about how we're going to build unity out of our increasing diversity, get rid of our old problems, and meet our new challenges. And I want you to help me do that.

I want you to help us, also, to pass this new budget, which helps to close some of those large opportunity gaps: the disparities in education; in jobs; in economic development; in civil rights enforcement; in home-ownership; and quality health care.

I came here tonight to celebrate and thank you, not to talk policy, but I want to mention just two areas. First, the economy. We all know that even though we have the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957, there are places that haven't felt much of this vaunted recovery. We all know that even though we have the lowest African-American unemployment rate every recorded—and the same for Hispanic-Americans—it's still quite a bit higher than the national average. And for young, single men, it is still quite high indeed.

Now, if we can't use this moment of unprecedented prosperity to bring jobs and opportunity and enterprise to the neighborhoods and to the people who have not yet felt it, but are willing to work for it, we will never get around to doing the job. Now is the time to do that.

So the NAACP is a nonpartisan organization; you do have Republican supporters out across this country who believe in civil rights. And I want you to go get them. *[Laughter]* And haul them up here to Washington, with the Democrats, too, and say, "Look, we want you to pass this new markets initiative. We can put \$15 billion in private investment into neighborhoods in this country that have not seen new investment and new jobs and new opportunity for people by giving the right kind of incentives, the right kind of tax cuts, the right kind of loan guarantees, the right kind of support to business people. And if we don't get around to doing it now, we will never get around to it." We need to do it now.

I also want to tell you that a lot of farsighted business people have figured out that

it would be very good for the American economy. Why? For the first 5 years of my Presidency, 30 percent of our growth came from expanded exports, selling more to other people around the world. Last year we had a good year, but we didn't get 30 percent growth from our exports. Why? You know why, because of the financial troubles in Asia and in a lot of Latin American countries. Now, I think we ought to help our friends in Asia, Latin America, and in Africa to trade with us more so we can grow and they can grow. But in the meanwhile, we've got the most significant untapped market for the growth of the American economy right here at home, in all these neighborhoods that still are not growing as they should.

The second thing I want to ask you to do is to help me give every child in this country a world-class education. I want you to help me finish the job of hiring 100,000 more teachers. I want you to help me finish the job. I want you to help me again. I want you to bring your Republican and your Democratic friends up here and help me convince the Congress not to say no this time to our proposal to build or modernize 5,000 schools. I'm tired of going into these inner-city schools and seeing schools so old we can't even hook them up to computers, with broken windows and peeling plaster. It's wrong.

And in many other areas, you go, and the kids are all having half their classes in house trailers because the schools are bursting at the seams. We need to do that. I want you to help me continue our work to hook up every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. I want to ask you to help me change the way we give out Federal money, to not become victim to a tyranny of low expectations.

I have said many times that I want to end the practice of social promotion, but not for the purpose of punishing the kids for a system that is failing them. And let me just give you one fact—I said this in the State of the Union, but I'm going to say it until I'm convinced every American knows it—last year, in the international test in math and science, a representative sample of American children, by race and income, scored near the top of the world in the fourth grade test. By the eighth grade, they had fallen to average.

By the 12th grade, they were near the bottom. Nobody came and took brain cells out of those kids' heads. They did not get dumber. The system was failing them.

So, yes, I believe we should end social promotion, but we also are tripling funds for after-school and summer school and tutoring programs and sending more college students into the schools to mentor kids when they're in middle school and tell them they can stay in school and go to college and what they need to do to do that. We need to do that.

We are dramatically increasing our scholarship program to tell young people, "If you'll go into inner cities or isolated rural areas and teach school for 3 or 4 years, we'll pay off your student loan. We want you to go out there and give something back to your country."

We have got to change the way we spend the money. The teachers and the parents and the kids are telling us what works; we ought to stop funding what doesn't work and start funding what does. We ought to say that school districts should raise standards for teachers, and we put money in there. There are so many of our teachers out there having to teach courses, with the schools overcrowded, that they don't have college majors or college minors in.

That's what happens in high school. It's not that these people are not dedicated. They are, but they have not had the chance to be properly prepared. And the schools can't get enough teachers to put enough people in the classrooms with the kind of academic background. We ought to help them change that.

And there are school districts with schools that are doing great and schools that aren't doing so well. The school with the biggest—the State with the biggest gain in student performance in the last couple of years is North Carolina, because they adopted a strategy that says, "We've got to turn around or shut down failing schools." When you do that, you almost never have to shut one down. They find a way to turn around.

The great English scholar Benjamin—I mean, Samuel Johnson, once said—I had Benjamin Johnson on my mind—[laughter]—Samuel Johnson said that it is remarkable how the prospect of one's own demise concentrates the mind. [Laughter] We don't

want to punish anybody; we want to turn schools around—and there's things in this budget to do that—and to help the teachers and to give the parents more information and to help more districts set up charter schools and to do things that will work, so that we don't have one size fits all.

I read a story the other day about a school district out West that organized a school just for high school dropouts. Let them come at different hours. Let them have access to computers and special tutors. And all of a sudden, almost all the dropouts came back to school. There are all kinds of different things that can be done to raise the performance level of our schools.

But I think all of you know that we'll never really have one America, and we'll never really get by discrimination, unless we create opportunity in the schools and opportunity in the economy. So I ask you to help me pass these initiatives.

Now, let me just say one last thing. I was delighted to be asked to come tonight, honored to accept. The work that I have been privileged to do as President, and before, in my life to advance the cause of equal opportunity is perhaps the thing I cherish most, of all the things that I and my wife and our administration have been able to do.

You'd be amazed how many times in my weekly lunch with the Vice President, after we get through with whatever business we have to do, we get back to talking about this subject. I guess it's because I grew up in the segregated South. Maybe it's because I met and was influenced by people like some of you here tonight, so many years ago. But part of it is, I know that it's a pure miracle that, starting out from where I did as a kid, I wound up here tonight. A pure miracle.

I once heard a guy say every politician wants you to believe he was born in a log cabin he built himself. [*Laughter*] But the truth is, we don't build our log cabins ourselves. And not a person standing here or sitting here tonight got here on your own. And most of us get out of this life better off than we deserve, because God is good and so are the people that we get in touch with.

But it really bothers me that there are children in this country, who are certainly just

as smart, full of as many dreams, with whatever abilities God gave me—that they have them—who may not be able to live out their dreams. And if all of us as citizens have one responsibility—apart from honoring our country and Constitution and laws—it ought to be to make sure that at the end of our days we have done everything we can to make sure no one we ever touched was denied the chance to live their dreams. We know we'll be better off when that's true. We know we'll all get something out.

I look at these young kids that are here tonight, these young people. I'm kind of jealous, actually. If they'd let me be 20, I think I'd let them be President. [*Laughter*] You know? I think about the life that lies before them and all that they might be. I imagine, 30 years from now, some African-American, Hispanic, Asian female standing here as President of the United States, you know?

But I know that as long as there are Native American reservations, where young American citizens live in communities where the diabetes rate is two and three and four and five times the national average; as long as there are neighborhoods where kids really don't have a chance to get a world-class education; as long as there are places where nobody's taking care of the pollution, so the health rates are not what they ought to be; as long as there is anyplace where anybody can't live out their dreams, the NAACP will have work to do, and America will have new ground to break. And together, there is no better cause for our energies and our lives.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTES: The President spoke at 9:07 p.m. in the Great Hall at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Julian Bond, chairman of the board, Kweisi Mfume, president and chief executive officer, and Bishop William H. Graves, vice chairman of the board, NAACP; Suzanne DuBose, president, Bell Atlantic Foundation; Gail West, wife of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo D. West, Jr.; Judith A. Winston, former Executive Director, President's Advisory Board on Race; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), chairman, America's Promise—The Alliance For Youth. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*February 20, 1999*

Good morning. This weekend, Governors from all over our country are here in Washington to talk about the long-term challenges facing our Nation as we prepare to enter the 21st century. Of those challenges, none is more important than educating our children—all our children—to world-class standards. Today I want to talk about how we must work together at every level of government and in every community, to make sure our Nation's public schools are the best in the world.

For 6 years now, improving education has been one of our highest priorities. Even as we have held fast to fiscal discipline, replacing an age of crippling budget deficits with a new era of budget surpluses, we have nearly doubled our investment in education and training.

The balanced budget I sent to Washington this month strengthens that commitment to our children's education with even more resources to help States improve accountability, to build or modernize 6,000 schools,\* to reduce class size in the early grades, to start more after-school programs, to connect every classroom and library to the Internet, and to finish the job of hiring 100,000 new highly trained teachers.

This is an education agenda for the 21st century. But with more children entering school than ever before and enrollments continuing to rise, we know we must draw on every resource we possess to strengthen and improve our public schools.

As both a former Governor and a parent, I know the greatest innovations in education do not start in Washington. They start in local schools and school districts, in community councils and parent-teacher groups. They start in States like North Carolina, where Governor Hunt has led the way to improve teacher quality, with performance assessment for new teachers and incentives for veteran teachers to become even more proficient and to become board-certified master teachers.

They start in Michigan, where Governor Engler is supporting greater accountability in schools by requiring school districts to send parent report cards on how well their schools are doing. They start in Delaware, where Governor Carper is putting an end to social promotion by insisting that students pass State tests before they move to next grades. They start in Pennsylvania, where Governor Ridge is improving school safety with effective discipline codes. They're starting in States like California, where Governor Davis has called on the State legislature to turn around failing schools with a new accountability plan.

As I have said many times, every problem in education in America has been solved somewhere, by somebody, in America. The trick is helping more communities to put those proven solutions to work in their own public schools. I believe the National Government has an obligation to help them do that.

That's why, in my State of the Union Address, I proposed an ambitious new agenda to invest more of our resources in what we know is working and to stop investing in what doesn't. My plan will help every school district to take five steps that are already working in schools around the country, steps advocated by teachers and principals and parents and students themselves: ending social promotion, but investing more money to help students with summer school and after-school programs, so we don't blame students when the system fails them; adopting and enforcing reasonable discipline codes; giving parents report cards on their children's schools and giving parents and children more choice of schools, with charter schools and more public school choice; turning around or shutting down the worst performing public schools; and ensuring that all new teachers are trained in the subject they'll be teaching.

Now, these steps are all based on proven experience. They're common sense. We have to make them common practice in every school district in America.

All across our Nation, we're seeing a grass-roots revolution in education, a revolution in accountability and rising expectations. This year we have a rare opportunity to use our new prosperity to help this revolution spread

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\* White House correction.

to every single school district, every classroom, every child.

Now, some in Congress believe the National Government has no business helping communities to improve their schools in this way. But I think strengthening education is a national priority. So I urge Congress to help reduce class size, to modernize our school buildings, to improve teacher quality, to make accountability for results—ending social promotion, reasonable discipline codes, all these other things that I have advocated—make these things the law of the land. If we do this, we can transform our public schools. We can lift our children up. We can give them the education they need to make the most of their lives in an exciting new century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on February 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 20. In his remarks, the President referred to Governors James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; John Engler of Michigan; Tom Carper of Delaware; Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania; and Gray Davis of California. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

### **Remarks at the Labor Unification Legislative Conference**

*February 21, 1999*

Thank you. I would like to—first of all, thank you for the wonderful, warm welcome—to express my deep respect and support for the IAM president, Tom Buffenbarger, and all of the IAM officers; the UAW executive VP, Ruben Burks—I know Steve Yokich is in Germany now—and all the UAW members here; and the steel workers' president, George Becker, and all the steel workers here; and of course, everyone up here on the platform with me.

George Becker would give his voice, his heart, and his life for his members. And he nearly gave his voice tonight.

I came here to do a number of things, but I'd like to start with first things first. The first thing I want to do is to say a simple, profound thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your support. Thank you for the fight you

have waged. Thank you for the miles we have walked together these last 6 years.

I also came here to support the merger of these three great streams of American labor, joining into a new river of 2 million strong. Throughout the 20th century, all three of you have been at the forefront in the struggle for human progress in America. The workers at River Rouge and Republic Steel shed their blood for more than their own rights and their own families. Their sacrifice gave all of us collective bargaining and the minimum wage.

The founders and members of your three unions gave us things all working people now take for granted as essential elements in a humane society: vacations, health care, pensions, grievance procedures. You have continued to lead the fight for all Americans—the fight to create Medicare to civil rights, to protecting our Nation against the Contract With America. The UAW, the steel workers, the machinists have provided the minds and muscles for a progressive society in our country.

Now, in this season of renewal and rebuilding for America, the house of labor is growing stronger. The creation of a mighty new industrial union—not just a merger but a new organization—will set the stage for even greater progress for your members and your families and for all the rest of America in the 21st century.

I believe you have an opportunity and, therefore, a duty, every bit as real as that which was seized by the great generations that preceded you a half-century ago. The labor pioneers had it hard. They wore their scars proudly. They were not always the easiest of personalities. But in spite of their contentiousness, I like to think that Walter Reuther, Philip Murray, and Thomas Talbot are up in heaven shaking hands at this new merger.

I thank you all for the strong support you have given not only to me and the First Lady and the Vice President and our administration but to our Democratic Party, especially in 1998. I'll never forget the sense of pride I shared on election night with John Sweeney, when he was at the White House, and we realized that for the first time since 1822, the President's party had won seats in

the House of Representatives in the sixth year of an administration. You might be interested to know that the last time that happened, in 1822, the other party disappeared. [Laughter] We won't be that lucky. [Laughter] But it certainly is a good incentive to continue the fight.

I want to thank you for your commitment to make your voices heard, to advance the issues and the candidates that are pro-worker and pro-family. For 6 years, as George said, we've been on a journey together to renew our Nation, to restore the American dream. For decades, our Nation was buffeted by the winds of economic change. Wages for working families stagnated; working people fell further behind. Beginning in 1993, together, we put in place a new economic strategy to put our people first. Because of what you have done, America is working again—with the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957, nearly 18 million new jobs, the lowest welfare rolls in three decades. And finally, after three decades of stagnation, in just the last 3 years wages are rising at twice the rate of inflation.

Things are not all as they ought to be, but clearly, at long last, we have begun to move aggressively in the right direction. Together, as has already been noted, we stood up against the congressional majority that was absolutely determined to strip away the victories and undermine the rights of working people.

I was proud to stand with you also to defeat the "Paycheck Protection Act" in California. I was proud to stop every piece of anti-labor legislation sent to me by the Congress. We knew the "TEAM Act" would undermine collective bargaining, so we said, no. We knew the Republican comp-time bill would be unfair to working people, so we said, no. We knew that safe pensions and a strong OSHA are vital to working people, so when Congress tried to undermine them, we said, no.

After 12 years in which my predecessors exploded deficits and quadrupled our national debt, all the while talking about a balanced budget and accusing my party and our friends in organized labor of being the big, irresponsible spenders, we actually balanced

the budget and did it in the right way, while nearly doubling our investments in the education and training of our people, and having big increases in things like medical research.

We're in the second year of surpluses, with years and years more projected in the future. America is working again. But as I said in my State of the Union Address, this is not a time for complacency. For one reason, as all of you here know, especially the steel workers, we are living in a very dynamic and somewhat troubling international economic environment, where things can change overnight. For another, in a world that is changing this fast, we have to take advantage of this moment of prosperity to deal with the big challenges facing America in the 21st century. We cannot rest until America works for every American, until prosperity extends to every working family in every community. America must do more.

Among other things, we must remain a great industrial nation. So I'd like to talk to you tonight about three aspects of our challenge. First of all, before the baby boomers retire, and with life expectancy increasing at a dramatic rate, with people over 80 being the fastest growing part of our population in percentage terms, we must use this moment and this surplus to save and strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century.

Now, here in Washington there is now a great debate about what to do with the surplus and how it should be applied, and whether, to Social Security and Medicare. I won't take time tonight to talk about the competing visions of Social Security and how we should deal with that, but I will work with you on that. What I want to talk about is, what should be our first priority with the surplus? I believe it should be to save Social Security and Medicare, and in so doing—[*ap- plause*—and in so doing, to pay down the national debt that was quadrupled in the 12 years before I took office.

Now, I am pleased that even though we will have our disagreements about what to do with Social Security, the Republican leadership in Congress has agreed that we should set aside 62 percent of the surplus to save Social Security. I think it's important that we do it in the right way: We should put 75 years of life on the Trust Fund; we should do

something about elderly women whose poverty rate is twice the rate of seniors; and we ought to lift the earnings limit so that seniors who want to work can do that.

Now, unfortunately, we do not agree on whether to set aside another 15 percent of the surplus to save Medicare. Of course, we will have our disagreements about how Medicare should be reformed. I think it should be reformed and kept solvent for 20 years, and also, we should add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. And I don't want to kid you. I think because of the numbers of people that are going to retire in the baby boom generation, and because we're all living longer, and because of medical advances which at least in their early years are more expensive, we will have to make some further reforms in Medicare, even if we do what I want.

But if we set aside 15 percent of the surplus for the next 15 years for Medicare, we can at least guarantee that it's all right till 2020. If we don't, we'll be faced with possible changes in Medicare that could undermine the universality of the program and its absolute reliability for seniors and for the children and grandchildren of seniors who don't have to pay those out-of-pocket medical expenses. So this is a huge issue.

Now, our friends in the other party say that we ought to just reform Medicare and maybe shift some of the costs to seniors—who may not be able to afford it—and maybe get away from Medicare as a defined benefit program. I am against that. I do not want to see Medicare turned from a defined benefit program into a defined contribution program.

But think of what we can do if we set aside part of this surplus, which will allow us to pay down even more of our debt and put 20 years on the Medicare Trust Fund's life, and then we can figure out how to make what other changes need to be made to strengthen the program and how to add the prescription drug program.

Now, that will cost more money in the short run, but over the long run, adding the prescription drug benefit will cut down on doctor visits; will cut down on hospital costs; will cut down on critical care costs, because with all these advances in medical research,

people will be able to stay healthier. The best way to cut down on the cost of the Medicare program is to keep seniors healthier for longer periods of time, and the medicine will help us to do that.

I believe the American people should have some tax relief out of this surplus, but I think we should save Social Security and Medicare first. Then I think we should focus the tax relief on helping working people and the middle class begin to save from their first day on the job, so they will have a piece of this enormous wealth that America has enjoyed in the last 6 years. That's what our USA accounts—our Universal Savings Accounts—will do.

So the choice the American people will face is our plan—which invests the surplus for tomorrow and focuses the tax relief on working families and the need to save—and theirs, which spends a lot more of the surplus today. Ours favors savings; theirs favors consumption. Ours focuses tax relief on the middle class, and theirs—well, theirs is a Republican tax plan. [*Laughter*]

I think at least this administration and our leaders in Congress ought to be entitled to the benefit of the doubt, based on the performance of the economy in the last 6 years. Their economic theory gave us 12 years of rising deficits and declining incomes. Our economic strategy has given us growth and surpluses. When I took office, the national debt had risen to one-half our annual income.

If we adopt my plan for the surplus, in 15 years, it will be just 7 percent of our annual income. That's the lowest it's been since right before we entered World War I in 1917. What that means in practical terms to you is that when I took office, we were spending over 14 cents of every dollar you paid in taxes just to make our interest payments on the debt. In 15 years that will be down to 2 cents on the dollar. The rest can be spent on you and your children and your future. And within 18 years, the United States of America would be debt-free.

Think of it: If we just have the discipline to do the right thing—and I'll say more in a minute why it's good for the economy—we could save Social Security for 75 years, save Medicare for 20 years, and get the

United States of America out of debt. I think that is the right thing to do.

But I don't want to pretend that their plan won't sound good, sound sweet, and sound simple. All I ask you is to look at the performance of our country in the last 6 years, and give us the benefit of the doubt, and support us. Let's save Social Security. Let's not let Medicare be dissolved. Let's not let it be changed fundamentally in its character. And let's pay down this debt to keep America's economy strong.

Now, the second thing we have to do is to keep the economy growing and to deal with crises as they occur. We have to have a strategy to keep the global economy working for Americans, as well as to increase the economic development here at home.

For the first 5 years of my Presidency, 30 percent of our economic growth came from increasing exports, and manufacturing employment in America increased. But last year, because of the global financial crisis, which has left Russia, most of Asia, in a deep recession, and has slowed growth dramatically in most of Latin America, the manufacturing sector in our country was hit very hard. We saw many, many jobs lost, and we know many more than those that were lost are still threatened. Industrial America is hurting now.

I have worked hard to limit this global financial crisis, to try to right the things that are out of whack, to help our trading partners return to economic growth in a healthy way so that they could buy our products instead of dump on our markets. We need a 21st century financial and trading system that limits the cycle of boom and bust, that strengthens social safety nets, that works for ordinary working people and their families in every country. In short, the United States must lead a crusade to put a more human face on the global economy.

While we are doing that—and I expect to spend an enormous amount of time this year working on that, so that we can reduce the likelihood that we'll have years in the future like the last year has been—we cannot let other economies' difficulties be a justification or an excuse for them to violate trade laws and engage in unfair trade practices.

Make no mistake about it. It was not economic difficulty and the declining value of

currency which made foreign goods cheaper, which precipitated the present crisis in steel. This was not an ordinary economic event. We know it was the result of unfair trade practices. We have used tools that are unprecedented in this kind of dispute to respond.

The Secretary of Commerce speeded up consideration of the dumping cases. We just announced that both Japan and Brazil have been dumping steel into our markets. We've put them on notice that the surge in exports is unacceptable, and this means that anyone who imports steel from Japan or Brazil must pay large deposits or post substantial bonds to the U.S. Customs Service. Paying these duties will likely reduce further unfair steel imports from these countries.

We've also made it clear to Korea in no uncertain terms that they cannot fill the void with unfair trade practices, and so far they have been responsive, though we'll continue to watch it closely.

As you know, we're in negotiations with Russia on a comprehensive agreement to reduce their steel exports to the United States. The goal of all these actions is to get imports back to their pre-crisis level when our steel industry was competing just fine with everybody in the world. And again, if we have a fair policy and we don't have unfair penetration, that will happen.

Now, I know that for a lot of hard-pressed plants, workers, families, communities, these trade laws work too slowly. But we are accelerating the pace at which they will work to the maximum ability to do so. December numbers show a 32 percent decline in steel imports across-the-board, a 67 percent decline in hot-rolled steel.

Now, I would just like to make one observation about that. For all those people who said that all these imports were just the product of ordinary economic activity and, therefore, we shouldn't do anything, the fact that they could cut hot-rolled steel exports from their countries to us 67 percent in one month pretty well destroyed the argument that it was ordinary economic activity that led to them in the first place.

In the case of Japan, we have made it clear that if their exports don't return to pre-crisis levels, we're prepared to take appropriate action, including self-initiation of trade cases,

something that is almost unprecedented. I will work very closely with you as we move forward. This has been a tough year for the steel workers and for many other manufacturing workers. We need to do more. And we will keep at it until we turn the crisis around.

The challenge we face, however, goes beyond steel. We have to make sure that the world economy works for everyone. As George said in his opening remarks, we've had some disagreements about this in the past. Trade has divided Americans for a long time. I want you to know, however, that I am determined to do whatever I can to find common ground on this issue that will enable labor and business, environmentalists and government in the United States to work together.

I support open markets because it has given us higher incomes and more jobs, and for the first time in anyone's memory, now the United States has the lowest unemployment rate in the industrialized world, even lower than Japan. No one can remember a time when that was the case. It's been a very, very long time.

Now, the right kind of trade is good for working families. And when a financial crisis hits our trading partners, we can see the devastating effect it has on them and on others here at home. But again I say we can't allow international economic competition or adversity elsewhere to become a race to the bottom here at home or in any other country.

