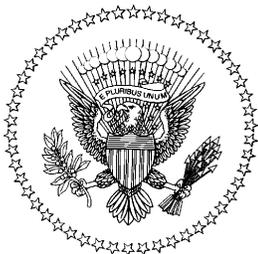


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, May 17, 1999
Volume 35-Number 19
Pages 833-893

Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Appointments and Nominations;
Meetings With Foreign Leaders;
Resignations and Retirements
Camp Hope, Albania, telephone conversation
with Americans—889
Chinese Embassy, bombing in Belgrade—854,
856
“Conyers for Congress” dinner—886
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
dinner—876
Georgia, roundtable discussion on new
markets in Atlanta—861
Germany
Community at Spangdahlem Air Base—833
Dinner with the troops at Ramstein Air
Base—836
Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award
dinner—867
Kosovo, situation in—837
Maryland
Departure for Fort McNair—878
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United
States at Fort McNair—879
New markets initiative—860
Oklahoma
Departure from Tinker Air Force Base—
854
Walking tour of tornado damage in Del
City—852

Addresses and Remarks—Continued

Radio address—851
Senate action on gun control legislation—878
Texas
Arrival at Austin-Bergstrom International
Airport in Austin—845
Democratic National Committee
Dinner in Austin—846
Luncheon in Houston—839
Treasury Secretary transition—873
“21st Century Law Enforcement and Public
Safety Act,” proposed—871
Washington, departure for Seattle—888
White House Strategy Meeting on Children,
Violence, and Responsibility—856, 857

Appointments and Nominations

Treasury Department
Deputy Secretary, remarks—873
Secretary, remarks—873

Communications to Congress

Bosnia and Herzegovina, message transmitting
report on continued operations of U.S.
forces—875
China, certification of satellite fuels and
separation systems exports, message—860
National Institute of Building Sciences,
message transmitting report—886

(Continued on the inside of the back cover.)

Editor’s Note: The President was in Seattle, WA, on May 14, 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

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under

regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for \$80.00 per year (\$137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for \$93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is \$3.00 (\$3.75 for foreign mailing).

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.

Contents—Continued

Communications to Federal Agencies

- Burma, memorandum regarding conditions in and U.S. policy toward—875
- Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area, memorandum—878

Interviews With the News Media

- Exchanges with reporters
 - Bonn, Germany—837
 - Rose Garden—857
 - South Lawn—878
 - Tinker Air Force Base, OK—854

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

- Germany, Chancellor Schroeder—837

Proclamations

- Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week—859

Resignations and Retirements

- Treasury Department, Secretary, remarks—873

Statements by the President

- Death of Meg Greenfield—886
- “Foster Care Independence Act,” proposed—886
- Senate action on gun control legislation—890

Supplementary Materials

- Acts approved by the President—892
- Checklist of White House press releases—892
- Digest of other White House announcements—890
- Nominations submitted to the Senate—892

Week Ending Friday, May 14, 1999

**Remarks to the Community at
Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany**

May 5, 1999

Thank you very much. Secretary Cohen, thank you for your remarks and your remarkable leadership. We're glad that you and Janet are here with us today and there for the men and women of America's military services every day.

Secretary Albright, thank you for being able to redeem the lessons of your life story by standing up for the freedom of the people in the Balkans.

To the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Hugh Shelton—I was looking at General Shelton standing up here—you know, he's about a head taller than I am. And I thought to myself, he not only is good; he looks good. He looks like the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But what I want you to know is, however good he looks, he's better than that in the job that he does.

I thank General Clark for his leadership. Ambassador Kornblum, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger. Our USAID Director, Brian Atwood, is doing so much for the humanitarian relief. Brigadier Scott Van Cleef, thank you. Chief Master Sergeant Daniel Keane, thank you for making all of us feel so welcome here today.

I'd like to thank the distinguished German public officials and citizens who are here. And I'd like to thank the Spangdahlem oompah band and the gospel choir. Thank you. I thank all the men and women of Team Eifel and all your family members who are here. I am delighted to see so many children here today. And I hope this will be a day they will long remember.

The 52d Air Expedition Wing is crucial to our mission in Europe. There are so many to thank: the Stingers and Hawks, the Panthers, your guests here, the crews of the Flying Knights, all the hundreds of base operations and support personnel here, working

day after day and now night after night. We ask so much of you, and you never let us down.

Ever since the end of the cold war, this base has been busy with the challenges of a new era, training new allies, planning new missions, helping people in need like the earthquake victims in Turkey whom the 52d Civil Engineer Squadron assisted last summer. A few years ago, you helped to end the cruel war in Bosnia. And I'm sorry you have to do it all over again, but I'm proud of the job you're doing today in Kosovo.

Earlier this year, some of you in the 22d Fighter Squadron flew support for Operation Northern Watch. Since this conflict in Kosovo began, we have been depending on you more than ever. It's meant more hardship and more hard work for you. Many of your loved ones are right now flying out of Italy, and of course, these F-117 stealth fighters and their crew are here from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. And they're a long way from their families.

Night after night—to Serbia, punching through enemy defenses; putting ordinance on target; returning home to debrief, rest, and then do it all over again: That takes courage and skill and a lot of support that we must never take for granted—refueling in midair; evading antiaircraft fire; pinpointing targets; seeking, often at great personal risk, to avoid civilian casualties; coordinating with crews from other nations; rescuing a downed pilot, as one of your squadrons did just a few days ago; and for the base personnel and the loved ones, always the anxious waiting for the aircraft to return.

One thing I have tried to make sure the American people understand in the years that I have been President is that your jobs have inherent dangers, even when not directly engaged in conflict. As many of you now know, just yesterday we lost two brave Americans in a helicopter training accident

in Albania. And today we grieve with their families and pray for them.

I came here more than anything else to say on behalf of your fellow Americans: We thank you for your service and your sacrifice. Though you're far from our shores, you are close to our hearts every day.

I also would like to thank the people of Germany, who are our allies in this cause and who do so very much to make all of you feel at home here in this wonderful country.

I just came from an operations briefing and a tour of the aircraft you fly from this base. I want to talk just a little bit about why you're flying. And I want all of you, particularly who have children here, who think about the world they will live in the 21st century, to think about why you're flying.

Our mission in Kosovo has nothing to do with trying to acquire territory or dominate others. It is about something far more important, creating the kind of world where an innocent people are not singled out for repression, for expulsion, for destruction just because of their religious and ethnic heritage.

You look around today at the people we have in uniform here. We have people from all different racial and ethnic backgrounds. We have people from all different religious heritages. And I think America's military is stronger because we try to get everybody's talents and put everybody's talents to the best possible use—not weaker. And I can tell you for sure that our country is stronger when we reach across all the lines that divide us and celebrate our differences but say that what unites us is more important.

All the differences that exist among people in the world, especially differences of religion, make life more interesting and more enlightening when they are limited by an understanding of our common humanity. But when people throw away that understanding of our common humanity and make differences the only thing that matter and make them so important they justify literally dehumanizing other people so that their lives, their children, their property, their history, their culture, even their faith in God do not matter, that makes life unbearable, and it makes civilization impossible.

And that is what we are fighting against in Kosovo, the same thing we fought to stop

in Bosnia. And if we want Europe to be undivided and democratic and at peace for the first time in history, and if we don't want your successors to have to come to this continent and fight another bitter war, then we must stand in Kosovo for the elemental principle of the common humanity of every breathing, living person in this continent.

The Alliance in which we are privileged to serve, NATO, is comprised of 19 democracies with 780 million people, tied together by a respect for human rights and the richness of all people, tied together in a conviction that we will build a Europe that is for the first time in history undivided, peaceful, and free. Kosovo is an affront to everything we stand for.

Two months ago there were 1.8 million ethnic Albanians living there; now nearly 1.5 million have been forced from their homes, their villages burned, their men often separated from their families and killed, some of them bundled and set on fire, the records of their family history and property destroyed.

The number of people dislodged there in 2 months is equivalent to the entire population of the State of Nebraska—kicked out of house and home without warning at gunpoint. It is—and those of you who were involved in Bosnia will remember this very well—it is the culmination of a deliberate, calculated, 10-year campaign by Mr. Milosevic to exploit the religious and ethnic differences in the former Yugoslavia, to preserve and enhance his dictatorial power.

His so-called ethnic cleansing has included concentration camps, murder, rape, the destruction of priceless religious, cultural, and historical sites, books, and records. This is wrong. It is evil. NATO, after the cold war, said that we would stand for the freedom and unity of Europe. This is occurring in the heart of Europe on NATO's doorstep. We must repudiate it. We must reverse it. And we intend to do that.

Now, when Mr. Milosevic started this campaign against unarmed people in Kosovo, with 40,000 troops and nearly 300 tanks, he

may have thought our Alliance was too divided, our people too impatient, our democracies too weak to stand against single-minded despotism. Every day, you prove him wrong.

NATO is now more united. Our objectives are clear and firm; Secretary Cohen said them. I want to say them one more time. This is not complicated. The Kosovars must be able to go home, safe and with self-government. The Serbian troops must be withdrawn, and instead there must be an international force with NATO at its core but, hopefully, with many other nations participating to keep the peace and protect all the people of Kosovo, Albanians and Serbs alike.

We have no quarrel with the Serb people. I say that again. We do not want to be guilty of the sin we are standing and speaking against. We have no quarrel with the Serb people. America has many great Serbian-Americans. They were our allies in war. Our quarrel is with ethnic cleansing and systematic killing and uprooting and the bigotry and death brought on by religious hatred. That is what we stand against and what we seek to reverse.

But for that to happen and for those people to go home and have self-government, there has to be an international security force with NATO at its core that will protect everybody there. We will continue to pursue this campaign in which we are now engaged. We will intensify it in an unrelenting way until these objectives are met.

You know, the gentle hills of this region, the Eifel region and the Mosel Valley, are peaceful today, thanks in no small measure to 50 years of Alliance and commitment, of which you are the most recent manifestation. But we mustn't forget that here, where we now are, there was a landscape of violence for thousands of years, from the time Trier served as a Roman capital just south of here. For two millennia, Europeans fought each other in the contested terrain around this base—two millennia.

Now, when you drive across these beautiful hills and you see these beautiful hills and you see these beautiful fields, war is unthinkable here and in most of Europe because of what your forebears did. And you can now look forward to a day not long from

now when, in the Balkans and throughout southeastern Europe, human rights are respected and the men and women of Spang are honored for doing your part to turn the dream of peace and human rights into an everyday reality.

This base was built in the aftermath of the Second World War at the dawn of the cold war. Because of Allied vigilance, the war we then feared would occur never happened. Now, planes are actually flying into combat from this base for the very first time to protect the future your forebears worked so hard to build.

I know this is hard. I know too many of these pilots are flying long hours with too little rest. I know the stress and anxiety must be unbearable. But when you wonder what it is like, next time you're in a meeting of American service personnel, look around at your differences, at your racial differences, the differences of background, the men and women together, the differences of religious faith, and thank God you live in a society that honors that, because we are united by things that are more important. And look at these little children here and think how terrible it would be for them to live in a world where a person could gain, increase, and keep political power by teaching young people like them to kill other young people because of their religious faith or their ethnic background.

That has no place in Europe or any other civilized society. And you have a chance to prove the dreams of the people that fought World War II and that held together during the long cold war to prove those dreams can be realized in Europe in your lifetime. And if you do, the people who wear the uniform of the United States military, 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, will not be called upon to spill their blood in another war because of some dictator's mad schemes to dehumanize a whole people. That is what you're fighting for, and that is what you will be grateful that you did for your children and the children of this continent.

Thank you so much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:36 p.m. in Hangar One. In his remarks, he referred to Janet Langhart Cohen, wife of Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen; General Wesley K. Clark, USA,

Supreme Allied Commander Europe; John C. Kornblum, U.S. Ambassador to Germany; Brig. Gen. Scott Van Cleef, USAF, Commander, 52d Air Expeditionary Wing; Chief Master Sergeant Daniel M. Keane, USAF, 52d Fighter Wing; and President Slobodan Milosevic, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The President also referred to the Team Eifel Amateur Radio Society. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Dinner With the Troops at Ramstein Air Base, Germany

May 5, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. General Jumper, General Wooley, ladies and gentlemen, let me first of all say that I know I speak for all the people in our group—the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, General Shelton, and others—in saying that we are delighted to be here and very proud of you.

I have been to Ramstein at least three times since I've been President. I was trying to think, it may be four. But I feel a special affinity for this base. I flew from here into Bosnia in 1995, when the people who were stationed here then did so much to restore freedom and peace to the people there.

There are a lot of things I'd like to say, as briefly as I can. First of all, I'd like to tell you I had a real good time tonight taking all the pictures and—[laughter]—I like having the opportunity to look our men and women in uniform in the eye and see where you're from and hear a little about your views. I thank especially the people who had dinner with me at the table over there tonight. I got questions about the Middle East peace process and the situation in Iraq and the long-term prospects in Kosovo and—

Audience member. Pay raises.

The President. —and pay raises, that's right. [Laughter] And they did a very good job. I want you to know, the guys at the table—they did a good job, because we talked a lot about how the Air Force and the Navy and this year probably the Army will be down on their recruitment goals and

the reenlistment problems and how we face the converging pressures of a very, very strong economy in the private sector—the strongest it has been maybe ever, certainly in a generation—and a very much increased operations tempo for people in the military, taking people away from their families more frequently and often for extended periods of time. And if that results in—those two things result in our not meeting our enlistment or reenlistment quotas, obviously, that only aggravates the up tempo problem further.

I think there is strong, overwhelming bipartisan support in the Congress this year to make some changes in pay, in retirement, in enlistment and reenlistment bonuses. And those three things plus some other things we're going to do, I hope will help to keep more of you in the service, and I hope will help to get more young people coming in.

The job market is very, very strong out there, as all of you know. And particularly after you've been in the service for a while and you've gotten the invaluable training that you get, I understand the temptations and the lures of taking those offers which wouldn't require you to be away from home so much and so far.

But I can tell you this: The United States military, because of people like you, can do things for a troubled world that no one else can do. And I am profoundly grateful. You're taking those supplies into the refugees in Macedonia and Albania—you must have talked to some of them. You must know what they have been through. And if you were involved in the operation in Bosnia or you talked to anybody else who was, you must know what they were put through and what it is that NATO is trying to stop in the heart of Europe.

At the end of the cold war, the question was, do we need a NATO? And the 19 Allies decided that, yes, we did; that if we wanted Europe to be free and united and at peace, we needed NATO and that would be our mission. And I wish there had been nothing for us to do—nothing for you to do. I wish none of you reservists or guards people had to be called up or had to volunteer. But it happened. And it is truly ironic that after all the wars in the 20th century, that here in

Europe we would still be fighting over religious and ethnic bigotry, being used to dehumanize people to the point of justifying killing them, burning them, looting their homes, running them out, burning their villages, eradicating every last vestige of historical, cultural records, burning their houses of worship. And that's not the world I want your children to live in.

And if your children are wearing the uniform of our Armed Services, I don't want them to have to fight a war because we didn't nip in the bud a cancer that can never sweep across Europe again.

So this is profoundly important. And the humanitarian aid you're taking to those desperate people is profoundly important. They are good people. They have their dignity. You are enabling them to keep what they can when most of them are running out of their country with nothing but the clothes on their back.

I just want you to know that back home people do know what you're going through; they do know what a sacrifice it is. We will do everything we can to make it better. In the Congress this year, I do believe there was overwhelming bipartisan support to respond to the problems you face and the challenges you face and the private market you face.

But nothing can ever compensate or take the place of the profound sense of satisfaction you must get when you go to bed at night knowing that you did something that was good and decent, not because your country wanted to dominate another people or control land but because we want our children and their children to live in a decent world.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in Hangar 3. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Allied Air Forces Central Europe; Brig. Gen. Michael W. Wooley, USAF, Commander, 86th Airlift Wing and Kaiserslautern Military Community. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany and an Exchange With Reporters in Bonn, Germany

May 6, 1999

Situation in Kosovo

Chancellor Schroeder. Ladies and gentlemen, we had a very intensive discussion together, the main emphasis, of course, having been on the crisis on Kosovo. We basically agreed regarding all of the questions that were discussed, and when I say "we agreed," then I'm talking about the two of us but also about Germany and the United States of America.

There is no reason whatsoever to go in and change our jointly adopted strategy. We very much welcome the initiative taken by the foreign ministers today, the G-8 conference. We have noticed from looking at the results that some strong movement has happened there. We have also conjointly decided that it is very necessary to support the frontline states of the region and particular Macedonia and Albania, the two countries that at present are shouldering the vast burden regarding the refugee problem.

We very much have to go in and make sure that the earmarked 250 million euro as support have to be channeled into those frontline states and really get there. You might know that Germany has earmarked 60 million German marks as support there. We have to make sure that those supports and that money speedily flows into the region.

I personally had the opportunity of talking to the Prime Minister of Macedonia today, and we also agreed that we were trying to spur matters in this very way.

The President of the United States of America has emphasized the fact that the United States will take on a large number of refugees. You know that we here in Germany have already taken on quite a few, and we hope that in taking these actions both America and Germany will set an example also for other European countries to follow up and to take on refugees themselves. We hope that as a consequence that they will follow suit.

Germany itself is continuing to think about whether they could potentially take on even more, and if you hear the most recent news today, yet again, another 10,000 refugees have flooded into Macedonia yet again, and in addition. And if you then bear in mind that soon the border might be closed off, sealed off, in fact, altogether, then really urgent action and consideration is needed here.

We have also discussed the possibilities of having some influence on the discussions taking place at the Club of Paris, where thoughts are ventilated about a potential suspension or a relief of debt for the frontline states involved, and we have decided that we conjointly support a debt relief or at least a suspension of debts for Macedonia and Albania.

And I think all of that—and I think that goes without saying—should be independent of the necessity of continuing our actions, continuing the NATO actions and the measures taken so far. But one point that was strongly emphasized was the necessity of giving a more comprehensive economic and political perspective for the Balkans.

President Clinton. If I could just say very briefly—Chancellor Schroeder has faithfully summarized the items we discussed and the conclusions that we drew, and I would just like to say on behalf of the United States how much I appreciate the leadership of the German Chancellor and the German people in dealing with the refugee crisis, in trying to relieve the pressure on Macedonia and provide for the economic needs of both Macedonia and Albania, and in looking to the long-term development of the Balkans and southeastern Europe, which is critical if you're going to avoid future incidents of this kind.

And on all those scores, both as the German Chancellor and as the present leader of the EU, I think he has done an outstanding job, and I am personally very grateful for it.

Cooperation of Russia and China

Q. Mr. President, how important is it in your view to get the U.N. behind the principles on Kosovo, and what do you intend in order to get not only Russia but also China into the part?

President Clinton. Well, I believe it would be very, very helpful if the United Na-

tions would endorse a peace process if it is a peace process that will work. Meaning that the refugees would have to be able to come back with security and autonomy, and the Serb forces would have to be withdrawn, and there must be a multinational security force there that NATO is a core part of.

Now, the U.N. did so in Bosnia. We were there as—under the umbrella of the U.N. NATO was there; Russia was there; Ukraine was there. It worked. And it will work again and, obviously, would be much better.

With regard to the Chinese, of course, the Chancellor is going to China in a couple of days, and he will have fresh news when he comes back. But I believe if the Russians support this, the Chinese will support this. And I think they believe that this is something the U.N. should do.

Q. Mr. President, what's the significance of the agreement or statement that Russia—[inaudible]—initially today?

President Clinton. I think the Chancellor might want to comment on that as well. The significance is that as far as I know, this is the first time that the Russians have publicly said they would support an international security as well as a civilian force in Kosovo. This is a significant step forward, and I was personally very pleased by it.

Balkan Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what is your personal impression? Do you think there is a message you can convey to the German people that there is a longer period of blood, sweat, and tears that you have to look forward to or to look at in the near future, or do you think that there is a real peace process underway?

President Clinton. I think there is a real peace process underway, but it has no chance of reaching a satisfactory conclusion unless we maintain Allied unity and firmness. I don't think the process is long, but I don't think we can afford to be discouraged or be impatient. We need to stay with the strategy we have and continue to aggressively support our air campaign and to aggressively support any diplomatic initiative that will secure the conditions necessary for a lasting peace in Kosovo.

Group of Eight Statement on Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, and Chancellor, do you think that the agreement, the statement that was issued today by the G-8 and Russia, will do anything to hasten the end to the conflict?

Chancellor Schroeder. I can only repeat and emphasize what the President of the United States of America has just said. I consider it as truly substantial progress which has been made there. There has been open talk about the presence and the necessity for the presence of international troops there, and I think things will continue along that way.