My goal has got to be to level the world up, not level it down. That means we have to press for more open markets that have stronger safeguards for workers, not weaker ones, for health and safety, for children, for a clean environment. A trade that honors the rights of workers and the dignity of work, that respects core labor rights. We have to do that.

We should do more not only through the trade framework but with the international labor organizations to raise labor standards around the world and to lead the world community to conclude a treaty that bans child labor everywhere in the world.

Now, if we save Social Security and Medicare, if we can keep the economy going in the midst of all these troubles, the third thing

that we have to do is to make sure that the economy works for all of our people and that adversity can be quickly overcome. If we can't do it now, when will we ever do it? That's why we ought to increase the minimum wage again. Ten million working families need it, and we ought to do it.

That's why we should expand the family and medical leave law to cover 10 million more workers and their families. It is not broad enough in its coverage. If we can't afford it now, when will we ever get around to doing it?

And that's why we have to recognize, also, that there are people in this country, in urban communities and rural areas, who have not felt any upturn in the last 6 years. That's what my new markets initiative is all about.

You know, we have all kinds of devices to help encourage Americans to invest in developing countries overseas, that aren't present here. One of the things that I have proposed is an "American Private Investment Company," modeled on our Overseas Private Investment Corporation, that would enable us to give both tax credits and loan guarantees to people who would invest in high unemployment areas in America, to put in new plants and new businesses, to create new markets and new jobs.

Let me just give you an example of how it would work, because I'm going to need your help to pass this. New York City—while America has a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, the unemployment rate in New York City is about 9 percent. Now, when you consider how low it is in some places in New York City, that means in a lot of big urban centers, it's well over 10 percent. If this whole plan passes, and a group of people got together, for example, under these laws that I have proposed, to spend \$300 million and open a plant in a high unemployment area in Brooklyn or the Bronx, or they wanted to—to use Congressman Rangel's favorite example—they wanted to rehabilitate Yankee Stadium instead of moving it away and hire construction workers who live in the Bronx to do it—suppose they wanted to do that. Under our plan, if this law passes, they put up \$300 million; the first \$100 million, they get a 25 percent tax credit for. The second \$200 million, they'd have a loan guarantee

for, which means they'd only have \$75 million at risk for the \$300 million investment.

That's a good deal. The best untapped markets for American business are here in America, and it will lower everybody else's threshold of anxiety; it will create economic opportunity. It's good for the steel workers. It's good for the machinists. It's good for the auto workers, because if those people have jobs, they'll buy more of everything. And I want you to help me pass it.

I also ask you to help me strengthen our education system, to finish the job of cutting class sizes by putting 100,000 new teachers into our schools, to pass our proposal to build or modernize 6,000 schools.

And I ask you to do something that will be quite controversial. I hope you will support me in this. Every 5 years, we pass an authorization law which sets the terms under which we give our tax money back to public schools. And it's about \$15 billion a year now that we give to schools to help them do their work. We now know—from teachers, from principals, from parents, from students themselves, from worlds of research—what works in the schools and what doesn't. We know that every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. But we know something else: Our kids, a representative sample of our kids—represented by race, income, and region—scores at the top of the world in the 4th grade math and science tests, drops to the middle of the world by the 8th grade, and is nearly at the bottom by the 12th.

Now, those children do not get dumber as they get older. That means we are not doing well enough by them, and we have to do better. We have to make sure all these kids can read well when they're in elementary school no matter what their family background or where their folks came from.

So I say, we need to change the terms in which we give out this money, not because the Federal Government makes it up in a room somewhere but because the schools have told us what works. We ought to end social promotion, but we ought to do it by saying we want to end social promotion, but we don't want to declare the kids failures because the system's failing them. So we ought to provide more funds for summer school

programs, for after-school programs, for tutors—keep the kids out of trouble, off the streets, in the schools learning, but make sure they know something when they go from grade to grade.

The teachers' organizations have asked us repeatedly to make one requirement that every school has not only a written, reasonable discipline policy, but can prove it's being enforced. That's important.

They ought to identify schools that are failing and turn them down or shut them down. Every State that's done this has found that they hardly have to shut any schools down, because they get turned around once they know that they're going to be shut down unless they do turn around.

These are elemental things that have worked in community after community after community. I think parents ought to get a report card on every school, every year, that their children are in. I think if we do these things, you'll be amazed at the results we'll have 5 years from now, when we have to reauthorize this aid again.

But this will be real controversial. Some people will say it's too tough on the kids that come from poor backgrounds. I think that's selling them short. They can do just fine, if they have good schools. And I'll tell you something, if they get out of school without a good education, the world's going to be real tough on them. And so we need to help them.

And then some of our friends in the other party will say, "Well, here's the President trying to micromanage the schools. We just want to give them the money. We're not trying to tell the schools what to do." Well, that would be true if I had just sat in my office one day and come up with this and thought it sounded good. This is what the people at the grassroots level have said and done and proved works. And it is simply wrong for us to keep subsidizing failure when we can invest in success. So I ask you to help us.

Just two other things, very quickly: I want you to help me this year do what we didn't do last year, and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Now, a lot of you know—a lot of you know, or you're about to find out in very difficult ways that after years of moderate inflation in health care

costs those premiums are going up again, even for managed care. And if you're going to pay for health care, you ought to be able to get health care. If you need to see a specialist, you ought to be able to see one. If you have options for health care, you ought to know what your options are. If you're in another town and you get hit in an accident, you ought to be able to go to the nearest emergency room, not one that's halfway across town. If you're in the middle of treatment with a doctor, you ought to be able to continue the treatment even if you change health care providers. These are elemental things.

The last thing I want to say, if you want the economy to work for everybody—I want to come back to something I said before—I know this is an alien concept; if I had been running for President in 1992—and many of you did so much for me—and I said, look, you vote for me and 6 years from now I'll be coming back to you telling you what great things will happen if we pay down the national debt, you would have decided that I needed a trip to a doctor, not to be elected President. But we can talk about that now.

We want the economy to work for everyone. You don't know what's going to happen beyond our borders. I am doing my best to turn this situation around, to do everything I can to make sure we don't have another year like the year we just had in the global economy, with all the trade problems and other things that came down on us. But if, God forbid, we continue to have these kinds of problems, don't we want the strongest demand we have here at home? Don't we want to be able to—and if we do more to protect our markets from unfair trade practices, then it still means that we're going to have to generate more economic activity here at home.

If you pay down the debt, what will happen? Interest rates will stay down, much lower than they otherwise would, no matter what happens around the world. That means lower home mortgage payments; it means lower car payments; it means lower business loans; it means lower student loans; it means lower credit card payments. It means greater investment in the American economy, more jobs, and lower prices and higher consumption. That's what it means.

Now, I do not know what is going to happen everywhere in the world in the next 2 years, much less after I'm gone. But I know this: If you'll go along with this and you'll help me do this, for the next 15 years, every single year the interest rates in America and the economy in America will be in better shape, no matter what happens, than they would have been if we don't do it and we give away this money right now. So I ask you to help me do this. This is a right thing to do for the United States of America.

Finally, let me just say there are a lot of changes going on in the world. No one can predict the future with any certainty. Tell you the truth, it's all worked out a little better, until this last rough patch in the road for us, than I thought it would when I was running. But I knew we were doing the right things.

One of the things we know is, if we put the American people first—if we think about how people can balance work and family, if we think about how we can preserve the dignity of work, if we think about how we can give every child the right to live up to his or her God-given capacity—if we do the right things, then in the tough times we'll do better than we otherwise would have, and in the good times we'll soar.

The American labor movement has helped this country to do the right things year-in and year-out, decade-in and decade-out. In joining together, I am convinced you have done the right thing for your members and their families for the 21st century. And I am convinced that you will do the right things for America.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in Hall A at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to R. Thomas Buffenbarger, international president, International Association of Machinists (IAM); Ruben Burks, secretary-general, and Stephen P. Yokich, president, United Auto Workers (UAW); George Becker, president, United Steel Workers Association (USWA), who introduced the President; and John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO. The IAM, UAW, and USWA merged to form one labor union.

**Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner**

*February 21, 1999*

Good evening. Governor and Mrs. Carper, Governor and Mrs. Leavitt, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the White House.

Two of my proudest possessions, which I have over at the Oval Office, are an original printing of the proceeds of the first Governors' conference, held at the invitation of President Theodore Roosevelt—formerly Governor of New York—in 1908, and the subject was the conservation of America's natural resources. The second is a picture taken on the front steps of the White House of the President and all the Governors in that year, with a letter signed with the picture by every serving Governor in 1992—some of you signed it—to me on the occasion of my election as President.

I see the picture every day. I see the book every day, and it reminds me of how much I enjoyed being a Governor and how much I very much enjoyed these Governors' meetings.

Six years ago, when I took office, I pledged a new era of partnership with the Governors. I have done my best to deliver on that pledge. I found that, when being a Governor, that it was easy to do the job when the economy was working than when it wasn't. [Laughter] So I hope you have found the same. I pledged to work on eliminating the deficit, and now we are into our second year of surpluses. I pledged to work with you on welfare reform, and I know all of you are very proud that the welfare rolls are about half the size they were in 1993. I pledged to work with you and your communities on crime, and the crime rate is at its lowest level in 25 years. I pledged to work on a cleaner environment in a way that would permit the economy to continue to grow, and together we have made progress on that and many other areas.

I also pledged to continue the practice I adopted as Governor of stealing the best ideas from other States I could possibly find. [Laughter] Among other things, we have adopted Georgia's HOPE scholarship and many other ideas that many of you brought into being.

For all these things, I thank you. I thank you for the work you continue to do. I thank you for the model you continue to set. In 6 years, I have concluded what I suspected when I came here, which is that Washington works best when it works as Governors and as the National Governors' Association work: across party lines; focusing on ideas, not ideology; on people, not politics; on unity, not division. For all that you do to build that kind of America in the 21st century, I thank you.

I look forward to our meeting tomorrow, and I ask you to join me in a toast to Governor and Mrs. Carper, Governor and Mrs. Leavitt, the Governors, their spouses, and our beloved country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to National Governors' Association Chairman Gov. Tom Carper of Delaware and his wife, Martha; and NGA Vice Chairman Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah and his wife, Jacalyn.

**Remarks at the National Governors' Association Meeting**

*February 22, 1999*

I know we're beginning a little late, so I will get right into my remarks and try to truncate them a little bit so we can have the maximum amount of time for discussion. Let me begin by saying that Hillary and I were delighted to have you here last night. We had a wonderful time. This room is in a little different condition than it was last evening, but I hope both events will prove to be enjoyable.

Let me say that I have been a participant in one way or the other in every Governors' meeting since 1979, for 20 years. I had the privilege of serving with 150 of my fellow Americans as Governors over a 12-year period. One of the best has passed away in the last few months, Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida. And I wanted to mention him both because he was an important member of the NGA and because he had the good sense to go from Washington back home, instead of the other way around.

I wanted to thank Governor Jeb Bush for his proposal to set aside some of the tobacco settlement money in Florida for the foundation named in Governor Chiles' name, for

the benefit of the children of the State. Those of us who knew and cared for Lawton are profoundly grateful for that. And I wanted to mention with the remembrance of him because he gave so much of his life, and the older he got, the more he gave to the future of our children. I know we have a lot of things to do today, but I'd like to spend my few moments talking about the education of our kids.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, the prosperity the Nation now enjoys gives us a rare opportunity and, I believe, a profound obligation to do more to ensure the education of all of our children. At a very important time, we have, as Secretary Riley never tires of saying, the largest school population and the most diverse one we've ever had. We have more overcrowded schools and more old and disrepaired schools than we have ever had. And we have more opportunities to seize the benefits of the well-educated population than we have ever had.

The budget that I sent to Congress this month, after the State of the Union, calls for spending \$1.4 billion to help States and school districts hire new and better trained teachers. That's a 17 percent increase over the budget I signed last fall, and it moves us considerably closer to our goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers over the next 7 years—now the next 6 years. It calls on Congress to pass our tax proposal to build or modernize 6,000 schools, which is a huge problem in many of your States. It triples our budget for after-school and summer school programs to \$600 million. That's enough to help local schools keep a million children in the schools and off the street during the hours when parents work and juvenile crime soars.

I had an interesting discussion last night with Mrs. Leavitt and Mrs. Kitzhaber about the importance of keeping young people in school, later in the school day. It includes new funds to stay on track to hook all our classrooms up to the Internet and to reach our goal of 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

I think it is very important that we invest more money, as we have more children, and as we are going to have to replace a large number of teachers who will be retiring, and make sure that they have been adequately

prepared. But I think it's also important that we candidly assess how we invest the money we are now spending. The Federal Government already is investing \$15 billion a year in public schools. This year we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I believe we should change the way we spend the money we are already spending. I don't know how many times I've heard Governors say that over the last 15 or 16 years about State funds.

The idea behind the "Education Accountability Act," which I will send to Congress next month, is to say after, now more than 15 years of education research and efforts since the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report, and the 10th year after the Governors and President Bush issued the "Goals 2000" report, it is time for the Federal Government to invest in those things which Governors and school districts and principals and teachers and students and parents have proved are critical for raising student achievement, which is the theme of your conference.

It says that school districts accepting Federal money must end social promotion, turn around or shut down failing schools, ensure teachers know the subjects they're teaching, have and enforce reasonable discipline codes, and empower parents with report cards on their schools.

I say again, we did not dream up these ideas in Washington. We learned them from North Carolina, where Governor Hunt has led the way in improving teacher quality with performance assessments, incentives for veteran teachers to become even more proficient, a strategy to turn around or shut down failing schools; in Pennsylvania, where Governor Ridge is improving school safety with effective discipline codes; in Delaware, where Governor Carper is putting an end to social promotion by insisting that students pass State tests before they move to the next grade; in California, where Governor Davis has asked the legislature to turn around failing schools with a new accountability plan; in Michigan, where Governor Engler is supporting greater accountability by requiring school districts to send parents report cards. And I could mention every Governor in this room in some specific or another because these ideas represent the best practices in

education reform today, proven in the laboratories of democracy at the State, city, and school district level.

Many of you have proposed one or more of these ideas in your state of the State addresses. In his state of the State, Governor Engler endorsed all five of them and said he didn't understand how anyone could disagree. I'm with him.

Some people already are trying to frame this debate here in Washington, however, in partisan or ideological terms, and try to force everyone to take sides, when I'd like to use it as an opportunity for us to debate, discuss, and come together.

You'll hear some people say the Federal Government shouldn't be involved at all in public education, just send us the check, and we'll take care of the rest. In 1787 our Founding Fathers declared that all new territories had to set aside land for public schools, establishing at the birth of our Republic the principle that public education, though a State and local responsibility, is a national priority. In 1862 President Lincoln created the land-grant college system. In 1917 Woodrow Wilson mandated vocational training in public high schools. In 1958 President Eisenhower created the new program to help public school teachers improve math and science instruction in the aftermath of *Sputnik*.

None of these Federal actions undermine the ability of State and local government to run their schools. Each was a necessary response to the challenge the Nation faced at the time. I believe we are at a similar moment of challenge today. And it should lead, I believe, in the direction of all the work that has been done by Governors since 1983 toward what works to raise student achievement.

Some will say the Federal Government should be giving States more flexibility, not demanding more accountability. I think it's a false choice and the Federal Government should be giving you more of both. You know from your own interactions that flexibility and accountability can achieve the right ends working with local governments.

Since I've been here, our administration has cut regulations in elementary and secondary education programs by two-thirds, granted 357 waivers so that States and school

districts can have the flexibility to try new approaches. We don't have any business telling you whom to hire, how to teach, how to run schools. I have vigorously supported more school-based management and more flexibility for you. But let's not kid ourselves. We are not doing our children any favors by continuing to subsidize practices that don't work and failing to invest in practices that do.

We shouldn't have a local option for schools to fail, year-in and year-out. Governors have recognized that for years. If you go back and read the "Goals 2000" statement, that—there's still a few of us around this room that were there back then—that the Governors hammered out with President Bush and his Education Department, and the allocation of responsibilities under that statement, it is clear that there has long been a recognition of our joint responsibility to raise student achievement. And I was thrilled when that became the topic of your endeavors this year.

There may be some who say there's now no longer any need for the Federal Government to assist on these accountability measures, because States and school districts are doing it on their own. I have no doubt that these ideas eventually will spread to every State and school district in America. The question is, how long will it take to happen?

Our Federal system, our laboratories of democracy, are great at inventing new ideas and testing them out. At least in the area of education, we're not so good at spreading the best of those ideas around in a comprehensive and timely fashion. It took over 100 years for laws mandating compulsory, free elementary education to spread from few States to the whole Nation. That pace of change might have been all right in the 19th century; it won't do for the 21st. We don't have the luxury of waiting and continuing to subsidize failure.

Now, let me just give one example of that, and then I'll turn it over to your chairman. In 1986 the NGA issued a report called, "Time For Results," with task forces chaired by Lamar Alexander, Tom Keane, Dick Riley, and me, urging the Governors to intervene in low-performing schools and school

districts and to take over or close down academically bankrupt schools—1986. In 1987 nine States had the authority to do that. In 1990 the NGA issued a report, “Educating America: State Strategies for Achieving National Education Goals.” In 1988, 18 States offered assistance or intervention in low-performance schools. In 1998 NGA policy supported State focus on schools and reiterated the 1988 policy that States should have the responsibility for enforcing accountability, including establishing clear penalties in cases of sustained failures to improve student performance. In 1999, 19 States have procedures for intervening in failing schools, 16 for replacing school staff or closing down the school.

This is tough politics. I don’t know that I could have passed this through my legislature. I do know that if we have the reauthorization of the Federal law this year and we’re sending this out, and all we do is to say we ought to do what the NGA said we should do 13 years ago, that will accelerate the pace of reform in education, and I think it’s a worthy thing.

I hope we can pass it. I want to work with you. And it is not inconsistent with our shared commitment to better flexibility in education.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Governors Jeb Bush of Florida, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, Gray Davis of California, John Engler of Michigan, and NGA Chairman Tom Carper of Delaware; Jacalyn Leavitt, wife of NGA Vice Chairman Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; and Sharon Kitzhaber, wife of Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon.

### **Statement on Industry and Education Leaders’ Recommendations on Technology in the Classroom**

*February 22, 1999*

I am delighted that the CEO Forum on Education and Technology, a group of leaders from industry and education, has developed a strong set of recommendations to en-

sure that teachers can effectively use technology in the classroom. If technology is to realize its potential as a powerful new tool to help students achieve high academic standards, teachers must be as comfortable with a computer as they are with a chalkboard.

That is why my \$800 million budget for educational technology includes over \$100 million to give both new and current teachers the training they need to integrate technology into the curriculum. I look forward to working with the CEO forum and other leaders in industry and education to give every child and teacher in America access to these high-tech tools for learning.

### **Statement on a Meeting of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan**

*February 22, 1999*

I welcome the successful meeting over the weekend between Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif. I commend the two Prime Ministers for demonstrating courage and leadership by coming together and addressing difficult issues that have long divided their countries.

The two leaders committed to intensifying their efforts on key matters, including: containing their competition in nuclear arms; preventing nuclear or conventional conflict between them; resolving territorial disputes including Jammu and Kashmir; refraining from interference in each other’s internal affairs; fighting terrorism; promoting political freedom and human rights; and working together to improve the lives of their citizens through economic growth.

South Asia—and, indeed, the entire world—will benefit if India and Pakistan promptly turn these commitments into concrete progress. We will continue our own efforts to work with India and Pakistan to promote progress in the region.

### **Remarks at the Democratic Governors’ Association Dinner**

*February 22, 1999*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. I

thank Governor O'Bannon for his kind introduction. I thank him and Governor Patton for their leadership of the Democratic Governors. I am delighted that all of them are here tonight, and I want to pay a special compliment to Tom Carper for his leadership for the National Governors' Association this year. And I might add, a special compliment to all the Democratic Governors who showed up here in Washington with an agenda for the NGA to put the children of this country first and put education on the front burner and not let it get mired in the partisan politics. They deserve an enormous amount of credit, and I thank them.

I want to thank Katie Whelan, Jennifer Rokala, Mark Weiner for their work for the DGA. And I'd like to thank the leaders of our national party who are here tonight: Governor Romer, Mayor Archer, Congresswoman Sanchez, and Joe Andrew—whom we stole from Indiana, thank you very much. I thank the Members of Congress who are here: Senator Akaka, Senator Bayh, Senator Dodd, Congresswoman Mink, Congressman Hoyer, and goodness knows who else is here; former Democratic Chairman Don Fowler and all the former Governors who are here: Governor Waihee, Governor Miller of Nevada, Governor Bayh—a two-for.

Let me also say one other thing by way of introduction. I am profoundly grateful to the NGA for putting together, courtesy of my good friend Frank Greer, that magnificent film on Lawton Chiles, one of the best, ablest people I ever knew, and I thank you for that.

When Rutherford B. Hayes became Governor of Ohio, he described his position in this way: "Not too much hard work, plenty of time to read, good society, et cetera." Hasn't changed much, has it? [*Laughter*] After he became President he said, "I am heartily tired of this life of bondage, responsibility, and toil." Well, I don't think he was right about either job. And I'm proud of the work you do and grateful for the role that all of you played in giving me a chance to serve you as President. It is not bondage or toil, although it is responsibility.

Nearly everybody who has had this job has written something like that. And it makes you wonder if they complain about it so much

why they work so hard to get it. There is no place on Earth, I think, as President Kennedy once said, where a person is called upon to reach deep into what you believe and what you think should be done, and then given the opportunity to marshal the resources of the country to move forward. But I think it is clear to all of you who have worked with me in the past that much of the success that this country has enjoyed, that we were a part of—and I certainly don't claim responsibility for all of it—but whatever success we have been able to enjoy in this administration is in no small measure the result of the fact that I had a chance to serve as a Governor for a dozen years. And I thank the people of my State for giving me that chance and all the Governors who worked with me.

In 1992 we said that we were bringing a new Democratic philosophy to the country. All it really meant was that we were going to bring Democratic ideals of opportunity for all, and a community of all Americans, and the Governors way of work—putting new ideas over old ideology and putting people over old-fashioned Washington politics. It turned out to be a pretty good theory.

All of you know that we've gone from a record deficit to a record surplus, that we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957, now the lowest unemployment rate of any industrial country in the entire world. We have opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it, provided immunizations for over 90 percent of our children for the first time in history. We're in the process, with your help, of providing health insurance to 5 million of the 10 million children in America who don't have it. Our country is working again and for that, and for the role all of you have played in it—not only the Governors and their staffs who are here but all the others who are here, from the labor organizations and the education groups and the business groups—I am profoundly grateful.

What I would like to just take a couple of minutes to talk to you about tonight is the urgency of the Governors being involved in dealing now with the great long-term challenges of this country. The easiest thing to do when things are going well is to say, "We

worked hard to get here; let's take a break." I might say that every time our country has done this—you go back through the whole history of America—every time we have done this, it has gotten us into trouble. And we can ill afford to do it now when the world is changing so fast and when even amidst our own prosperity, as all of you know, there is a lot of trouble around the world. Virtually all of Asia is in recession. Our neighbors in Latin America, our fastest-growing markets, all have had their economic growth dramatically reduced because of the global financial trouble. There are a lot of threats to our security lurking out there in nooks and crannies of discord the world over.

And I asked the American people in the State of the Union, and I ask the Governors here tonight, to join me in making the most of this opportunity that we have, because of our prosperity and equally because of our national confidence, to look at the long-term challenges of the 21st century. We have a chance to guarantee for the next several decades that these challenges we know about now can at least be met. No one can foresee for sure what will happen 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, but we know that if we deal with the problems that we know are out there now, if we seize the challenges we know are out there now, that our successors will have an easier path and our country will do a better job with more of its children.

We have to deal with the aging of America. There will be twice as many people over 65 in 2030 as there are now, and I hope I'm still one of them. You know, a lot of people go around wringing their hands about the problems with Social Security and Medicare. This is a high-class problem. We have this problem because we're living longer and staying healthier. The fastest growing group of Americans in percentage terms are people over 80. So I have asked the Congress to set aside 77 percent of this projected surplus for 15 years to save Social Security and Medicare and to improve them.

If we do that, we will also be able to pay down the national debt so that in 15 years, instead of half our annual income, which is what it was when I took office, it will be 7 percent of our annual income. That's the smallest percentage it has been since 1917,

before this country entered World War I. Instead of spending 14 cents on your tax dollar to pay interest on the debt, which is what we were paying in 1993, we'll be spending 2 cents. And if future Congresses have the discipline to stay on this track, we could actually be a debt-free nation in 19 years. Just think of it and what it would mean for our children.

We can save Social Security. We can do something about the inordinate rate of women on Social Security who are still living in poverty. We can lift the earnings limit that now is imposed on people on Social Security, which I think is a mistake, since we have more and more older people who are healthy, who are strong, and who want to work. We can add 20 years to the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit with some significant, but doable, reforms if we will have the discipline to set aside 77 percent of this surplus. That leaves us plenty of money to have tax cuts. I think we should have them dedicated to helping middle class people save for their own retirement, to have more investment in education, and to pay for our military needs. We can do all of that.

Now, the easy thing to do—we'll say, "Well, we've got this surplus, we waited 30 years for it, let's just give it away. It will be popular." There are a lot of Americans who could use all the money now. But it would be a mistake. And believe me, if you look at all this turmoil around the world—and the Governors that are going on the trade missions, that are seeking foreign investment, that want to do more business, you understand this. I don't know—and I'll say more about this in a minute—I don't know whether the United States can rectify a lot of these problems in the global economy in the next couple of years; I'm going to do everything I can to get that done. But I know this: If we have the debt going down, we'll keep interest rates down and investment high; if things go wrong overseas, they will be better than they otherwise would have been; and if things turn around overseas, our boom will be greater than it otherwise would have been if we have the discipline to do this. And I implore you to help me.

The Governors—Democrat and Republican alike—complained for years and years

that everybody in Washington talked about balancing the budget, and no one ever did anything about it. And after I got here and I saw all the blood that was on the floor after the '93 economic plan, I understood why nobody did anything about it. Dick Riley, my Education Secretary, another of our former colleagues, used to always tell me after that, when I'd be moping around, he'd say, "Just remember my old saying: 'let's change; you go first.'" [Laughter] But we're here now, and we don't want to turn around. We want to keep going.

You know we have to do something about the children and families in 21st century America. We have more kids in our schools—they have more diverse backgrounds; more of them come from parents who don't speak English, or whose first language is not English—than ever before. A lot of them are going to school in trailers, or in school buildings so old they can't even be hooked up to the Internet. I thank you for your support of our agenda to help you hire more teachers, to help you build or modernize schools. I ask you to continue to support our efforts to raise the standards. Governor Carper had the right slogan for this year's Governors' meeting: raising student achievement. We ought to end social promotion, but help the kids with after-school programs and summer school programs. We ought to turn around the failing schools. We ought to give the parents the report cards. We ought to do what it takes for educational excellence.

We also ought to do more to help working families afford quality child care. One of the great ironies is when we fought very hard for welfare reform—the Democratic Governors stood with me in insisting that we get billions of dollars in that welfare reform bill for child care—that we keep the guarantee of medical care and nutrition for the kids. The welfare rolls have dropped by nearly 50 percent. The people that are left are harder to place. We can't just let them be thrown into the streets. So a lot of you are using your surplus funds to put more money into child care and more money into training. It is an irony that a lot of people who have never been on welfare, but who have young children, cannot afford their child care needs.

In our balanced budget this year, we have a comprehensive program that will allow millions of children to have comprehensive child care while their parents go to work. And succeeding at home and work ought to be America's family mission for the 21st century. I ask you for your support for that. And for our efforts to expand the family leave law, to raise the minimum wage, to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, to do more to support equal pay for equal work—a bigger and bigger issue among working husbands, as well as working women—all these things need to be done if we are going to have the proper balance between work and family, so that our parents can do their job if our schools do theirs.

We have to build the right quality of life for the 21st century. We talked a lot at the Governors' meeting today about the livability agenda that I put forward with the leadership of the Vice President, Carol Browner, Rodney Slater, Dan Glickman, to try to help our communities manage their traffic problems, their toxic problems, their need for more green space with no Federal mandates, and a lot of empowerment. I hope you will help me pass that.

And finally, as the Governors get more and more and more involved in the global economy—and you've been leading us that way for 25 years now—I hope you will help me in my continuing effort to convince the Congress and the country that there is no longer a clear dividing line between our interest beyond our borders and our interest within our borders. I'll just give you one example.

I want to keep this economic expansion going. I am convinced that to do it we have to have more economic growth at home and more economic growth abroad. Governor Patton invited me to Kentucky's Appalachian region to push my America new markets initiative—tax credits and loan guarantees to get people to invest in the high unemployment areas of America. Mayor Archer here, in Detroit, got one of our first enterprise zones, and the unemployment rate in Detroit is now one-half of what it was in 1993. Detroit's unemployment rate is about at the national average. We can do that in rural areas and urban communities all over America.

And then we have to reach out beyond our borders to create a financial system and a trading system that works for ordinary people in the 21st century; to have labor standards, environmental standards and more open markets; to make it possible for money to go into places, but to make honest loans and open loans and protect against these wild fluctuations that have not only hurt overseas countries, but have hurt American farmers, have hurt our companies like Boeing and have been a killer for the steel industry. We have got to put a human face on the global economy, but we cannot run away from it. The Governors know that.

And I ask you to help to build a national consensus for that approach—not for running away, but not for saying, “Well, we’ll just open things up and forget about how it affects ordinary people.” In the end, the test of all of our efforts as Democrats is, are people out there in the country who never come to a fundraiser, but get up every day and work their hearts out and raise their kids and do everything they’re supposed to do, are they going to be better off if this policy prevails? That is the heart and soul of what drives our party. And if we can deal with the aging of 21st century America, the challenges of children and family in 21st century America, the challenges of our environment in 21st century America, the security challenges of 21st century America, we’re going to do just fine.

We can only do that if we deal with one last challenge, which I believe today more than any other thing, is the distinguishing difference between the two parties. And that is, we believe that 21st century America must be one America, united, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Every night for the last several nights, I have made a call to the Secretary of State, who is over in France trying to broker a peace agreement in Kosovo, trying to avoid another horrible ethnic slaughter in a country right next door to Bosnia. And you know what we went through there. Every week I try a little harder to use the time I have remaining to get a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In the last several weeks, I have exerted what efforts I could, so far without success, to avoid a brutal, murderous conflict between

Ethiopia and Eritrea, to minimize the other tribal wars in Africa.

Now, after years of work, we’ve hit another snag in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and we are doing our best to try to get by this last, tough thing. All you have to do is to read the papers to know that there are continuing tensions between India and Pakistan, between Greece and Turkey, that have old, deep, ethnic, and religious roots. All over the world, in the so-called modern world, ancient animosities are driving people to the point of war, and are keeping people down, ordinary people, in other countries—the kind of folks we try to represent here—cannot build a normal life because their leaders are determined to continue conflicts based on racial, religious, or ethnic lines.

And it’s why we have to guard so hard against that sort of thing here at home. We think we’re doing great now, and we can indulge ourselves in conflicts that we know better than to pursue, that is wrong. And we have to honestly say the great test of our democracy, in the end, is whether in good times and bad, America not only tries to do good abroad but to be good at home. In the end, we will be judged by that. We have to be a country where we all serve together, which is why I’ve worked so hard for AmeriCorps. We have to be a country where we’re pushing back constantly the frontiers of discrimination, which is why I have supported so strongly the “Employment Non-Discrimination Act.”

And we have to be a country that relishes our racial, our ethnic, our cultural diversity, and says we celebrate all this, but we know that underneath what God gave us all in common—in spite of all of our differences—is more important; that the framers of our Constitution so long ago were pretty smart when they talked about the inalienable rights given to every human being. And if we recognize that, then we ought to be able to find a way to live together.

I have done everything I know to do for 6 years to move us toward that one America. Should we have differences; should we have arguments; should we have elections; should we have discussions? Of course we should. But when you leave here tonight, if you don’t

remember another thing I said, you just remember this: No country throws away its common values and common humanity, even for an instant, without paying a price. And every night—every night—I thank God that we have the chance to be a force for peace from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Kosovo to Africa. I ask for the opportunity every night to make one stab to work out the problems between Greece and Turkey on Cyprus, to try to bring India and Pakistan closer together. And I thank God every night that we have not been cut apart by those things.

But America is growing more and more diverse. One of our new Governors here, Governor Davis, while he is Governor—while he is Governor—may preside over a State that has no majority race. Now, this is a good thing in the world of the 21st century if—but only if—America not only preaches our doctrine to people abroad but lives by it at home. The Democratic Party in the 1990's has constantly been for opportunity, for change, and for community.

I like to joke that at the end of the 20th century, looking back on over 200 years of American history, our party leaves this century and enters the next as not only the party of Jefferson and Jackson and Franklin Roosevelt but also now the party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. And I am very proud of it. I want you to stay proud of it. And I want us to live by it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:58 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Governors Frank O'Bannon of Indiana, DGA chair, Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, DGA vice chair, Tom Carper of Delaware, Gray Davis of California; former Governors John Waihee of Hawaii, Bob Miller of Nevada, Evan Bayh of Indiana, and Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Katie Whelan, executive director, Jennifer Rokala, national finance director, and Mark Weiner, treasurer, Democratic Governors' Association; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair-designate, and Donald L. Fowler, former national chair, Democratic National Committee; and media consultant Frank Greer.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

February 23, 1999

### Kosovo Peace Talks

**The President.** I'd like to make a very brief statement, and then we'll take a couple of questions. And as you know, you'll get to ask the leaders questions after the meeting, and we've got a lot of work to do.

But I think it's important to—first of all, I want to say how pleased I am to have the whole leadership here, how much I appreciate their coming down. We've got a lot to discuss, and I'm looking forward to it. I'd like to make just a couple of comments about the peace talks at Rambouillet on Kosovo. They made a lot of progress; they've got about a 40-page document, which describes in greater detail than ever before what the nature of an autonomous Kosovo within Serbia would be like. And that's the good news.

There are still some important disagreements. The Serbs have still not agreed to a NATO-led multinational force to try to maintain the peace over a 3-year period. The Kosovars still want some sort of assurance of a referendum at the end of the 3-year period, and neither side will agree to the other's position on that. And so we're working through that today, hoping for a resolution.

I talked to Secretary Albright last night. Whatever happens today and however they agree to proceed, I think it's very important that the Serbs exercise restraint on the ground and that the Kosovars respond in kind. They've made a lot of progress, and they don't need to let this thing get away from them. And we'll keep watching it, and I expect there will be more news on it as the day breaks.

**Q.** Will you extend the deadline again, sir, is that it?

**The President.** No, I don't know. That's up to the parties. I hope that they'll be able to resolve what they're going to do today. I think there will be some sort of resolution about where to go from here today, and we'll just have to see.

**Q.** But no bombings?

**The President.** Well, whether NATO bombs or not, the Secretary General has the

authority in his pocket now. That depends upon the actions of the Serbs. And what we need is continued restraint. But as I said, they made a lot of progress; they had these two big differences, each side having one condition the other won't agree to. So we'll just have to see where we go today.

**Q.** Mr. President, Senator Lott expressed concern about a costly, open-ended, no-defined peace-keeping mission. What kind of reassurances can you give him on that point?

**The President.** Well, I think that what we learned in Bosnia was that we shouldn't set a date certain and later find out we can't meet it and have people feel that they've been misled. I don't want to do that. So I think the important thing to do is to have an exit strategy based on benchmarks, on developments. And then if the Congress agrees with the benchmarks, that those are reasonable standards, then I think we can have an open relationship that has some credibility in the agreements between the Congress and the executive branch.

In terms of paying for it, I think in this fiscal year, whatever we have to do, we would need emergency funding because we're in a fiscal year where the Defense budget is already set. In the years ahead, I would expect that we would have to work that into the budget, and I think that's what the Congress leaders—Congress, as far as I know in both parties—have expected us to do, because they don't want the Pentagon to have to absorb these costs away from readiness and taking care of our people in the military.

#### **Cooperation With Republicans**

**Q.** Mr. President, these Republican leaders all voted to oust you from office. How can you work with them?

**The President.** We all took an oath, and I think we intend to follow it. We owe it to the American people, and I'm looking forward to it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

#### **Remarks on the "Insure Kids Now" Initiative**

*February 23, 1999*

**The President.** Thank you very much. Let me begin by saying how very much I appreciate all of you here who are a part of this historic day. I thank my longtime friend Governor Carper for his generous remarks and his great stories. He almost broke my concentration, though. I'll spend the rest of the day trying to remember what my first answer was to whether there was a noise when a tree falls in the forest. *[Laughter]*

I thank you, Governor Leavitt, for your outstanding leadership and your concern for our children. I'd like to, again, acknowledge the presence of Governor Angus King of Maine and Mary Herman; Governor and Mrs. Knowles of Alaska; Governor Vilsack of Iowa; Mrs. Rosselló from Puerto Rico; Mrs. Underwood from West Virginia. And I thank all the members of the Governors' conference who are here.

There's one private citizen here I would like to acknowledge, and that is Bud Chiles, the son of the late Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida, who has been very active in this endeavor, as well. I thank him.

We have a distinguished bipartisan delegation from the United States Congress here: Senator Hatch, here supporting his Governor from Utah; Senator Specter from Pennsylvania; Congresswoman Diana DeGette from Colorado; Congresswoman Anna Eshoo from northern California; Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee from Texas; Congressman Bart Stupak from the upper peninsula of Michigan. He is the only person in the room who thinks it is warm outside today. *[Laughter]*

I'd also like to thank the Smith family for coming, and I hope the boys weren't too embarrassed to stand up. They look very healthy to me, and that's reassuring. *[Laughter]* And I'd like to thank these beautiful children for being here—over here, and their families. When you think about what this is all about, just kind of look over there.

I want to thank the National Governors' Association. I want to thank Secretary Shalala, who is indefatigable. If I ask her to do something, sooner or later I will come to regret it—*[laughter]*—because she will do

it, and I will wind up doing whatever it is I'm supposed to do to make sure it gets done. She is not only the longest serving person in her position ever, she is also the most energetic, and that is no disrespect to her predecessors. I have never known anybody with as much energy as she has, with the possible exception of her mother, who I understand is still winning tennis tournaments in her eighties. [*Laughter*]

I'd also like to thank the First Lady, without whom I probably would not know very much about these issues. When I met her in 1971, she was already obsessed with them. She took an extra year when we were in law school to work at the Yale Child Studies Center and the Yale University Hospital so that she could put her legal learning to work to help the health of our children.

When you talked about our home State having 38,000 people signed up, we have less than one percent of the population. That means if everybody was doing that well, we'd already have 4 million kids signed up for this program, and that is in no small measure due to a group called the Arkansas Advocates for Families and Children, which Hillary founded over 20 years ago now. So I thank her for all that she has done.

When the Congress passed the bipartisan balanced budget in 1997, it was a truly historic act, and most of the publicity that surrounded that endeavor came from the sheer relief the country felt that finally we had done something about the deficit. But it's important to point out that there were a lot of very important provisions within that very large law, but none more important than the \$24 billion allocated to provide health insurance. We estimated at that time—to up to 5 million kids, which we estimated at that time were about half of the uninsured children in our country.

It is inconceivable that a country with as much economic prosperity as we now enjoy, and the best health care system in the world, would leave 10 million—now nearly 11 million—children without health insurance. We know many of them are eligible for Medicaid, but their parents don't know it. We know there are a lot of hard-working families now whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, but they apply, or qualify, for the

Children's Health Insurance Programs now that the States are operating around the country. But they don't know it.

Now, we knew when we signed this law into effect—I'll never forget Donna Shalala telling us that, you know, we can pass this law, but we've already got—at that time—over 3 million kids eligible for Medicaid who don't sign up and don't know it. So we knew then that, to make the tree heard in the forest, to extend the Governor's metaphor, to make the health insurance program more than an empty promise, we'd have to somehow get the word out to parents.

Last week—you've heard all these stories—last week I had an incredible experience at a health care forum in New Hampshire. I met a woman named Christine Monteiro, who has run a small business with her husband, a solar energy business, for 11 years. And like all small businesses, she had her ups and her downs. But the hardest times came when her kids needed health care and they couldn't afford the health insurance.

She found out about it the way we don't want people to have to find out about it, even though better that she found out than not. She had to take repeated visits to the doctor, with her child. And finally, a health care worker at the medical clinic told her that she might be eligible for New Hampshire's CHIP program. She applied immediately and found that her daughter's visits were all covered, and she saved up to \$1,000 a month for a very serious illness for her child.

Christine and her family were lucky. Not everybody, even who would come into a medical facility, might know. This should not be a matter of luck. We're here because all of us, in our various roles in life, recognize that we have an obligation to use every possible tool, every possible response, to reach more of the hard-working families like those you've heard about and seen today.

Government has a role to play. Secretary Shalala talked about it. Our national campaign is called "Insure Kids Now." We've already heard about the remarkable National Governors' Association effort, working with our administration and Bell Atlantic. The national toll-free number—I'm going to say it again—I like to say toll-free numbers, you

know. There's some chance it'll get on television if I say it—[*laughter*—one of the few things I can think of to say that is subject to absolutely no controversy. [*Laughter*] I could stand up here for 10 minutes and just repeat the toll-free number. I'll say it again: 1-877-KIDS-NOW. Not hard to remember and important not to forget.

As you've heard, because of the work of the NGA, you can get State-specific information. Because when the Congress set this program up in the Balanced Budget Act, and we strongly supported this, we realize we couldn't possibly design a program in Washington that would cover all the different circumstances that existed from State to State. So all these programs were set up and then approved State by State. So this is very, very important that we get this information out to people in the form in which it is most usable. And again, I want to thank Governors Carper and Leavitt for their leadership in this critical past year, and all the other Governors for their support.

Secretary Shalala told you about some of the things we're doing at the Federal level to reach more uninsured children. But let's be frank: to reach them all—to reach them all—everyone who can touch the life of a child or the child's parents needs to be involved in this effort.

Today we're here to announce an unprecedented commitment, from media to business, from the health care industry to grassroots organizations, all over our Nation, to inform families of these new health insurance options. We begin with an all-out media campaign to reach as many families as possible. NBC is unveiling a new primetime PSA to raise awareness about Children's Health Insurance Programs. Epatha Merkerson, one of the stars of NBC's "Law and Order," who appears in the PSA, is here with us today. Thank you very much for being here.

ABC and Viacom/Paramount will soon begin airing a PSA the First Lady made to inform families about the "Insure Kids Now" toll-free number. They have representatives here. I thank them. The National Association of Broadcasters will make the First Lady's PSA available to all of its member stations. Black Entertainment Television and Turner Broadcasting will also run the ad.

Before I go forward, I'd like to just unveil the two PSA's here for the first time. Let's take a look at them.

[*At this point, the public service announcements for the "Insure Kids Now" initiative were shown*]

**The President.** I'd also like to thank the representatives from Univision here. They will run a PSA in Spanish, made by HHS.

And we're not stopping there—major corporations, from Kmart and Ralph's Grocery to McDonald's to General Motors; from the American Medical Response to Blue Cross/Blue Shield Association to Pfizer, all of whom are represented here. It will help make sure that the "Insure Kids Now" toll-free number appears on grocery bags and restaurant placemats, on school buses and in doctors' offices, even on the toothbrushes that dental hygienists give their patients.

And with the help of organizations like America's Promise, the United Way, and a host of community-based groups, families will hear about health insurance from the people they trust the most—from teachers and principals, doctors and nurses, rabbis and ministers. Ultimately, of course, parents must take responsibility for their children's health. Our message must be: What you don't know about your children's health insurance options can hurt them.

It's up to you to find out if your child is eligible for this health insurance. So call the toll-free number: 1-887-KIDS-NOW. Working together, we can reach those kids. Look at those kids there. There's over 10 million of them. They deserve to be as healthy as we feel today. And we can do it for them.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tom Carper of Delaware, chairman, and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt, vice chairman, National Governors' Association; Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine and his wife, Mary J. Herman; Gov. Tony Knowles of Alaska and his wife, Susan; Gov. Thomas Vilsack of Iowa; Irma Margarita (Maga) Rosselló, wife of Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico; Hovah Underwood, wife of Gov. Cecil H. Underwood of West Virginia; and actress S. Epatha Merkerson. The transcript made available by the Office of the

Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

**Radio Remarks on the “Insure Kids Now” Initiative**

*February 23, 1999*

As every parent knows, nothing is more important than keeping our children healthy. So I have very good news for working parents. Even if you can't afford private health insurance, it's now possible to get help with doctor bills, medicines, and hospital care for your children. If your children are uninsured, please call 1-877-KIDS-NOW—1-877-KIDS-NOW. With a little help, your children can get the care they need to grow up healthy and strong.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 2:54 p.m. in the Oval Office on February 22 for later broadcast as a public service announcement. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 23. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on the Kosovo Peace Talks**

*February 23, 1999*

The peace talks in Rambouillet, France, are a significant step forward in the search for a fair and lasting peace in Kosovo. In the last three weeks, the negotiations have produced more progress than we have seen in the decade since Kosovo's autonomy was stripped away by the Government in Belgrade.

By agreeing in principle to a strong plan that would provide substantial self-government for the people of Kosovo, the negotiators on the Albanian side have shown courage and leadership. The agreement by the Serb side to substantial autonomy for Kosovo also represents an important, but incomplete, recognition that only by allowing the people in Kosovo control over their day-to-day lives can there be a lasting peace.

The Kosovar negotiators have asked for time to consult with their constituents before formally signing the peace plan. I believe that

the Kosovar Albanian people will strongly support what their negotiators have done, because the agreement represents the opportunity for a better life after years of repression and fear. The Serbs should be prepared to return to the negotiations on March 15 with a commitment to sign the full agreement—including the indispensable provisions on the withdrawal of most Serb security forces from Kosovo and the deployment of a NATO-led peace implementation force.

In the meantime, it is imperative that all sides avoid provocations that would imperil this progress. NATO Secretary General Javier Solana retains the authority given to him by the NATO Council to act if necessary.

I want to thank Secretary Albright and all her negotiators for their tireless efforts that led to hopeful developments, and commend British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, the cochairs of Rambouillet, for their leadership.

**Statement on the Verdict in the James Byrd, Jr., Murder Trial**

*February 23, 1999*

When James Byrd, Jr., was murdered, it was my hope that people would join together across racial lines to demonstrate that an act of evil like this is not what our country is all about. That hope was fulfilled over the past 8 months, as citizens across the country expressed their outrage and grief over this tragedy and their determination to ensure that justice be done.