I would also very much like to emphasize the fact that I agree that there is no reason whatsoever to now think about a change in the NATO strategy now that the strategy does seem to work, and I'm talking about military as well as political initiatives undertaken therein.

President Clinton. Let me just say very briefly, I agree with what the Chancellor has said. I do believe it's an advance because you have to see the G-8 resolution here, the statement, in the context of Mr. Chernomyrdin's efforts. I mean, here is a man that served as Premier of Russia twice; very highly regarded, I think, by all of us who have ever dealt with him on all sides of this issue. And this statement, plus his ongoing effort, I think you have to read this as a move forward and increasing the likelihood that there will ultimately be a resolution of this that will actually work.

Thank you.

NOTE: Chancellor Schroeder spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Office of the Chancellor at the Chancellery. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski of Macedonia. In President Clinton's remarks, he referred to Special Envoy and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia. The President also referred to the European Union (EU). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Houston, Texas

May 7, 1999

Thank you very much, Ken. I want to thank you for so many things, but particularly today for the work you have done on this. And I thank Joe Andrew for being willing to leave Indiana, a State no one thought could become a Democratic State, that just elected a new Democratic Governor and elected Senator Evan Bayh overwhelmingly, thanks in no small measure to his leadership there. And I look forward to many years of his leadership for the DNC.

I'd like to thank Molly Beth Malcolm for being here and Steve Zimmerman for providing us this modest little room to have lunch in. [Laughter] Someone told me that Napoleon was once in this room, but not in Texas—[laughter]—and Frederick the Great, and all kinds of other people. I don't know if any of them were Democrats, but we are. We may have tripled the number of Democrats who have ever been in this room in the last 300 years, just today at lunch. [Laughter] But I am delighted to be here, and I thank all of you for coming.

I want to talk a little today—I know several of you said that I looked tired, and I don't know whether it's just because I'm not young anymore or because I just got back from 2 days meeting with our troops and with refugees from Kosovo in Germany. But this is a rather unusual moment for our country, I think, because things are in some ways the best of times. We just saw today, again last month unemployment rate was 4.3 percent. We had another 234,000 jobs; we're up to 18,400,000 now in the life of this administration. The welfare rolls have been cut nearly in half. We've got a 30-year low in the crime rate. The teen pregnancy rate is going down. Basically, the social indicators are good. Many of the indicators relating to drug use are moving in the right direction.

And I want to say a special word of thanks, by the way—I think he—no, he didn't

leave—to Mayor Brown, who in his previous incarnation was a member of our Cabinet and led our Nation's efforts to keep our children away from drugs. And I was elated when he was elected mayor, and I hope you'll keep him here for a good long time, because I think he'll do a great job for you. And thank you, Mayor, for being here today.

Anyway, you know, we have to feel good about these things. And I do, and I feel grateful. But all of us are sobered and saddened by three events of the recent days. And I would like to mention—although they seem entirely disparate—one is the terrible tornadoes that have claimed record numbers of lives in Oklahoma and Kansas and related storms here in Texas and over in Tennessee; the second, obviously, is the heartbreaking tragedy in Littleton, Colorado—I know we were all glad to see the children go back to school this week; and the third is the conflict in Kosovo. And I would like to try, if I could, today—it's not exactly your typical party-stump speech at a fundraising luncheon—but just ask you to think with me about how we're—what lessons we should learn from those three events and how it relates to what we're trying to do in our administration and with our party.

And I'd like to go back just for a moment to 1992 and late 1991, when I made the decision to seek the Presidency. I was in my fifth term as Governor. I was having a wonderful time. Our daughter was doing well in school and with her friends. And Hillary and I were having more fun with our friends because I was about to get the hang of being Governor, having done it for 10 or 11 years. And I really didn't want to do what I did in 1992—plus, it seemed like a fool's errand; President Bush was at, like, 75 percent approval in the polls when I made the decision to run. And I knew I was a relatively young person, and I could wait, and that was my kind of personal inclination.

But I was profoundly disturbed by two things: first, by the objective conditions in the United States. There were—unemployment was high; inequality was increasing; wages hadn't increased in real terms in 20 years; and all the social indicators were going in the wrong direction.

But the second thing that bothered me was that the debate in Washington seemed so divorced from the world, on the street in Arkansas where I lived and from the larger world beyond the borders of the United States, that it seemed to me that the parties were caught in a gridlock, labeling each other and fighting over turf in Washington that did not deal with what I thought were the two great challenges of our age: One was preparing for the 21st century by trying to take advantage of all the economic changes and the technology and globalization that was going on in a way that enabled people to build stronger families and stronger communities and left no one behind; and the second was, to find a way to deal with the dizzying array of differences in our own society in a way that respected those differences but pulled us closer together. And I didn't see much coming out that would do that.

And it seemed to me that there was a way that you could actually strengthen the economy, for example, and improve the environment. There was a way to reward entrepreneurs and still reach out to people who were being left behind and let them go along for the ride in this new economy. There should be a way to reduce the deficit and still increase investment and education and health care. There should be a way to help people succeed at home as parents and succeed at work. There should be a way that we could glorify the individual, as we always have in America, and recognize that fundamentally we'll all do better if we're one community.

And that's basically what the campaign in '92 was all about, and those words that I said, that I wanted a society that had opportunity for all and responsibility from all and a community of all Americans. And that's why I'm here today. You know, I'm not running for office, and some of the people out on the street are apparently elated about it. [*Laughter*] But that's the American way. I'm not running for office. I'm here because, while I am grateful for the role I have been able to play as President, in the 18 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and having 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious diseases for the

first time in history, opening the doors of college to all Americans with the tax credits and the improved student loan program and the scholarship programs, and all the other things we've done—the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; we've set aside more land to be protected than any administration in history, except those of the two Roosevelts—I am grateful for all of that.

But this is not a matter of personality. We had ideas that we turned into policies. We changed the role of Government. We have a smaller Government. There are fewer people working for the Federal Government now than in any time since John Kennedy was President. And yet, it's more active. We focus less on telling people what to do and more on giving people the tools to solve their own problems and creating the conditions in which Americans could thrive in the world. And the ideas matter. And the values, the principles of opportunity and responsibility and community matter. And the Democratic Party, therefore, matters.

These ideas have benefited every people in every State. They have benefited Republicans and independents as much as they have benefited Democrats. They are capable of unifying the country at a time when so many continue to seek to divide it. And they also give us a clue about what we should do.

We've still got big challenges out there. It would be a big mistake for us not to deal with the challenges of Social Security and saving Medicare and to do it in a way that will enable us now to reduce the debt of this country over the next 15 years to its lowest point since before World War II. Did you ever think you'd hear anybody stand up and talk about doing that?

It would be a great mistake for us not to continue to push for education reform, to put more teachers in the classroom with modern facilities, to finish the job of hooking all our classrooms up to the Internet, to end the practice, nationwide, of social promotion, but not to label the kids failures, to give them the after-school programs and the summer school programs they need to have higher standards around the country. It would be a mistake for us not to continue to do this just because times are good here. It would also be a mistake for us not to continue to

try to give opportunity to people who still don't have it. There are still places in Texas, with all the economy booming, that haven't felt this recovery.

Just a few days from now the Vice President is going down to south Texas to have our annual empowerment zone conference. And I'm very proud of the fact that one of the things that we have worked hard to do in the last 6 years is to leave no one behind, to give tax incentives and other investments to poor communities to try to induce people to start businesses there and put people to work there. And I'm very proud of the fact that one of the major initiatives before the Congress this year, my so-called new markets initiative, would give people loan guarantees and tax credits to invest in the poor neighborhoods of America and urban and rural areas—like they can get today to invest in poor neighbors overseas.

I think we ought to give people the same incentives to invest in Americans who don't have jobs and opportunity that we give them to invest elsewhere. I don't want to take the others away. I just want our folks to have the same chance.

So there's a lot to do. And it would be a mistake, just because of our prosperity or because people are already talking about the next election, to overlook the fact that we still have a lot of time between now and January of 2001, and to put a great country in idle is a great mistake.

The second thing I'd like to say is I think it is a mistake to forget about our continuing obligations in the face of the problems of the moment. But I think there are lessons in each of these three things that I mentioned that we're all very much preoccupied about now.

What is the lesson of the tornadoes? This maybe belongs more in a sermon on Sunday than a political speech, but the lesson is, no matter how well America does, a little humility is always in order. We are not in full control. And we have to be sensitive about this, especially here in this part of the country. We have to do more to try to prepare ourselves for these storms, and we have to do more to try to minimize their impact when they occur.

The Governor of Oklahoma said a couple of days ago when I called him after the tornado that—we were talking about how Oklahoma and east Texas and Arkansas are at the beginning of basically the tornado belt in America—and he said, “You know, the more growth we have, the more expansion of our communities, the more construction we’re going to have in these alleys where tornadoes often hit.” And we began to talk about that, about construction and safety and prevention.

I say that to point out that there are certain constants that we have to deal with in our society that call on us to be humble, call on us to be prepared and remember we’re not in total control.

Now, the second thing I’d like to say about Littleton is that the lesson here is that no matter how prosperous we are economically—and this was terrible for that community; I’ve talked to school officials and local officials there—we have to understand that there are forces at work in our society that call on us to make an extra effort to protect our children from violence.

I think it is important not to overly politicize this in the sense of fingerpointing. I have said before, and I will say again, I think that instead of everyone saying, “Whose responsibility is that? Whose fault is this?”—I mean, instead of saying whose fault this is, we should say, “What can I do to take responsibility for it? What can I do to change it? What can I do to make it better?”

Like you, I don’t know any more about what happened there than what I can read about it. But I have read voraciously. I have watched the television programs. I have listened to the townhall meetings and the other interviews that people up there have done. And you may know that Hillary and the Vice President and Tipper and I are going to have a big meeting at the White House on the 10th, next Monday. We’re going to bring in people to talk about every aspect of this, including some people who have been very active in antiviolence initiatives around the country.

But I would just like to say—I ask you to think about Littleton in the following ways. Number one, no society has any job more important than raising its children well. It

is the number one job of every society. And raising our children well depends upon doing our jobs as parents but also recognizing, as Hillary said years ago, it does take a village, and we need to look at the village and see what the village is like now.

And the following things occur to me, and I don’t want to prejudge what we will do on Monday, but I think we need to recognize that without regard to family income, the speed and pressure of modern life increases the chances that children will become isolated and that vulnerable children, therefore, will be more likely to drift into something that’s really bad for them. At any given moment in time there will always be children who are vulnerable to problems.

But if you just think about the speed and pressure and sheer movement of modern life, the speed with which people move around and the hassles that are associated with that, and the speed with which images and news and information of all kinds—positive, negative—is crammed into our lives, I think that a lot of what we have to deal with here is giving our children some breaks, some protections, and our families some breaks and protections about that.

The second thing I think is important is that we need to honestly try to challenge the families of this country not to give up on communicating with our kids when they start to drift away from them naturally and move into independence. It’s still important to maintain some kind of knowledge of what’s going on in there.

The third thing I’d like to tell you is I think that there are things schools can do which will at least minimize youth violence, over and above zero tolerance for guns and other things. I visited a very impressive school in Virginia the other day, in Alexandria, that has a phenomenally diverse student body. They have a very active peer mediation group where the kids try to solve each other’s problems. They have comprehensive counseling services. They have access to mental health services for kids who need it.

And I think it’s very important—Tipper Gore is going to have the White House Conference on Mental Health in Washington in the next few days, and she had a very courageous article in USA Today, today. If you

haven't read it, I urge you to read it. I was really proud of her, talking about the whole issue and how it affected her life and her family's. I think that's very important.

I'll tell you something else this school had; this school had a 1-800 hotline so that if the children suspected that some other students in school were maybe going to do something destructive or wrong, they could call the hotline and have certainty that the lead would be followed up on but that they wouldn't be outed as somebody who was talking about their classmates.

So I think we have to continue to work with the schools, as the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General have done. I think that there are challenges for those who influence our culture, including the entertainment community. When we trivialize or brutalize relationships or trivialize violence or, particularly in the intimacy of the Internet and the video games, run the risk that kids who are already isolated create a whole alternative reality that at the same time desensitizes them to violence, I think that's a problem.

And I also believe, finally, that there ought to be some more laws that will minimize the chances that the kinds of weapons those kids had will get into the hands of children who will do bad things with them. And I hope we can avoid yet another big fight in Washington between the NRA and others. This should not be the culture war we have going on. It makes common sense, it seems to me, to reinstitute the waiting period of the Brady bill, along with the insta-check. It ought to apply to people that buy explosives as well as people who buy handguns.

We ought to close the loopholes in the assault weapons ban law. We have an assault weapons ban, but it's got a couple of loopholes in it big enough to drive a truck through. We don't need—if the law is a good law, then we ought to make it work. We ought to do background checks at gun shows. I've been to gun shows in rural America. I know a lot of people that run them think this is going to be a terrible headache. It's not. The technology is there. We can fix it, so we can do it.

But the main thing I want to say is, I do not believe there is any one answer here. I

believe there is a responsibility in the entertainment community. I think there's a responsibility in the Internet community. I think there's a responsibility for the gun manufacturers and law enforcement. I think there is a responsibility in the schools. I think there is a responsibility with the parents. I think a lot of us have something to do.

But what I would like you to think about here, instead of being despondent about the magnitude of the problem, is, first of all, look at the courage and character of the overwhelming majority of the people in Littleton that we have seen manifest in so many different ways under such adversity.

And secondly, look at the example that Americans are capable of solving their social problems by grassroots movements. That's really why the teen pregnancy rate is dropping, because there's a grassroots effort, a comprehensive effort that is sweeping the whole country. That's why drunk driving went down—Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Drunk Driving.

So there is no magic bullet here, and the most important thing is having a magic attitude of not taking any solution off the table because it would require you to do something, but not falling into the easy trap of pointing the finger at someone else. But the lesson here is that if we want to be a strong and great nation, we must continue to deal with the problems, and they're not all economic problems. And there is nothing more important than the quality of our children's childhood.

Now, let me close with Kosovo. There are some people who may not understand why we would be so concerned about what happens in a small place a long way away, where hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people have been uprooted, had their homes burned, the records of their very existence burned, their religious and cultural sites destroyed, sometimes people literally wrapped in bundles and burned alive, lots of children raped, solely because of their ethnic and religious background. And it is a reprise of what happened just a few years ago in Bosnia.

Why should we care about it? First all of, because it violates our most fundamental values. And if we have the capacity to stop something like that, we ought to.

Secondly, because we have learned the hard way that people, when they behave that way, think that that behavior—if they get away with it, they think it's rewarded, and other people will follow their lead. And all over the world today, at the end of the cold war, when communism is gone as a competing ideology, if there is nothing positive to organize people and pull them together, then one of the things that is most likely to pull them apart are racial, ethnic, and religious differences, used to demonize other people, almost exclusively by people who don't really believe it as much as they are trying to mobilize people to get political power or wealth or both.

Now, we fought two wars in Europe in the century that's about to end. We want Europe to be united, to be free, to be democratic, to be at peace. If they are, they'll be our friends. They'll be our partners. They'll be better trading partners. They'll also help us solve problems in other parts of the world. There are all kinds of practical reasons we should do this. There are all kinds of practical reasons.

But when you get right down to it, if we are going to say we are grateful that America has emerged from the cold war as the world's only superpower, if we're going to be grateful for the good fortune we have enjoyed in the last 6 years, we have to be willing to spend a small percentage of our good fortune and a significant percentage of our credibility to be good allies with our European friends who asked us to come and help, and do this.

I also believe in a world where religious differences have bedeviled the Middle East and Northern Ireland and so many other places, it speaks volumes that the United States and our European friends and Canada are willing to stand up for people who are overwhelmingly of the Muslim faith, and say, they have rights, too; they are people, too; they are children of God, too; and they deserve the right to have their life, to go home, to be safe, to have the autonomy that they deserve. And that's what we're fighting for in Kosovo.

If you think about—there's one little baby here, or was here a few minutes ago—you imagine that the world this baby is going to live in when she gets out of college and goes

into the world. Do you want it to be a world where, frankly, more and more people have a lot of the economic prosperity we've enjoyed? I do, because that means we'll do even better if we have more partners who are doing better, which is characterized by people knowing each other across national lines, sharing economic opportunity, sharing educational opportunity, working together in common cause to deal with the continuing challenges of the world. Or do we want it to be a world where we feel like we're under siege all the time because everywhere people are falling victim to their most primitive impulses, that they're using modern technology and modern computers to figure out how to get modern weapons to kill somebody because of some ancient hatred? I don't think it's a close question.

And one of the things that I have learned as President is that you cannot draw an easy dividing line between what is a domestic issue and a foreign issue in a world that is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. You can't just do that. You can't say, "Well, it's great that international trade helps most of us," and forget about those that are not helped by trade. You have to give them the education, the skills, the training, the opportunity so that no one will be left behind. That's a domestic and a foreign issue. And believe me, this is, too.

The greatest thing this country has got going for it today is that we have all different kinds of people that all have their chances. But we have to stand against hatred and for harmony. We have to say, "Whatever our differences, our fundamental common humanity is more important than anything else."

I was reading coming down here today that here in the legislature, Texas is debating this hate crimes law, named after James Byrd. You know, for me as a white southerner, the thought that a man could be murdered because of his race in 1999 is heartbreaking. But it is a sober reminder that human nature may improve, but we'll always have problems. And it is the country's organization, the country's dominant values, the country's leadership, the country's direction that matters.

I hope that law will pass and become law here. I hope that Texas will say, "We don't

want people to be hurt because of their race, because they're gay, because of whatever. And when people are hurt in that way, we stand against it."

But in a larger sense, I hope that we will become a more effectively caring society. I hope we'll find some ways to put on the brakes when the speed's too fast for our children's childhood, and they're hurtling toward isolation in a destructive way.

And I think we can do that and still get all the benefits of this modern world that's opened up to us. But it will depend upon the right ideas and the right values. It is not dependent upon any one person.

I am so grateful that I have been the instrument, as President, of some of the good things that have happened in America. I am more grateful than you know. But what matters is that we have the right values and the right ideas, and when something works, we do not abandon it; we stick with it.

That's why I'm here. That's why I hope you will continue to support our party. Because what we have stood for has made a lot of difference, and it will make more difference in the future if you and I do our part.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Le Grand Salon de la Comtesse at La Colombe d'Or restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to F. Kenneth Bailey, Jr., event chair, and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Molly Beth Malcolm, State Democratic chair; Gov. Frank O'Bannon of Indiana; Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma; Mayor Lee Patrick Brown of Houston, TX; and Stephen Zimmerman, owner, La Colombe d'Or restaurant.

Remarks on Arrival at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Austin, Texas

May 7, 1999

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. I want you to know, folks, I spent some of the best days of my life in Austin, Texas. And when Lloyd went up to make his remarks, I looked at the mayor and I said, being mayor of Austin may be the best elected job in the United States. And he didn't dispute me.

I also want to thank Lloyd Doggett for his leadership on this and so many other projects. We've been friends for many, many years. I was elated when he was elected to the Congress, and I can tell you he does a terrific job for all the constituents of this district in Washington, DC.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very, very sorry I had to miss the dedication. You know why. The events in Littleton, Colorado, compelled me to cancel. I do want to tell you that on Monday Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore and I are going to have a very distinguished array of people from all over the country to meet in Washington to organize a national campaign against violence involving our children. And I know it will have the support of every person here.

But I want to ask you to think a little bit about the significance of this airport not only in terms of what it means to all of you but in terms of what it means to the future of America and how we ought to do all of our business. Six years ago, when your air base was closed, you saw that it did not have to be an economic setback. In fact, it could be an enormous opportunity. Austin-Bergstrom International Airport today is a testament to your unwavering commitment and vision.

For years, this airport had the following motto: Bergstrom Air Force Base: Global Power for America. Today this airport is still a symbol of global power for America. It's a different kind of power. Where military aircraft essential to our victory in the cold war once landed here, now boxes of software take off for markets around the world, fueling our success in the new global economy. Where once pilots flew reconnaissance missions to survey cold war enemies, now they fly planes that ferry high-tech visionaries between Silicon Valley and these "Silicon Hills."

This airport will be your gateway to prosperity in the 21st century. And I especially appreciate something that's already been mentioned, that you pay tribute to some of Texas' finest citizens. I hope every visitor will be inspired by Captain Bergstrom's courage and sacrifice, by my good friend Jake Pickle's life of service and compassion, by President Johnson's bold vision and commitment to progress for all Americans together, and by

Barbara Jordan's incomparable voice for justice on common ground.