I hope that the verdict rendered today by 12 citizens in Jasper, Texas, will bring some sense of closure to the family and friends of Mr. Byrd. The First Lady and I offer our prayers for them and our hope that their memories of Mr. Byrd's life will sustain them in the difficult time ahead. The jury has spoken. Our work for racial reconciliation and an end to all crimes of hatred in this country will go on.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting a Report on a Western  
Hemisphere Drug Alliance**

*February 23, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to provide the attached report on a Western Hemisphere Drug Alliance in accordance with the provisions of section 2807 of the "Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998." This report underscores the Administration's commitment to enhancing multilateral counter-narcotics cooperation in the region.

Strengthening international narcotics control is one of my Administration's top foreign policy priorities. Because of the transnational nature of the Western Hemisphere drug trafficking threat, we have made enhanced multilateral cooperation a central feature of our regional drug control strategy. Our counter-narcotics diplomacy, foreign assistance, and operations have focused increasingly on making this objective a reality.

We are succeeding. Thanks to U.S. leadership in the Summit of the Americas, the Organization of American States, and other regional fora, the countries of the Western Hemisphere are taking the drug threat more seriously and responding more aggressively. South American cocaine organizations that were once regarded as among the largest and most violent crime syndicates in the world have been dismantled, and the level of coca cultivation is now plummeting as fast as it was once sky-rocketing. We are also currently working through the Organization of American States to create a counternarcotics multilateral evaluation mechanism in the hemisphere. These examples reflect fundamental narcotics control progress that was nearly unimaginable a few years ago.

While much remains to be done, I am confident that the Administration and the Congress, working together, can bolster cooperation in the hemisphere, accelerate this progress, and significantly diminish the drug threat to the American people. I look forward

to your continued support and cooperation in this critical area.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 23, 1999.

**Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony  
for President Jerry John Rawlings of  
Ghana**

*February 24, 1999*

President and Mrs. Rawlings, distinguished members of the Ghanaian delegation, my fellow Americans. Mr. President, Hillary and I are delighted to welcome you and Mrs. Rawlings to the United States. Nearly a year ago, your country gave us a greeting I will always remember. On that great day, it was over 100 degrees fahrenheit—[laughter]—and we had a half million people in Independence Square in Accra. We thought we should arrange a similar meeting here today. [Laughter]

Actually, for the South Grounds of the White House, we have a large crowd of people, young and old, from all parts of America, including a significant number of people whose roots are in your country. And in our hearts, our welcome is warm. In Independence Square, before the largest crowd I had ever addressed, I learned the meaning of *akwaaba*, your word for "welcome." It was also written on billboards and on posters, and unforgettably written in the faces of all the Ghanaian people we saw. Mr. President, Mrs. Rawlings, it gives me great pleasure to say to you this morning, *akwaaba*. Welcome to the United States.

Our trip to Ghana marked an important step forward for Africa and the United States, symbolizing a new beginning for both of us, a partnership built on mutual respect and mutual benefit. On our part, it signaled to the world our respect for Africa's achievements and aspirations after centuries of colonialism and decades of cold war. On Africa's part, it signaled your readiness to work with us to forge a better future of open societies and shared responsibilities.

Mr. President, under your leadership, Ghana has continued to flourish. It remains a vivid example of what democracy and open markets can do for the African people. Over the past 5 years, your economy has grown steadily. You have an independent judiciary, a lively Parliament, a thriving civil society.

Ghana is a partner with other African nations, seeking to preserve peace in the region, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where you support the ECOMOG regional peacekeeping forces, and through your partnership in the Africa Crisis Response Initiative. You also send peacekeepers to other spots far from home, from Lebanon to the former Yugoslavia. And for that, we are grateful.

The United States needs strong partners like Ghana. It is no secret that hard challenges lie ahead for Africa. Recent headlines have described the continuing upheaval caused by terrorism, civil war, military aggression, the senseless cruelty suffered by innocent people caught in a web of violence. Clearly, there remains much to be done. But equally clearly, these headlines do not tell the full story of Africa, of more than 700 million people who want what people the world over want: to work, to raise a family, to live a full life, to bring a better future to their children.

A year after my trip to Africa, it is important to highlight what the headlines often don't: the hard work of the African people toward these lofty goals, the progress we are making in spite of setbacks. In Ghana, as in other African nations, we are deepening our link through growing trade and investment, air travel and Internet access. I look forward to discussing this progress with the President and to talking about how we can build on it.

Something else of far-reaching importance is happening in Africa, something unthinkable last year when I visited Accra. Three days from now there will be a democratic Presidential election in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria. For 28 of its 38 years of independence, Nigeria has been run by military dictators. Now it has a chance to start anew.

The friendship between Ghana and the United States grows deeper every year. Ghana received our very first Peace Corps

volunteers in 1961, and nearly four decades later, new Peace Corps volunteers still make a difference there. Across a wide range of common endeavors, our nations cooperate and learn together. More and more Ghanaians are coming to America to help us build our future. More and more Americans visit Ghana and the rest of the continent to understand the history that binds us together.

Mr. President, your visit underscores the debt all Americans owe to Ghana and to Africa for the brilliant contributions that African-Americans have made and continue to make to the United States.

The writer and crusader, W.E.B. Du Bois, was a citizen of both Ghana and the United States. Near the end of his life, he wrote his great-grandson that his very long life had taught him two things: first, that progress sometimes will be painfully slow and, second, that we must forge ahead anyway because, and I quote, "the difference between 100 and 1,000 years is less than you now think." He concluded, "doing what must be done, that is eternal."

Mr. President, you have done so much of what must be done. It will live eternally, and we will be eternally grateful for the friendship between our two nations. Let us extend it in the new century for the new millennium.

Mr. President, Mrs. Rawlings, welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Rawlings was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to President Rawling's wife, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings. The President also referred to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Rawlings.

### **The President's News Conference With President Rawlings**

*February 24, 1999*

**President Clinton.** Mr. President, distinguished members of the Ghanaian delegation, it's been a real pleasure for me to welcome President Rawlings back to Washington to advance the partnership between the United States and Ghana.

On my visit to Africa last spring, I said the United States wanted and very much needed a new partnership with Africa. We face stiff challenges: a border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; civil wars in the Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone; famine and disease causing heartbreaking human loss. But it is important not to forget how far Africa has come since the days of apartheid and authoritarianism.

In a few days, we'll have an election in Nigeria to elect a President and to give the largest, most populous country in Africa a chance to chart a new course. Over half the countries of sub-Saharan Africa already have democratically elected governments. It is clearly in our interest to have a broad and constructive partnership.

Since Kwame Nkrumah led Ghana to independence in 1957, Ghana's example has inspired other nations to take control of their destinies. Over the past decade, Ghana has continued to lead the way, with a growing economy, with peacekeeping forces in west Africa and around the world, with its efforts to strengthen democracy at home.

Today President Rawlings and I are broadening our partnership. We're encouraging multilateral African forces to respond quickly to outbreaks of violence. We're providing more training for Ghana's battalion in the new African peacekeeping enterprise, the African Crisis Response Initiative. We're supporting Ghana's active role in stemming violence in west Africa through ECOMOG's regional peacekeeping force, as it seeks to stop the carnage that has racked Sierra Leone.

For our part, we have contributed logistical and medical support for peacekeeping troops there, and we will continue to do so. In fact, I want to increase our support for ECOMOG, and I hope Congress will support my proposal to do so. In the last 18 months, we have also provided over \$75 million in humanitarian assistance to refugees and victims of violence.

President Rawlings and I also agreed on a number of steps to increase trade and investment between our nations. Tomorrow our U.S. Trade Representative will sign a trade and investment framework agreement with her Ghanaian counterpart. It will be only our second such agreement in Africa.

Next month, here in Washington, 9 members of my Cabinet will meet with ministers representing more than 40 African nations to discuss ways that we can work together to expand development. I also hope Congress will soon take the next step by passing the "African Growth and Opportunity Act."

Finally, the President and I will continue to work together to fulfill the promise of democracy in Africa. Ghana already invests a phenomenal 40 percent of its budget in education. Today we announced that we will be sending new Peace Corps volunteers to help link Ghana's classrooms to the Internet. We're also working with Ghana to crack down on child labor, to train judges and lawyers mediating disputes, to fight HIV and AIDS while infection rates are still low there, to build a reliable power supply for the future, to study and preserve Ghana's elephant population and their environment, and to prepare for fair elections in the year 2000.

This partnership, indeed, covers a lot of ground. Our investment in Ghana and Africa is one of the most important we can make for the new century. This year we will offer over \$800 million in economic support to Africa. We will augment this with a healthy program of bilateral debt forgiveness for Africa's strongest performing economies. Over a 2-year period, counting what we did last year, that bilateral debt forgiveness will be almost \$500 million.

Africa cannot overcome all its challenges overnight. But make no mistake about it, there is a new Africa, growing proudly alongside its ancient traditions. Ghana is not the largest country in Africa, but it continues to lead toward tomorrow by the force of its example, by its commitment to democracy, by its steady economic progress, by its cooperation with its neighbors, by its willingness to take risks and make contributions for peace. Ghana is lighting the way forward and we are proud to be here working to strengthen our partnership.

Mr. President.

**President Rawlings.** Thank you very much. Thanks for some parts of the good news. I wish you had told me about it earlier on. [Laughter]

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen of the press, this morning, at the ceremony on the

White House lawn, I set out a rather modest agenda for my visit to the U.S. I'm happy to note that the discussions that we've had so far have been instructive from both sides. President Clinton has shown to us his sincerity and determination to forge ahead with a new era of cooperation with Africa.

We all agree that his trip to Africa last year represented the high point of official U.S. attention to and recognition of our continent. And I hope that Africa will continue to feature prominently on the foreign policy agenda of the U.S.

It is rather unfortunate that the stereotype image of Africa as a continent full of conflict, lack of democracy, et cetera, et cetera, continues to dominate the international media. And yet, there are many positive developments taking place on our continent. For example, in the past 5 years, some 21 African countries have achieved positive GDP growth rates, with 12 of them—including Ghana—reaching 45 percent a year. Democracy has taken root in many African countries, with emphasis on good governance.

And many of our countries have done the right things to create a favorable climate for foreign investment. In fact, Africa has demonstrated real promise as a destination for investment. Ladies and gentlemen, listen. The statistics show that between 1990 and '94, the average annual return on U.S. direct investment to Africa was 28—28—percent. This, compared with 11 percent in Europe, 12 percent in Latin America, and 14 percent in Asia—the Pacific areas.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude my very brief and introductory remarks by saying that Africa is a continent in transition. It is a continent facing challenges, and some of these have their roots in the bipolar politics of the cold war. But Africa could very well be the continent of the future. As you know, the Secretary-General of the U.N., Mr. Kofi Annan, put it succinctly the other day when he said that the conflicts and problems of Africa were caused by human action and can, therefore, be ended by human action.

We're here, ladies and gentlemen, as I said earlier on, to invite the United States of America to be part and parcel of that human action, to address the problem of hunger, poverty, debt, and conflict. Thank you.

**President Clinton.** Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, what we will do is, we'll take alternating questions, one from the American press, one from the African press, and we'll begin with Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

### **Independent Counsel Statute/Allegations of Misconduct**

**Q.** Mr. President, would you like to see the independent counsel statute expire in June? And what is your reaction to recent allegations by an Arkansas woman, apparently of something she claims happened many years ago?

**President Clinton.** Well, my counsel has made a statement about the first issue, and I have nothing to add to it.

On the independent counsel law, I think that, as you know, we've been—I think you know, I think it's been public that we've been asked to testify, the White House Counsel has been invited to testify next week. And I presume sometime between now and then I'll have a chance to talk to them about what they intend to say.

I think for right now what I would like to say, because I have been, to put it mildly, closely involved with the operation of the statute, that I think I would like to leave the maximum amount of time for others to make their opinions known and to feel free, without any reference to anything we might say, to do that. I would encourage people who have views to make them known. And I was particularly struck by the change in position of the American Bar Association and by the size of the vote in favor of that different position. And I think it's just something that Congress should look at.

**Q.** Excuse me, but you do have some ideas about—

**President Clinton.** I do; I do have some—

**Q.** —the loss of confidentiality.

**President Clinton.** I do. I have some ideas about it. But I think it would be better for me at this time to say less so that others can say more. The Counsel will be testifying at some point next week. But now I think the important thing is that everyone feel free to express their opinion, and I don't think

mine should, in effect, cast a shadow or illuminate what others might wish to say between now and the time we make our statement.

***Peacekeeping Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo***

**Q.** My question is for both Presidents. There is a conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo—[*inaudible*—is trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement. In the case that it reaches the point where it needed the contribution of troops for a peacekeeping force in the Congo, is, first, Ghana going to contribute troops to bring peace to the Congo? And also, is the United States going to contribute money and logistics for the peacekeeping in the Congo?

**President Rawlings.** If I may—do you mind, sir? You are no doubt aware that we have more than enough problems on our hands on the West Coast of Africa, and for the past—what—10 to 15 years or so, we've been involved in the conflict issues in west Africa, mainly between Nigeria, Guinea, and Ghana. We've managed to find the appropriate solution to the problem in Liberia, and today we find ourselves also in Sierra Leone.

I must admit, though, that much as we've enjoyed some form of assistance from some of our Western allies, I don't think the assistance that has been provided has been adequate, and it's something we've always brought to their notice. But in our recent discussions with the Cabinet, under his leadership, they've made it quite clear that they'll do everything possible to assist us to be able to deal with some of the problems in west Africa.

As far as the issues to do with the Congo is concerned, I believe the U.S. is doing what you can by way of providing the necessary assistance to South Africa and a few other countries to find a solution to the problem in that part of Africa.

Should they be asking for troops from Ghana to serve in, what do you call it—Congo-Brazzaville—

**Q.** The Democratic Republic of Congo.  
**President Rawlings.** Thank you very much. I have to say that our resources are stretched to the very limit. We have problems back at home. And if the U.N. or the

international organizations and countries would want to assist us, we have a number of troops who would be prepared to assist, to provide a peacemaking as well as the peace—what do you call it—peacekeeping effort in that part of the country. Okay?

**President Clinton.** My answer to you sir is, first of all, I think we all have a stake in a resolution of the problems of the Congo. And if there were an appropriate peace signed that we felt to be consistent with the rules of the international community and the long-term stability and welfare of the people of the Congo, as well as its neighbors, I would certainly do my best to support any necessary force to maintain the peace for a period of transition, including logistical and other support.

I'm sure you know this, I mentioned it in my remarks, but for some years now, we've been trying to help establish an Africa Crisis Response Initiative, and help to support it financially, that would, in effect, go beyond the efforts of ECOMOG in west Africa, to deal with the whole continent. And when I was in Senegal last year, I actually went out to a training operation of the Africa Crisis Response Initiative, and I met with some of the soldiers, and I talked with our people about what we were doing together.

So I would be pleased. I also went to Rwanda last year and met with the leaders of the surrounding countries, the Great Lake countries, including Mr. Kabila. At that time, we were trying to—I was hoping we could avoid the bad year we've had in the Congo.

So if there could be an internationally recognized agreement, consistent with international law, that required a peacekeeping force, and we were asked to provide some sort of support, logistical and otherwise, I would be inclined to do so.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

***Kosovo Peace Negotiations/U.S. Foreign Policy Interests***

**Q.** Mr. President, two questions. Last Friday you said it would be a mistake to extend the negotiating deadline for Kosovo. What made you change your mind in less than 24 hours? And how do you respond to former Secretary of State Kissinger, who says that Kosovo should be protected by European

troops and not American troops? He wrote this week, "Kosovo is no more a threat to America than Haiti was to Europe, and we never asked for NATO support there."

**President Clinton.** Well, this is a good way to have a six-question, instead of a three-question press conference. [*Laughter*] Let me try to disaggregate those things.

First of all, what they did in the peace talks was to reach an agreement that they had gone as far as they could, but they did not want to give up and disintegrate into violence. So when we agreed to extend, we were basically agreeing to what both parties wished to do. It seems to me that if your objective is to get people to get together to make peace and they say, "We think this is what we need," I think that's the right thing to do.

Now, the Kosovars have agreed in principle to the agreement. They want to go home and have time to sell it between now and the middle of March. The Serbs have agreed, except they don't agree to having a multinational, NATO-led peacekeeping force because they say there's a big difference between Kosovo and Bosnia. Bosnia was an independent country in which the Serbs had interests; Kosovo, they say, is a part of their country, so this erodes their sovereignty. The problem is that we believe, and all others, including the Europeans, who have been involved in this process, believe that unless there is some sort of multinational force, we cannot keep the peace.

So they've agreed to work on this between now and March 15th, and they're giving us some time to work on it to try to make it work, and I'm committed to do that.

Now, second point: I would say there is a difference between the interests of Europe in Haiti and the interest of the United States in Kosovo. And I don't mean—this does not diminish the importance of Haiti. We've worked very hard to save democracy in Haiti, and to support that country. But our country, for 50 years, has recognized that what we wanted in Europe was a Europe that was democratic, peaceful, and undivided. At the end of the cold war, we finally had a chance to achieve all three. But with the disappearance of repressive regimes and the threat of

the cold war conflict, a lot of old ethnic, religious conflicts reasserted themselves.

Does the United States have an immediate, selfish interest in what happens on some lonely road in Kosovo to some poor farm family driving a wagon, with horses that are underfed because they haven't been able to get food? No. We have—I would argue we have a humanitarian interest. One of our major papers yesterday ran a gripping picture on the front page of a whole line of refugees moving out.

But the United States does have a direct interest in whether there is instability in the Balkans. And I would say to Dr. Kissinger, I think we're moving in the right direction. We want Europe to assume more of its own defense. And if you compare where we were in Bosnia—how long it took to get there, what our role was, our contribution in the beginning of the Bosnia operation—to where we are in Kosovo on this military proposal—how much more quickly it materialized, and our contribution, only about 14 percent, I think, of the total—I think we're moving toward more of an independent European force, but supported by the United States, because we have a very large stake in anything that upsets the stability of central Europe.

### ***Domestic Support for the President's Africa Initiative***

**Q.** It's obvious that Africa does not play a major role in terms of the minds of the people of the United States, as we can gather now that no questions have been asked about Africa.

**President Clinton.** You shouldn't take it—it often happens with Asians and Latin Americans and—[*laughter*]—and it's really my fault because I don't let them ask me enough questions on other occasions, so I'm forcing them to use this opportunity to pepper me. I apologize. [*Laughter*] So go ahead.

**Q.** It's obvious that you and your Government have very good intentions towards Africa. But how are you going to "conscientize" Congress and the American people to be able to support your efforts in Africa?

**President Clinton.** Well, first of all, that's a very good question. We talked about that

at great length in our meeting today. We spent as much time on that as anything.

Let me say, I see this as a multiyear effort, long-term effort. It started when we had the first-ever White House conference on Africa here. And we're about to have this ministerial, as I said, next month, with at least 40 African nations represented—very high levels. I was the first President ever to take a really long trip to sub-Saharan Africa and to go to six countries.

We're trying to increase both—not both, all three—aid, trade, and investment and bilateral debt relief. We are working on demining activities, which is very sensitive and important in many parts of Africa. We're working especially hard on health-related issues and particularly HIV and AIDS, where that's a big problem.

And meanwhile, we're trying to lift the profile of Africa in the United States. There is actually quite a lot of interest among ordinary citizens here. The Africa trip I took last year, particularly since it got off to such a good start, when a half million people showed up in Accra—[laughter]—and most of our people—Presidents are not used to having half a million people. [Laughter] If I get 10,000 or 20,000 here, it's a big show. [Laughter].

But the point is, it captured the imagination of the American people. And we also had a good delegation from Congress there. And tonight, at the state dinner, we will have a delegation from Congress, a sizeable delegation, which will include both African-Americans and non-African-Americans. It will include both Democrats and Republicans.

This is not going to be—we were isolated from Africa for a long time, except for cold war concerns, as you know. And we are trying to have a broad, deep, full relationship now. And it is simply not going to happen overnight; we're going to have to work at building it.

But I want you to be encouraged. I think we're moving in the right direction. And I have been very heartened by the genuine interest I have gotten from Members of Congress, from both parties and all kinds of backgrounds. I have been trying to tell them that this is a phenomenal opportunity, as well as

obligation, for the United States; we've been missing it, and we don't need to miss it anymore. And I think that we're moving in that direction.

**President Rawlings.** It is true that when this issue came up I did a lot of talking about, engaging about this issue, almost sounding like a priest. [Laughter] And at the end of it, the response I got was that there are other ones that you should be talking to this way. I mean, those who you should be talking to this way were outside of this room, outside of this Cabinet. And in other words, they are very much in agreement with our perceptions about Africa's problems, what the problems are and what the solutions ought to be. So in effect, it's hard to take this message outside of that Cabinet, to the broader American public, to Members of Congress, et cetera, on both sides of the aisle.

**President Clinton.** To be fair, what the President said here in his opening statement in some ways is the most important thing you can say to Americans who are not involved in Africa. This is not simply a continent with problems; it's a continent with promise. Our investments in Africa, American investments in Africa, have earned a rate of return more than twice the rate of return earned by American investments the last 5 years in Europe, Asia, or Latin America. That is quite a stunning statistic.

And you can say, "Oh, well, it's because it's just the beginning of investment;" or, "Oh, well, the best opportunities are there." You can make all the excuses you want; 30 percent is 30 percent. [Laughter] And that's real money, you know? Even by the standards of the last 5 years, that's a hefty rate of return.

I did tell—after the President was pounding on me to do better by Africa, I did say, I said, "Reverend Rawlings, you're preaching to the saved." [Laughter] "You should just pass the plate, you know." He was preaching to the saved. [Laughter] But it's a very important point. I don't blame him, or you, for asking this question.

But you have to understand, too—I know the cold war has been over 10 years now, I know that. But I also would call your—I would like to say one other thing, briefly, I said to the delegation earlier. The end of

the cold war presented the United States with a new circumstance that required us to take an approach different from the approach we had taken for 200 years. For 200 years, our principal involvement with other countries was commercial or cultural, unless attacked. Then in the 20th century, we got into World War I because our ideals were offended and because our allies were in trouble in Europe. We immediately withdrew from the world, with disastrous consequences. One of the reasons that we had the Great Depression and we had World War II is that the United States in its idealism walked away from the world.

So then we had World War II, and then we had the cold war, a reason for America to stay in the world. For the last 10 years, it is the first time in the history of the United States that we have had a sustained, comprehensive commitment, bipartisan, to have a larger role in the world—in peacetime, without our existence being threatened—which means we learned something from what happened between World War I and World War II, and we understand that America is a country where people here come from everywhere, and we know we have unique responsibilities because of the blessings we enjoy at this moment in history. But it is a new moment for us, and we are still learning how to do it.

That is not an excuse. I know when you see a child die of AIDS, or you see a child step on a mine in Angola, or you see an economic opportunity going unfulfilled, or you think that we could help you to end a war more quickly, I know it's frustrating. But our friends in Africa have to understand what we have been doing for the last 10 years is unique in more than 200 years of history for us. And I think we'll get it right and do the right thing, but it requires a certain departure that I think most people who don't know the history of our country have difficulty accepting.

Go ahead, Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters].

#### **President Rawlings' Budget Proposal/ Situation in Iraq**

**Q.** President Rawlings, your domestic critics say that your budget proposal for the com-

ing year has been unrealistically optimistic, and I'm just wondering if you might like to take this opportunity to respond to that.

And President Clinton, on Iraq—[Laughter].

**President Clinton.** I thought you were going to ask me the first question. [Laughter] Go ahead.

**Q.** There's been another incident again today. And this certainly seems to be an ongoing recurrence. And I'm just wondering if, perhaps, you can clarify for us what the U.S. policy objective is on Iraq? And have we given up all hope of any kind of arms inspections again?

**President Rawlings.** Please. I don't think there's anything unrealistic about what the Minister of Finance—and it's not just the Minister of Finance, but it's the whole Cabinet, under the chairmanship of the Presidency, myself, as well as the Vice President, do a very thorough examination of the pros and cons of what's coming in and what's going out, et cetera, and on the basis of which, we do a very thorough examination of what will come and what will not. And it's on the basis of this that we come out with the budget statement for the country.

And please accept it when I say that we've gone through an experience where, unlike governments of the past, we did not make the mistake of—what do you call it—taking politically expedient moves just to deal with some economic problem. Because ultimately it's going to catch up with us, and this is what has happened in the past. And this is a lesson we learned more than 10, 15 years ago.

I mean, it's been very difficult for us in the past, every time we've had to read the budget, but then we take the trouble to educate our people about what it entails, what it means, what the difficulties are going to be, et cetera.

But you've got to keep in mind that the minute our people under—very often—I think I understand where you're coming from—very often, whenever people do not understand or appreciate what is being churned out in a broadcast, then, of course, I mean, they wonder what you're talking about. But if you can reduce it to the lowest denominator and then they understand what it all entails, they are all for you. That's half

the problem; that's half the solution that's solved. And that's what we do. Not just with our civilian counterparts, the workers in the factories, but soldiers, officers, et cetera, in the barracks, et cetera. The minute they understand it, that's half the problem.

Now, if you're telling me this on account of what you are reading on the Internet, it's unfortunate that we're not as quick, as efficient to correct misimpressions—is that the word?—or distortions on the Internet, as others do ahead of us. I wish we were just as efficient as they are on the Internet—[laughter]—then you wouldn't be asking me this question. [Laughter]

We have a Finance Minister—wait a minute—who started off as the Energy—he made a success of it—no, before the Energy—Transport and Communication—he made a success of it. From there we moved him to Lands and Forestry; he made a success of it; from there to Energy—no, Energy and to do with the gold mine—Mines and Energy; he made a fantastic success of that one. And that's how he ended up as the Minister of Finance.

A man of integrity, earnestness; he sits with a cross-section of the people, from the top right down to the bottom—workers, union leaders, et cetera—and lays everything on the table. And that is what we need in Africa. That's what we've been doing in Ghana. That's how come we've survived this long, because we don't hide anything from anybody. We lay everything on the table.

So if you're putting this question across to me, please, attribute it to those who just cannot accept the earnestness, the sincerity of this government. Is that okay? [Laughter] No, if I haven't finished, please feel free, you can come back.

**President Clinton.** On Iraq, you asked two questions. Let me take the second question first.

No, we have not given up on the prospect of restoring inspections. But since Saddam Hussein terminated his cooperation with UNSCOM and then the military action was taken by the United States, Great Britain, with the support of our allies, they have continued to defy the U.N., and that's where we are now. That brings us back to your first question.

What's going on with these incidents is that under the United Nations resolutions, which are still in place, the no-fly zone still exists. The no-fly zone has to be patrolled. When it is patrolled by American and British pilots, from time to time, as you pointed out, there have now been several instances when Israeli air defense—excuse me, Iraqi air defense weapons have been fired at our airplanes. And they're trying, obviously, for the symbolic victory of shooting one of these planes down, and perhaps trying to intimidate us from enforcing the no-fly zone, which we're still bound to do under the United Nations resolution.

Now, in response to that, we have certain rules of engagement which permit us to take out the air defense. And we have done quite a lot of it. I noticed there was one column in the press in the last week—I think it was Mr. Seib's [Jerry Seib, Wall Street Journal] column—but anyway, it was a column which pointed out that a significant amount of damage, perhaps as much damage or more, has been done to the air defense network since the end of the last military action than was done during the military action, where we had a lot broader range of targets we were going after.

And I regret this, you know. I regret this. I wish he would stop doing that. I wish he would make an agreement with the United Nations to let the inspections go back. We have shown that we are not interested in hurting the Iraqi people. We have been for broader rules for meeting the nonmilitary needs of the people of Iraq, and we will continue to work at that.

But these little encounters—each of them so far has been relatively small—are as a result of the fact that we are still, notwithstanding the fact that the inspectors aren't there, bound to enforce a no-fly zone which still exists under the U.N. resolutions.

### **African Debt Relief**

**Q.** This question is to President Clinton. In recent years, there's been much talk about the need for debt cancellation, and the general feeling among African countries is that this is one surest escape route towards economic development. I would like to hear your comments on it.

**President Clinton.** I'm sorry. I'm hard of hearing. Could you repeat—the debt cancellation issue?

**Q.** Yes.

**President Clinton.** Well, I believe that debt relief is appropriate, in Africa and in certain other places, particularly in view of the countries in—some of the countries in Asia that have been so hard hit by the financial crisis. I think that debt relief, frankly, though, only works if it is accompanied by a longer-term commitment to a sound economic policy.

If you look at the astonishing results that Ghana has produced over a period of years—steady growth, good years and bad years; some years are better than others—but you've enjoyed steady growth. You've had a steady political environment that has also become steadily more democratic, not steadily more repressive, moving in the right direction.

I think that it is unlikely that a lot of these countries can really resume significant growth without debt relief. But I do not believe debt relief alone will bring them their growth. That's my position. I'm for more debt relief. The United States is sponsoring—as I said, we will have, in Africa alone, almost \$500 million in debt relief this year and last year, if Congress approves my proposal. We also have contributed another \$50 million in this budget as our contribution to a larger international debt relief effort.

And I think we can do more. But it is essential for some countries, but it is not enough. So we need debt relief plus trade and investment, plus aid, plus good economic policies within the country. You have to have all of them, I think, to maximize African growth.

Let's take one more. John [John King, Cable News Network].

### **Cooperation With Congress**

**Q.** Sir, both the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader left their meeting with you yesterday and refused to answer directly when we asked them outside if they could trust you after the events of the past few months. Was that your sense in the meeting? And if that is the case, how do you hope

to accomplish anything in your final 22 months?

**President Clinton.** Well, the answer is that was not my sense. I thought it was a good meeting. Because of what they went through with their own Members, that's a difficult question for you to ask them. And no matter what answer they give, it causes them more problems than it solves. You guys are great at asking me those questions, too.

But I mean, keep in mind, they're the leader of—they have to lead their caucuses in the House and the Senate. So that sort of question, at the time when some of the nerves are still raw, any answer they give makes it more difficult for them, potentially, at least, within their caucus or within the country, depending on what answer they give.

So I think the answer ought to be, the answer they ought to give and the answer they ought to have deeply imbedded in their minds and hearts is that their feelings are not important here—just like my feelings are not important. We have an oath to fulfill, a responsibility to fulfill. We were hired to do the public's business, and they expect us to do it.

You know, it would be hard to imagine a year that was more strained than last year, and we got a lot done. It was a good year, legislatively. We continued—we passed our second balanced budget; we passed the legislation to provide for 100,000 teachers, with almost a third of them paid for in the downpayment, and lots of other things.

So I think we're now in a period—this is early in the legislative calendar; they have a new leader in the House; they have a lot of work to do; they have to get a budget resolution through. And then we have probably, oh, I don't know, 8 or 10 bills that I can conceive of us getting agreement on—I mean, really significant bills, a lot of them—between the two parties.

And then we've got these big questions of what to do about Social Security, Medicare; whether I'm right, they're right, something else is right on the tax cut issue. There are big questions out here. And I believe that we will all do our duty in the end; that's what I think. And I just think we need to—if we focus on the American people and doing our

duty, and not on whether we're mad or happy, disappointed or elated about the events of the last year, then all this in the course of time will work itself out. And the American system will be validated.

We—if you take a position like the ones we've taken, it is simply wrong for you to think about what your feelings are. Your responsibility is to fulfill your oath and do what the public needs. And if we focus on that, we'll be just fine.

### **Dual Citizenship**

**Q.** President Rawlings, I think I'm on the wrong side of the room. I apologize, but I have a question for you.

**President Rawlings.** I understand. Actually, I was actually briefed that most of the questions would be directed at the President. [Laughter] I was made to understand that, don't be surprised if most of the questions are related to American domestic situations and not the fact that I'm here from Africa. Thank you. Carry on, please. [Laughter]

**Q.** Well, I've heard that Ghana is offering some sort of dual citizenship to African-Americans. Is that true? What does it mean, and what's the reasoning behind it?

**President Rawlings.** It's very true. Sorry, do you mind if I—is it something connected to the question?

**President Clinton.** Answer this one, and then if you want to call on him, it's fine.

**President Rawlings.** Very soon, our Parliament will be passing the bill to grant black Americans their dual citizenship, as far as Ghana is concerned, and you'll have the right of dual abode.

**Q.** What does it mean?

**President Rawlings.** What does it mean?

**Q.** Yes.

**President Rawlings.** You wouldn't need a visa; you wouldn't need whatever it is to enter my country. You will have the freedom to move around as any fellow Ghanaian, and that will not deny you your American citizenship, either.

**Q.** What's the reasoning behind it?

**President Rawlings.** What's the reason behind it?

**Q.** Yes.

**President Rawlings.** Do German-Americans, do Israeli-Americans—are they denied

the right of their citizenship back at home? No, no, please, if I'm wrong, can you correct me?

**Q.** I don't know. [Laughter]

**President Rawlings.** Quite frankly, I mean, I could go on and on. But the point is that, I mean, you're our kith and kin. If others can refer to themselves as Jewish Americans or German-Americans or Irish-Americans, whatever it is, Italian-Americans, and you're calling yourself African——

**Q.** Americans.

**President Rawlings.** ——whatever it is. [Laughter] I mean, where do you come from? After all, I mean, my continent is the mother of—what do you call it?—not all continents but humanity and civilization as we've come to know today. I mean, is there any reason why you should not have the right to enjoy the citizenship of where you come from?

**President Clinton.** I'm just sorry I can't do it. [Laughter] I don't qualify. [Laughter]

**President Rawlings.** No, no, wait a minute, sir. Hold on, Mr. President. [Laughter] No, no. You're not going to explain this for me. [Laughter]

Let's put it this way. I'm rather surprised that you're asking me this question. I should be asking you, I mean, how on God's possible—whatever it is—could you be asking me a question like this? [Laughter] Because, I mean——

**Q.** Would it be dual loyalty?

**President Rawlings.** Well, I guess that's what we have a bit of—we don't have any problem with that. I think—when I look into that issue, I have a problem with you, because you're demanding loyalty to the American Constitution, and yet I cannot demand the same kind of loyalty to my country. And this is where I'm beginning to have a problem. But nonetheless, there's no reason why I will deny my fellow black African the right to enjoy the citizenship as I enjoy as an African.

**President Clinton.** Let me just try to—the general rule is that dual citizenship laws are, by definition, controlled by the citizenship conditions of both countries. And it's not unheard of for Americans to have dual citizenship.

Interestingly enough, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, we've had American citizens who had roots, for example, in the Baltic States. One went home to his country and became the Ambassador. I don't know if he had to give up his American citizenship, or not. It would be a function of the law. But there are—and the laws operate differently in different countries. But almost all countries allow some form of dual citizenship.

Now, second thing is, the President didn't mention this, but if Ghana does this, it certainly won't hurt in trying to get more Americans interested in Ghana, going to Ghana, and contributing to Ghana's future. I thought it was quite a clever idea myself. *[Laughter]* Thank you very much.

**President Rawlings.** No, no, no. Hold on, Mr. President. *[Laughter]* On one condition—that if you fall foul of the laws and regulations of my country, the—what do you call it? —the judiciary, the police—and the laws of my country will take their course without the American Government attempting to intervene, to say, this is a citizen of my country.

**President Clinton.** I think that's what the rule is.

**President Rawlings.** Thank you, sir.

**President Clinton.** There's a whole lot of law on that. I think that's the rule. Thank you.

**Q.** I want to say to you something.

**President Rawlings.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** You know, we the people—

**President Rawlings.** Yes sir.

**Q.** —of African descent that are Latino, are ready, willing, and able to cooperate with Africa—*[inaudible]*—and our experience, the President of the Dominican Republic, and I, as a Cuban-American, reside here for—*[inaudible]*—are ready and willing to help you in the African initiative. And I guarantee you with my friend of the Republican Party is going to give me 100 percent support for the initiatives—of Africa. So you have the cooperation of the Latinos like the Jewish have for their people in Israel.

**President Clinton.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 169th news conference began at 2:35 p.m. in the Presidential Hall (for-

merly Room 450) of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to David E. Kendall, the President's personal attorney; President Laurent Desire Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. President Rawlings referred to Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Richard Kwame Peparah of Ghana.

### Radio Remarks on Fighting Fraud in the Medicare Program

February 24, 1999

We need your help to fight Medicare fraud. Most health care providers are honest, but a few bad-apples threaten the system. You can help us spot those bad-apples by checking your Medicare records carefully. If you see questionable charges or services, call your doctor's office first, then call your Medicare representative. If you still have questions, call us at 1-800-HHS-TIPS. Fighting Medicare fraud is everybody's responsibility.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 3:45 p.m. in the Oval Office for later broadcast as a public service announcement.

### Statement on the Resignation of Paul Begala as Counselor to the President

February 24, 1999

Paul Begala has been a close and trusted adviser since I first sought the Presidency. I value his advice; I appreciate his loyalty; and I treasure his friendship. I am grateful that he has used his razor-sharp mind and wit in the service of core values and the common good. Paul has given long hours to the service of his country, and he has more than earned the right to seek new horizons, through teaching and writing, and to spend more time with his three young children. I expect he will continue to be a powerful and persuasive voice for the cause we share in years to come. Hillary and I wish him, Diane, and the children all the best.

### **Statement on Launching the “Who Pays? You Pay” Initiative**

*February 24, 1999*

I am pleased to join the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, and the AARP in launching the new “Who Pays? You Pay” campaign, a new initiative to combat fraud and abuse in the Medicare program.

This new campaign is another step towards ending the fraudulent practices that rob taxpayers and threaten the future of the Medicare Trust Fund. Today we are partnering with beneficiaries to teach them how to detect Medicare fraud. We have worked with, and we will continue to work with, those in the provider community who are equally committed to eliminating health care fraud.

We have a long-standing commitment to crack down on fraud, waste, and abuse, and I am proud to say that since 1993, the administration’s efforts have saved taxpayers more than \$38 billion, with health care fraud convictions increasing by more than 240 percent. The partnership between providers, the law enforcement community, and beneficiaries created by this initiative is a critical step towards ending waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare program. Physicians, nurses, hospitals, and nursing homes know that it is in everyone’s best interest to weed out the bad-apple providers who threaten our ability to provide high-quality and affordable health care for older Americans.

I congratulate Secretary Shalala, Attorney General Reno, and the AARP for their commitment to preserve the Medicare program and ensure the provision of high-quality, affordable health care to our senior citizens.

### **Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Rawlings of Ghana**

*February 24, 1999*

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I want to welcome President Rawlings and Mrs. Rawlings and the entire Ghanaian delegation, along with the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, and our other distinguished guests to

the White House. Hillary and I are delighted to see you all here.

There was so much interest and enthusiasm about this dinner that we had to move it from the dining room into the East Room. And you might be interested to know that it was in this room that Thomas Jefferson met with Meriwether Lewis to plan the great Lewis and Clark expedition, which explored the American Continent. It is fitting that we are having this dinner here, almost 200 years later, to chart a new century and to explore our relationship with Ghana and with Africa.

It was no accident that Ghana was our first stop, our gateway to Africa, when Hillary and I and our delegation, the Members of Congress, the administration, and citizens traveled to Africa last year. Mr. President, in the last decade, under your leadership, Ghana has made great strides toward fulfilling President Nkrumah’s vision of a proud, strong country.

In important ways, it may even have surpassed that vision. Starting our African journey in a democratic country with a growing economy, a powerful commitment to tolerance at home and peace around the world allowed us to highlight for all Americans the progress that Africa has made and the promise of our future together. It allowed us to reaffirm for all of Africa that the United States is proud and determined to build a partnership of mutual respect with African nations which share our dreams of a better world. It also gave us the opportunity to get to know Ghana.

It has become the subject of some raw humor in the White House that I never tire of telling people that we had a half a million people in Independence Square in Ghana. About—[*applause*—]thank you. Every time the Vice President gets a good news story these days, I say, “But have you ever spoken to a half a million people?” [*Laughter*]

Let me say also, Mr. President, we all know that you have so many friends in the United States—quite a few here tonight. I want to mention, though, an astonishing fact that I learned about a friend of Ghana, and yours, who is not here tonight—also a friend of mine, who performed here for the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Stevie Wonder.

He spends considerable time in Ghana, and actually, Mr. President, he has boasted in the United States that he's flown your airplane. [Laughter] I hope you wore a seat belt. [Laughter] With a story like that, he may be planning to run for office soon.

I want you all to know I have spent an inordinate amount of time thinking about President Rawlings' political predicament. Listen to this: He was elected President by his fellow citizens in 1992. He was reelected in 1996. He loves his country, and he loves being President of his country. His Constitution prevents him from running again in 2000. [Laughter] Mr. President, I feel your pain. [Laughter]

It seems to me the only response for two slightly scarred but energetic warriors like us is to renew our commitment and dedication in these remaining 2 years of our service, to make them count every day for all our people, so that when our citizens choose new leadership for a new century, we can know that we have done our best to pave their way.

So let us tonight commit together to work on the things that matter to real people and to the children and their future: to strengthen our democracies; to broaden the reach of our economies; to make education and health care better and more widely available; to protect our environment; to work to convince others to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts within and among the nations we can reach. And let us commit to making the bonds between our two nations stronger than ever.

Mr. President, Nana, it is a profound honor for Hillary and for me to have you here. And we now ask all of you to join us in a toast to the President and the First Lady and the people of Ghana.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, wife of President Rawlings; and musician Stevie Wonder.

**Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels**

*February 24, 1999*

On March 1, 1996, by Proclamation 6867, I declared a national emergency to address the disturbance or threatened disturbance of international relations caused by the February 24, 1996, destruction by the Government of Cuba of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba. In July 1996 and on subsequent occasions, the Government of Cuba stated its intent to forcefully defend its sovereignty against any U.S.-registered vessels or aircraft that might enter Cuban territorial waters or airspace while involved in a memorial flotilla and peaceful protest. Since these events, the Government of Cuba has not demonstrated that it will refrain from the future use of reckless and excessive force against U.S. vessels or aircraft that may engage in memorial activities or peaceful protest north of Cuba. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 24, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:38 a.m., February 25, 1999]

NOTE: This notice was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on February 26.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting a Notice on  
Continuation of the National  
Emergency With Respect to Cuba**

*February 24, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 24, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting a Report on  
Administration of the Coastal  
Zone Management Act**

*February 24, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to transmit the Biennial Report to Congress on the Administration of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for fiscal years 1996 and 1997. This report is submitted as required by section 316 of the CZMA of 1972 as amended, (16 U.S.C. 1451, *et seq.*).

The report discusses progress made at the national and State level in administering the Coastal Zone Management and Estuarine

Research Reserve Programs during these years, and spotlights the accomplishments of NOAA's State coastal management and estuarine research reserve program partners under the CZMA.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 24, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25.

**Remarks to the Community in  
Tucson, Arizona**

*February 25, 1999*

**The President.** Thank you. Thank you. I was just wondering if Esther would agree to go back to Washington with me. That was amazing. [*Laughter*]

Thank you for your wonderful welcome. I had no idea when I got here that I was coming to a place so large or so beautiful or completely full, with a good crowd outside. And it's a real testament to your good citizenship. You can't imagine, as Congressman Kolbe said, what this weather look like to us. It has been freezing in Washington. And I come here, and I'm sort of a sports fan—you've got three teams in spring training; you've got this great golf tournament going on here. And here you are with me. Thank you very much. I'm very grateful.

I'd like to thank Mayor Miller for meeting me at the airport and being here today. And he and his wife met me, and it's her birthday today—I hope she's enjoying this unusual celebration of her birthday.

I thank County Supervisor Sharon Bronson for her remarks and her presence here today. And Congressman Kolbe, thank you for crossing district and party lines to be here with us today. We appreciate it very much. I thank you good friend, Ed Pastor, and his wife, Verma, for their friendship and support and leadership over the years. I thank him for that.

I know Attorney General Janet Napolitano and several legislators and tribal leaders and others are here. I thank them for being here. I think the Director of the Pima County Council on Aging, Marian Lupu is here. I

was told before I got here that Linda Ronstadt and CeCe Peniston are here, and if they are, thank you for being here. And if they're not, I'm giving them free publicity. That's okay, too. [Laughter]

You know, I'm delighted to be back in Arizona; I'm delighted to be here. Ed told me that I am the first President to come to Tucson since President Ford. If that's true, the others didn't know what they were missing, I can tell you that. I'm not sure, but I believe this is the first time I've had the opportunity in Arizona to thank the people of Arizona for their support for the Vice President and me in 1996, and I'm very grateful for that.

This State is living proof that the great era of westward expansion did not end a century ago; it is still going on. And when I look out here at all of you, I am reminded that when America looks to the west, it still sees the future. We see in Arizona the glimpses of America's future, and the seismic shifts in population, and growth you are already undergoing.

The mayor mentioned Hillary—the one thing—I wanted to say this: the one thing Hillary said to me this morning, only half kidding, before I left—I said, “You know, look at this. This speech begins by saying, Arizona is the mirror of the future, all these shifts in population.” She said, “Yeah, there's another way it's a mirror of the future, too. The women are in charge at last.” I think my political career just got in there under the wire. That's what I think. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, we've had a good time today, and I am delighted to be here. But I do want to take a few moments to have a serious discussion with you about what I believe we should be doing in this last year of the 20th century. And I think it is terribly important, because the United States is so fortunate today to have the longest peacetime expansion in our history and the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957 and all the other economic indicators you know well. We're in our second year of budget surpluses after 30 years of deficits. Welfare rolls are about half what they were 6 years ago. We are so fortunate.

But the tendency is for people in public life and positions of responsibility and for citizens at large, after having gone through

difficult and challenging times, when things get a whole lot better and ordinary folks can finally begin to feel it, to see it in the highest homeownership in our history, for example, the tendency is to say, whew, and to relax, and to basically just enjoy this moment or to think about other things, or to get distracted. And I believe that would be an error.

And I ask you to come here today to join with me in thinking seriously about our future, because this prosperity we have and this confidence we have gives us not only an opportunity but an obligation to try to deal with the long-term challenges America faces. That's what I attempted to talk to the American people about in the State of the Union. I want to mention a few of them today and then focus on the ones that have already been discussed.

There's one other person, though, I will not forgive myself if I don't introduce, a native of Arizona and a very important member of my personal White House staff, Mr. Fred DuVal. So I wanted to introduce Fred. Thank you very much.

One of the big challenges you face in Arizona that all America will have to face is, how do we preserve the environment as we grow the economy; how do we maintain what you all came to California—I mean, to Arizona—for in the first place? [Laughter] While you have sustained records—economic growth. If you moved here to Arizona, if you're not like Esther and you weren't born here, if you moved here, it puts you in an awkward position to say you wish other people would stay home, doesn't it? So the question is, how do we sustain growth as a country, knowing we're going to put more pressure on our natural resources, and knowing we have local problems like preservation of green space, other natural heritage, quality of water, quality of air, not having toxic sites, and that's all somehow connected to a lot of global problems like the warming of the climate.