Since I'm here today, I cannot help noting that the work of Lyndon Johnson and Barbara Jordan is being carried on today here in Austin by the State legislators who are trying to pass hate crimes legislation in the name of James Byrd. As you probably saw on the tarmac, I was honored to meet with members of Mr. Byrd's family. I know that what happened to him was anathema to every good citizen in Texas, as well as the United States.

And I ask you, as our men and women in uniform today struggle against the killing, the rape, the looting, the uprooting of people, based solely on their ethnic and religious background in Kosovo, as they did in Bosnia, as we fight to reconcile people around the world, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, here in America, if we want to do good abroad, we have to be good at home. We have to stand up for what is right.

We have to acknowledge that there are differences among us that we celebrate. There are differences among us that are real differences, and we are compelled to disagree. But underneath it all, as the Founders of our Republic recognized, there is our common humanity and our equal dignity. And we must always stand for it. If we want to be a force against ethnic cleansing and genocide around the world, we have to be a force for harmony and community, here at home in every place in the United States.

And so I close with the point I tried to make at the beginning. I want you to think about what this represents and how you did it. What it represents is a commitment to a common future, where no one is left behind and everybody has a chance. How you did it is by working together, across all the elements of this richly textured community. If you think about it, we could solve all of our problems that way. Thanks for the model.

Good luck, and God bless you.

Wait a minute. I want to do one other thing. I want to thank the Barbara Jordan Elementary Choir and the Pflugerville High School Band. Thank you very much. How about a little more music? Let's go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Kirk Watson of Austin, TX; and former Representative J.J. Pickle. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Austin

May 7, 1999

Thank you very much. You know, when Roy was doing that riff, you know, "Before he came, I didn't know I needed new furniture; I didn't know I needed new art work; I didn't know I needed"—Mary kept getting redder and redder, and finally she says, "He may not know he needs another place to spend the night tonight." [*Laughter*] I must say this is a lot better than the last hovel we spent the night in. [*Laughter*]

Let me say to all of you, I've had a wonderful time here tonight, seeing so many of my old friends. There are a lot of people here—the ones Roy mentioned and also Carlos Truan, Gonzalo Barrientos—a lot of other people who were with Roy and Gary and Judy and Nancy and Tom, all the rest of us, way back in 1972. And we have remained friends for a long time. And during most of that time, with the odd interruption, sometimes the odd, wonderful interruption like the reign of Governor Richards, the election of Lloyd Doggett, we've been in the minority.

And I want to talk tonight a little bit about—I want to have kind of a serious conversation tonight about why I really came here, because what Joe said is right. I'm not running for anything. And I would seize any excuse to come here to Austin, because I had some of the happiest days of my life here, and I have a very jealous wife who wishes she were here today.

But for the next 2 years, I'm helping the Democratic Party because I believe it's the right thing to do for America. I hear a lot of folks on the other side kind of licking their lips and saying, "Well, wait until the next election, and we'll have Clinton out of the way. Maybe it will be better."

What I want to say to you is that I am very grateful that I've had the chance to serve you. And I am profoundly grateful that we

have the lowest unemployment in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in forever and a day—they're half the size they were before—and the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Roy was saying that we've got 90 percent of our children immunized against serious diseases for the first time in history. The doors of college are virtually open to every American now because of our HOPE tax credit and the student loan changes we've made. We've set aside more land in perpetuity than any administration, except for the two Roosevelts, in American history. I'm grateful for all that.

But what I want you to understand is that I'm grateful because I got a chance to implement a set of ideas that now represent the governing philosophy of the Democratic Party. And it is very different from the driving philosophy of the other party. And if the American people like the results that have been achieved, then we need to support those people running for the Congress and the White House who believe in these ideas.

In 1991, when the incumbent President was at 75 percent approval and I decided to make this race when nobody but my mother and my wife thought I could win, I did it because I was worried about my country and my Capital. Because it seemed to me that there was nothing particularly wrong with America that couldn't be fixed if we would just open our eyes and go to work. The unemployment rate was high, inequality was increasing, the social problems were worsening, and we had a lot of problems around the world that we didn't seem to have any governing idea of dealing with. But I felt great about America. I just thought we had to change the way Washington worked.

Just go back in your mind to that period and that long period where the other party spent 12 years telling us how terrible the Government was, and a lot of our guys were sort of fighting a rearguard action defending it. But most of the ideological battles which took place in Washington were about yesterday instead of about tomorrow. And so I set off on this crazy journey with a lot of you, based on a few simple ideas.

First of all, I asked myself, what is the problem? The problem is that we have not thought about how to take full advantage of

this explosion in technology and the globalization of the economy in society and at the same time figure out how not to leave anybody behind and make our families and our communities stronger and maintain our push for peace and prosperity around the world. We haven't thought about how to make the transition in a way that not only provides vast opportunities for people like those of us in this beautiful setting tonight, but makes America as a nation stronger.

And it seemed to me that what we had to do is to go back to some very basic things: that we had an obligation to try to have opportunity for every person who was responsible enough to deserve it; that we had to try to build a community made up of every law-abiding citizen without regard to what other differences they had; that we had to commit ourselves to be more involved in the rest of the world, not less involved, because the world is growing smaller and smaller; and that we needed a different sort of Government that could be much smaller—and it is today, by the way. It's the same size it was in 1962—that's the size of your Federal Government today. And I'm proud of that.

But what you need to know, we made it smaller but more active, focused not so much on telling people what to do or maintaining old bureaucracies but giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. Those were my ideas: opportunity, responsibility, community, a Government that gives people the tools to make the most of their own lives.

And I thought to myself, there are a whole lot of things people believe that I don't think are true. I believed if we work at it, we could reduce the deficit and still increase our spending in education and health care if we did it right. Well, 6 years later, we've got a huge surplus, and we've nearly doubled spending in education and health care.

I believed we could improve the economy and improve the environment. The air is cleaner and the water is cleaner than it was 6 years ago. We've reduced chemicals in the atmosphere from chemical plant emissions by 90 percent in the last 6 years.

I believed that we could help people succeed at work and at home. And I still think that's one of the biggest problems we've got

in this country, people trying to be good parents and trying to meet their obligations at work at the same time.

I believed that we could promote entrepreneurialism and trade around the world and still help people who, because of their education or where they live, are at risk of being left behind. Those are the things that I believed.

I believed that we can be a force for peace and recognize that there are some times when we have to use our overwhelming military force.

I believed that in welfare we could reduce the welfare rolls, get more people to work, and at the same time help people who were on welfare to do a better job of raising their children. That we didn't have to hurt people in their responsibilities as parents, to say if you're able-bodied you ought to work if you can.

I didn't believe that—all those choices and all those debates that I kept hearing in Washington. And so we set out to do it, and the public responded, and the people gave me a chance to serve. And then in '96, another chance. And then in '96 and '98 kept returning more of our people to the Congress so that we're at the point where we can almost reverse the election of '94. I think the election in '94 happened, by the way, because we made the tough decisions as a party, all alone, to reduce the deficit, without a single vote from the other party, and increase our investment in education. We made the tough decision almost all alone to pass a crime bill that put 100,000 police on the street, banned assault weapons, and required the Brady bill's waiting period. And by the election in '94—and we tried to provide more health insurance, all alone, and didn't have enough votes to do it. And by '94 what happened was people knew what we'd done on the economic plan, but they didn't feel the economy was getting better; they knew what we'd done on the crime bill, but the NRA convinced a bunch of hunters we were going to take their rifles. By '96 everybody still had their rifles and the crime rate had gone down, the economy had gone up, and we got reelected. And the Congress is doing better ever since our elections.

So now we're poised for this election in 2000. And what I want to say to you is, I appreciate what Roy said about me, and it's nice to be introduced by your old friends. They'll lie about you a little now and then. But the truth is, you must believe this, this administration has succeeded because we had the right ideas and the right approach and we're grounded in the right values, and it's what represents the heart and soul of the Democratic Party today. And that's why I'm here.

We've got a lot of big decisions to make. And you have to decide who is going to make them. We have to deal with the aging crisis—twice as many people over 65 by 2030. I hope to live to be one of them. *[Laughter]* I've given the Congress a plan that will save Social Security, save Medicare, provide help for people taking care of their parents and long-term care, allow middle income people and lower income people to save for their own retirement for the first time and do it in a way that pays down the national debt by 2015 to the lowest point it has been since before World War I. And that's really important to keep the economy going, because we'll be less dependent on the vagaries of the global financial system.

I've given the Congress a plan that will improve the quality of education by ending social promotion, by providing after-school and summer school programs for our kids, by finishing the work of hooking all our classrooms up to the Internet, by modernizing a lot of these old school buildings and helping the school districts that are having kids in house trailers, by supporting better teaching, and by having national academic standards, which I hope our whole party will embrace and help us in this great battle we're in, because I think you should have local control of the school about how to implement national academic standards.

There's an international standard that all of our children need to meet if we want them to make a good living. And we're about the only advanced country in the world that doesn't have that. As a result, we've got the finest system of higher education in the world; no one believes that our system of elementary and secondary education is uniformly the finest in the world. And yet, it

can be. And all the diversity we have in our schools is a great asset in a global society, but every one of those kids deserves a chance at the brass ring.

I was in the Alexandria school system the other day, across the river from the Capitol and the White House. There are kids from a hundred different racial and ethnic groups there, nearly a hundred different native languages. Every one of them can make a contribution to America if he or she gets a world-class education. And to pretend that it ought to be a local option whether they get it is, I think, obscuring what is plainly real here.

So we Democrats stand for more flexibility about how to do things, but for national standards of excellence based on international standards of what our children need to know. And I think the American people are with us on that.

I could talk about a lot of other issues. I'd just like to mention one or two more. The Vice President is coming down here to south Texas in a couple of weeks to our annual empowerment zone conference. Since 1993, we've been trying to figure out ways to get more investment into poor urban neighborhoods and poor rural areas and poor Native American reservations, because there are still a lot of people that haven't participated in this economic recovery.

And I worry a lot about how we're going to keep America's growth going and our unemployment low without any inflation, especially if we have trouble overseas. One way is to make more markets here at home. And there are lots of places right here in Texas where unemployment is still too high, too many hardworking people still don't have the skills they need, and where if we could attract the right investment in the right way we could have dramatic growth. So this is going to be a big challenge. If we can't get around now to giving poor rural areas and urban areas that have been left behind the chances they need, we'll never get around to it.

Let me just mention one or two other things. I am very interested in this whole issue of balancing work and family. And I think there's some things we ought to do. I think we ought to raise the minimum wage again. I think we ought to strengthen the family and medical leave law. I think we

ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. I think we ought to pass our child care plan to help lower income people with their child care costs. We have to realize that most parents have to work and every parent ought to have the option to do it, but no parent should have to sacrifice the most important job any woman or man has, which is to raise strong, good kids. There are a lot of things out there we have to do. We've got a big job to do in the world. You can see it today with some of the problems we have.

Now, I'd like to close by just asking you to think about three things and giving you examples of what my philosophy is, that I think is our party's philosophy. These are the best of times for Americans, but we're all pretty sobered up right now because of three events of the recent days: One, are the terrible tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kansas and, to a lesser extent but still sad, in Texas and Tennessee; two, is the heartbreaking incident in Littleton, Colorado; and third, is the continuing conflict in Kosovo. Now, let me tell you what they mean to me.

First, the tornadoes mean that none of us should get too big for our britches. We're not in control. We have to maintain a certain humility when thinking about all the problems of the world. But as our hearts go out to those people—I'm going up to Oklahoma City tomorrow to tour the damage and talk about what we can do to help them put their lives back together—I'm thinking about what we can do to try to prepare better for the next one. I'm thinking about what we can do if we know we're going to grow and expand in areas that have been tornado alleys, what we ought to do to build houses that will do a better job of withstanding them or have quicker escapes to places that will be safer. In other words, I think what we always should be thinking about is: How can we make it better? How can we deal with what is going to come?

In the case of Littleton, on Monday, Hillary and I and Al and Tipper Gore are going to sponsor a big meeting at the White House with people from the entertainment and Internet communities, people from the gun manufacturers, people from the religious communities, people who work in schools on problems of violence, students, a lot of other

segments of our society, coming together to talk about how we can start a national campaign to reduce the likelihood of violence against our children.

Now, I think it is important that you know how I look at this. I think the world's worst thing we can do is to use this awful heart-break to get into a fingerpointing session. Because the truth is that not a single soul here knows exactly what triggered those kids. And we all know that in any given time there will be people who are more vulnerable than others to whatever influences to which they're exposed to. But I do think we would all admit, if we sort of take our defenses down, that the society in which our children grow up today, number one, throws things at them faster; number two, gives them even more opportunities to be isolated from their parents and from their peers; number three, exposes them at an earlier age and in greater volume and intensity to more violence and the coarsening of human relationships; and number four, it's way too easy for them get things like Tech-9 assault pistols. And I think we can all sort of admit that.

And what I'm trying to do is to figure out what we should all do here to launch a genuine grassroots national campaign where I try to pass the laws I should pass; the gun manufacturers come forward and do what they ought to do to try to protect our kids; the entertainment community makes a contribution; the Internet community makes a contribution—they've worked hard, by the way, with the Vice President to try to give parents more screening technologies—and the religious community comes forward; the mental health community comes forward; the schools provide more adequate counseling services and peer mediation for the kids, and what some of our schools are doing now, providing a hotline so kids who know what's going on in the school can call and tell somebody without being subject to abuse.

There are lots of things to be done here. But there's also something to be said here for recognizing the incredible pressures that parents and children are under because life is so fast and so crowded. And it is easy for all of us, if we're not careful, to wind up being strangers in our own homes. And our children need to understand also that no matter

how solid and rooted they are, childhood is a fragile and difficult time. Every school will always have its cliques. Every school will always have its groups. But we've got to teach our kids that they can enjoy being in their crowd without looking down on the others; because people who are constantly subject to ridicule and abuse are going to have their lives twisted or distorted in some ways, unless they are really superhuman.

So I'm looking forward to this. And all the cynics who say it can't be done, I would remind you that teen pregnancy is now down 5 years in a row because of a national grassroots movement, not because of any law we passed in Washington. Drunk driving is down because of Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving. We now have 10,000 companies that have voluntarily joined an alliance that we organized a couple years ago to hire people from welfare to work, and they've hired over 400,000 people without a single law being passed. We can do this. And I believe we can do it, but only if our political, public life brings us together and not drives us apart.

And the last thing I'd like to say is about Kosovo. I know this is a difficult issue. I saw the people with their signs on the way in, saying we ought to end the fighting. Nobody wants to do it more than me. I think those of you who've known me for 30 years know that the most difficult thing that I ever have to do is use a superior position to put pressure on somebody else, particularly if it involves the use of violence. I'm not that sort of person.

But let me tell you, since the end of communism, we have seen the inevitable rise of national aspirations and ethnic aspirations, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. In one place only, the former Yugoslavia, we have seen that turned into a credo that says it is all right to burn the homes, destroy the records, destroy the churches—the mosques, in this case—and the museums, and the libraries, and the very lives of families; it's all right to rape the daughters; it's all right to shoot the sons; it's all right to do this.

And for 3 years, we worked, through the United Nations and negotiations and everything else, to end the war in Bosnia. And finally, we ended the war in Bosnia when

NATO bombed and when the opposition forces started winning some battles on the ground. And we've been able to maintain a peace there.

People don't have to like each other. People may have legitimate grievances. But ethnic cleansing and killing people wholesale because of their race or religion is wrong. And the United States is in a position to stand against it, and we ought to.

I know there are a lot of people who disagree with me. They say, "Well, we don't have any vital national interest." I would argue to you that we do. It's not only a moral, humanitarian issue. We'll be better off if our best allies in the world, in Europe, live in a continent that is whole and democratic and at peace and free of this sort of thing.

First of all, they won't be wasting their money tearing each other up. Secondly, they'll be better trading partners. Thirdly, they'll be better partners in helping us solve problems in other parts of the world. And if we can put an end to ethnic cleansing in Europe, then we can put an end to it in Africa, and we can put an end to it wherever else it rears its ugly head.

If we can't solve this problem, it's very difficult to understand how our children are going to live in peace in a world where every radical terrorist group can get on the Internet and figure out how to build a bomb or get weapons or do anything else they want to do. We have got, at least, to tell people that in the world of the 21st century, it is not okay to kill people just because they're of a different race or ethnicity or religion.

That's why I must say, I want to applaud the Senators who are here, who are trying to pass that hate crimes act in the legislature, in honor of James Byrd. I think it's very important. It makes a statement.

This is the last thing I'll say about this. I've already talked longer than I meant to, but if you don't remember anything else I say, remember this: It is one thing to say that we all ought to get along together and quite another to do what is necessary for us to do so in decency and honor.

The differences among us are a part of what makes life more interesting and makes this country so successful, as long as they are contained. When the differences among us are used, as they are in Kosovo today, as they

were in Bosnia before, as an instrument of human destruction, they can quickly make life unbearable.

Now, we can't force anybody to like anybody else. Maybe not everybody in this place tonight likes everybody else. But we live according to certain rules, and we do it not only because it is morally right but because we do better when other people do well. When we do the right thing or, as Hillary says, when we act like we're in a village, we all are better off.

So I ask you to think about this. The Democratic Party has stood for community and for opportunity and for citizen responsibility. We have refused to accept all these phony choices we were presented with, between economic growth and the environment, between accountability and help in education, and all the other things. These ideas have led America to a better place. That's why I'm here. I'm glad I was President. I hope I was the instrument of a lot of the good things that have happened in this country. But the most important thing is that we continue in this direction, that we stay on this course, that we embrace these ideas. And that is why it is important to support this party.

I'm very grateful to you. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Roy and Mary Spence, dinner hosts; Texas State Senators Carlos Truan and Gonzalo Barrientos; Gary Mauro, former Texas land commissioner; Judy Trabulsi, Nancy Williams, and Tom Henderson, who worked with the President on the 1972 McGovern campaign in Texas; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 8, 1999

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about our efforts to help the people and communities devastated by the terrible tornadoes that hit Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, and Tennessee this week. These tornadoes killed over 50 people, injured hundreds more, and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and

businesses. I know I speak for all Americans when I say to the families who lost so much, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Today I'll be flying to Oklahoma City to get a firsthand view of the destruction. This is a duty I've performed many times in the aftermath of many natural disasters. One thing I've learned is that the images we see on television can never fully convey the level of sheer destruction or the depth of human grief caused by these disasters. Yet, I've also learned that the worst of nature can bring out the best in people.

At times like these, families rally together; neighbors help neighbors; strangers reach out to strangers; while police, doctors, firefighters put in 24-hour days in often hazardous conditions without complaint. Natural disasters create many victims but bring forth many heroes. There are some challenges that no individual, indeed, no community can handle alone. And on these occasions the National Government must act quickly, effectively, compassionately.

When I became President, I vowed that the Federal Government would do a better job of helping communities respond to the ravages of nature, and it has. As part of Vice President Gore's reinventing Government effort, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under the direction of James Lee Witt, has gone from being much criticized to becoming a model of disaster relief, now recognized all around the world for its speed, skill, and dedication.

Officials from FEMA and other Federal agencies are already on the ground in communities hit by this week's tornadoes, healing wounds, searching for missing persons, providing shelter, clearing debris, restoring power and water, issuing emergency expense checks. But more must be done.

Today I'm glad to announce the Department of Labor will spend over \$12 million to provide temporary jobs for some 3,500 Oklahomans. Men and women who lost their jobs and businesses destroyed by the tornadoes will be paid to serve at relief centers, to distribute food and water, to help on construction crews. They'll be able to feed their families by rebuilding their communities.

I'm also announcing today that I'll ask Congress for an additional \$372 million for

FEMA's disaster relief fund. These resources are crucial for our disaster relief efforts, and I urge Congress to act quickly on my request.

Finally, in the balanced budget that I sent to Congress there is \$10 million to further improve the National Weather Service's next generation Doppler radar network. This system makes it possible to issue warnings in advance of coming tornadoes so that local residents can seek shelter. Over the last decade, average warning times have doubled from 6 minutes to 12 minutes. Residents of hard-hit Cleveland County, Oklahoma, received warnings a full 35 minutes before the tornado touched down there this week, and that warning saved lives. That's also why I support the creation of a national weather center for state-of-the-art tornado and severe storm forecasting at the University of Oklahoma.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to provide individuals with the tools they need to improve their own lives. That's what we're doing in Oklahoma this week. Natural disasters test our faith, but they also show us that the old-fashioned American values of neighborly care and concern are still very much alive. And they remind us of the enduring power of the American people to emerge from calamities even stronger.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:03 p.m. on May 7 in La Colombe d'Or restaurant in Houston, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Following a Walking Tour of Tornado Damage in Del City, Oklahoma

May 8, 1999

Thank you very much. Governor Keating and Mrs. Keating; Congressmen Istook and Lucas. I don't know if Senator Nickles and—there he is, over there. Thank you very much.