This is a major challenge. I know that you are working on it. When the mayor met me at the airport he gave me a shirt that I'm going to try to wear out to spring training when I leave you—on the Bellota Ranch, which you have preserved, I think 10 or 12

miles from here—the kind of thing we ought to be doing more of.

And so one example of what we're trying to do to help you deal with the future is the livability agenda that I talked about a little bit in the State of the Union, that the Vice President and I developed, that will give communities new tools and new resources to deal with whatever the major challenge is in any community to making it more livable, whether it's reducing traffic congestion or saving green space or promoting smart growth.

We also have to recognize that we're not yet giving all of our children a world-class education, so in the State of the Union I talked a lot about how we can build a 21st century education for every American child, from putting more teachers in the schools to building or modernizing 6,000 schools, to having more summer school and after-school programs, to having more charter schools and Internet hookups for all of our classrooms. These things are very important. And Arizona has growth challenges and diversity challenges there as well.

We talked a lot about—in the State of the Union, I talked a lot about the need to bring economic opportunity to the communities and the people that still haven't been part of the recovery, whether they're in urban areas or isolated rural areas or Native American reservations. We have a program now—if we can't get investment in there now when unemployment is low and when money is ample, if we can't get private investment to prove free enterprise will work for all Americans who will work, we'll never get around to doing that. So I think that is a very important thing for us to do now, and I hope you will support that.

But for the next few years, all of these major challenges will be overshadowed by two great decisions: how do we deal with the aging of America; and what are we going to do, now that we finally have a budget surplus, what are we going to do with it? And I want you to think about that.

You know you are on the cutting edge of the aging of America. Here in Pima County alone, there are an enormous number of people over 65; the number has doubled just since 1980. The number of Americans over

65 in the entire country will double within 30 years. Life expectancy is already 76 years-plus in America. If you get to be 65 years old, your life expectancy, on average, is already over 80, well over 80. People over 80 are the fastest growing group of Americans. Esther's just one of the crowd there—[laughter]—and her family.

So what does all that mean? Well, it means that before you know it, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. It means even before that, there will be many, many more people on Medicare, and the older you get, the more you tend to access health services. And even staying healthy often costs money.

If you look at that, when the baby boomers retire—we had to wait two generations. It's not until—this group that's now in the schools today is the only group of Americans more numerous than the baby boom generation. I'm the oldest of the baby boomers, I was born in 1946—

**Audience member.** Me, too. [Laughter]

**The President.** It looks better on you. [Laughter]

And those of us in the next 18 years are the so-called baby boom generation—we retire, there will be two people drawing—working for every one person drawing Social Security. And even before that, as I said, there will be great pressures put on the Medicare program because we're living longer, and we have more access to high-tech medicine, but we access it more.

Another thing that's important for you to remember is that Social Security is not just a retirement program; it's an insurance program. One-third of the investments that are paid out in Social Security go to people who become disabled or to the survivors of people who die prematurely from accidents, disease, and other things. And when you think about what you're getting out of Social Security, particularly if you're not drawing it yet, don't forget that every year—you have the equivalent of a term insurance policy that's issued every year against disability or death.

All over America, I meet people who literally would not be able to get along were it not for these benefits. So here's the problem: Everybody likes Social Security; everybody likes Medicare; and we can't sustain the

programs unless we make some changes, both changes in the structure of the program and investing more money.

Now, thank goodness we now have a surplus. We're in the second year of surpluses, and we project that, on average, we'll have them for at least another 25 years. That doesn't mean that we won't have bad economic years, but on average, year-in and year-out, we'll have them, and that's good.

Now, in the State of the Union Address, as Esther said, I proposed setting aside for 15 years 62 percent of the surplus for Social Security and 15 percent of it for Medicare. And I'd like to talk a little about that. I propose to do it in a way that will enable us to pay down the national debt with the surpluses but as we pay the debt down, to commit the money that we're using to pay the debt down when it comes back in, when it's manifested in the out-years, to commit future years money to Social Security and Medicare.

Now, if we do that, every young person in the audience should be for that, not just because it would guarantee that you would get Social Security and Medicare but because if you pay the debt down, as I'll say more about in a minute, it will immeasurably strengthen the American economy. And keep in mind, it is the strength of our economy that is enabling us to have this whole conversation today. If we still had 8 percent unemployment and a \$200 billion deficit, we'd be letting somebody else think about this down the road.

Now, I want to say, first of all, that I am very encouraged that there are more and more Members of Congress like the two here, Ed Pastor and Jim Kolbe, who are committed to seeking reasonable solutions to these challenges, and who want to set aside—there seems now to be broad agreement among leaders and rank-and-file members in both parties of Congress to set aside the lion's share of the surplus to save Social Security.

There seems to be, now, some movement in the Republican majority away from having a large across-the-board tax cut if it would take away from the surplus' ability to save Social Security. We don't yet have that kind of agreement on setting aside some of the surplus for Medicare, and I think we should. And I'm going to keep pushing for that, be-

cause I think it's important—and I'll explain more about that in a moment—because I think we have to have both Social Security and Medicare fixed by the end of this year.

Now, I can tell you—if you look at what this surplus is projected to be over the next 15 years, if we did what I asked there would still be a substantial amount of money, out of which you could have targeted tax cuts, which I think the best are the USA accounts, the savings accounts I proposed, because most people need help saving for their retirement. But you could have a targeted tax cut. You could have investments for defense, for education, for medical research. There's still money there.

But keep in mind: when you save money, if it doesn't materialize, you just didn't save quite as much as you meant to. Once you give the tax cut, the money is gone. So we're giving it back to you, and it was all your money in the first place. And that's good. But if you want us to fix Social Security and Medicare, you should want us to make sure that we invest enough to do that. And if we do it—[applause]—thank you.

Now, let me just tell you basically what I propose to do. What I propose to do is to take 62 percent of the surplus, commit it to Social Security, and pay the debt down. And what I believe we should do is to invest a modest amount of this in the private sector, the way every other retirement plan does. The Arizona State retirement plan does; every municipal retirement plan does; every private plan does. But I don't want to see the Government having too much influence over the stock market, so I proposed to set up a totally independent board, like every other retirement plan has, that no politician can have any influence over, and then to limit the aggregate amount of our investments to about 4 percent. It will never get over 4 percent over the next 20 years.

There's some differences about that, but if you do it, you'll increase the rate of return on Social Security. When only two people work and one person draws, you have to find some way to do it. Mr. Kolbe got a different way he thinks is better.

But here the point I want to make: If you set aside 62 percent of the Trust Fund for Social Security, it will extend the life of the

Social Security Trust Fund to 2050, maybe another year or two, depending on how much longer the economy stays in good shape.

But there are three other things we need to do, and I want you to think about it. Number one, historically, to have a good retirement system with Social Security, we've always thought we ought to have it alive for 75 years. Number two, the rate of poverty among single elderly women is over 18 percent, nearly twice the general rate of poverty among seniors, and we need to make some adjustments in the program to lift them out of poverty, I think. Number three, I think it's a mistake, when more and more seniors are living longer and living healthier, to continue the earnings limitation on Social Security, that limits what people can earn. And interestingly enough, if you lift the earnings limitation, it actually costs the Trust Fund money in the short run because a lot of people start collecting their Social Security. But within a matter of a few years, it starts making money, because even retired people who earn income pay taxes on it, so after a certain period it will actually start replenishing the Social Security Trust Fund.

Now, to do that, to do that we will have to make some other changes. And to do that, we will have to make some changes that will be perhaps somewhat controversial, that will have to be made in a bipartisan fashion. But the changes won't be nearly as dramatic, nearly as big and nearly as troublesome as they would be if we didn't commit the surplus in the first place.

So I hope that you will support this idea of committing the surplus and then you will tell—we're down in Ed's district now—tell him that you know he wants to preserve Social Security; you know he wants to take care of the people that have to be taken care of; and you will trust him to go up there and make some decisions that may be somewhat controversial today; but 10 or 20 years from now we'll all be thanking goodness that the Congress of the United States was willing to do what it takes to save Social Security for 75 years. And I think that's important.

Now, let me say furthermore, on Medicare, here's the problem. We've made a lot of changes in Medicare to try to cut down on fraud and abuse, and there was a bunch

of it. Right now, the Trust Fund in Medicare is stable for 10 years; that's the good news. Here's the bad news. Ten years is not enough. We ought to stabilize it for 20 years. And as probably most of you have noticed, inflation in the cost of health care has gone way down the last few years. Health insurance premiums have not been going up very fast. We've got them back in line with inflation.

When I became President, for many years before that, health insurance premiums had been going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. But a lot of the savings, the easy savings that could be squeezed out for managed care—and some not so easy, which is why I'm for the Patients' Bill of Rights—a lot of those savings have been squeezed out. So this year, it is estimated that health insurance premium costs will increase about 7 percent, whereas the general rate of inflation will be just a little over 2 percent.

So you can see that that's a real problem. We can't sustain the present budgeted costs of Medicare. We're going to have to put some more money in it. If we put 15 percent of the surplus aside for Medicare for 20 years—15 years, we could take the Trust Fund out from 2010 to 2020.

Now, I would also like to see us begin to work into Medicare a prescription drug benefit, which I think would dramatically improve it. But keep in mind, the program doesn't have enough money now. We've got to be careful how we do it because you could spend a whole lot of money in a hurry and give people who may not need it the benefit. But if you think about it, we're spending—we've had a remarkable bipartisan consensus. You know, you wouldn't think we ever agreed on anything, I'm sure, out here. *[Laughter]* Once in a great while we all agree on something. And one of the things that we've had real agreement on every since I've been in Washington, for the last 6 years, has been to dramatically increase spending for medical research. And some of the findings are breathtaking.

We've uncovered the genes that give a strong predisposition to breast cancer. We've done nerve transplantations in laboratory animals from legs to spines that have actually

cured broken spinal cords in laboratory animals, just unbelievable things that have breathtaking potential for the future. But if we're investing all this money to try to come up with medicine, for example, that helps to keep people well or to cure conditions that were formerly incurable, that dramatically improve the quality of life, we want to be able to bring those into the lives of the American people.

And if you're worried about people, in effect, as we get older putting enormous burdens on the hospital costs, which is all the money is—you know, hospital and doctor visits—if we can work out the right sort of prescription drug benefit, we'll actually save money over the long run because people will stay out of the hospital, they'll stay out of costly medical care, they will stay healthy. So we have to work hard to kind of get this right.

So again, my proposal is, set aside 15 percent of the surplus for Medicare, take the Trust Fund out to 2020, but recognize we're going to have to make some changes there for the same reason we have to make some changes in Social Security, and especially if we want to add a prescription drug benefit for the people who really need it.

Now, that's the general outline of my proposal. But I also want to emphasize, if you save the surplus for 15 years—we save a little over three-quarters of this surplus for 15 years and used it to buy into publicly held debt and to pledge the future revenues to Social Security and Medicare, here's what would happen. We would go from a national debt that today was quadrupled between 1981 and 1993—we quadrupled the debt, and it was 50 percent of our annual income—today it's down to 44 percent of our annual income. In 15 years, it will be down to 7 percent of our annual income. The last time it was 7 percent of our annual income was 1917, right before we went into World War I.

What does that mean to you in practical terms? This is where I want the young people in the audience to listen. It will mean that the Congress that meets 15 years from now, instead of having to take a 13-plus-cents of every dollar you pay in taxes right off the top to pay interest on the debt, we'll be

spending 2 cents of every dollar you pay in taxes to pay interest on the debt.

In the early years, most of the difference will go to fix Social Security and Medicare. But over time, that's a huge amount of money that can be invested in the needs of future generations. It can be providing for tax cuts; it can be providing for anything out in the country when we get this debt off.

But what I want the young people to understand here, especially is if we start paying this debt down and we go all the way, if we stay on this trajectory we could be debt-free for the first time in 2018. That's just 19 years from now. And in the meanwhile we'll have lower interest rates, higher investment, more investment in new business and new jobs, home mortgage rates will be lower, credit card payments will be lower, car payments will be lower, student loan rates will be lower, and the economy will grow faster. Now, I want you to think about it. Why will that happen? Because the Government will not be going in and taking up a bunch of money every year to finance the deficit. So interest rates will go down, savings will go up, investment in our future will go up.

So this proposal is good for younger people for two reasons: This is not—for one thing, people on Social Security now don't have to worry, it's going to be fine for 30 years. You don't have to worry. Now, you do, most of you on Medicare, have to worry because it's not going to be fine after 10 years if we don't fix that.

But every American of every age should care about this. Why? Well, for one thing, I can tell you as the oldest of the baby boomers, I spend a lot of time—I stay in touch with the people I grew up with, a lot of them. Most of them are just middle-class people, the kind of people who live here in Tucson. And my whole generation is obsessed with the thought that our retirement, because we're such a large group, would put an unacceptable burden on our children and their ability to educate and raise our grandchildren. And if we fix Social Security and Medicare, then our children will have more of their disposable income in those years to build their families, their quality of life, and their children's future. That's why this is not just a seniors' issue.

Secondly, if we pay down the debt, the major beneficiaries of those changes will be the younger people. You know, there's been a lot of trouble in the world economy the last couple of years. Last year it was terrible. I have worked very hard to try to turn it around. I will do everything I can this year to make some major strides forward, because a lot of our prosperity depends upon the prosperity of our trading partners. But our ability to control what happens beyond our borders is somewhat limited, as all of you understand. I can tell you this: If we pay this debt down, whatever bad times come in the future won't be as bad as they would have been by a long shot. And whatever good times come in the future will be much better than they would have been because of this.

So I say again, I haven't tried to give you a traditional political speech today; we're just having a talk. And I appreciate how—I very much appreciate how quiet you've been and how you've listened to this.

There are some promising signs in Washington. I met with the leaders of both parties in both Houses, a couple of days ago. There's some indication that there is—I think there is an agreement that we have to use the lion's share of the surplus to save Social Security. There is, I think, some movement toward reaching some consensus about the nature of tax cuts, if they ought to be targeted and benefit the people that need it most and try to not get in the way of saving Social Security. We're not there on Medicare yet, and the Medicare problem will come sooner.

But we need to hear—the people of this country need to make a decision. And this is maybe a fairly complicated scenario I've laid out for you. I know it would be a lot more popular to say, "We've got a surplus. It's your money. I'm just going to give it back to you." And then you could all cheer; and I could go home; we'd go watch baseball or do something else. *[Laughter]*

But what I want to say to you is, this is a high-class problem. This is nothing to wring your hands about. The reason we have this Social Security and Medicare problem is because we've got the best medical science in the world and because we're all living longer. This is not an occasion for hand-wringing.

The older I get, the better I like this problem. *[Laughter]* This is a high-class problem.

But we have a responsibility to the future. This country's still around here, after more than 200 years, because whenever the chips are down and we had to make a decision about what kind of country we were going to be and what kind of future we were going to have, we did the right thing. And we kept going forward.

And the decisions that we make, not just in the Congress and the White House, but as a people, about whether we're willing to take on the challenge of securing Social Security for the 21st century, whether we're willing to do the same thing for Medicare, and whether we're willing to save a substantial part of this surplus to do those things and to pay this debt down, will shape, in large measure, what America is like for the young people in this audience and their counterparts throughout the United States.

This is a wonderful time to be in the United States. We can all be grateful, because the truth is that no one, not even the President, could have predicted that the results of our attempts to reduce the deficit, to bring interest rates down, would have produced these results. And no one can claim sole credit for it. This is a shared achievement of the American people. And we should be proud of it.

So as we go back to Washington and we go back to work, I ask you here—and I ask you to talk to your friends and neighbors in Arizona—when you're on your phone with your friends and family members throughout the country, I want you to tell them about this meeting today. And if you don't remember anything else, just remember, if we save about three-quarters of this surplus for Medicare and Social Security and if we pay the debt down with the surplus and then if we have the courage to make some decisions that may sound a little tough—to save Social Security for 75 years, fix Medicare for 20 years, and get the debt down to where it's virtually nonexistent—America is going to be a stronger, better place.

These programs will be there. These programs will be there for the next generation of Americans, but America will be there—

America will be there—brighter, better, stronger than ever before.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the Music Hall at the Tucson Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to senior citizen Esther Don Tang, who introduced the President; Mayor George Miller and his wife, Roslyn; Verma Pastor, wife of Representative Ed Pastor; and entertainers Linda Ronstadt and CeCe Peniston.

**Radio Remarks on the Kennedy-Murray Amendment to Proposed Education Flexibility Partnership Legislation**

*February 25, 1999*

This year, we have a remarkable opportunity to work together across party lines to bring true progress to America's public schools. I welcome the idea of greater flexibility for States and school districts, and I urge the Senate to pass the so-called Ed-flex legislation, because it provides for greater flexibility and greater accountability. But we must do more to give our children a world-class education. That's why I also strongly support the amendment to the legislation proposed by Senators Kennedy and Murray to continue the national commitment we began last year: to hire 100,000 new teachers and to reduce class size all across America. Studies confirm what every parent already knows: smaller classes make a big difference, from improved test scores to improved discipline. The Senate should pass the Kennedy-Murray amendment and give our Nation's children the individual attention they deserve in the classroom and the better future only a good education can bring.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 2 p.m. in the Tucson Convention Center in Tucson, AZ, for later broadcast. The proposed education flexibility partnership legislation is S. 280. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on the Death of Virginia Foster Durr**

*February 25, 1999*

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to hear of the death of Virginia Foster Durr. Throughout this century, America's long march toward freedom and justice has been the achievement of countless Americans—black and white—who risked their lives to lead us closer to our most cherished ideals. A white woman born to privilege in the Deep South, Mrs. Durr refused to turn a blind eye to racism and intolerance in our society. Her courage, outspokenness, and steely conviction in the earliest days of the civil rights movement helped change this Nation forever. Hillary and I feel honored to have known and been inspired by this truly great American. Our thoughts and prayers are with her friends and family.

**Proclamation 7168—American Red Cross Month, 1999**

*February 25, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

For almost 120 years, the American Red Cross has served as a beacon of hope to those in need. Reaching out to victims of disaster, generations of Red Cross volunteers have provided shelter, food, and other essential services to relieve the suffering of families and communities and help people begin the process of rebuilding their lives. Today more than a million dedicated men and women volunteer under the banner of the American Red Cross, upholding this extraordinary tradition of service and assisting people across our Nation and around the world to prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

The strength and scope of the natural disasters that occurred during 1998 made this past year among the most devastating in recent history. Floods, tornadoes, winter storms, and wildfires ravaged communities across the Nation. Hurricanes Georges and Mitch caused record destruction in the Gulf

States and Central America. In total, the American Red Cross responded to more than 62,000 disasters in 1998. Whether it was a fire that destroyed a family's home or a hurricane that destroyed an entire region, the Red Cross reacted immediately with compassion, generosity, and humanity.

Yet the Red Cross does more than cope with emergencies. During the past year, volunteers collected and processed nearly six million units of lifesaving blood for our Nation's hospitals and educated more than 11 million Americans through health and safety courses. The Red Cross also reached out to the men and women of our Armed Forces, their families, and our veterans, helping our military personnel keep in touch with home during family emergencies, offering confidential counseling and other support services, and assisting veterans in obtaining their benefits. In the past year alone, the American Red Cross provided more than 840,000 individual services to those who have given so much to protect our Nation and preserve our freedom.

During American Red Cross Month, as we take time to recognize this vital organization and all that it has accomplished, we can and should look forward with hope to the new century. For while we can never know the challenges we may face in the future, whether as individuals or as a national community, we do know that the American Red Cross will continue to serve, enabling us to meet those challenges and to recover from disaster. As Americans, let us sustain our longstanding support of the Red Cross and its humanitarian mission and renew our commitment to the ideals upon which it was founded. By reaching out with compassion and caring to help those in need, we can ensure a brighter future for our Nation and our world in the new millennium.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March

1999 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to show support for their local Red Cross chapters and to become active participants in advancing the noble mission of the Red Cross.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 1, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

**Executive Order 13114—Further Amendment to Executive Order 12852, as Amended, Extending the President's Council on Sustainable Development**

*February 25, 1999*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to further amend Executive Order 12852, as amended, to extend the life of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 12852, as amended, is further amended by deleting from section 4(b) of the order the text "February 28, 1999" and inserting in lieu thereof "June 30, 1999".

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 25, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:39 a.m., February 26, 1999]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on March 1.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Reporting on Deployment of  
Military Personnel to Kenya and  
Tanzania**

*February 25, 1999*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

On August 10, 1998, I reported to the Congress that two teams of U.S. military personnel had been deployed to Kenya and Tanzania to assist in the provision of security for our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in the aftermath of the terrorist bombings at those sites. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about the continuing deployment of U.S. military personnel in Kenya.

The military personnel that deployed to Tanzania have since redeployed. Military personnel have remained in Kenya, however, to assist in provision of security for our embassy and American citizens in Nairobi. The need for this additional security support will continue until renovations are completed to provide a secure and permanent embassy facility in Nairobi.

I have continued this deployment of U.S. Armed Forces pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to assist in embassy security and the security of American citizens overseas.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

**Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial  
and Congressional Campaign  
Committees Dinner in San  
Francisco, California**

*February 25, 1999*

Thank you. Well, thank you very much. First of all, let me say to our host and his

family and to all the rest of you, I have had a perfectly wonderful time here tonight. And I think that's important. I say that because a lot of you go to a lot of these events, and I don't know that you always have a perfectly wonderful time. [Laughter] But we've had a wonderful time.

I think all of you know you're here to do something of surpassing importance, and I want to say that, as I was looking at the previous speakers and those who were introduced who hold public office, I was sitting here silently thinking to myself, I am very proud to be a member of my political party.

I am the beneficiary, as no one else here is, of all the work that these Members of Congress have done. I know things about them all that we don't have time even to go through. I've had conversations with Senator Baucus about the environment or how we ought to relate to Asia over the long run. I've talked to Senator Torricelli at all hours of the night, usually at my instigation, I might add, about all manner of issues. Senator Boxer and I are members of the same family in more ways than one, and I was profoundly grateful that the people of California re-elected her by such a handsome margin.

And Hillary and I both felt privileged to be able to come out here last year and to campaign for her, for Gray Davis, for all the Democrats who were elected. Congressman Bonior, Congressman Miller, Congressman Kennedy—you know I used to be like Congressman Kennedy, too young to hold office, and I looked younger than I was—[laughter]—but he's a marvelous leader for our Democratic House Campaign Committee—Congresswoman Eshoo; Congresswoman Lofgren, who was, I must say to all of you, a lion on the House Judiciary Committee and a great leader there; Congresswoman Woolsey.

I want to say what Bob Torricelli said about Nancy Pelosi is right. I have been on both sides of issues with Nancy Pelosi; there is nothing more humbling than to have her look at you and tell you why you're wrong. [Laughter] You know? You just—she doesn't have to do like those really conservative Republicans who invoke God all the time. She just looks at you, and you know God is on her side. [Laughter] She never has to say it,

you know. And if she really disagrees with you and she gets those—her eyes seem to get bigger and bigger and sadder and sadder, and you don't know whether she's going to cry or hit you right between the eyes. [Laughter] There are few people in public life I admire more for marrying their heart with their mind than Nancy Pelosi. You should be very proud of her, and I know you are. But she has really done a great job.