We have, obviously, James Lee Witt, our FEMA Director, here with me, and Buddy Young, his Regional Director, and many others here: our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez; the Deputy Secretary of Housing and

Urban Development, Saul Ramirez; Mayor Lewis; Mayor Nelson; Mayor Reed; and a lot of other Oklahoma State officials who are here.

Let me say to all of you, I was talking last night to my wife, and we were remembering all the tornadoes that we dealt with when I was Governor of Arkansas. You may know that our two States have the highest incidents of tornadoes in the entire country. I have been going to these sites for 20 years, most of them with James Lee Witt, and this is the most devastating tornado I have ever seen. I have never seen so much complete destruction of homes over so wide an area. And of course, you know that at least for a couple of communities, the measurement of the tornado was virtually off the charts.

And I just want you to know—and I came into this neighborhood today, and I saw all these American flags sticking up, all the people rooting around in the rubble of their houses, looking for those family photos and the marriage licenses and the other records of family life, but with a strong spirit. It was profoundly moving to me.

And I want to say that our hearts go out to those who have lost so much and, obviously, especially to the families of those people who lost their lives. But we also thank you for setting an example of what is very best in this country, the way you have reacted to this.

I want to say a special word of thanks to the police and fire personnel, the National Guard, the Red Cross, all the people who volunteer, the young AmeriCorps volunteers over there, everybody who's been a part of this. I am very grateful. And I'd like to thank the citizens of Oklahoma. When the Governor said there had not been a single incident of looting, even though there had been no curfew, I think that says it all. And again, let me say to all of you, I am profoundly grateful.

There are a couple of things that I'd like to say that we're trying to do in addition to what you know already. FEMA has got a 1-800 number. We're trying to get in touch with all the businesses, as well as the homeowners and the people who have lost their cars and other things. But we also are today going to make available about \$12 million

from the Department of Labor, which will provide 3,500 temporary jobs that will be directed to people who lost their jobs because their businesses were taken out by the tornado.

And these jobs—though obviously they pay better, a lot better than unemployment compensation—so we can put several thousand people to work in the reconstruction process, everything from delivering water and food supplies to doing cleanup to actually helping on some of the construction crews. We'll be able to do that. We talked with your congressional delegation today, and we're going to look and see if we can do more.

But there will be several people here who will be out of their own jobs for months while the rebuilding occurs. And we're going to go back to Washington, try to figure out exactly how many people are going to be out of work, for how long, and try to make sure we can provide funding for work that actually needs to be done. We don't have to make up these jobs—you can look around. There's a lot of work that needs to be done here. So we'll try to do that.

The second thing that I wanted to mention, that the Governor has talked a lot about, is that I want to thank everybody who was involved in the weather warning because hundreds of lives were saved by that: the people at the weather service; the people here in Oklahoma who worked on this; the law enforcement people that went up and down the streets and blared their sirens and were on loudspeakers; the television stations that showed the pictures and the patterns and predictions. Over and over and over, people say how grateful they are for that.

We are working—and one of the things that is in the balanced budget this year that I very much hope will pass is several million dollars more to develop the next system of Doppler radar, which the Governor reminded me was developed here at the University of Oklahoma. And I think it's very important that we continue to improve that.

I also very strongly support establishing a national weather center with the help of Federal funds at the University of Oklahoma, to see what we can do not only to provide even better warning but perhaps to dilute the

strength of some of these very powerful tornadoes before they hit, and we'll be working on that.

The last point I would like to make is something I'd like everyone who lost a home to think about. We believe—no, I take that back—we know that lives can be saved under almost all conditions if there is at least one room properly encased and protected with concrete in a house. Now, in the loans which will be given for rebuilding the homes, 20 percent of the loan money can be used for protective purposes, for preventive purposes. Isn't that right? Yes—to make safe rooms. The average cost of one of these safe closets, if you do it with a closet, is only about \$2,000. The Governor will have discretionary funds available from the Federal Government that will actually permit him to contribute some of that money to families whose incomes are so modest they can't afford it on their own.

So if you don't remember anything else I say today, remember this: For goodness sake, build a safe room in your house when you rebuild. Go in and do the—any kind of alterations you have to do. It will be the cheapest \$2,000 you ever spent. If you don't have the money, get in touch with the right people at the State. We'll try to get them enough money to provide some help. But we will be able to save nearly everybody if we can do this. And in this rebuilding, once again, Oklahoma can show the way for America, if the word gets out that everybody here is determined to have one of these safe, reinforced closets in their homes.

We can't promise you that there will never be another tornado. We can promise you we'll do our best to continue to improve the warning. We'll see if the frontiers of science can widen to the point where we can dilute the strength of the storm. We'll put Oklahoma at the center of that.

But you can do something to help and to set an example for people throughout the United States in the areas that are vulnerable to tornadoes, by rebuilding with these safe and reinforced rooms.

Again, I'm sorry. Our hearts are with you. We'll be with you throughout the rebuilding. But thank you—thank you for once again showing the whole country what is best about America.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Del Aire neighborhood at the corner of 42d Street and Angela Drive. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank Keating, and his wife, Cathy; Director Raymond Lloyd (Buddy) Young, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI; Mayor Glenn Lewis of Moore, OK; Mayor Harry L. Nelson of Del City, OK; and Mayor Eddie O. Reed of Midwest City, OK.

Remarks on Departure From Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, and an Exchange With Reporters

May 8, 1999

Bombing of Chinese Embassy in Belgrade

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, as all of you know, last night the NATO airstrikes included a number of command and control targets in Belgrade, targets that involved Mr. Milosevic's ability to do what he has done in Kosovo to run the people out and repress them. Unfortunately, the Chinese Embassy was inadvertently damaged, and people lost their lives, and others have been injured.

It was a tragic mistake, and I want to offer my sincere regret and my condolences to both the leaders and the people of China.

Having said that, let me also remind you that it is clear that we're doing everything we can to avoid innocent civilian casualties. Because the television and other media are in Belgrade, you know every one that's occurred, but I would remind you that well over 10,000 sorties have now been flown, with massive ordinance having been dropped. And that is evidence that we're working very hard to avoid this.

It doesn't remove the sadness from the people in China and from the other innocent civilians that have been hurt, but we are doing our best. And I think it's important to remember why these airstrikes are necessary. Many thousands of Kosovars have been killed. There have been rapes; they have been burned out of their homes; their records have been destroyed; and hundreds of thousands have been turned into refugees.

This can all end tomorrow with an agreement that meets the minimum conditions to

restore Kosovo to civilized life; that is: the Serb forces have to leave; a multinational security force with NATO involvement has to come in; the Kosovars have to be able to go home with security and autonomy.

And we're working hard to achieve that goal. We made some progress last week, diplomatically. And meanwhile, I think it's important that NATO stay the course.

International Reaction

Q. There are protests around the world. Russia is calling this "barbaric." Could this derail the diplomatic efforts you're making toward a peace deal?

The President. Well, it wasn't barbaric. What is barbaric is what Mr. Milosevic has done. It's tragic. It's awful. But it's a tragedy, and it was an accident. What is barbaric is the intentional ethnic cleansing that he has provoked for a decade now, first in Bosnia where a quarter of a million people lost their lives and 2½ million people were made refugees, and now here. That is what is barbaric.

And I believe that Russia recognizes that, which is why they've shown so much leadership on the diplomatic front. And I would encourage them to stay on that course. If they want the bombing to end, then the Kosovars need to come home. We need to reverse the ethnic cleansing. We need to know they'll be secure.

And that's what I would urge everyone to think about here. You know, I'd like to see a few more demonstrations against the helplessness—I mean, the treatment against the helplessness Kosovars.

I don't blame people for being upset about it; I'm upset about it. But it is clearly—if you remember that over 10,000 sorties have been flown here, it is obvious that the NATO—the generals and the pilots have worked very hard to avoid this.

I know when I was in Germany, I talked to pilots that literally had risked their own lives to avoid innocent civilian casualties when weapons being fired against them were being fired from heavily populated civilian areas—on roofs and things like that—and they didn't fire back. They risked their own lives to avoid this sort of thing.

So this will happen if you drop this much ordinance over this period of time. I think the campaign is necessary. And what we need to do to end it is to meet the conditions necessary for the Kosovars to go home with safety and autonomy.

Impact on Balkan Peace Process

Q. Is this a setback for peace?

The President. No. What I hope it will do—I'm convinced that NATO should continue its mission. And what I think it should do is to make everybody who's interested in peace redouble their efforts to get Mr. Milosevic to reverse ethnic cleansing here. We need some sense of proportion here. Look at the numbers of people involved: thousands of people killed—of Kosovars; hundreds of thousands driven out of their homes, their homes burned, their records burned—coming on top of what happened in Bosnia. Let's not forget what the record is here.

And I hate this. And as I said, I send my regrets and my profound condolences to the leaders and the people of China, and to the innocent people in Serbia who have perished. I hate it. But someone sometime has got to stand up against this sort of ethnic cleansing and killing people wholesale and uprooting them and trashing them and destroying their lives by the hundreds of thousands, solely because of their religion and ethnicity. Otherwise, there will be far greater tragedies.

You know, these things are not easy. But someone had to do it sometime. And the answer is for everyone who wants an end to it to put some pressure on the Serbs and get this diplomatic thing even more energized. And let's keep working and put it behind us. No one would be happier than me when it's over. But what we're doing is the right thing to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

**Remarks at the White House
Strategy Meeting on Children,
Violence, and Responsibility**

May 10, 1999

Bombing of Chinese Embassy in Belgrade

Before I make my opening remarks, I would like to begin by saying a word about the tragic bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. I have already expressed our apology and our condolences to President Jiang and to the Chinese people. And I have reaffirmed my commitment to strengthen our relationship with China.

But I think it's very important to remember that this was an isolated, tragic event, while the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, which has led to the killing of thousands of people and the relocation of hundreds of thousands, is a deliberate and systematic crime. Until NATO's simple conditions are met, therefore, the military campaign will continue.

But again, I want to say to the Chinese people and to the leaders of China, I apologize; I regret this. But I think it is very important to draw a clear distinction between a tragic mistake and a deliberate act of ethnic cleansing. And the United States will continue to make that distinction.

White House Strategy Meeting

Now, let me say as I look around this room today, I want to say on behalf of the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, and Hillary and myself, first, we appreciate all of you coming. This is a very diverse and distinguished group of Americans. We have leaders of Congress from both parties here; leaders of the faith community; we have activists among parents and students and educators, and people in music and people in the entertainment communities; people who represent the gun manufacturers of our country. This is a truly impressive and diverse array of Americans.

Obviously, we have asked you to come here to see what we can do together to give our children safer childhoods. The four of us, both individually and together, have worked on many of the matters that will be discussed here today for years. We have made particular efforts to give our children safe streets and safe schools.

But I think that we, and the members of the Cabinet and the administration who are here, like all Americans, were profoundly affected by the events in Littleton, Colorado, coming as they did after so many tragic incidents in our schools last year. And we were determined to see what we could do to bring the American people together, to get beyond the divisions that often attend many of the subjects here, which is not to say that we shouldn't have a serious discussion today, and to try to move forward on something really big that can make a difference.

Now, last Friday I announced, therefore, that we would launch a national campaign to prevent youth violence, a grassroots effort that would involve all Americans, from every community and all walks of life. I expect the ideas and recommendations generated here today in our discussion to lay the groundwork, the common groundwork for that campaign. We are not here to place blame but to shoulder responsibility.

In the weeks to come, I will work with Congress to pass legislation that makes our schools and streets safer and keeps guns out of the wrong hands, because that's part of our responsibility. And again I want to say how very much I appreciate the representatives of the gun manufacturers for being here today and supporting some of the specific legislative proposals that have already been publicized.

Today I'm also directing the Surgeon General to prepare the first report in more than a decade on youth violence and its causes. This report will infuse our efforts with new understanding and new urgency.

Let me just briefly say that, with representatives of the manufacturers of guns today, I want to say to the press and to the public that we have found common grounds on some common sense measures: banning violent juveniles from buying guns, raising the age for handgun ownership from 18 to 21, closing the gun show loophole, holding reckless parents responsible for giving children access to guns, reducing illegal gun trafficking by helping law enforcement trace weapons used in crimes. Again, I commend the gun manufacturers here today for taking that kind of responsibility. Others have agreed to do their part.

A few years ago, through the Vice President's leadership, we were able to put in place a voluntary rating system for television. Les Moonves, the head of CBS, and Bob Iger, the head of ABC, have led the way by putting their networks behind this effort. They are here today, and they went to some considerable trouble to change their schedules to do so, and I appreciate their presence.

This year, half the new TV sets sold in America will contain the V-chip, which parents can use to protect their children from violent programming. Today the FCC is announcing a V-Chip Task Force to make sure that next year every new set contains the V-chip. And the Kaiser Family Foundation is announcing a massive new public education campaign to make sure parents know about it and know how to use it. Also, following this meeting, Kaiser and the Ad Council, also represented here, will produce a campaign of antiviolent ads called "Talking With Kids About Tough Issues."

Last week the Vice President also announced a voluntary agreement by 95 percent of the Internet service providers to offer parents a new tool to assure that they are only one click away from the resources they need to protect their children. And I thank the representatives of the Internet for being here today.

Let me also say that we know that profoundly important efforts are being made in our schools and our communities in efforts to involve parents in increasing their capacity to prevent their children from drifting into violence, to engage the early warning signs, to get the necessary counseling and mental health services. I know that Mrs. Gore and Hillary have both been heavily involved in a lot of these issues for a long time.

And I want to say a special word of appreciation to the parents who are here, to the teachers who are here, and to the students who are here, because I believe that they may have more to say to us about what the rest of us should do than we can imagine.

So to all of you, thank you for coming. Let's leave here today resolved to be, all of us, a part of this national campaign, and I want us to have a good conversation about where we go from here.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China. The President also referred to the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS); and the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Remarks Following the White House Strategy Meeting on Children, Violence, and Responsibility and an Exchange With Reporters

May 10, 1999

The President. Please be seated, everyone. We're getting our group up here, you see. It's a little slow—it's a large and, as you can see, diverse and distinguished group. We just had a wonderful meeting in the East Room of the White House. We had not only the Vice President and Tipper and Hillary and I, but many members of our administration and four Members of Congress: Senator Brownback and Senator Reid and Leader Gephardt and Representative Jennifer Dunn were there.

And we listened to several hours of discussions; over 40 people spoke, many of them already heavily involved in the efforts to give our children a safe childhood and protect them from violence.

This was exactly the kind of session I had hoped for, where everyone was talking about the problems and the opportunities; everyone was talking about what could be done to accept responsibility. No one was pointing the finger of blame.

In the weeks and months ahead, as we launch our national campaign to prevent youth violence, we will build on the strong foundation of this day and on many of the things which have been said and many of the people who have said them.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the young people who are here today and who are working in their own communities to try to help their fellow students have a safe and wholesome life.

As the national campaign gets underway, we know we'll have to overcome the old ways of doing business. We've seen some of that today as well, in the remarkable support that gun manufacturers have given to many of our commonsense gun proposals. We see in the

efforts of networks like ABC and CBS, and private family foundations like Kaiser, and agencies like the FCC, all of whom have supported the television rating systems, and giving parents the tool of the V-chip to protect children from excessively violent programming.

We know that there is more for each of us to do at home and at school, in Hollywood and in the heartland and here in Washington. Every parent, every teacher, every leader has something more to do.

First and most fundamentally, we must do more to help parents fulfill their most important responsibilities, those to their children. Challenging parents to turn off the television when they don't like what they see, to use the new tools the Vice President announced recently to keep an eye on the computer screen, to refuse to buy products that glorify violence. If no one consumes these products, people will stop producing them. They will not build it if you don't come.

To the media and entertainment industries, I also say we need your wholehearted participation in this cause. There are many changes which have occurred over the last generation in our society. It is true that we've had a lot of breakdowns in families, schools, and communities. It is true that we have had a rise in the availability of weapons. It is also true that there has been a coarsening of the culture in many ways. And those who influence it must be sensitive to that.

I mentioned today that not very long ago there was a fascinating story on the birth of Hollywood, the virtual creation of Hollywood by immigrants, on one of our cable channels. And the story really graphically demonstrated how these immigrants, who came to the United States, faced initial discrimination, went to California to make a new life—created an image of America, and an image of the American dream and an image of American life in the movies that they made that had a very positive impact on the culture of America for decades.

We cannot pretend that there is no impact on our culture and our children that is adverse if there is too much violence coming out of what they see and experience. And so, we have to ask people who produce things to consider the consequences of them—

whether it's a violent movie, a CD, a video game. If they are made, then at least they should not be marketed to children.

Finally, I urge Congress to join in this campaign by passing the legislation necessary to keep guns out of the hands of children. As a group of gun manufacturers and sportsmen made clear today, these are common-sense measures that they support.

There are also other things that we can do, that I hope we will do to provide more support for counseling services, for mental health services, for other things which will help to improve our efforts.

Again, let me say, I want to thank the Vice President and Tipper Gore for the work they have done on these issues for years. I want them to come forward and speak. But first, I want to ask the First Lady to speak and acknowledge that she has to go to a school as soon as she finishes talking here.

She had the idea for us to call this national conference and to try to organize a national grassroots campaign. It was a good idea, and it looks like a lot better idea after today's meeting. So I want to thank Hillary for everything she's done and ask her to come forward and say a few words.

[At this point, Hillary Clinton, Tipper Gore, and Vice President Al Gore made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Q. [Inaudible]—forces? Is that good enough?

Situation in the Balkans

Q. Mr. President, are you encouraged by word of a Serb withdrawal?

The President. Well, I'm encouraged by any good word, but I think that the conditions that we set out are the minimal ones to make this work. I don't think that the—after all the Serbs—after all the buildup and the hundreds of thousands of Kosovars have been driven out, many, many killed, I don't think they'll come back with that. So I think we have to do better.

But any little daylight, any little progress is—it's better than it was the day before. We just have to bear down and keep working, and we'll work through it.

But I think that forces have got to be withdrawn. There has to be an international security force there. Otherwise, they won't come home. And that's the important thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Hillary Clinton, Tipper Gore, and Vice President Al Gore.

Proclamation 7195—Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 1999

May 10, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Whether working in big cities, suburban communities, or small rural towns, America's law enforcement officers serve each day as a defense against the forces of crime and brutality. These courageous men and women defend our lives with their own. All too often they pay the ultimate price for their dedication, as America saw again this past year when an armed intruder invaded the United States Capitol and gunned down Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson. These brave men were husbands, fathers, neighbors, and friends. We must honor and remember their sacrifice and the loss of the loved ones they left behind.

We must also remember that the heroes who died defending the U.S. Capitol were just 2 of the 61 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty last year. Firearms took all but 3 of these lives. In addition, 78 officers died in tragic accidents. All of their memories live on, not only with their friends and families, but also in the hearts of all of us who enjoy safer, more peaceful lives because of their dedicated service.

This week we honor with special gratitude the nearly 600,000 highly trained law enforcement personnel who serve our Nation each day. Whether working undercover against drug pushers, gang leaders, and terrorists; apprehending fugitives; responding to domestic violence calls; or arresting drunk

drivers, these courageous men and women uphold their pledge to preserve the peace and promote the public's safety. In large part because of their skill and determination, crime rates in our Nation have fallen to the lowest point in 25 years, with the murder rate at its lowest level in 30 years. But the war on crime is a constant and dangerous struggle, and during Police Week—and especially on Peace Officers Memorial Day—we honor those who serve on the front lines of that battle.

By a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962 (76 Stat. 676), the Congress has authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day" and the week in which it falls as "Police Week," and, by Public Law 103-322 (36 U.S.C. 167), has requested that the flag be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 15, 1999, as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 9 through 15, 1999, as Police Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities. I also request the Governors of the States and of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also invite all Americans to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of May, 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 the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 12, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 13.

**Message to the Congress on
Certification of Satellite Fuels and
Separation Systems Exports to China**
May 10, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of Public Law 105-261, the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999, I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of satellite fuels and separation systems for the U.S.-origin Iridium commercial communications satellite program:

- (1) is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry; and
- (2) the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such export, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 10, 1999.

**Remarks on the New Markets
Initiative**
May 11, 1999

Thank you very much. I'd like to begin by thanking all the business leaders who have come here to be with us today, the members of the administration who are here, and especially the Vice President, for the work that he has done to spearhead our community empowerment effort over the last 6 years and a few months.