And Dick Gephardt and I, 11 years ago, had a dinner in the kitchen of the Governor's mansion, composed of cold McDonald's french fries, not quite as nice as the one we're having tonight. He came to visit me in Arkansas, and Jane was there. Hillary was there. We stayed up half the night talking. It was really the first time I'd ever had a chance to get to know him, and I can honestly say that, with every passing week, every passing month, every passing year of working with him, my admiration and affection for him has grown.

And he has done something a lot of people couldn't do. The Democrats were in the majority a long time, and I want to talk about how we came to be in the minority in a moment. But they were in the majority a long time. And psychologically, it was very difficult for people who had been in the majority a long time to go into the minority. And a lot of people, frankly, just got—they just quit. I'll say this for the Republicans, they don't quit. Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms don't quit, right? [Laughter] And a lot of our guys, they had a hard time, so they just—they resigned. They left their careers.

And Dick Gephardt realized that because he believed, as did I, as did all those in this room tonight, that we didn't want America to look like what we thought would happen if the "Contract With America" prevailed. And we didn't agree with it. And we thought that in the end the American people would support the decisions we've made which cost us the Congress in 1994. And so he rose to the occasion in a way that I think was awesome, even to people who had a lot of confidence in him and admired him. And I can tell you that after the next election, when he becomes the Speaker of the House, every person in this room will be very proud that

you were here tonight and that you made a contribution to it. And I thank you.

Now, when the mayor came in tonight I told him I would be for him or against him, whichever would help most in his election. [Laughter] And typically, he asked for one of each. [Laughter] But I want to thank the mayor for always making me feel at home in San Francisco. I thank Art Torres for his leadership of our party. I thank all of you.

I wish I could think of something to say that you can say to somebody else that would spread the word beyond the circle of friends we all have. But as I was going through this magnificent home tonight, and Bob Torricelli said something that I wish I could have said, because he said, "All of you are here because you believe your country will be better off if you help other people who have things that you already have—to acquire things that you already have."

I believe that the things in this time at least that distinguish our party are things for which this home, this city, and this State are metaphors. We don't know who laid this stone in the floor. We don't know who did the marbling work on these beautiful columns or who painted the walls or put the glass in the ceiling. I don't know who painted that wonderful painting of Nijinsky in the other room. But I know one thing: Every one of them—we don't know any of them—they had different gifts, but they were very special. And we're all better off and enriched tonight because they had a chance to manifest their gifts. But we're also better off because they had the chance to manifest their gifts together. The house was built by the gifts of many people, some of whom are completely anonymous. The magnificent furniture, the inlaid work on the desk, the things I saw—I don't have any idea, some of those people have been dead more than a hundred years. But every one of them had a gift, and when you put them all together, you have quite a home.

San Francisco and California, they're places where everybody can feel at home, where the diversity, the richness, the texture of what will be 21st century America is already evident, and where ideas are prized, no matter what their source, and where people don't fear change as long as the change

occurs in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. That's basically what we think America ought to be like, all day, every day.

When Nancy quoted the prayer of St. Francis and talked about all the places I brought peace to, I thought there are three places that I have made no progress. I've made no progress, although I've tried, in trying to get Greece and Turkey to get along. I've made no progress in trying to resolve the tensions between India and Pakistan. And I'm not sure I've made any progress at all in bringing peace to Washington, DC. [Laughter]

But I will say this: This country knows one thing after 6 years, that all the things that used to be said by the other party about the Democrats turned out to be wrong. They said we couldn't be trusted to govern; we couldn't manage the economy; we couldn't deal with crime or welfare or foreign policy or defense. And the country is in a lot better shape.

The interesting thing is that it turns out that if you believe everybody has got a gift to give, that the gifts will only manifest themselves to the maximum degree if we give them together, and that Government ought to be about bringing out the best in people and trying new ideas and moving forward, it turns out it works. It works.

But it wasn't always evident. The reason these Democrats are in the minority tonight is because in 1994 it was not evident to the American people that the tough votes they cast for the budget bill in '93 and the crime bill in '94, the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and bringing the deficit down and, at the same time, saying we had to increase our investment in education—it wasn't apparent in 1994 that the results would be what they turned out to be.

But the American people, if you give them enough time, nearly always get it right. That's why we're still around here after more than 200 years. And in 1998, for the first time since 1822, the party of the President in the 6th year of a Presidency won seats in the House of Representatives, while being outspent by \$100 million, because of what they stood for and because of the record that together we had made and the progress the American people have made.

And I'm not running for anything anymore. I might run for the school board some day. [Laughter] I'm here because I believe that what we stand for has not only helped America to come to where we are now as compared to where the United States and California were in 1991 and 1992 but because I believe that now the real question is, what will we do with this moment of prosperity and confidence? And I'd like to be pretty candid with you tonight and tell you what I have absolute confidence we should do and what challenges are out there that I haven't quite figured out exactly how to solve yet. But I am sure that having people in the majority who believe everyone has a gift, we have to give them together, and we ought to be bringing out the best in people in public life, are the people that ought to be mapping the path of the 21st century.

We have to deal now with a surplus. If somebody had told you in 1992, "If you vote for Bill Clinton, 6 years later he'll be coming back, and they'll have this big fundraiser, and he'll be saying, the biggest challenge we've got now is how to deal with the surplus," you would have said, "I will not vote for that man. He's nuts." [Laughter] "He's kidding." But let me just ask you to think—yes, America is doing well; yes, California is doing well. But we have some big challenges. And if we expect to win in 2000, we have to show, number one, that in the next 2 years we're doing everything we can to fulfill the mandate the voters gave us in the '98 election and, secondly, that we are still looking to the future.

We've got to deal with the aging of America, the retirement of the baby boomers, the fact that we're all living longer. Our life expectancy up over 76 years now. If you live to be 65 in America, your life expectancy is over 80 years now, soon to be over 85. In the year 2030 we'll have twice as many people over 65 as we do today. We'll have only two people working for every one person on Social Security.

The Democratic Party, out of its compassion and its sense of obligation across the generations, created Social Security and Medicare, and they will both be stretched mightily by the rising cost of health care, the fact that we're living longer and using more

health resources, and the fact that the demographics of the baby boom retirement will put great stresses on us. We now project a surplus for the next 25 years. There is a way to deal with the aging of America that will use most of the surplus to save Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.

We will also have to make reforms in Social Security and Medicare, some of which may be somewhat controversial. But if you believe that we have to be together, then that's what we've got to do. I was in Tucson today, speaking to a big community group, and person after person after person came up and told me that they were literally alive because of these programs.

I was introduced by an 82-year-old Chinese-American woman who is, near as I could tell, about 4'8". She made Barbara Boxer look like a basketball player. [*Laughter*] And she was magnificent. She was a community leader in Tucson and was born in Tucson—a native of Tucson, Arizona—who talked about being a breast cancer survivor and the mammography she got because of Medicare and because we had pushed that and changed the system.

So who do you trust to change this program, and are we going to do it, and how are we going to do it and be faithful? We have to do it. And we do it not for the people on these programs now—they're going to be fine—but so that the baby boomers, like me—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—do not have to go to bed every night worried that we are bankrupting our children and undermining their ability to raise our grandchildren.

And now is the time to think about it—now, years ahead of time, when we have the resources, when we have the ability, before the crisis arises, before it threatens to weaken the American economy just to find some sort of solution. That's the first thing we have to do.

The second thing we have to do, as others have said, is to recognize, frankly, as so many of you have done in many ways, that we will never be the country we ought to be in the 21st century until every child gets a world-class education. We will never be. And I think that means, among other things, continuing our work for better prepared teach-

ers, smaller classes, hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet. We're up to 50 percent, by the way.

When the Vice President and I came here for our first NetDay a couple of years ago, only about 8 percent of the classrooms in America were connected to the Internet. We're up to 50 percent now, and we will make our 100 percent goal shortly after the turn of the century. And that's a good thing. But we need to build or modernize a lot of schools. We've got all these schools where the kids are going to schools in house trailers, or they're going to schools in buildings so old they can't even be wired for the Internet. Many of our cities, the average age of the school building is 65 years or more. And a lot of those buildings are magnificent, but they take some money to modernize and to prepare.

I want to end social promotion, but I don't want to declare the children a failure when the system is failing them. Senator Boxer's great passion has been getting us more after-school programs. We now have in this budget enough money for a million children to be in after-school programs in the United States if it passes. This is an important thing.

We have to recognize that there is much more we have to do to balance work and family. Today in Arizona, three different people came up to me and thanked me for the family and medical leave law, the first bill I signed as President. But millions of workers are not covered. They ought to be covered.

We ought to pass the child care initiative Senator Torricelli talked about. You'd be amazed how many people are out there struggling to work and having so much of their wages eaten up because they cannot afford quality child care. We've seen the welfare rolls drop in half, but the truth is that there are some people who are off the rolls who aren't working, and others who would leave the rolls gladly if they could only afford the child care. And we have a child care initiative that we ought to pass.

Balancing work and family will be one of the signal issues of the 21st century. More and more, two-parent families will be working. More and more, single parents will have to work. We owe it to America, those of us

in positions of responsibility, to lead a country where every person who wants to work or has to work and who has children can succeed as a parent and a worker. If we ever get in a position where we accept the proposition that anybody in this country ought to have to choose, then we have lost, because we are diminished by either choice. And yet, every day, people do choose. And every day, people who are working who have children are making choices sometimes they're not even aware of. And it erodes the fabric of our common society, and we have to do a better job.

We have to have a commitment in the 21st century that we manifest now to bring this economic recovery to people in places that haven't seen it. There are cities in this country now that still have huge census tracts with double-digit unemployment, rural areas with double-digit unemployment, Native American reservations where, even though we now have the lowest unemployment rate in the entire industrial world, there has been no new investment, and there have been no new jobs.

I have given the Congress an economic package which will provide incentives to create new investments and new markets here at home. We ought to do that. Every one of you ought to want every American at least to have a chance to participate in this recovery. Now, when our economy is the strongest in at least a generation, if we can't bring economic opportunity to people who haven't had it now, we will never get around to it. If we can't prove that free enterprise can work in places it hasn't reached now, we will never be able to prove it. And I hope you will support that.

We talked a little about the remarkable sense of community you have here. One of the things that I want to do—and I was met by someone from the chamber of commerce at the airport who is an architect, who had a copy of a publication the Vice President put out on our new livability initiative—\$1 billion to help communities deal with traffic problems, the need for green space, the need for managed development, \$1 billion to set aside lands in perpetuity.

We have gotten ourselves tied in knots too often in our country trying to make the

choice between our economic growth and the preservation of our environment and the quality of life. We have decided to try something different—to put some money out there to acquire some land that's available on the market and to help communities figure out how to grow and preserve green space, how to grow and deal with traffic congestion, how to deal with these things. I think this is very important.

So, these are some of the things that are on the agenda for us in this year, along with the very important peacemaking work I hope we will be continuing to do in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Kosovo, and in the places I mentioned where we've had no progress, including Washington, DC. [Laughter] There are two challenges I want to ask you to think about, because there are people in California that I think are uniquely qualified to do it.

In order to keep the American economy growing over the long run, we have got to restore growth to the global economy. For the 6 years I've been President, in the first 5 years, 30 percent of our growth came from sales of American products overseas. Now, last year, we had very good growth, but it didn't come from overseas. We were able to generate enough activity within our borders and basically hold our own in our sales. But because of the economic downturn in Asia, the terrible financial crisis there, and the impact it had in Latin America and the slowdown there, we had some real difficulties. Our farmers, our steel industry, our aircraft people had some real problems.

I believe that it is imperative that the United States take the lead—and we have been working hard on this for a year—in trying to figure out how to create a financial and trade architecture for the 21st century that will benefit ordinary people everywhere, that will put a human face on the global economy, that will enable people to follow responsible policies and honest and open investment practices to actually participate, and that will avoid the kind of horrible, wild swings we've seen in the last 2 years that turned people who worked for a generation to make themselves middle-class people in Asia into abject poverty. There were Asian cities where doctors and nurses had to start

sleeping in the hospitals because they lost their homes when this collapse occurred.

Now, I can't run all their policies. No President could. And some of their problems were of their own making. But I want you to know that I have gotten in touch with the people that I believe are the best minds in the world on this subject. We are working very hard. I am going to work very hard for the next year to try to get the countries of the world to agree on a framework within which steady, solid growth can occur in a way that will benefit Americans but also fulfill our responsibility to help others lift themselves out of difficulty. And if you have any ideas on that, don't be ashamed to present them to me, because I don't think there is a person in the world who has got an answer to this issue in the world today.

The second thing I'd like to ask you to think about is an environmental issue, and that's the issue of climate change. There's no question in my mind that the world is changing and that the climate is warming. I was out on the Monterey Peninsula not very long ago, with Sam Farr, and I think George Miller was there. We had this oceans conference. And Anna was probably there. We went out on the—and Barbara was there, I think. We went out on Monterey Peninsula, and these graduate students took me out into the bay. And we were walking out into the clear water, and this graduate student said, "Mr. President, reach down there and pick up a handful of the stones and the marine life." And I did. And the graduate student pointed to this little elemental form of marine life and said, "You see this? Twenty years ago, you could not find this any further north than 50 miles south of here. That is how much the water has warmed up in 20 years"—this small species, moving 50 miles north.

I've been working real hard—you probably don't know much about this, but to avoid an outright salmon war between Washington, Oregon, Canada, and Alaska, because all the fish keep moving further north. So now, Canada, Washington, Oregon don't have enough, and Alaska's got more than they know what to do with, because of the changing nature of the climate.

Yet, oil prices are very low, and it looks like they're going to stay low for 2 or 3 years, which makes things like electric cars and substitute technologies relatively less economically attractive. And we have a majority in the House of Representatives—and Dick Gephardt will tell you—that caused this administration to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars last year appearing before subcommittees to explain why our efforts on climate change, which include no regulation and no taxes but tax incentives and research and development for new technologies—we're not some great conspiracy to bankrupt the American economy.

Now, California is a place that thinks about the future and lives with the future and has to live with the constant tension of dealing with these things. And you've adopted all of these tough clean air standards. So I say to you: I am determined before I leave office to build a national consensus to tackle this problem in a consistent, disciplined way for the next 10 years, and I believe the technology is there to actually promote more economic growth while doing the right thing with greenhouse gas emissions and turning this situation around.

But if you can give me some ideas about that, as well as contribute your money to the Democratic majority, I would be grateful. These are two great challenges that will shape the way our children will live for the next 50 years, and I want your help.

Now, the last thing I'd like to say is, I thank you for your citizenship and your concern, especially now. I think that it's fair to say in light of the events of the last 6 years and the election of '94 and the success that has come to our country that we're all grateful for and none of us, including me, can take full responsibility for, the American people have the achievement. But I think we really know now that it matters if we give everyone a chance to develop his or her gift. It matters if we believe we're stronger if we become one community and one America.

It matters if we believe the purpose of politics is to bring out the best in people. It matters. That's what this next election is about. That's what your contribution is about. Even if we fix Social Security and Medicare and do all I want to do in education and bring

this economic initiative to distressed areas of the country and make peace everywhere I'd like to make it, problems will never go away. And the world is changing very fast and no one can foresee all the developments.

So the best thing to do is pick the right people with the right values, the right philosophy, and the right approach. The last 6 years entitled the Democratic Party to the benefit of the doubt. And I believe that the last 6 years and the debates of the last 6 years put us in a position to make a very compelling case that we are now not only the party of Jefferson and Jackson, Roosevelt and Kennedy, but the party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt as well. And we need you. We need your support.

So I want you to think about this. This is a long way from November of 2000. But it will pass in the flash of an eye. Hillary said the other day—we were talking, fixing up a room at the White House—it's part of her project to try to leave the house in a lot better shape than we found it—and she said—no, it was in good shape when we found it. Don't laugh like that. I didn't mean it like that. [Laughter]

But we wanted to do some things for the house, and we were up putzing around, putting stuff around, you know, and she said, "Can you believe we've been here 6 years?" It doesn't take long to serve a term or live a life. And ultimately, we will be judged by what we leave for our successors. I think we want to be judged well. I know you can trust the people who are here with me tonight to carry on the legacy you believe in and to build the kind of America our children deserve. You have helped them to do it, and I am very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gray Davis of California; Jane Gephardt, wife of Representative Richard A. Gephardt; Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco; and Art Torres, chair, California State Democratic Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks on United States Foreign Policy in San Francisco

February 26, 1999

Thank you, and good morning. Mr. Mayor, we're delighted to be here in San Francisco. We thank you for coming out to welcome us. Senator Boxer, Representative Pelosi, Representative Lofgren, members of the California Legislature who are here. I'd like to especially thank two people who had a lot to do with the good things that have happened in the last 6 years in our administration, our former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry, and Mrs. Perry, who are here; and General John Shalikashvili, thank you for coming. We're delighted to see you.

I very much appreciate this opportunity to speak with all of you, to be joined with Secretary Albright and Mr. Berger, to talk about America's role in the century to come; to talk about what we must do to realize the promise of this extraordinary moment in the history of the world. For the first time since before the rise of fascism early in this century, there is no overriding threat to our survival or our freedom. Perhaps for the first time in history, the world's leading nations are not engaged in a struggle with each other for security or territory. The world clearly is coming together.

Since 1945, global trade has grown 15-fold, raising living standards on every continent. Freedom is expanding: For the first time in history, more than half the world's people elect their own leaders. Access to information by ordinary people the world over is literally exploding.

Because of these developments, and the dramatic increase in our own prosperity and confidence in this, the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history, the United States has the opportunity and, I would argue, the solemn responsibility to shape a more peaceful, prosperous, democratic world in the 21st century.

We must, however, begin this discussion with a little history and a little humility. Listen to this quote by another American leader, at the dawn of a new century: "The world's products are exchanged as never before and

with increasing transportation comes increasing knowledge and larger trade. We travel greater distances in a shorter space of time and with more ease than was ever dreamed of. The same important news is read, though in different languages, the same day, in all the world. Isolation is no longer possible. No nation can longer be indifferent to any other.”

That was said by President William McKinley a hundred years ago. What we now call globalization was well underway even then. We, in fact, had more diplomatic posts in the world than we have today, and foreign investment actually played a larger role in our own economy then than it does today.

The optimism being expressed about the 20th century by President McKinley and others at that time was not all that much different from the hopes commonly expressed today about the 21st. The rising global trade and communications did lift countless lives then, just as it does today. But it did not stop the world's wealthiest nations from waging World War I and World War II. It did not stop the Depression, or the Holocaust, or communism. Had leading nations acted decisively then, perhaps these disasters might have been prevented. But the League of Nations failed, and America—well, our principal involvement in the world was commercial and cultural, unless and until we were attacked.

After World War II, our leaders took a different course. Harry Truman came to this city and said that to change the world away from a world in which might makes right, quote, “words are not enough. We must once and for all prove by our acts conclusively that right has might.” He and his allies and their successors built a network of security alliances to preserve the peace and a global financial system to preserve prosperity.

Over the last 6 years, we have been striving to renew those arrangements and to create new ones for the challenges of the next 50 years. We have made progress, but there is so very much more to do. We cannot assume today that globalization alone will wash away the forces of destruction at the dawn of the 21st century, any more than it did at the dawn of the 20th century. We cannot assume it will bring freedom and prosperity to ordi-

nary citizens around the world who long for them. We cannot assume it will avoid environmental and public health disasters. We cannot assume that because we are now secure, we Americans do not need military strength or alliances or that because we are prosperous, we are not vulnerable to financial turmoil half a world away.

The world we want to leave our children and grandchildren requires us to make the right choices, and some of them will be difficult. America has always risen to great causes, yet we have a tendency, still, to believe that we can go back to minding our own business when we're done. Today we must embrace the inexorable logic of globalization, that everything, from the strength of our economy to the safety of our cities to the health of our people, depends on events not only within our borders but half a world away. We must see the opportunities and the dangers of the interdependent world in which we are clearly fated to live.

There is still the potential for major regional wars that would threaten our security. The arms race between India and Pakistan reminds us that the next big war could still be nuclear. There is a risk that our former adversaries will not succeed in their transitions to freedom and free markets. There is a danger that deadly weapons will fall into the hands of a terrorist group or an outlaw nation and that those weapons could be chemical or biological. There is a danger of deadly alliances among terrorists, narcotraffickers, and organized criminal groups. There is a danger of global environmental crises and the spread of deadly diseases. There is a danger that global financial turmoil will undermine open markets, overwhelm open societies, and undercut our own prosperity.

We must avoid both the temptation to minimize these dangers and the illusion that the proper response to them is to batten down the hatches and protect America against the world. The promise of our future lies in the world. Therefore, we must work hard with the world to defeat the dangers we face together and to build this hopeful moment together, into a generation of peace, prosperity, and freedom. Because of our

unique position, America must lead with confidence in our strengths and with a clear vision of what we seek to avoid and what we seek to advance.

Our first challenge is to build a more peaceful 21st century world. To that end, we're renewing alliances that extend the area where wars do not happen and working to stop the conflicts that are claiming lives and threatening our interests right now.

The century's bloodiest wars began in Europe. That's why I've worked hard to build a Europe that finally is undivided, democratic, and at peace. We want all of Europe to have what America helped build in Western Europe, a community that upholds common standards of human rights, where people have the confidence and security to invest in the future, where nations cooperate to make war unthinkable.

That is why I have pushed hard for NATO's enlargement and why we must keep NATO's doors open to new democratic members, so that other nations will have an incentive to deepen their democracies. That is why we must forge a partnership between NATO and Russia, between NATO and Ukraine; why we are building a NATO capable not only of deterring aggression against its own territory but of meeting challenges to our security beyond its territory, the kind of NATO we must advance at the 50th anniversary summit in Washington this April.

We are building a stronger alliance with Japan, and renewing our commitment to deter aggression in Korea and intensifying our efforts for a genuine peace there. I thank Secretary Perry for his efforts in that regard. We also create a more peaceful world by building new partnerships in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Ten years ago we were shouting at each other across a North-South chasm defined by our differences. Today, we are engaged in a new dialog that speaks the language of common interests, of trade and investment, of education and health, of democracies that deliver not corruption and despair but progress and hope, of a common desire that children in all our countries will be free of the scourge of drugs. Through these efforts to strengthen old alliances and build new partnerships, we advance the prospects for

peace. However, the work of actually making peace is harder and often far more contentious.

It's easy, for example, to say that we really have no interests in who lives in this or that valley in Bosnia or who owns a strip of brushland in the Horn of Africa or some piece of parched earth by the Jordan River. But the true measure of our interests lies not in how small or distant these places are or in whether we have trouble pronouncing their names. The question we must ask is, what are the consequences to our security of letting conflicts fester and spread? We cannot, indeed, we should not, do everything or be everywhere. But where our values and our interests are at stake and where we can make a difference, we must be prepared to do so. And we must remember that the real challenge of foreign policy is to deal with problems before they harm our national interests.

It's also easy to say that peacemaking is simply doomed where people are embittered by generations of hate, where the old animosities of race and religion and ethnic difference raise their hoary heads. But I will never forget the day that the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority came to the White House, in September of 1993, to sign their peace accord. At that moment, the question arose, and indeed, based on the pictures afterward, it seemed to be the main question, whether, if in front of the entire world, Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat would actually shake hands for the first time.

It was an interesting and occasionally humorous discussion. But it ended when Yitzhak Rabin, a soldier for a lifetime, said to me, "Mr. President, I have been fighting this man for a lifetime, 30 years. I have buried a lot of my own people in the process, but you do not make peace with your friends."

It is in our interest to be a peacemaker, not because we think we can make all these differences go away, but because in over 200 years of hard effort here at home and with bitter and good experiences around the world, we have learned that the world works better when differences are resolved by the

force of argument rather than the force of arms.

That is why I am proud of the work we have done to support peace in Northern Ireland and why we will keep pressing the leaders there to observe not just the letter but the spirit of the Good Friday accords.

It is also why I intend to use the time I have remaining in this office to push for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to reach a just and final settlement, and to stand by our friends for peace, such as Jordan. The people of the Middle East can do it, but time is precious, and they can't afford to waste any more of it. In their hearts, they know there can be no security or justice for any who live in that small and sacred land until there is security and justice for all who live there. If they do their part, we must do ours.

We will also keep working with our allies to build peace in the Balkans. Three years ago, we helped to end the war in Bosnia. A lot of doubters then thought it would soon start again. But Bosnia is on a steady path toward renewal and democracy. We've been able to reduce our troops there by 75 percent as peace has taken hold, and we will continue to bring them home.

The biggest remaining danger to this progress has been the fighting and the repression in Kosovo. Kosovo is, after all, where the violence in the former Yugoslavia began, over a decade ago, when they lost the autonomy guaranteed under Yugoslav law. We have a clear national interest in ensuring that Kosovo is where this trouble ends. If it continues, it almost certainly will draw in Albania and Macedonia, which share borders with Kosovo, and on which clashes have already occurred.

Potentially, it could affect our allies, Greece and Turkey. It could spark tensions in Bosnia itself, jeopardizing the gains made there. If the conflict continues, there will certainly be more atrocities, more refugees, more victims crying out for justice and seeking out revenge.

Last fall, a quarter of a million displaced people in Bosnia were facing cold and hunger in the hills. Using diplomacy backed by force, we brought them home and slowed the fighting.

For 17 days this month, outside Paris, we sought with our European partners an agreement that would end the fighting for good. Progress was made toward a common understanding of Kosovo's autonomy, progress that would not have happened, I want to say, but for the unity of our allies and the tireless leadership of our Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Here's where we are. The Kosovar Albanian leaders have agreed in principle to a plan that would protect the rights of their people and give them substantial self-government. Serbia has agreed to much, but not all, of the conditions of autonomy and has so far not agreed to the necessity of a NATO-led international force to maintain the peace there.

Serbia's leaders must now accept that only by allowing people in Kosovo control over their day-to-day lives—as, after all, they had been promised under Yugoslav law—it is only by doing that can they keep their country intact. Both sides must return to the negotiations on March 15, with clear mandate for peace. In the meantime, President Milosevic should understand that this is a time for restraint, not repression, and if he does not, NATO is prepared to act.

Now, if there is a peace agreement that is effective, NATO must also be ready to deploy to Kosovo to give both sides the confidence to lay down their arms. Europeans would provide the great bulk of such a force, roughly 85 percent, but if there is a real peace, America must do its part as well.

Kosovo is not an easy problem. But if we don't stop the conflict now, it clearly will spread. And then we will not be able to stop it, except at far greater cost and risk.

A second challenge we face is to bring our former adversaries, Russia and China, into the international system as open, prosperous, stable nations. The way both countries develop in the coming century will have a lot to do with the future of our planet.

For 50 years, we confronted the challenge of Russia's strength. Today, we must confront the risk of a Russia weakened by the legacy of communism and also by its inability at the moment to maintain prosperity at home or control the flow of its money, weapons, and technology across its borders.

The dimensions of this problem are truly enormous. Eight years after the Soviet collapse, the Russian people are hurting. The economy is shrinking, making the future uncertain. Yet, we have as much of a stake today in Russia overcoming these challenges as we did in checking its expansion during the cold war. This is not a time for complacency or self-fulfilling pessimism. Let's not forget that Russia's people have overcome enormous obstacles before. In just this decade, with no living memory of democracy or freedom to guide them, they have built a country more open to the world than ever, a country with a free press and a robust, even raucous debate, a country that should see in the first year of the new millennium the first peaceful democratic transfer of power in its 1,000-year history.

The Russian people will decide their own future. But we must work with them for the best possible outcome with realism and with patience. If Russia does what it must to make its economy work, I am ready to do everything I can to mobilize adequate international support for them. With the right framework, we will also encourage foreign investment in its factories, its energy fields, its people. We will increase our support for small business and for the independent media. We will work to continue cutting our two nations' nuclear arsenals and help Russia prevent both its weapons and its expertise from falling into the wrong hands. The budget I have presented to Congress will increase funding for this critical threat reduction by 70 percent over the next 5 years.

The question China faces is how best to assure its stability and progress. Will it choose openness and engagement? Or will it choose to limit the aspirations of its people without fully embracing the global rules of the road? In my judgment, only the first path can really answer the challenges China faces.

We cannot minimize them. China has made incredible progress in lifting people out of poverty and building a new economy. But now its rate of economic growth is declining, just as it is needed to create jobs for a growing and increasingly more mobile population. Most of China's economy is still stifled by state control. We can see in China the kinds of problems a society faces when

it is moving away from the rule of fear but is not yet rooted in the rule of law.

China's leaders know more economic reform is needed, and they know reform will cause more unemployment, and they know that can cause unrest. At the same time, and perhaps for those reasons, they remain unwilling to open up their political system, to give people a peaceful outlet for dissent.

Now, we Americans know that dissent is not always comfortable, not always easy, and often raucous. But I believe that the fact that we have peaceful, orderly outlets for dissent is one of the principal reasons we're still around here as the longest lasting freely elected Government in the world. And I believe, sooner or later, China will have to come to understand that a society, in the world we're living in, particularly a country as great and old and rich and full of potential as China, simply cannot purchase stability at the expense of freedom.

On the other hand, we have to ask ourselves, what is the best thing to do to try to maximize the chance that China will take the right course, and that, because of that, the world will be freer, more peaceful, more prosperous in the 21st century? I do not believe we can hope to bring change to China if we isolate China from the forces of change. Of course, we have our differences, and we must press them. But we can do that and expand our cooperation through principled and purposeful engagement with China, its government, and its people.

Our third great challenge is to build a future in which our people are safe from the dangers that arise, perhaps halfway around the world, dangers from proliferation, from terrorism, from drugs, from the multiple catastrophes that could arise from climate change.

Each generation faces the challenges of not trying to fight the last war. In our case, that means recognizing that the more likely future threat to our existence is not a strategic nuclear strike from Russia or China but the use of weapons of mass destruction by an outlaw nation or a terrorist group.

In the last 6 years, fighting that threat has become a central priority of American foreign policy. Here, too, there is much more to be done. We are working to stop weapons

from spreading at the source, as with Russia. We are working to keep Iraq in check so that it does not threaten the rest of the world or its region with weapons of mass destruction. We are using all the means at our disposal to deny terrorists safe havens, weapons, and funds. Even if it takes years, terrorists must know there is no place to hide.

Recently, we tracked down the gunman who killed two of our people outside the CIA 6 years ago. We are training and equipping our local fire, police, and medical personnel to deal with chemical, biological, and nuclear emergencies, and improving our public health surveillance system, so that if a biological weapon is released, we can detect it and save lives. We are working to protect our critical computer systems from sabotage.

Many of these subjects are new and unfamiliar and may be frightening. As I said when I gave an address in Washington not very long ago about what we were doing on biological and computer security and criminal threats, it is important that we have the right attitude about this. It is important that we understand that the risks are real, and they require, therefore, neither denial nor panic. As long as people organize themselves in human societies, there will be organized forces of destruction who seek to take advantage of new means of destroying other people.

And the whole history of conflict can be seen in part as the race of defensive measures to catch up with offensive capabilities. That is what we're doing in dealing with the computer challenges today; that is what we are doing in dealing with the biological challenges today. It is very important that the American people, without panic, be serious and deliberate about them, because it is the kind of challenge that we have faced repeatedly. And as long as our country and the world is around, unless there is some completely unforeseen change in human nature, our successors will have to do the same.

We are working to develop a national missile defense system which could, if we decide to deploy it, be deployed against emerging ballistic missile threats from rogue nations. We are bolstering the global agreements that curb proliferation. That's the most important thing we can be doing right now. This year,

we hope to achieve an accord to strengthen compliance with the convention against biological weapons. It's a perfectly good convention, but frankly, it has no teeth. We have to give it some. And we will ask our Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to stop nations from testing nuclear weapons so they're constrained from developing new ones. Again, I say: I implore the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty this year. It is very important for the United States and the world.

Our security and our safety also depends upon doing more to protect our people from the scourge of drugs. To win this fight, we must work with others, including and especially Mexico. Mexico has a serious drug problem, increasingly affecting more of its own young people. No one understands this better than President Zedillo. He described it as the number one threat to his country's security, its people, its democracy. He is working hard to establish clean government, true democracy, and the rule of law. He is working hard to tackle the corruption traffickers have wrought.

He cannot win this battle alone, and neither can we. In any given year, the narco-traffickers may spend hundreds of millions of dollars to try to suborn Mexican law enforcement officials, most of whom work for under \$10,000 a year.

As I certified to Congress today, Mexico is cooperating with us in the battle for our lives. And I believe the American people will be safer in this, as in so many other ways, if we fight drugs with Mexico, rather than walk away.

Another global danger we face is climate change. As far as we can tell, with all the scientific evidence available, the hottest years our planet has ever experienced were 1997 and 1998. The two hottest years recorded in the last several—excuse me—9 of the 10 hottest years recorded in the last several centuries occurred in the last decade.

Now, we can wait and hope and do nothing and try to ignore what the vast majority of scientists tell us is a pattern that is fixed and continuing. We could ignore the record-breaking temperatures, the floods, the storms, the droughts that have caused such misery. Or we can accept that preventing the

disease and destruction climate change can bring will be infinitely cheaper than letting future generations try to clean up the mess, especially when you consider that greenhouse gases, once emitted into the atmosphere, last and have a destructive environmental effect for at least a hundred years.

We took a giant step forward in 1997, when we helped to forge the Kyoto agreement. Now we're working to persuade developing countries that they, too, can and must participate meaningfully in this effort without forgoing growth. We are also trying to persuade a majority in the United States Congress that we can do the same thing.

The approach I have taken in America is not to rely on a whole raft of new regulations, and not to propose big energy taxes, but instead to offer tax incentives and dramatic increases in investment in new technologies, because we know—we know now—that we have the technological capacity to break the iron link between industrial age energy use patterns and economic growth. You're proving it in California every day, with stiffer environmental standards than other States have.

We know that the technology is just beginning to emerge to allow us to have clean cars and other clean forms of transportation; to dramatically increase the capacity of all of our buildings to keep out heat and cold, and to let in more light. We know that the conservation potential of what we have right now available has only just been scratched. And we must convince the world and critical decisionmakers in the United States to change their minds about a big idea, namely that the only way a country can grow is to consume more energy resources in a way that does more to increase global warming.

One of the most interesting conversations I had when I was in China was with the environmental minister there, who thanked me for going there to do an environmental event, because he was having trouble convincing the Government that they could continue to lift the Chinese people out of poverty and still improve the environment. This is a central, big idea that people all over the world will have to change their minds about before we will be open and free to embrace the technological advances that are lying evident

all around us. And all of you that can have any impact on that, I implore you to do it.

Our fourth challenge is to create a world trading and financial system that will lift the lives of ordinary people on every continent around the world or, as it has been stated in other places, to put a human face on the global economy. Over the last 6 years, we've taken giant steps in opening the global trading system. The United States alone has concluded over 270 different trade agreements. Once again, we are the world's largest exporting nation. There is a lot more to be done.

In the first 5 years of my Presidency, about 30 percent of our growth came from expanding trade. Last year, we had a good year, but we didn't have much growth from expanding trade because of the terrible difficulties of the people in Asia, in Russia, and because of the slowdown in growth in Latin America, and because we did not reach out to seize new possibilities in Africa. Those people are suffering more, and our future prospects are being constrained.

The question is what to do about it. Some of the folks outside who were protesting when I drove up were saying by their signs that they believe globalization is inherently bad, and there's no way in the wide world to put a human face on the global economy. But if you look at the facts of the last 30 years, hundreds of millions of people have had their economic prospects advanced on every continent because they have finally been able to find a way to express their creativity in positive terms and produce goods and services that could be purchased beyond the borders of their nation.

Now, the question is, how do we deal with the evident challenges and problems that we face in high relief today and seize the benefit that we know comes from expanding trade. I've asked for a new round of global trade negotiations to expand exports of services, farm products, and manufacturers. I am still determined to reach agreement on a free trade area of the Americas. If it hadn't been for our expansion in Latin America, from Mexico all the way to the southern tip of South America, we would have been in much worse shape this last year.

I have urged Congress to give the trade authority the President has traditionally had

to advance our prosperity, and I've asked them to approve the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the "Africa Growth and Opportunity Act" because we have special responsibilities and special opportunities in the Caribbean and in Africa that have gone too long unseized.

But trade is not an end in itself. It has to work for ordinary people. It has to contribute to the wealth and fairness of societies. It has to reinforce the values that give meaning to life, not simply in the United States but in the poorest countries, struggling to lift their people to their dreams. That's why we're working to build a trading system that upholds the rights of workers and consumers, and helps us and them in other countries to protect the environment, so that competition among nations is a race to the top, not the bottom. This year we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world.

The gains of global economic exchange have been real and dramatic. But when the tides of capital first flood emerging markets, and then abruptly recede, when bank failures and bankruptcies grip entire economies, when millions who have worked their way into the middle class are plunged suddenly into poverty, the need for reform of the international financial system is clear.

I don't want to minimize the complexity of this challenge. As nations began to trade more and as investment rules began to permit people to invest in countries other than their own more, it became more and more necessary to facilitate the conversion of currencies. Whenever you do that, you will create a market against risk, just in the transfer of currencies. Whenever you do that, you will have people that are moving money around because they think the value of the money itself will change and profit might be gained in an independent market of currency exchange.

It is now true that on any given day, there is \$1½ trillion of currency exchange in the world. Many, many, many times more than the actual value of the exchange of goods and services. And we have got to find a way to facilitate the movement of money, without which trade and investment cannot occur, in

a way that avoids these dramatic cycles of boom and then bust, which have led to the collapse of economic activity in so many countries around the world.

We found a way to do it in the United States after the Great Depression. And thank goodness we have never again had a Great Depression, even though we've had good times and bad times. That is the challenge facing the world financial system today.

The leading economies have got a lot of work to do. We have to do everything we can, not just the United States, but Europe and Japan, to spur economic growth. Unless there is a restoration of growth, all the changes in the financial rules we make will not get Asia, Latin America, countries—Russia—out of their difficulties.

We have to be ready to provide quick and decisive help to nations committed to sound policies. We have to help nations build social safety nets so that, when they have inevitable changes in their economic conditions, people at least have the basic security they need to continue to embrace change and advance the overall welfare of society.

We have to encourage nations to maintain open, properly financed—excuse me—properly regulated financial systems so that decisions are shaped by informed market decisions and not distorted by corruption. We also have to take responsible steps to reform the global financial architecture for the 21st century. And we'll do some more of that at the G-7 summit in Germany in June.

In the meanwhile, we have to recognize that the United States has made a great contribution to keeping this crisis from being worse than it would have been by helping to get money to Brazil, to Russia, to other countries, and by keeping our own markets open. If you compare, for example, our import patterns with those of Europe or those of Japan, you will see that we have far, far more open markets. It has worked to make us competitive and productive. We also have the lowest unemployment rate in the entire world among all advanced countries now, something that many people thought would never happen again.

On the other hand, we cannot let other countries' difficulties in our open markets become an excuse for them to violate international trade rules and dump products illegally on our markets. We've had enough problems in America this year and last year—in agriculture and aerospace, especially—from countries that could no longer afford to buy products, many of which they had already offered. Then, in the last several months, we've seen an enormous problem in this country in our steel industry because of evident dumping of products in the American market that violated the law.

So I want you to know what while I will do everything to keep our markets open, I intend, while this crisis persists, to do everything I can to enforce our trade laws.

Yesterday we received some evidence that our aggressive policy is producing some results and, I think, proof that it wasn't market forces that led to what we saw in steel over the last year. The new figures from the Commerce Department show this: Imports of hot-rolled steel from countries most responsible for the surge—Japan, Russia, and Brazil—have fallen by 96 percent from the record levels we saw last November.

That is not bad news for them; that's good news. If they won't—if American markets are going to stay open, we have to play by the rules. We have to follow lawful economic trends, not political and economic decisions made to dump on the American markets in ways which hurt our economy and undermine our ability to buy the exports of other countries.

Our fifth challenge has to keep freedom as a top goal for the world of the 21st century. Countries like South Korea and Thailand have proven in this financial crisis that open societies are more resilient, that elected governments have a legitimacy to make hard choices in hard times. But if democracies over the long run aren't able to deliver for their people, to take them out of economic turmoil, the pendulum that swung so decisively toward freedom over the last few years could swing back, and the next century could begin as badly as this one began in that regard.

Therefore, beyond economics, beyond the transformation of the great countries to eco-

nomics security—Russia and China—beyond even many of our security concerns, we also have to recognize that we can have no greater purpose than to support the right of other people to live in freedom and shape their own destiny. If that right could be universally exercised, virtually every goal I have outlined today would be advanced.

We have to keep standing by those who risk their own freedom to win it for others. Today we're releasing our annual Human Rights Report: The message of the Human Rights Report is often resented but always respected for its candor, its consistency, for what it says about our country and our values. We need to deepen democracy where it's already taking root by helping our partners narrow their income gaps, strengthen their legal institutions, and build well-educated, healthy societies.

This will be an important part of the trip I take to Central America next week, which has prevailed against decades of civil war only to be crushed in the last several months by the devastating force of nature.

This year, we will see profoundly important developments in the potential transition to democracy in two critical countries, Indonesia and Nigeria. Both have the capacity to lift their entire regions if they succeed and to swamp them in a sea of disorder if they fail. In the coming year and beyond, we must make a concentrated effort to help them achieve what will be the world's biggest victories for freedom since 1989.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Tomorrow, it holds its first free Presidential election, after a dictatorship that made it the poorest oil-rich country in the world. We are providing support for the transition, and if it succeeds, we have to be prepared to do more. Because we count on further progress, today we are also waiving the sanctions we imposed when its Government did not cooperate in the fight against drugs.

Indonesia is the fourth largest nation and the largest Islamic country in the entire world. In June, it will hold what we hope will be its first truly democratic election in more than 40 years. Indonesia desperately needs a government that can help it overcome its economic crisis while maintaining the support of its people. We are helping to

strengthen the social safety net for its people in providing the largest contribution of any nation to support the coming elections.

Whether these struggles are far or near, their outcome will profoundly affect us. Whether a child in Africa or Southeast Asia or Russia or China can grow up educated, healthy, safe, free from violence, free of hate, full of hope, and free to decide his or her own destiny, this will have a lot to do with the life our children have as they grow up. It will help to determine if our children go to war, have jobs, have clean air, have safe streets.

For our Nation to be strong, we must maintain a consensus that seemingly distant problems can come home if they are not addressed and addressed promptly. We must recognize we cannot lift ourselves to the heights to which we aspire if the world is not rising with us. I say again, the inexorable logic of globalization is the genuine recognition of interdependence. We cannot wish into being the world we seek. Talk is cheap. Decisions are not.

That is why I have asked Congress to reverse the decline in defense spending that began in 1985, and I am hopeful and confident that we can get bipartisan majorities in both Houses to agree. I hope it will also agree to give more support to our diplomats and to programs that keep our soldiers out of war, to fund assistance programs to keep nations on a stable path to democracy and growth, and to finally pay both our dues and our debts to the United Nations.

In an interdependent world, we cannot lead if we expect to lead only on our own terms and never on our own nickel. We can't be a first-class power if we're only prepared to pay for steerage.

I hope all of you, as citizens, believe that we have to seize the responsibilities that we have today with confidence, to keep taking risks for peace, to keep forging opportunities for our people and seeking them for others as well, to seek to put a genuinely human face on the global economy, to keep faith with all those around the world who struggle for human rights, the rule of law, a better life, to look on our leadership not as a burden but as a welcome opportunity, to build the future we dream for our children in these,

the final days of the 20th century and the coming dawn of the next.

The story of the 21st century can be quite a wonderful story. But we have to write the first chapter.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Plaza Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco; Lee Perry, wife of former Defense Secretary William Perry; former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico. The President also referred to the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

### **Statement Announcing an Emergency Supplemental Appropriation To Help Farmers and Ranchers**

*February 26, 1999*

Today I am sending to the Congress requests for a \$152 million emergency supplemental appropriation to help America's farmers and ranchers. Many farm communities continue to undergo very hard times despite the disaster aid we worked so hard to provide last year. Economic turmoil in Pacific Rim countries and around the world continue to make it difficult for American farmers and ranchers to export their goods overseas. More and more farmers and ranchers need loans to see them through to better times, and our Department of Agriculture simply is running out of available credit.

The Agriculture Department's staff around the country needs immediate help to handle the increased workload brought on by providing emergency services. I hope that Congress will join me in helping our farmers and ranchers during this difficult time, particularly when the rest of the country is blessed with unparalleled prosperity. I urge them to approve this request by the end of March.

**Memorandum on Certification for Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries**

*February 26, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99-15

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Certification for Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended ("the Act"), I hereby determine and certify that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries/dependent territories have cooperated fully with the United States, or have taken adequate steps on their own, to achieve full compliance with the goals and objectives of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances:

Aruba, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(B) of the Act, I hereby determine that it is in the vital national interests of the United States to certify the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries:

Cambodia, Haiti, Nigeria, and Paraguay.

Analysis of the relevant U.S. vital national interests, as required under section 490(b)(3) of the Act, is attached.

I have determined that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries do not meet the standards set forth in section 490(b) for certification:

Afghanistan, Burma.

In making these determinations, I have considered the factors set forth in section 490 of the Act. Given that the performance of each of these countries/dependent territories has differed, I have attached an explanatory

statement for each of the countries/dependent territories subject to this determination.

You are hereby authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

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**Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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**February 22**

The President announced his intention to appoint Thomas R. Reedy as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

**February 23**

The President announced his intention to nominate George T. Frampton, Jr., to be a member of the Council on Environmental Quality. The President will designate him as Chair upon confirmation.

The White House announced that the President will address the opening of the U.S.-Africa Ministerial on Partnership in the 21st Century on March 16 in Washington, DC.

**February 24**

In the morning, the President met with President Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana in the Cabinet Room.

**February 25**

In the morning, the President traveled to Tucson, AZ. In the afternoon, he visited the Major League Baseball Arizona Diamondbacks' practice facility at Tucson Electric Park.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lawrence J. Delaney to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

In the evening, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA.

**February 26**

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA.

The President announced his intention to nominate Larry Harrington to be U.S. Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

In the evening, the President attended a Democratic National Committee Saxophone Club/Women's Leadership Forum reception in the Los Angeles Room at the Century Plaza Hotel.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**


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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

**Submitted February 23**

Paula J. Dobriansky, of Virginia, to be a member of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2001 (re-appointment).

George T. Frampton, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Council on Environmental Quality, vice Kathleen A. McGinty, resigned.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**


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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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**Released February 22**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

**Released February 23**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy Chris Jennings on the "Insure Kids Now" initiative

Statement by the Press Secretary: U.S.-Africa Ministerial in March

**Released February 24**

Fact Sheet: Strengthening the U.S.-Ghana Partnership: The State Visit of President Rawlings

**Released February 26**

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the situation in Kosovo

Fact Sheet: Overview of Annual Presidential Certification of Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

Statement by the Press Secretary: Annual Presidential Certifications for Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**


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NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.