I'd like to just say just a word or two by way of introduction to try to highlight why I asked these business leaders here today. You heard the Vice President talk about what we have tried to do since we came here, since we passed the first economic plan to give genuine economic opportunity to all of our citizens: the empowerment zones, the community development banks, the kinds of incentives we were trying to give to create jobs and opportunity for people who hadn't had them.

And we are very grateful for the record declines in unemployment among African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans and for the fact that the unemployment rate has dropped dramatically, not only overall but in many of our toughest, toughest neighborhoods throughout the country.

On the other hand, even though we have the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957, there are still 37 cities—37—where unemployment is double the national average. There are lots of smaller communities where children still have to go past abandoned storefronts to get to a grocery store to buy a carton of milk. There are rural areas and very small towns which have had almost no new investment in the last 6 years. And of course, in many, many of our Native American areas and communities there is still a great deal of economic distress and uncertainty.

So what this whole effort has been about from the beginning for me, and especially what we are working on now, is the idea that we should go into the 21st century leaving no one behind. We should genuinely create opportunity for every responsible citizen. And we are being given a chance to do it.

I told the folks we met with today, it's very—I've spent a lot of time over the last 6 or 7 years studying how the American economy works as compared with other advanced economies in the world. And on balance, we've done a better job of creating jobs, while others have worked harder to maintain a sense of community and a greater degree of equality among working people. The price they have paid is that they have higher unemployment rates than we do.

We have been given an opportunity now, because we've got the strongest economy in at least a generation, to prove that we can bring the benefits of free enterprise to every neighborhood in America. We can prove that you can have low unemployment and increasing opportunity. The Vice President pointed out today that the wealth that minority families, for example, and families that live in poor rural areas have is still dramatically less than the wealth that average Americans have. They don't ever have a chance to accumulate anything.

This initiative that we are taking, we believe can change all that. We believe it builds on what we've done with the empowerment zones, with the enterprise communities, with the community development banks. We do want the Congress to give us another round of empowerment zones, and we want more.

In July I am going to visit communities for 2 or 3 days in our most stubborn pockets of poverty. I'm going places not just to remind America of the plight of the Americans who live there but to highlight their enormous economic potential and the visionary businesses who are helping to develop it.

Let me say again, the people who are here behind me, I was astonished when we listened in the meeting this morning about some of the things that they're already doing to bring opportunity to people in the areas they serve. But we have to do more.

You know, for years our Government has worked to give Americans incentives to invest in emerging markets around the world. But we now know, as we look forward to how we can continue to create jobs and have economic growth without inflation, that our greatest untapped markets are here at home—at least \$85 billion in untapped markets.

So how are we going to do this? First, the business leaders of our country have to help us. We have to mobilize the private sector to bring new jobs and opportunities. We know that, since the Government, the Federal Government is the smallest it has been since 1962, what we can do is to do what we have been doing. We can find a new way to create the conditions and give the private sector the tools to bring investment to these areas to put people to work.

Now, how can we do that? More empowerment zones, more community development banks, but also our new markets initiative. Many of the people here with me today said, "What we need, if we want more investments in the inner cities, more investments in the medium-sized cities and small towns, more investments in rural areas, you've got to have more equity investment." So in the State of the Union I proposed this new markets initiative to leverage billions of dollars in that kind of investment by providing tax

credits of up to 25 percent of the equity placed in untapped markets.

I also proposed to create American private investment companies and new market venture capital firms to bring more equity capital to investors who develop or expand in these areas with loan guarantees that would cover up to two-thirds of the investment. If you have 25 percent tax credit for what's at risk and a loan guarantee of two-thirds of the rest and a plain market there and we can actually get this out in simple terms that people can understand, I think we have a chance to spark an enormous amount of economic development in America before this administration's work is done.

We should not be thinking of our success without an equal determination to give every one of our fellow citizens a chance to be a part of it as we go into a new century. We don't have to leave anyone behind. And if we can't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it?

So, July we'll make the tour. In a few days we'll go down to south Texas, to the Vice President's annual empowerment conference. And we will continue to work with the business leaders that are here to do things that make sense. But the bottom line is we need the Congress to work with us in a bipartisan way. Of all the things in the world, this should not be a partisan political issue. We want to provide the economic incentives necessary to create jobs, keep growth going in America, keep inflation low, and go into that new century with everyone—everyone—walking hand-in-hand together.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on New Markets in Atlanta, Georgia May 11, 1999

The President. Thank you. Well, first, Mayor Campbell, Mayor Jackson, Mayor Young, my friends, it's wonderful to be back in Atlanta. I will be very brief because I want to spend most of my time listening to our panelists, but I'd like to try to put what the

mayor has said into the perspective of what we're trying to do with our administration. And I have with me our Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo; our Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez; my Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste. We had other members of the Cabinet with us earlier today, along with my National Economic Adviser, Gene Sperling, who helped to put this whole event today together.

But let me try to tell you why I'm here. When I became President in 1993 I had traveled around America and I had seen with my own eyes for many years, as a Governor and then as a candidate for President, people able to start businesses in places that had high unemployment or low income or other economic problems, if they just had access to capital and they had the right technical support, marketing support, loan guarantees or whatever.

So when we started our administration we put into our first economic plan this whole idea of empowerment zones which would give tax credits, loan guarantees, technical assistance and direct investment, and community development financial institutions which would make direct loans to people who otherwise might not have access to them.

We've also been greatly aided in this national endeavor by some of our own financial institutions, and I think the leading one plainly has been NationsBank in terms of what you have done to try to loan money to people who couldn't get it otherwise.

Now, after 6 years, watching these empowerment zones work, we can see examples like this. But what I want to say to you now is, I think it's important that we try to take this example to the whole Nation. Our economy now is in the best shape it's been in at least a generation; some people think it's the best economy America has ever had. We have the lowest recorded rates of unemployment since we've been keeping separate statistics for African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. We have record numbers of new small businesses starting in each of the last 6 years. We've got the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957.

Now, that's all good, but we also know that we have neighborhoods in big cities, we have small- and medium-sized cities, we have rural

areas and Native American reservations where there has been almost no new investment, almost no new businesses, almost no new jobs. So I am trying to highlight, first of all, for the American people, you and people like you all over the country, so people will know this can be done.

Secondly, I'm trying to build support for an initiative I have before the Congress now, which is called the new markets initiative, designed to give tax credits to people who put equity money, investment money, into low per capita income areas, high unemployment areas in our country, and to provide loan guarantees, up to two-thirds of the total investment for people who will do that, and to increase our community development loaning all over the country, not just in the empowerment zones, because I believe we ought not to leave anybody behind when we go into the 21st century. I think that every American who is willing to work ought to have a chance to do it.

And so, that's why I'm here. I want people to see you and believe it can be done in their neighborhoods, in their communities, rural or urban. I want to listen to you, and I want to try to build support.

The last point I want to make is, in July I am going to take 2 or 3 days and go to places in America that need this help, and try to highlight for the American people in the midst of all our prosperity both the obligation and the opportunity we have to do better. And I'm going to ask the American business leaders to help me. And a lot of these folks came with me today from all over the country. I just want to mention who is here. They're all the leaders of their various organizations.

Duane Ackerman from Bell South and Dan Amos from AFLAC, both of Georgia; Don Carty of American Airlines; Emma Chappell of the United Bank of Philadelphia; Jon Corzine of Goldman Sachs; Ted Gifford of Bank of Boston; Martin Grass of Rite Aid; Dan Hesse, AT&T Wireless; Richard Huber, Aetna; Debra Lee of BET; Leo Mullin of Delta Airlines, another home base here; Frank Newman of Bankers Trust; Maceo Sloan of Sloan Financial Group; Sy Sternberg of New York Life; and Sandy Weill, head of Citigroup. I'd like to ask all them to stand.

They are giving a day of their lives to try to help replicate this elsewhere, and we thank them. [Applause]

Now, that's enough of our talk. We want to hear from you. Who would like to go first? I also want to say, I've got some of this good coffee from the Cameroon, and I gave myself a refill on the way out here; I hope you'll forgive me. And I had a little of that sweet potato cheesecake, and I have lifted things from almost every entrepreneur here. This is a beautiful market, and I want to thank all of those who had anything to do with it. This is something the entire city can be proud of, and especially because of its roots to the rich history of 20th century Atlanta. So I'm very pleased.

But I would like to hear from all of you now. Who would like to go first and talk about what your experience was, how you got your business started, or what progress has been made here? Would you like to start?

[Jason Slaughter, president and chief executive officer, S&W International Food Specialties, thanked the President and stated his belief that, if you give people opportunities, they will do well. He explained how his business had been helped by the empowerment zones, the welfare to work program, and the Small Business Administration and how his business had grown from a \$150,000 company with 12 employees to a \$13 million company with over 60 employees in 3½ years.]

The President. Give him another hand. That was great. [Applause] You were great. Jason, you might be interested to know that earlier today when we were meeting in the White House a lot of these business leaders—and many of them have thousands and thousands of employees, but they repeatedly said to us, “Look, what we've got to do is to get capital out there to folks. They need that more than anything else. If they can get that first investment money—because you can't borrow it all unless you're able to put something up—that will make a big difference.”

And you're living proof of it. The way I figure it, if you can keep growing at this rate, by the time I'm ready to draw Social Security you will be a billionaire, and you can hire me to sort of work in my off hours. [Laugh-

ter] I accept right now in advance. I'll be here. You get ready. That's great.

Would you like to talk a little bit about the role of your bank here and what you're trying to do?

[Sally Adams Daniels from NationsBank stated that the bank had opened its community development operation in 1993. Creating partnerships with local community development corporations, the bank had redeveloped over 4,200 units of affordable housing in Atlanta.]

The President. Let me say, many years ago, before I ever became President, my wife and I had a long talk one night with Hugh McColl about investment in low income areas in America. And we told him—we talked about the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh which basically was the pioneering bank in the Third World, starting very poor people out in businesses and actually making good money doing that.

And both Hillary and I at various times in the last, probably 10 years, have had other conversations with him about it and then with others involved with NationsBank. But I was particularly pleased that not long after you announced your merger plans that the bank's 10-year plan for reinvestment in communities, including direct loans to provide initial capital to people who otherwise wouldn't have it, was announced.

And I want to tell you I very much appreciate that. I think it will make a huge difference. These people prove that they need a hand up, and they do right well if they get it.

Vivian, would you like to talk about your experience?

[Vivian Reid, owner of the Kaffee Shop, described how she and family members had started the coffee shop and how her business had thrived, in part, because new market initiatives had provided others in the area with the means to support each other.]

The President. Thank you. Let me say, I think you hit on an important point, because I can just say, I was really looking forward to coming down here because I've always loved Atlanta and I love the history of the place. But when I got here, I saw a lot

of things I didn't know were here, so I think you do need a marketing plan that tells people what it's like now and where you're going with it.

You know, you had so many different kinds of just food establishments, just different kinds. And the other thing that impressed me—you talked about the family businesses—the other thing that impressed me was the diversity of people working here. You have a lot of Asian American families here. You have—there is a lady back there who is in a food store who told me she is from Ghana, and she said “Aquava”—when I saw the Ghana word for welcome, which I first heard about a half a million people in Accra—and I think this is something that ought to be highlighted, that there are people here from all over the world, so that you get the best of Atlanta's past and a picture of Atlanta's future here. And I think there is a way for you to market it that would even increase the rate of growth that the merchants are enjoying.

That's what I'm going to do when I get out of the White House, go around and give people advice like this.

Go ahead. Ken.

[Kenneth Bleakley, executive director, North Yards Business Park, stated that his organization wanted to try to create more jobs in the inner city as one of the legacies of the Olympic Games and described how with the help of the empowerment zone program and environmental funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, they had successfully funded the program.]

The President. Give him a hand. That was great. *[Applause]* I would like to emphasize just one of the points that Ken made. And that is the funds the Federal Government put into environmental cleanup. Most people don't ever think about this as an economic development issue. But one of the things that has retarded the comeback of many areas in our cities are so-called brownfields, areas that have been subject to some measure of environmental pollution and areas, therefore, that can't get new investment and new support and can't even very often get permits to do what people want to do unless the cleanup is done.

But if the people who want to put the plan in or the business in have to bear the cleanup costs, then the financing doesn't work out. There's no reasonable way they can make the economics of their business work in the early years. So this is something the Vice President pointed out to me fairly early on in our work together, because he was heading this empowerment task force that we had. And we've spent a lot of time and effort trying to give communities funds to clean up the brownfields, because—and it's just breathtaking what we've found happens, the way it sort of cascades on itself—the money. And I appreciate what you're doing.

Mr. Bleakley. Thank you.

The President. And congratulations, to you, too. That's great.

Now, this is my cheesecake lady who destroyed my diet today, and I loved every bite of it. Do you want to tell us a little about your experience here and how you got started and what you're doing?

[Sonya Jones, owner of the Sweet Auburn Bread Company, stated the empowerment zone agencies were very aggressive in helping clients get projects off the ground. She described the problem she had attracting qualified people to her business, citing the need to offer them benefits to attract them.]

The President. Let me ask you this—are the principal needs you have to attract and keep good employees child care and health care?

Ms. Jones. Definitely.

The President. Those are the principal ones?

Ms. Jones. Yes.

The President. One more than the other?

Ms. Jones. They're right together, actually, I would say.

The President. I do believe this year, at the end of the year when Congress has to pass the budget, I still think we have quite a good chance to pass our health care initiative—I mean our child care initiative, which would provide more tax credits and more direct subsidies for people with modest incomes to afford quality child care. And one of the things—there must be a child care center very close to this market with all these

people down here. If there's not, that's something that ought to be looked at. But when you get a certain number of employees in the market and then people near here, you may be able to quite economically establish something for the neighborhood if there's not.

But if we pass this program, people like the people who would get a job working for you will have access to a lot more financial help to pay for that child care.

On the health care side, I really believe the only places that I know that have been really, really successful at this are people that have offered pool coverage to small businesses so, in effect, both the employers and the employees can buy health care at the same cost, more or less, per person that some of these large employers can. I don't think there is presently available another alternative to that, and so I think it's—except for when some States allow people who make relatively low incomes to buy into the Medicare/Medicaid program for—you know, they pay something but not the full range.

Those are the only two options that I'm aware of. But if there's not such a pooled arrangement here in this area, that's the next thing you ought to try to get the empowerment zone to organize. They can't do it until they have a certain number of employees, because it doesn't work economically. But once you cross a certain threshold with a certain profile for the employees, and a lot of them are young restaurant workers and healthy—you know, for example, you can do this and make the economics work. So that's something I think the empowerment zone can do.

Mr. Aderhold, do you want to say something there?

[Mr. John E. Aderhold, chairman, Aderhold Properties, Inc., pointed out that the community did have a day care center along the lines that President had discussed but noted that it operated on a small scale and needed to be expanded.]

The President. You know, it's very interesting. One of the things that—I saw a study of Georgia about—oh, this was 6–8 months ago, we were looking at the impact of the welfare reform law. And at the time, one of

the big problems was that Georgia was growing jobs like crazy, but most of them were growing were in the suburbs and most of the people who were losing their welfare benefits lived in the cities, and there wasn't an adequate transportation link.

Here's something that's been done here that has the potential to grow where are all of you are working folks in the urban areas, and there may be some way that the State's welfare reform program—and I think the person who ran it at least for Governor Miller is here—I don't know if the commissioner is here or not, but he was out at the airport—but there may be some way that they can use some of the money that they still have from welfare reform to subsidize child care centers in the city of Atlanta around here.

Because when we—when I signed the welfare reform bill, one of the things we did was we gave every State the amount of money they were receiving in February of 1994 when welfare caseloads were at an all-time high. Now, they have dropped more than at any period in history. They're almost 50 percent lower than they were in February of '94. The State still has that dollar amount. So they've got the same amount of money they had then, minus inflation, which hasn't been very much. So it may be that you could go there and try to get them to help the empowerment zone locate child care here for you.

Mr. Aderhold?

[Mr. John Aderhold described how the Fulton Cotton Mill project had progressed, renovating 12 acres of dilapidated territory and converting it into an area which was helping to draw people back into the city.]

The President. Well, thank you for taking a chance on it. And I think that, if someone like you is willing to take a chance of that magnitude, at least the modest amounts of money that the Government put up is the least we can do to share the early risk.

[Mr. Aderhold then added that the way the city cooperated in dispensing the funds was key to the success and thanked Mayor Campbell for his assistance.]

The President. Thank you. *[Applause]* Yes, give them a hand. That's great.

I didn't mention this earlier, but we are having, 2 weeks from today—maybe, and maybe it starts 2 weeks from yesterday; but either 2 weeks from yesterday or today, we're having our annual empowerment zone and enterprise community national convention that the Vice President hosts, and we're doing it in south Texas this year, in a small town, rural empowerment zone area we had down there. I think it's in McAllen. And it's a great place to go if you've never been there.

And we're going to all gather down there, and, Mayor, if either you're going, or whoever is going from Atlanta representing you—I'm sure you'll be represented there—I think the point that John just made is one that ought to be made there. Because we have now had enough experience with these empowerment zones that we can see differences in the rate of effectiveness. And I think this is a point that ought to be hammered home.

So if either you go, or if you will instruct whoever is going on behalf of Atlanta, to make that point, I'd appreciate it.

Tricia?

Tricia Donegan. Hi, welcome. Thanks for coming to Atlanta. You're the first guy to get me off a day of work so—[laughter]—since we've opened.

The President. Glad to do it.

[Tricia Donegan, owner of the Eureka Restaurant, described how she had started her restaurant business in 1995, how the assistance of the Federal funds helped get it off the ground, and how it was now expanding into other empowerment zones in the city.]

The President. Thank you, that was great. I said this morning when I was meeting with all the CEO's, I don't think any of us ever conceived this as a charitable operation. We thought that if we could build a community where everybody had a chance to make a living, that it would help all the rest of us, that we would all be stronger if people who were willing to work and had skills and had gifts to give to the community had a chance to do it and be paid an appropriate amount for it.

I think that this is a—it is really—America is very good at creating jobs. And compared to almost every other country in the world

with an advanced economy, we've got a very low unemployment rate. But we still have a problem when places have been down for a long time, going back and getting that economic opportunity there and bringing people into the circle of success.

And if we can't do it now when the economy is good, we'll never get around to doing it. So that's why I wanted people to see and hear all of your stories and your philosophy and see how this can work, because this is what we would like to do in every community in America where it is not now being done.

Mr. Mayor?

[Mayor Bill Campbell thanked the President for bringing the business leaders to see how the inner city was flourishing and stated that the President's urban policy, whether the COPS program or the empowerment zones, had effectively contributed to the city's growth and well being.]

The President. Let's give all our participants a hand here. They're great. Thank you. Great job.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 2:55 p.m. at the Sweet Auburn Market. In his remarks, the President referred to Mayor Bill Campbell, and former mayors Maynard Jackson, and Andrew Young of Atlanta, GA; F. Duane Ackerman, chairman and chief executive officer, Bell South; Daniel P. Amos, president and chief executive officer, AFLAC, Inc.; Donald J. Carty, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, American Airlines; Emma Chappell, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, United Bank of Philadelphia; Jon Stevens Corzine, chairman, Goldman Sachs; Charles K. Gifford, chairman and chief executive officer, Bank of Boston; Martin Grass, chairman and chief executive officer, Rite Aid Corp.; Dan Hesse, president and chief executive officer, AT&T Wireless; Richard Huber, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc.; Debra Lee, president and chief operating officer, BET Holdings; Leo Mullin, president, chairman, and chief executive officer, Delta Airlines; Frank Newman, chairman and chief executive officer, Bankers Trust; Maceo Sloan, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Sloan Financial Group; Sy Sternberg, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, New York Life; and Sandy Weill, chairman and co-chief executive officer, Citigroup; Hugh McColl, chairman and chief executive officer, Bank of America Corp.;

and former Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the round-table participants.

Remarks at the Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award Dinner

May 11, 1999

Thank you so very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you, Dorothy, for your wonderful words. She has been involved in this work for many years, but every time I hear her speak I always marvel at how young and vigorous and alive and energetic she always sounds.

I'm honored to be here with Wade Henderson; Julian Bond; Rabbi Saperstein; Monsignor East; my good friend, Justin Dart; Frances Humphrey Howard, it's nice to see you tonight, ma'am. I also want to—I have been told that Judy Shepard is here, the mother of Matthew Shepard, and she testified for the hate crimes legislation today. I don't know where she is, but I'd like to ask her to stand up—and I thank you. Where is she? Thank you very much, and God bless you. Thank you. *[Applause]*

I would like to thank the members of the administration who are here: Secretary Herman; our EEOC Chair, Ida Castro; our Civil Rights Assistant Attorney General, Bill Lann Lee; Ben Johnson, who is continuing the work of our initiative on race at the White House; and Mary Beth Cahill and others on the White House staff. I thank them.

I would also like to say a special word of appreciation to the many Members of the Congress who are here, well over a dozen House Members, and Senator Wellstone, Senator Sarbanes, and Senator Robb. I thank all of them for being here and for what they do. If it weren't for them, many of the things we have tried to do in the area of civil rights and human rights would not have been sustained in these last few years.

When I saw Senator Robb's name here, it reminded me before I give out this Hubert Humphrey Award—or acknowledge the award winners, you're going to give it out—I admired Hubert Humphrey very much, and

I grew up just being almost crazy about him because I grew up in the South during the civil rights revolution. And I got to meet him when I was a young man and when he was making his last campaign and during his latter service in the Senate, after he had been Vice President.

But I would like to say something I have rarely had the chance to say as President, but I don't think I would be here doing this, or we would be where we are as a country if it had not been for the President Hubert Humphrey served, Lyndon Johnson, and I think that we should never forget that. I just got back from Texas a few days ago, and I was thinking about it quite a lot down there.

I want to congratulate the Hubert Humphrey Award winners tonight: Gary Locke, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Jeannie Van Velkinburgh, who I know is back in the hospital tonight and couldn't be with us.

We honor these people because of something Dr. King once said, "No social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability." You all know they are pushed forward by courageous men and women who give themselves and inspire others to follow. People like my good friend, Governor Gary Locke, who has used the power of his office to expand and defend opportunity for all the people of his State. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, who together for 50 years have advanced the cause of civil rights through their art and through their efforts to open the theater and movies to people of all backgrounds. And Jeannie Van Velkinburgh, who stood with the white martyrs of the civil rights movement in the South when she was paralyzed in 1997, trying to help a black man under attack by skinheads. All true American heroes. I know we are honored to be in their presence tonight. I congratulate them on their awards, and I congratulate you for your choices.

For nearly half a century, the Leadership Conference has helped hundreds of diverse groups keep their eyes on the prize and speak with one booming voice. Today, your voice is louder, larger, and more diverse than ever. And that is good, because it is still sorely needed. While our economy has never been stronger and minority unemployment is the lowest it has been since separate measurements have been kept, there are still striking

disparities in income, wealth, jobs, education, and criminal justice that breakdown along what DuBois called “the color line,” and other disparities that affect people who are disabled or people who are gay. In other words, we still have quite a little hill to climb before we can claim to be the one America of our Founders’ dreams.

I was thinking today how I could best honor the spirit of Hubert Humphrey. I could give a long speech. [*Laughter*] I should tell you, if he were here at this podium tonight and I was out there, I would want him to give a long speech. I loved his long speeches. But I think what I will do instead is to try to make briefer comments in the spirit of his service about just three things we still need to do before we cross that bridge into a new century.

First, we must continue to work together for a fair and accurate census. I agree with Wade when he says the 2000 census is a civil rights issue. It is a fundamental building block of democracy. We have to make sure the Census Bureau can do its job with the most up-to-date and scientific methods. We all say we live for the day when every American counts as much as every other American. Surely, that day must begin with counting every American.

The second thing we have to do is to close the economic opportunity gaps that still exist among our people, in our inner-cities, our smaller and medium-sized towns, our rural areas, and on our Native American reservations. There will never be a better time for us to shine the light of economic opportunity on communities and neighborhoods that have been too long in the shadows. We do have the strongest economy in a generation, perhaps in this century. But we know—we know—that there are still large numbers of communities that have been left out and left behind.

Just an hour ago I returned from Atlanta—I think Congressman Lewis is here—but I toured the Sweet Auburn Market in Martin Luther King’s home neighborhood, in Atlanta’s empowerment zone with the mayor of Atlanta, Bill Campbell, and two of his predecessors, who are friends of many of yours, Maynard Jackson and Andy Young.

I was there to highlight the fact that our greatest untapped markets today for America are not overseas, they are right here at home. There’s an \$85 billion consumer market out there that is grossly underdeveloped. Ever since we took office, Vice President Gore and I have worked hard to try to get more people to invest in that part of America, with the empowerment zone program, the community development financial institution effort, special initiatives from HUD, from SBA, from the Department of Labor. And we have had some good success.

But as I look back on it, even now, with unemployment at 4.3 percent, with over 18 million new jobs, there are still inner-city neighborhoods, there are still medium-sized and smaller communities, there are still rural towns, there are still Native American reservations where there has been almost no new investment in job creation.

And what I am attempting to do this year is to convince the Congress to pass legislation and the American business community to mobilize to invest in those communities to create jobs there. I took some of the biggest business leaders in America today to that market in Atlanta. And I let them sit there with me and we listened to people talk about how they started their coffee shop and their bakery and their restaurant and how one man had bought an empty old mill and was converting it to 500 apartments and how a young man who was a supplier to other businesses had taken his business from \$150,000 a year to \$12 million a year in 3 years, starting with a modest loan.

And in July, in early July, I’m going to take 3 days and do what I did today in Atlanta. I’m going to go across the country, to the poorest communities and to some places where a lot of good things are happening, to demonstrate why we need to have a national framework to give every community a chance to get the money it needs to start the businesses, to expand the businesses, to create the jobs, to stabilize the future.

Our proposal is very straightforward: We want to double the number of empowerment zones where people get tax credits, loan guarantees, direct investment, and technical assistance. We want to dramatically increase the number of community development

banks, but we want to pass a national new markets initiative that simply says we want to give business people and investors the same incentives to invest in poor American neighborhoods we give them to invest in our neighbors. We don't want to take those other incentives away. We want to grow the Caribbean economies. We want to grow the Central American economies. We want to encourage Americans to be involved in Africa, and we want a new partnership there. But we also believe that Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, south Texas, and the Indian reservations of the high plains should get new American money now. So I would ask you to help me pass this legislation.

The third thing I ask you to do is to help us pass the hate crimes prevention act this year. In 1997, the year Jeannie Van Velkinburgh and Oumar Dia were brutally attacked by skinheads, more than 8,000 hate crimes were reported in the United States. That's nearly one an hour. The hearings today that Mrs. Shepard testified at were held in the United States Senate by the Judiciary Committee, under the leadership of Senator Hatch. First, I commend Senator Hatch for holding those hearings, they are a welcome sign—surely the goodness we can make fighting hate crimes a bipartisan, even a nonpartisan mission of the United States of America.

I think we need to be clear about what our legislation is designed to do. It is not an effort to federalize crimes traditionally handled by the States. It is an effort to partner with local authorities. And it is not only about cracking down on hate crimes committed because of sexual orientation, gender, or disability. It's also about expanding civil rights protection for all Americans. Let's never forget what happened to James Byrd, Jr. in Texas. I met with his daughter in Austin, just a few days ago. She's down there trying to get the Texas legislature to pass State hate crimes legislation. We ought to be pulling for her and for the Texas legislators who are trying to get the job done, and we ought to remember that we also need it here in Washington.

So I say to you, we need to do this for all Americans. We need to make the hate crimes prevention act and the employment

nondiscrimination act the law of the land, because it will help us to move toward one America, and it will help us to make a statement about what we are not, as well as what we are.

I was honored to appear at a testimonial banquet for Rabbi Saperstein the other night. We've been friends for many years. I love and admire him very much. And I especially appreciate how hard he's worked for peace in the Middle East and how hard he's worked to protect the heritage and the historical rights of the Israeli people and still be fair and humane toward the Arabs, with whom they share that land.

And I make this point for the following reason. It seems to me that the central irony of our time is that most of us have a vision of America in the 21st century and the world in the 21st century in which we'll all be mixed up in wonderful ways. We'll have all this fabulous technology, and we'll be E-mailing people on the South Pole or wherever. [Laughter] Our kids will have pen-pals in Africa and Mongolia. We'll jet around on airplanes and do business with people at the tip of Tierra del Fuego. [Laughter] Our kids will speak Japanese and Russian; one of them will solve the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh. We think this is what it's going to be like. It's going to be great.

We just had this NATO Summit here. We had the leaders of 42 countries here, all the way to central Asia; speaking all these different languages because we see that the world is drawing us closer together. Technology and commerce and culture all bringing us together. And most of us think it will really be neat if America can thrive in that kind of world because we're rapidly becoming the most diverse democracy ever known. And won't it be grand? That's the image we all have. That's the dream we have.

And yet, our whole world is bedeviled by the oldest problem of human society, which is fear and hatred of the other. We have known it in America primarily as the curse of race. Although we see discrimination and cruelty against people who are gay, discrimination against people who are disabled, we see it in other manifestations. We occasionally see religious discrimination in America. But primarily we have known it as race.

And yet, we see it everywhere. Hillary wanted to come here tonight to pay her respects to the honorees, but she got on a plane today to continue years of work she has done in Ireland, to try to use women and children to bring together people across the lines of Catholic and Protestant Irish. And then she's going on to the refugee camps of Albania and Macedonia, to clarify our compassion and concern for the predominantly Muslim Kosovar Albanians who have been driven from their homes and female loved ones murdered.

The bane of the Balkans is primarily a religious ethnic bane. First, the Bosnian Muslims, but now the Kosovar Muslims driven from their homes, systematically killed, raped, pillaged, their cultural and religious institutions and records destroyed. Why? Because they have been turned into something sub-human and so they somehow taint the land they share with the Serbs or the Croats or others.

We saw with breathtaking speed what happened in Rwanda a few years ago, the world totally caught flat-footed with no mechanism to deal with the slaughter of Rwanda, where somewhere between 700,000 and 900,000 people were killed in 100 days with no modern weapons, mostly hacked to death, because two African tribes who, in this case, who had shared the same land for 500 years, all of a sudden decided that they couldn't bear it anymore.

I hope you support what we are doing in Kosovo and what we did in Bosnia. I want you to know that we also have worked to redeem the failure of the world to stop the slaughter in Rwanda by developing an Africa Crisis Response Team, working with the militaries of the countries in the region that are committed to democracy and human rights, so that, God forbid, if anything like this ever happens again we, in the United States, and other freedom-loving people around the world, will have Africans with whom we can work to move more quickly to stop genocide, to stop ethnic cleansing, to not let it happen again.

But what I want to say to you is this: There will be fights around the world based on ethnic differences that we won't be able to stop. Sometimes people just fall out with one an-

other. But if we want to at least be able to stand firm against ethnic cleansing, against genocide, and for the principle that it is possible to honor our differences, to enjoy our differences, to recognize our differences, and still keep them contained within the framework of our common humanity so that life is more interesting but not unbearable; if that's what we want, and we expect people to take the United States seriously at a time when we are easy to resent because of our economic and military power, then people have to see us not only trying to do good around the world but trying to be good at home.

You know, many of these people are struggling. Macedonia and Albania, the two poorest countries in Europe—think how easy it is for all of them to resent us, to say, "Well, we're just waiting for our turn in history's clock to bring us to the top and take them down," to resent our power, to resent our wealth, to resent what they may think of as our preaching. I am telling you, it's imperative that we do this at this moment in history. But if we want to be a force for good, we have got to be good.

So when we stand up for the hate crimes legislation, when we stand up for the employment nondiscrimination legislation, when we stand up as a people and say that it's okay for us to have differences—and we're not even asking everybody to like everybody else in America—but we have got to find a way to get along by recognizing the fundamental human dignity of every person. We have got to find a way to do that so that we take advantages that are rife with all of our diversity by joining together in affirming our common humanity.

Keep in mind, unless we can do that here at home, in the end, we will not be able to do that around the world. And our whole vision of the 21st century—our whole vision—what we want our children to see in the world of their dreams depends upon our being able to do both: to stand for what is good abroad and to keep struggling to be good at home. That's what our honorees have led us in doing. It is certainly what you have led us in doing. Don't get tired. We've still got a ways to go.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. in the International Ball Room at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Dorothy Height, chair, Wade Henderson, executive director, and Rabbi David Saperstein, executive committee member, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; Julian Bond, chairman of the board, NAACP; Monsignor Raymond G. East, pastor, Nativity Catholic Church, Washington, DC; award presenter Justin Dart, Jr.; Frances Humphrey Howard, sister of Hubert Humphrey; Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard who was murdered in a hate crime in Wyoming in 1998; award recipients Gov. Gary Locke of Washington, actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Jeannie Van Velkinburgh, who was shot while aiding a hate crime victim in Denver, CO, in 1997; Renee Mullins, daughter of James Byrd, Jr., who was murdered in a hate crime in Texas in 1998; and former mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young of Atlanta, GA.

**Remarks Announcing the Proposed
“21st Century Law Enforcement
Safety Act”**

May 12, 1999

Thank you very much. Please be seated; and good afternoon. Madam Attorney General, Mr. Holder, Officer Hall, Senator Leahy, Congressman Stupak, Senator Biden, Senator Specter. There are now over 50 Members of Congress here, I think; at least that many had accepted to come. And we see our mayor there, Mayor Williams; Mayor Schmoke; Mayor Rendell, and other officials; Associate Attorney General Fisher; Treasury Under Secretary Enforcement Jim Johnson; and the Director of our COPS Office, Joe Brann. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here today, and welcome.

Five years ago this summer, after a remarkable effort in Congress which required, among other things, the breaking of an intense filibuster, with the support of many of the people here today, I was able to sign into law a crime bill that was the first of its kind: a comprehensive bill that funded local solutions to local problems and enhanced the promising practice of community policing; a bill that also banned assault weapons and demanded tougher punishment for the toughest criminals and provided innovative pre-

vention strategies to keep our young people out of trouble in the first place.

It was a crime bill that brought our laws into line with our oldest values, requiring all of us to take responsibility at every level of government and every community in America to prevent crime and protect our families. I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Senator Biden who is here today for his extraordinary efforts in what seems like, at once, a long time ago and only yesterday.

Today we know that the strategy embodied in the crime bill, which was really written by local police officers and law enforcement officials, is working. The murder rate is down to its lowest level in 30 years; violent crime has dropped 20 percent in the last 6 years alone; and in many smaller ways, reducing crimes like vandalism and littering that undermine the quality of life. We are beginning to repair the social fabric and restore civility to everyday life.

There are many reasons for this success. The Brady bill has stopped over 250,000 illegal handgun sales to felons, fugitives, and stalkers. The assault weapons ban has helped; so have tougher penalties and the waning of the devastating crack epidemic.

But police chiefs, politicians, and people on the street all agree that the most important factor has been community policing. After all, until the crime bill passed, the violent crime had tripled over the preceding 30 years, but the size of our police forces had increased by only 10 percent. Where police officers, therefore, used to cruise anonymously through the streets, now community police officers walk the beat and know the people in the neighborhoods, becoming involved in the lives of the people they protect and involving them in the fight against crime.

Community policing has worked miracles in many of our cities, where violent crime once was out of control and law-abiding citizens mistrusted police often as much as they feared gangs. Now, in cities and communities all across America, residents work with police officers forming neighborhood watches, banding together against drug dealers, building connections that are the core of community life and the heart of civil society.

When I signed the crime bill I pledged to help communities all over our Nation fund

100,000 community police officers by the year 2000. Today we are keeping the pledge.

Since 1994, the COPS program has funded 99,000 new police officers, over half already on the beat. Today I am pleased to announce the latest COPS grants, over \$96 million for nearly 1,500 police officers in more than 500 communities. This will bring us to over 100,000 community police officers funded, ahead of schedule and under budget. And I thank you for all of your efforts in that regard.

In making America's thin blue line thicker and stronger, our Nation will be safer. But you and I know our job is far from finished. Last week I sent new legislation to Congress to close the loopholes in our gun laws, raise the age of handgun ownership to 21, hold adults liable for keeping, recklessly keeping guns and ammunition within the reach of children, and asking for background checks for the purchase of explosives.

Today I will send to Congress a new crime bill for the 21st century, to advance our crime-fighting strategy in several respects and build on the successes of the 1994 crime act. We know what works, and we should make certain that those efforts continue and are expanded.

We know, too, that crime is still too high in too many communities. And the next stage of our crime-fighting strategy must focus with renewed intensity on the high crime areas, to break the cycle of violence on our meanest streets. Finally, we know we face new threats as a result of the new technologies of the information age.

So here's what the bill does. First, and most important, it expands the COPS program, helping communities to hire up to 50,000 more police officers, especially those hardest hit by crime. It will help them hire local prosecutors who work much as community police officers do in the neighborhoods where they can make the biggest difference. The bill will also give 21st century tools to our police officers to fight the criminals who, themselves, increasingly use technology to commit crimes and to avoid capture. The bill will provide grants to help communities encourage schools, faith-based groups, and citizens, themselves, in restoring peace to our neighborhood. School districts can use the

grants for preventive efforts that will reduce the likelihood of tragic violence.

The second thing the bill will do is to help steer young people away from crime and gangs by strengthening antitruancy and mentoring programs, by cracking down on gang members who intimidate witnesses.

Third, the bill will help to break the cycle of crime and drugs. Three out of four people in the criminal justice system have drug problems. If we treat those drug problems, we can cut the crime rate dramatically. The bill says to prisoners, "If you stay on drugs, you stay behind bars; to those on parole, if you want to keep your freedom, you must stay free of drugs."

Fourth, the crime bill will do more to protect our most vulnerable citizens. It will punish retirement rip-off artists, nursing home operators who abuse and neglect their residents, telemarketers who prey on older Americans. It will toughen penalties for people who commit violent crimes in the presence of children and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Finally, the crime bill will strengthen our efforts to combat international crime and terrorism. The threat of weapons of mass destruction is real and increasing in an age of technological change and open borders. The bill will make it a Federal crime to possess the biological agents used in such weapons without a legitimate, peaceful purpose.

This is the kind of comprehensive approach that has brought crime down 6 years in a row now. It is the kind of tough but smart approach we need in the new century. I am pleased that so many Members of the Congress are committed to move this agenda forward this year. I thank the Democrats who have come out in support of the legislation, and I hope that, as in 1994, we will enjoy strong support from Republican Members who share our objectives. And I thank those who are here today. I look forward to working with members of both parties to protect our families and to make our communities safe.

Now, as you all know, this is Police Week, and you see a number of police officers behind me and out in the audience. It's a week where we pay tribute to our Nation's law enforcement officers. Without their courage,

commitment, and ability to meet the challenges of our time and to help keep our streets safe, life would be much more difficult in America.

It is fitting, therefore, that the next speaker is a young community police officer from the Wilmington, Delaware, Police Department, funded through our COPS program, who used to be, I might add, a fifth-grade teacher and who truly represents the changing face and the bright future of policing in America. Officer Jonathan Hall was a teacher when he decided to become a police officer, but he still finds time to be a mentor to at-risk young people. And he takes every chance he can to talk to children about how they can protect themselves from crime.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a man who symbolizes what we have been working to bring to America for the last 6 years, Officer Jonathan Hall.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, MD; and Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, PA.

Remarks on the Secretary of the Treasury Transition

May 12, 1999

The President. Please be seated. I'd like to welcome all of you here today, especially the families of the people who are at the center of this announcement, and members of the Cabinet, Members of the Congress, Mr. Greenspan, ladies and gentlemen.

For 6½ years now, I have worked hard to build an economy that gives all of our people a chance to prosper and to live out their dreams. When I took office in 1993, it was a time of record deficits, high unemployment, decades of stagnant wages. It was clear then that we needed to make difficult and too long deferred choices.

So we put in place a new economic strategy rooted in the realities of the emerging information age. By now, the elements of that strategy are tiresomely familiar to those of you who have been a part of this: fiscal discipline, investment in our people, ex-

panded trade. But the results are plain: over 18 million new jobs; the lowest unemployment and inflation in three decades; the strongest economy in a generation, perhaps ever, ushered in by new technologies; the productive energies of the American people; and sensible policies.

In 1992 I told the American people I would focus on the economy like a laser beam. The first step was to establish within the White House a National Economic Council, modeled on the National Security Council, and then to pick Bob Rubin to lead it.

As the first Chair of the National Economic Council, Bob forged a true team and built an enduring and vital institution, now ably led by his successor, Gene Sperling.

Four years ago, when Secretary Bentsen resigned, I appointed Bob to be Secretary of the Treasury. Alexander Hamilton, our first Treasury Secretary, insisted that the United States pay its debts and practice fiscal prudence. That then-controversial proposal gave the new Nation a chance to grow into the powerhouse it is today. Bob has been acclaimed as the most effective Treasury Secretary since Alexander Hamilton, and I believe that acclaim is well deserved. I thank again the Members of Congress who have come here, both Republicans and Democrats, in testament to that.

He has upheld the highest traditions of the office. He has merged old-fashioned fiscal conservatism with new ideas to help all Americans benefit from the new economy and to maintain and enhance America's leadership in the world economy. He understood the importance of fiscal discipline and the accountability and the impact that it would bring, not only low interest rates but also intangible economic confidence, both of which have brought us more jobs, more businesses, higher wages, lower mortgage rates, and a rising standard of living for all Americans.

He cares very deeply about the impact of abstract economics on ordinary people. I can tell you that for all these years, he has always been one of the administration's most powerful advocate for the poor and for our cities, for the investments that we put into the empowerment zones, for the earned-income tax credit, for the community development

banks and the Community Reinvestment Act, and for the new markets initiative that I was out promoting in Atlanta yesterday. He has also tried to help our friends abroad when they needed it, knowing that our friends and trading partners need to do well if America is to do well.

We were reminiscing in the Oval Office just a moment ago about the night just before he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury when we decided we had to give assistance to Mexico. At the time, I think 11 percent of the American people thought we were doing the right thing. But since then, I think almost always, the American people have concluded that Bob Rubin's recommendations have been the right thing for our country.

It's no secret to all of you who know him that Bob has been pining for private life for a long time now, and I have been pleading for all that long time for him not to pine too much. But 2 weeks ago, he told me that he was ready to go. I will miss his cool head and steady hand, his sharp mind and his warm heart. I also want to put him on notice that I expect him to show up here regularly for the next 2 years until we're done, for lots of free advice.

I used to joke that Bob Rubin came to Washington to help me save the middle class, and he'd stayed so long that by the time he left he'd be one of them. *[Laughter]* He just wants a little time to prove me wrong. *[Laughter]* But I thank him from the bottom of my heart for being a true patriot and a true friend.

To carry forward our economic strategy, I will nominate Larry Summers to be the next Secretary of the Treasury. He is brilliant, able, a critical part of our economic team during the entire life of this administration, therefore, deeply knowledgeable and more than ready to help steer our Nation through the strong and sometimes turbulent currents of the new economy.

Rarely has any individual been so well prepared to become Secretary of the Treasury. For the past 6 years he has been a senior official at Treasury, first Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, and then for 4 years as Deputy Secretary. He has always been Bob Rubin's partner in many,

many ways, working with him to balance the budget, to strengthen Social Security, to reform the IRS, to build a stronger economy at home and abroad. He has a close working relationship not only with Chairman Greenspan but with key finance ministers and central bankers around the world. He has the rare ability to see the world that is taking shape and the skill to help to bring it into being.

I will also nominate Stu Eizenstat to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. I have known him now for well over 20 years, since he was President Carter's Domestic Policy Adviser. He has served our administration very well in several positions: Ambassador to the European Union, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, and most recently Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

Of all the people on this platform today, the person making the greatest sacrifice for the national interest is Secretary Madeleine Albright. And I appreciate her presence here and the absence of tears in losing a man as able as Stu Eizenstat. *[Laughter]*

Stu has handled many of our Nation's most difficult missions over the last 6 years, from our successful efforts to lift food and medicine sanctions on trading partners—or non-trading partners—to the struggle for justice and compensation on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust, an endeavor he will continue.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to him for all the many missions he has undertaken, but especially for the work he's done in the Holocaust area. He has done it better, more energetically, more completely, and with greater sensitivity for all the elements involved than I think any other American could have. And not just Jewish-Americans and other survivors and family members of survivors of the Holocaust around the world, but all Americans should be grateful for this unique contribution he has made to making the American dream real.

With his legendary grasp of policy and the art of practical government, his long experience, his stamina, and his steady judgment, he will be a vital, full member of our economic team.

Our economy continues on its remarkable path, but we must press forward with the strategy that has brought us thus far. We have a lot to do to strengthen Social Security and Medicare in the months ahead to maintain our fiscal discipline and begin to pay down this debt; to renew our public schools so that they can play the role that they must play in preparing all of our people to succeed in the economy we are working to build; and to bring economic opportunity where it is still not in sufficient supply in underinvested urban and rural areas in America.

With a steady strategy and now, a strong economic team, I am confident we can enter the 21st century stronger than ever. But I would like to say that more than any other single citizen, Bob Rubin deserves the credit for building all the teams we've had with all the members, because he started with his National Economic Council. No one had ever made it work before. No one had ever made it really a priority to bring together all the strands and all the economic actors, to bring together the State Department and the Treasury Department and the Commerce Department and the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and a lot of other things most Americans had never heard of. He brought it all together. He got us to work as a team. He worked for a consensus. He was always honest with me in presenting disagreements, and he built a spirit and a belief that we could actually make this economy what it ought to be for our people. That will be his enduring achievement, along with the fact that everybody believed as long as he was Secretary of the Treasury, nothing bad could happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, Bob Rubin.

Secretary Rubin. Thank you.

The President. You're not used to this.

[At this point, Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin, Treasury Secretary-Designate Lawrence H. Summers, and Deputy Treasury Secretary-Designate Stuart E. Eizenstat made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Memorandum on the Report to Congress Regarding Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma

May 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Report to the Congress Regarding Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma

Pursuant to the requirements set forth under the heading "Policy Toward Burma" in section 570(d) of the FY 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 104-208), a report is required every 6 months following enactment concerning:

1) progress toward democratization in Burma;

2) progress on improving the quality of life of the Burmese people, including progress on market reforms, living standards, labor standards, use of forced labor in the tourist industry, and environmental quality; and

3) progress made in developing a comprehensive, multilateral strategy to bring democracy to and improve human rights practices and the quality of life in Burma, including the development of a dialogue between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and democratic opposition groups in Burma.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit the report fulfilling these requirements to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to arrange for publication of this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Continued Operations of United States Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina

May 12, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 1203 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 1999, Public Law 105-261 (the Act),

requires submission of a report to the Congress whenever the President submits a request for funds for continued operations of U.S. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In connection with my Administration's request for funds for FY 2000, the attached report fulfills the requirements of section 1203 of the Act.

I want to emphasize again my continued commitment to close consultation with the Congress on political and military matters concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congress in the months ahead as we work to establish a lasting peace in the Balkans.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 12, 1999.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner

May 12, 1999

Thank you so much. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to join those who have spoken before and thank everyone, from our entertainers to the caterers to the servers, everyone who made this wonderful evening possible.

I want to thank Senator Torricelli for taking on the leadership of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee. It is often a thankless task; but we have to recruit good candidates, and then they have to be able to get their message out. If it weren't for you, the second part couldn't occur. I want to thank Senator Murray, who won a heroic battle for reelection in the last election season, when many people thought it would not happen, and she won and won big, and she deserved to.

And I want to thank our leader, Tom Daschle. It is in no small measure because of the way he held our Democrats together and the way he spoke for and to ordinary Americans from his position in the Senate that we did so well in the last election, and we'll do even better in 2000. I am honored every day I get to work with him in our leadership effort.

Now, you've all had a good time tonight, and the last thing you need is another long

speech. But I would like to try to emphasize something Senator Torricelli said and make a real point that I hope you can leave with.

Tomorrow morning, when you're doing whatever else you're doing, if someone asks you why you were here tonight, you could say, "Well, I wanted to hear the band," or, "I wanted to taste the food," or, "I work for somebody that made me go"—[laughter]—or whatever else. I would hope you could give a better answer. And I would hope you could tell people why you believe it's important that our party continue to do well and that we win more seats in the Senate until we win the majority back.

You know, I'm gratified by what Senator Torricelli said about our record. I'm gratified that we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history and over 18 million new jobs and that millions of children are getting health insurance and 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time, and we've set aside more land in permanent protection than any administration, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. I'm gratified by all that.

But what you must understand is that even when we have been in the minority in the Congress, most of what has been achieved in this administration would not have been possible without the support of the Democrats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. They deserve a full measure of credit for every good thing that has happened in the last 6½ years.

The second thing I want to say is, it's very flattering, now that I can't run for reelection anymore, for Senator Torricelli or someone else to say that I did a pretty good job leading our country. But what we did in 1993, as a result of the vote in 1992, was to bring back old values and to bring new ideas to the American people. And it was the combination of reaffirming our devotion to opportunity for all, for responsibility from all citizens, for the idea of an American community in which every good person could be a part, and the new ideas to prove we could reduce the deficit and balance the budget and still double spending on education and the environment; to prove that we could improve the economy and improve the environment at the same time; to prove that we

could value the individual and still say, "What brings us together across all the lines that divide us is more important; our community is what makes us great;" to give entrepreneurs a chance to make a lot of money and the stock market a chance to grow and still say that we can't rest until we've given every American community a chance to be a part of the American dream. It was those ideas that brought America back. And that's why in the year 2000, when I will not be on the ballot, it will be as important as it has ever been for the Democrats to do better and better and better so that those ideas can be made real in the lives of every American citizen.

We've got a lot on our plate this year and next year: saving Social Security and Medicare; paying our debt down so we can keep interest rates down; continuing to strive for educational excellence and education opportunity; many other things. But because of the traumas that we have been through in America in the last few weeks and because of the conflict in Kosovo, I would like to ask you to think about one thing as I close.

And that is this: It is supremely ironic, particularly for all these young people here, that when we dream about the 21st century, we dream about a time when people of all ethnic and racial and religious configurations will be working together in our country and around the world. We dream about capitalizing on this fabulous explosion of technology. You can have pen-pals in Mongolia, in Cameroon, and wherever else. We think the world will be stronger and smaller and at our fingertips, and how wonderful it will be.

And yet, the only real cloud looming over the world today is the oldest demon of human society, the weakness of people when together to fear and hate and harm those who are different from us, by race or ethnicity or religion or in some other way.

Now, what we have to do is to say to ourselves, we will be purged of that. That's why it's important that we pass this hate crimes legislation. That's why it's important that we pass the employment and nondiscrimination act. That's why it's important that we move in Washington to take sensible steps to protect all our children from the dangers of guns. I'm very disappointed that the Senate

today did not vote to have background checks at these gun shows, like the people of Florida voted to do it. That's part of our community.

In a world in which America is so blessed with so much wealth and so much power, it is very easy for others to resent us and to mistake our motives, as we have seen in recent days. If we want to be in a position to stand up against ethnic cleansing, against genocide, against bigotry abroad, we must be good at home. We must reaffirm the fundamental value of community to the Democratic Party and the American people. And we must acknowledge that our own history has given us plenty of humility because of our history of slavery, and because we, too, are guilty of cleansing when the American people pushed the Native American tribes off their lands without adequate compensation and without any concern for how they would govern themselves and make their way in life so long ago. And we are still living with the consequences of that.

But I will close with this story to make this point. If this doesn't make you proud to be an American, nothing will. Today, at the request of Senator Daschle and his colleagues, Senator Johnson and Senator Conrad and Senator Dorgan from North Dakota and Senator Baucus from Montana and Representative Pomeroy from North Dakota, I met with 19 tribal leaders from Native American tribes from the high plains of America. Even more than most other Native American tribes, they have struggled economically. They have not yet felt the wonderful rush of all this economic opportunity and this very low unemployment rate. Their educational system still needs improvement. Their health care needs advances. And I met with them and listened to them.

But at the end of the presentations, the person who was their spokesperson stood up and he said, "Mr. President, we have seen America's long journey, and we have been a part of it, from the unfortunate beginnings of our relationship to where we are today, meeting with the President. And today we signed a proclamation, all of us tribal leaders, supporting the United States' stand against ethnic cleansing and the murder of innocents in Kosovo, and I want you to know that." And then—[*applause*]*—oh, it gets better.*

And then another man stood up and he said, "Mr. President"—another tribal leader—he said, "I have two uncles, one was on the beach at Normandy in World War II, the other was the first Native American fighter pilot in American military history. My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Calvary at Wounded Knee. And I only have one son. But I have seen America's journey, and I would gladly have my son go fight to protect the Kosovar Albanian Muslims from the fate that we should never see any people endure again."

Remember, look around the room tonight. It's the America we want and the world we will work for. And I think you should have no doubt about which party is more likely to give you that future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:08 p.m. in the Great Hall at the National Building Museum.

Memorandum on the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

May 12, 1999

Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 1999 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

I am delighted that Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala has agreed to serve as the Chair of the 1999 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area. I ask you to enthusiastically support the CFC by personally chairing the campaign in your agency and appointing a top official as your vice chair.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to support thousands of worthy charities. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign but also assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help positively influence thousands of employees and will guarantee another successful campaign.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks on Departure for Fort McNair, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

May 13, 1999

Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation

The President. Good morning. On Monday we brought parents and students, religious leaders and educators, and representatives of the entertainment and gun industries to the White House to lay the groundwork for a national campaign to reduce youth violence.

We agreed that this was no time to point fingers or to pass the buck, but instead a time for everyone to take responsibility. Parents must take greater responsibility for their children's actions and get more involved in their children's lives. The entertainment industry must do its part.

Even now, in the aftermath of Littleton, there are some in the entertainment industry who say there is nothing they can or should do. But that is wrong. Hundreds of studies show that the aggregate impact of sustained exposure to violence over the media to children, principally on television but also in the movies and now in video games, generally desensitize children to violence and its consequences, and therefore, make the more vulnerable children more violence-prone.

The entertainment community is helping parents to limit children's exposure to violence. It should also not market indiscriminate violence to children. If this is a job for all of society, the entertainment industry is very much a part of our society and must do its part.

Perhaps the most courageous statement at the summit, however, came from representatives of the gun manufacturers. They vowed to be part of the solution, to work with us to pass sensible measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

One of the most important measures we agreed on was legislation to require background checks at gun shows. In the past 5 years, the Brady law has stopped more than

a quarter million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns. But there's a loophole in the law: tens of thousands of guns are sold every year at gun shows without any background check at all.

Last night a narrow majority of the Senate voted to preserve the dangerous gun show loophole. For the life of me, I can't figure out how they did it or why they passed up this chance to save lives.

Just last November, over 70 percent of the voters in Florida, not generally thought of as a liberal State, voted to close the gun show loophole.

I ask the Senate to reconsider its decision. There is simply no excuse for letting criminals get arms at gun shows they can't get at gun stores. Today the Senate will have another chance to debate commonsense measures that most gun makers and sportsmen and ordinary citizens would welcome. The American people are watching this debate. They care very much about the result.

As we all saw Monday, the gun manufacturing industry is ready to make progress. The country is ready to make progress. The Congress should be ready to make progress. We can't expect parents, young people, and the media to take responsibility if we in Government aren't willing to do our part.

Thank you very much.

Funding for Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, the Kosovo money bill—is it getting so loaded down that you may have to veto it?

The President. Well, I believe that we're actually making progress. I got a report from Mr. Podesta this morning, and I think there is some effort to trim down the bill some and to get it in position where I can sign it, and I hope it will be done quickly. We need the funds now, and we need the demonstration of support for the Kosovar refugees and for Macedonia and Albania now. It needs to be done as quickly as possible. And I'm, frankly, pretty encouraged this morning.

Q. Do you think the American people understand the war, Mr. President? Support for the war seems to be declining, according to national polls.

The President. I think they do understand it. I think they understand that it is overwhelmingly a humanitarian problem. I think they understand that there's a great difference between ethnic cleansing and mass slaughter and ethnic conflicts, which are so prevalent in other parts of the world. I think they understand that this is not something the United States is doing alone but with the strong involvement and leadership of our European allies. And I believe they understand that we have an interest in seeing peace and freedom in Europe.

I think they are probably frustrated that it's not already over, but I said in the beginning we have to be prepared to pay the price of time. And the most important thing is that our children will understand it years from now if we stand against ethnic cleansing and we can turn the world against it, and they will not forgive us years from now if we do not.

Thank you.

Q. Central American aid, Mr. President?

Q. Are there offsets that you would accept?

Q. Will Yeltsin be impeached? What happens if Yeltsin goes?

Q. Central American aid—

The President. That is there, and I hope we get it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the South Lawn at the White House. A portion of the exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at Fort McNair

May 13, 1999

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Commander Pouliot. I am grateful to you and to Veterans of Foreign Wars for your support of America's efforts in Kosovo.

General Chilcoat, Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Secretary West, National Security Adviser Berger, Deputy Secretary Guber, General Shelton and the Joint Chiefs, and to the members of the military and members of the VFW who are here. I'd also like

to thank Congressman Engel and Congressman Quinn for coming to be with us today.

I am especially honored to be here with our veterans who have struggled for freedom in World War II and in the half-century since. Your service inspires us today, as we work with our Allies to reverse the systematic campaign of terror and to bring peace and freedom to Kosovo. To honor your sacrifices and fulfill the vision of a peaceful Europe, for which so many of the VFW members risked your lives, NATO's mission, as the Commander said, must succeed.

My meetings last week in Europe with Kosovar refugees, with Allied leaders, with Americans in uniform, strengthened my conviction that we will succeed. With just 7 months left in the 20th century, Kosovo is a crucial test: Can we strengthen a global community grounded in cooperation and tolerance, rooted in common humanity? Or will repression and brutality, rooted in ethnic, racial, and religious hatreds dominate the agenda for the new century and the new millennium?

The World War II veterans here fought in Europe and in the Pacific to prevent the world from being dominated by tyrants who used racial and religious hatred to strengthen their grip and to justify mass killing.

President Roosevelt said in his final Inaugural Address: "We have learned that we cannot live alone. We cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community."

The sacrifices of American and Allied troops helped to end a nightmare, rescue freedom, and lay the groundwork for the modern world that has benefited all of us. In the long cold war years, our troops stood for freedom and against communism until the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain collapsed.

Now, the nations of central Europe are free democracies. We've welcomed new members to NATO and formed security partnerships with many other countries all across Europe's east, including Russia and Ukraine. Both the European Union and NATO have

pledged to continue to embrace new members.

Some have questioned the need for continuing our security partnership with Europe at the end of the cold war. But in this age of growing international interdependence, America needs a strong and peaceful Europe more than ever as our partner for freedom and for economic progress and our partner against terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and instability.

The promise of a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace, is at long last within reach. But we all know it is threatened by the ethnic and religious turmoil in south-eastern Europe, where most leaders are freely elected and committed to cooperation, both within and among their neighbors.

Unfortunately, for more than 10 years now, President Milosevic has pursued a different course for Serbia, and for much of the rest of the former Yugoslavia. Since the late 1980's he has acquired, retained, and sought to expand his power by inciting religious and ethnic hatred in the cause of Greater Serbia, by demonizing and dehumanizing people, especially the Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims, whose history, culture, and very presence in the former Republic of Yugoslavia impedes that vision of a Greater Serbia. He unleashed wars in Bosnia and Croatia, creating 2 million refugees and leaving a quarter of a million people dead. A decade ago, he stripped Kosovo of its constitutional self-government and began harassing and oppressing its people. He has also rejected brave calls among his own Serb people for greater liberty. Today, he uses repression and censorship at home to stifle dissent and to conceal what he is doing in Kosovo.

Though his ethnic cleansing is not the same as the ethnic extermination of the Holocaust, the two are related, both vicious, premeditated, systematic oppression fueled by religious and ethnic hatred. This campaign to drive the Kosovars from their land and to, indeed, erase their very identity is an affront to humanity and an attack not only on a people but on the dignity of all people.

Even now, Mr. Milosevic is being investigated by the International War Crimes Tribunal for alleged war crimes, including mass killing and ethnic cleansing. Until recently,

1.7 million ethnic Albanians, about the population of our State of Nebraska, lived in Kosovo among a total population of 2 million, the other being Serbs.

The Kosovar Albanians are farmers and factory workers, lawyers and doctors, mothers, fathers, school children. They have worked to build better lives under increasingly difficult circumstances. Today, most of them are in camps in Albania, Macedonia, and elsewhere, nearly 900,000 refugees, some searching desperately for lost family members. Or they are trapped within Kosovo itself, perhaps 600,000 more of them, lacking shelter, short of food, afraid to go home. Or they are buried in mass graves dug by their executioners.

I know we see these pictures of the refugees on television every night, and most people would like another story. But we must not get refugee fatigue. We must not forget the real victims of this tragedy. We must give them aid and hope. And we in the United States must make sure—must make sure—their stories are told.

A Kosovar farmer told how Serb tanks drove into his village. Police lined up all the men, about 100 of them, by a stream and opened fire. The farmer was hit by a bullet in the shoulder. The weight of falling bodies all round him pulled him into the stream. The only way he could stay alive was to pretend to be dead. From a camp in Albania, he said, "My daughter tells me, 'Father, sleep. Why don't you sleep?' But I can't. All those dead bodies on top of mine."

Another refugee told of trying to return to his village in Kosovo's capital, Pristina. "On my way," he said, "I met one of my relatives. He told me not to go back because there were snipers on the balconies. Minutes after I left, the man was killed. I found him. Back in Pristina no one could go out, because of the Serb policemen in the streets. It was terrible to see our children, they were so hungry. Finally, I tried to go shopping. Four armed men jumped out and said, 'We're going to kill you if you don't get out of here.' My daughters were crying day and night. We were hearing stories about rape. They begged me, 'Please get us out of there.' So we joined thousands of people going through the streets at night toward the train station.

In the train wagons, police were tearing up passports, taking money, taking jewelry."

Another refugee reported, "The Serbs surrounded us. They killed four children because their families did not have money to give to the police. They killed them with knives, not guns."

Another recalled, "The police came early in the morning. They executed almost a hundred people. They killed them all, women and children. They set a fire and threw the bodies in."

A pregnant woman watched Serb forces shoot her brother in the stomach. She said, "My father asked for someone to help this boy, but the answer he got was a beating. The Serbs told my brother to put his hands up, and then they shot him 10 times. I saw this. I saw my brother die."

Serb forces, their faces often concealed by masks, as they were before in Bosnia, have rounded up Kosovar women and repeatedly raped them. They have said to children, "Go into the woods and die of hunger."

Last week in Germany I met with a couple of dozen of these refugees, and I asked them all, in turn, to speak about their experience. A young man—I'd say 15 or 16 years old—stood up and struggled to talk. Finally, he just sat down and said, "Kosovo, I cannot talk about Kosovo."

Nine of every 10 Kosovar Albanians now has been driven from their homes, thousands murdered, at least 100,000 missing, many young men led away in front of their families; over 500 cities, towns and villages torched. All this has been carried out, you must understand, according to a plan carefully designed months earlier in Belgrade. Serb officials pre-positioned forces, tanks, and fuel and mapped out the sequence of attack: what were the soldiers going to do; what were the paramilitary people going to do; what were the police going to do.

Town after town has seen the same brutal procedures: Serb forces taking valuables and identity papers, seizing or executing civilians, destroying property records, bulldozing and burning homes, mocking the fleeing.

We and our Allies, with Russia, have worked hard for a just peace. Just last fall, Mr. Milosevic agreed under pressure to halt

the previous assault on Kosovo, and hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were able to return home. But soon, he broke his commitment and renewed violence.

In February and March, again we pressed for peace, and the Kosovar Albanian leaders accepted a comprehensive plan, including the disarming of their insurgent forces, though it did not give them all they wanted. But instead of joining the peace, Mr. Milosevic, having already massed some 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo, unleashed his forces to intensify their atrocities and complete his brutal scheme.

Now, from the outset of this conflict, we and our Allies have been very clear about what Belgrade must do to end it. The central imperative is this: The Kosovars must be able to return home and live in safety. For this to happen, the Serb forces must leave; partial withdrawals can only mean continued civil war with the Kosovar insurgents. There must also be an international security force with NATO at its core. Without that force, after all they've been through, the Kosovars simply won't go home. Their requirements are neither arbitrary nor overreaching. These things we have said are simply what is necessary to make peace work.

There are those who say Europe and its North American allies have no business intervening in the ethnic conflicts of the Balkans. They are the inevitable result, these conflicts, according to some, of centuries-old animosities which were unleashed by the end of the cold war restraints in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. I, myself, have been guilty of saying that on an occasion or two, and I regret it now more than I can say. For I have spent a great deal of time in these last 6 years reading the real history of the Balkans. And the truth is that a lot of what passes for common wisdom in this area is a gross oversimplification and misreading of history.

The truth is that for centuries these people have lived together in the Balkans and southeastern Europe with greater or lesser degree of tension but often without anything approaching the intolerable conditions and conflicts that exist today. And we do no favors to ourselves or to the rest of the world when we justify looking away from this kind of slaughter by oversimplifying and conven-

iently, in our own way, demonizing the whole Balkans by saying that these people are simply incapable of civilized behavior with one another.

Second, there is—people say, “Okay, maybe it's not inevitable, but look, there are a lot of ethnic problems in the world. Russia has dealt with Chechnya, and you've got Abkhazia and Ossetia on the borders of Russia. And you've got all these ethnic problems everywhere, and religious problems. That's what the Middle East is about. You've got Northern Ireland. You've got the horrible, horrible genocide in Rwanda. You've got the war, now, between Eritrea and Ethiopia.” They say, “Oh, we've got all these problems, and, therefore, why do you care about this?”

I say to them, there is a huge difference between people who can't resolve their problems peacefully and fight about it and people who resort to systematic ethnic cleansing and slaughter of people because of their religious or ethnic background. There is a difference. There is a difference.

And that is the difference that NATO—that our Allies have tried to recognize and act on. I believe that is what we saw in Bosnia and Kosovo. I think the only thing we have seen that really rivals that, rooted in ethnic or religious destruction, in this decade is what happened in Rwanda. And I regret very much that the world community was not organized and able to act quickly there as well.

Bringing the Kosovars home is a moral issue, but it is a very practical, strategic issue. In a world where the future will be threatened by the growth of terrorist groups, the easy spread of weapons of mass destruction, the use of technology including the Internet, for people to learn how to make bombs and wreck countries, this is also a significant security issue. Particularly because of Kosovo's location, it is just as much a security issue for us as ending the war in Bosnia was.

Though we are working hard with the international community to sustain them, a million or more permanent Kosovar refugees could destabilize Albania, Macedonia, the wider region, become a fertile ground for radicalism and vengeance that would consume southeastern Europe. And if Europe were overwhelmed with that, you know we would have to then come in and help them.

Far better for us all to work together, to be firm, to be resolute, to be determined to resolve this now.

If the European community and its American and Canadian allies were to turn away from and, therefore, reward ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, all we would do is to create for ourselves an environment where this sort of practice was sanctioned by other people who found it convenient to build their own political power, and therefore, we would be creating a world of trouble for Europe and for the United States in the years ahead.

I'd just like to make one more point about this, in terms of the history of the Balkans. As long as people have existed there have been problems among people who were different from one another, and there probably always will be. But you do not have systematic slaughter and an effort to eradicate the religion, the culture, the heritage, the very record of presence of the people in any area unless some politician thinks it is in his interest to foment that sort of hatred. That's how these things happen. People with organized political and military power decide it is in their interest that they get something out of convincing the people they control or they influence to go kill other people and uproot them and dehumanize them.

I don't believe that the Serb people in their souls are any better—I mean, any worse—than we are. Do you? Do you believe when a little baby is born into a certain ethnic or racial group that somehow they have some poison in there that has to, at some point when they grow up, turn into some vast flame of destruction? Congressman Engel has got more Albanians than any Congressman in the country in his district. Congressman Quinn's been involved in the peace process in Ireland. You think there's something about the Catholic and Protestant Irish kids that sort of genetically predisposes them to—you know better than that, because we're about to make peace there, I hope—getting closer.

Political leaders do this kind of thing. Think the Germans would have perpetrated the Holocaust on their own without Hitler? Was there something in the history of the German race that made them do this? No.

We've got to get straight about this. This is something political leaders do. And if peo-

ple make decisions to do these kinds of things, other people can make decisions to stop them. And if the resources are properly arrayed, it can be done. And that is exactly what we intend to do.

Now, last week, despite our differences over the NATO action in Kosovo, Russia joined us, through the G-8 foreign ministers, in affirming our basic condition for ending the conflict, in affirming that the mass expulsion of the Kosovars cannot stand. We and Russia agreed that the international force ideally should be endorsed by the United Nations, as it was in Bosnia. And we do want Russian forces, along with those of other nations, to participate, because a Russian presence will help to reassure the Serbs who live in Kosovo, and they will need some protection, too, after all that has occurred.

NATO and Russian forces have served well side-by-side in Bosnia, with forces from many other countries. And with all the difficulties, the tensions, the dark memories that still exist in Bosnia, the Serbs, the Muslims, and the Croats are still at peace and still working together. Nobody claims that we can make everyone love each other overnight. That is not required. But what is required are basic norms of civilized conduct.

Until Serbia accepts these conditions, we will continue to grind down its war machine. Today our Allied air campaign is striking at strategic targets in Serbia and directly at Serb forces in Kosovo, making it harder for them to obtain supplies, protect themselves, and attack the ethnic Albanians who are still there. NATO actions will not stop until the conditions I have described for peace are met.

Last week I had a chance to meet with our troops in Europe, those who are flying the missions, and those who are organizing and leading our humanitarian assistance effort. I can tell you that you and all Americans can be very, very proud of them. They are standing up for what is right. They are performing with great skill and courage and sense of purpose. And in their attempts to avoid civilian casualties, they are sometimes risking their own lives. The wing commander at Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany told me, and I quote "Sir, our team wants to stay with this mission until it's finished."

I am very grateful to these men and women. They are worthy successors to those of you in this audience who are veterans today.

Of course, we regret any casualties that are accidental, including those at the Chinese Embassy. But let me be clear again: These are accidents. They are inadvertent tragedies of conflict. We have worked very hard to avoid them. I'm telling you, I talked to pilots who told me that they had been fired at with mobile weapons from people in the middle of highly populated villages, and they turned away rather than answer fire because they did not want to risk killing innocent civilians.

That is not our policy. But those of you who wear the uniform of our country and the many other countries represented here in this room today and those of you who are veterans know that it is simply not possible to avoid casualties of noncombatants in this sort of encounter. We are working hard. And I think it is truly remarkable—I would ask the world to note that we have now flown over 19,000 sorties, thousands and thousands of bombs have been dropped, and there have been very few incidents of this kind. I know that you know how many there have been because Mr. Milosevic makes sure that the media has access to them.

I grieve for the loss of the innocent Chinese and for their families. I grieve for the loss of the innocent Serbian civilians and their families. I grieve for the loss of the innocent Kosovars who were put into a military vehicle that our people thought was a military vehicle, and they've often been used as shields.

But I ask you to remember the stories I told you earlier. There are thousands of people that have been killed systematically by the Serb forces. There are 100,000 people who are still missing. We must remember who the real victims are here and why this started.

It is no accident that Mr. Milosevic has not allowed the international media to see the slaughter and destruction in Kosovo. There is no picture reflecting the story that one refugee told of 15 men being tied together and set on fire while they were alive. No, there are no pictures of that. But we have enough of those stories to know that

there is a systematic effort that has animated our actions, and we must not forget it.

Now, Serbia faces a choice. Mr. Milosevic and his allies have dragged their people down a path of racial and religious hatred. This has resulted, again and again, in bloodshed, in loss of life, in loss of territory, and denial of the Serbs' own freedom and, now, in an unwinnable conflict against the united international community. But there is another path available, one where people of different backgrounds and religions work together, within and across national borders, where people stop redrawing borders and start drawing blueprints for a prosperous, multi-ethnic future.

This is the path the other nations of south-eastern Europe have adopted. Day after day, they work to improve lives, to build a future in which the forces that pull people together are stronger than those that tear them apart. Albania and Bulgaria, as well as our NATO ally, Greece, have overcome historical differences to recognize the independence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and others have deepened freedoms, promoted tolerance, pursued difficult economic reforms. Slovenia has advanced democracy at home, and prosperity, stood for regional integration, increased security cooperation, with a center to defuse land mines left from the conflict in Bosnia.

These nations are reaffirming that discord is not inevitable, that there is not some Balkan disease that has been there for centuries, always waiting to break out. They are drawing on a rich past where peoples of the region did, in fact, live together in peace.

Now, we and our Allies have been helping to build that future, but we have to accelerate our efforts. We will work with the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, and others to ease the immediate economic strains, to relieve debt burden, to speed reconstruction, to advance economic reforms and regional trade. We will promote political freedom and tolerance of minorities.

At our NATO Summit last month we agreed to deepen our security engagement in the region, to adopt an ambitious program to help aspiring nations improve their candidacies to join the NATO Alliance. They

have risked and sacrificed to support the military and humanitarian efforts. They deserve our support.

Last Saturday was the anniversary of one of the greatest days in American history and in the history of freedom, V-E Day. Though America celebrated that day in 1945, we did not pack up and go home. We stayed to provide economic aid, to help to bolster democracy, to keep the peace and because our strength and resolve was important as Europe rebuilt, learned to live together, faced new challenges together.

The resources we devoted to the Marshall plan, to NATO, to other efforts, I think we would all agree have been an enormous bargain for our long-term prosperity and security here in the United States, just as the resources we are devoting here at this institution to reaching out to people from other nations, to their officers, to their military, in a spirit of cooperation are an enormous bargain for the future security of the people of the United States.

Now, that's what I want to say in my last point here. War is expensive; peace is cheaper. Prosperity is downright profitable. We have to invest in the rebuilding of this region. Southeastern Europe, after the cold war, was free but poor. As long as they are poor, they will offer a less compelling counterweight to the kind of ethnic exclusivity and oppression that Mr. Milosevic preaches.

If you believe the Marshall plan worked and you believe war is to be avoided whenever possible and you understand how expensive it is and how profitable prosperity is, how much we have gotten out of what we have done, then we have to work with our European Allies to rebuild southeastern Europe and to give them an economic future that will pull them together.

The European Union is prepared to take the lead role in southeastern Europe's development. Russia, Ukraine, other nations of Europe's east are building democracy; they want to be a part of this.

We are trying to do this in other places in the world. What a great ally Japan has been for peace and prosperity and will be again as they work to overcome their economic difficulty. Despite our present problems, I still believe we must remain commit-

ted to building a long-term strategic partnership with China.

We must work together with people where we can, as we prepare, always, to protect and defend our security if we must. But a better world and a better Europe are clearly in America's interests.

Serbia and the rest of the Balkans should be part of it. So I want to say this one more time: Our quarrel is not with the Serbian people. The United States has been deeply enriched by Serbian-Americans. Millions of Americans are now cheering for some Serbian-Americans as we watch the basketball play-offs every night on television. People of Serbian heritage are an important part of our society. We can never forget that the Serbs fought bravely with the Allies against Fascist aggression in World War II, that they suffered much, that Serbs, too, have been uprooted from their homes and have suffered greatly in the conflicts of the past decade that Mr. Milosevic provoked.

But the cycle of violence has to end. The children of the Balkans, all of them, deserve the chance to grow up without fear. Serbs simply must free themselves of the notion that their neighbors must be their enemies. The real enemy is a poisonous hatred unleashed by a cynical leader, based on a distorted view of what constitutes real national greatness.

The United States has become greater as we have shed racism, as we have shed a sense of superiority, as we have become more committed to working together across the lines that divide us, as we have found other ways to define meaning and purpose in life. And so has every other country that has embarked on that course.

We stand ready, therefore, to embrace Serbia as a part of a new Europe if the people of Serbia are willing to invest and embrace that kind of future; if they are ready to build a Serbia, and a Yugoslavia, that is democratic and respects the rights and dignity of all people; if they are ready to join a world where people reach across the divide to find their common humanity and their prosperity.

This is the right vision and the right course. It is not only the morally right thing for America; it is the right thing for our security interests over the long run. It is the vision

for which the veterans in this room struggled so valiantly, for which so many others have given their lives.

With your example to guide us, and with our Allies beside us, it is a vision that will prevail. And it is very, very much worth standing for.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Eisenhower Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas Pouliot, commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Statement on the Death of Meg Greenfield

May 13, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Meg Greenfield. In her work for the Washington Post and Newsweek, Meg perfected the art of the newspaper column. Her essays were invariably tightly reasoned, forcefully stated, and deeply felt. She called on those of us who work in Government to pursue farsighted public policy and bipartisan solutions. Her voice of eloquence and reason will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family in their time of mourning.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Assist Young People Leaving the Foster Care System

May 13, 1999

Hillary and I are pleased that Representatives Nancy Johnson and Ben Cardin today introduced important legislation to assist the approximately 20,000 young people who leave our Nation's foster care system each year at age 18 without an adoptive family or other permanent family relationship. Today, Federal financial support for these young people ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. Without the emotional, social, and financial support that families provide, many of these youth are not adequately prepared for life on their own.

I believe that we have a responsibility to ensure that these young people have the tools they need to make the most of their lives. That is why my budget request includes significant new investments to provide them with access to health care and help them to earn a high school diploma, further their education or vocational training, and learn daily living skills such as budgeting, career planning, and securing housing and employment. Today, Representatives Johnson and Cardin have moved this issue forward. I am committed to working with them and other Members of Congress in the months ahead to enact meaningful and fiscally responsible legislation to enable these young people to live up to their God-given potential.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report of the National Institute of Building Sciences

May 13, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the requirements of section 809 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1701j-2(j)), I transmit herewith the annual report of the National Institute of Building Sciences for fiscal year 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 13, 1999.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at a "Conyers for Congress" Dinner

May 13, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, thank Bob Johnson and the whole BET family for making us feel at home at this wonderful place tonight. And I want to thank Kenny Burrell and Donald Byrd and James Moody, and also I'd like to thank the musicians who were playing for us earlier. They were very, very good, and I enjoyed hearing them.

I want to say how much I appreciate the fact that so many of John Conyers' colleagues are here from the Michigan delegation, from the Congressional Black Caucus, and the whole Congress would have showed up if they could have. And notwithstanding his claims of false advertising, he really is 70 years old. [Laughter]

Now, I say that in astonished admiration. He has a child who is 10 years younger than my daughter—[laughter]—maybe more—and one of the most impressive young men I've ever met in my life. And thanks to Debbie Dingell, he went through the Detroit Auto Show with me, and he knew more about the cars than I did. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, there are many things that I appreciate about John Conyers. I appreciate the fact that he has supported my economic and social initiatives since I've been President. And thanks to his leadership, we have tried to do things that make sense—for our economy, to give everybody a chance to participate. We've tried to do things to help young people stay out of trouble, instead of just punishing people after they commit crimes. We've tried to do things that make sense to bring people together and to create more opportunity. And he's had a big impact on that.

I appreciate the fact that in standing up for me last year, he stood up for the Constitution of the United States. And I'm grateful to him.

I am grateful for the fact that long before it was fashionable, he believed the United States ought to be on the side of human rights in South Africa, in Haiti, and throughout the world. So I am very grateful to be a friend of John Conyers.

I am also hoping that if I hang around him long enough, I get to meet some more great musicians—[laughter]—I get another chance or two to play. I can't tonight. I've got to work. And maybe I'll learn the secret of how to look young when I'm 70. People always ask me how old I am, and I say, "I'm the oldest 52-year-old man in America"—or 53, or however old I am—I can't keep up with it.

Let me say one other thing that's very important as I look around this crowd tonight—you know, our hearts have been heavy in the

United States over the loss of the children in Colorado. And our hearts have been burdened over the efforts that we are making in Kosovo. And I think about the world we would like to build for our children. I think about how jazz music brought people together across racial lines, long before there was much of any other way to do it in America, long before it was cool or noticed—I'm talking about in the twenties and thirties. Mr. Gregory, I'm glad to see you here—thank you.

And I look around this crowd tonight and I think about—those of you who are here who are young, you imagine what you want your life to be like. And a lot of you, you know all about computers and the Internet and how to relate to people all around the world and go into these strange chat rooms and talk to people in Mongolia or someplace. And we all want to believe it's going to be great and wonderful and fascinating. And isn't it interesting, after all our long journey, so that we could come here tonight, together—a journey which John Conyers, having been in the Congress since 1964, had a lot to do with helping us make.

But isn't it interesting that we had in our own country, a horrible murder-suicide, which the young people involved said was perpetrated because they felt that they were part of a gang that was not respected by others, and they hated other people, partly for racial, partly for other reasons. And this is 1999. And these kids were so far gone, that that's what they said. And our hearts were broken by it. And all those brilliant young people—one African-American, the others not—had their whole future taken away because these kids wanted to destroy and then to destroy themselves.

And isn't it interesting that that's sort of against everything both that the whole history of jazz but also the potential of America and the world represents. And then you look around the world today, and what's the trouble? What's the trouble in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East and Africa, in the Balkans—from Bosnia to Kosovo—what's the trouble? People can't get along because of their racial, their ethnic, or their religious differences.

And so if we ought to think of one thing we can honor John Conyers for, thinking about what he stood for in South Africa, think about the record he stood for on civil rights at home, what he's fought for on the Judiciary Committee—it ought to be the idea that America ought to be a good place and a safe place and a full place for all its children.

Yesterday—I will tell you this story in closing. I want to tell you a story. Yesterday, at the request of the Senators from North Dakota and Senator Daschle and Senator Baucus, I had a fascinating meeting with 19 tribal chiefs from the 19 Indian tribes of the High Plains, the Northern High Plains in America. And all of you who don't know about that part of the country need to know that notwithstanding all the things you read about how rich the Native Americans are because of their gambling enterprises today, the tribes that don't have those gambling enterprises and the tribes that are in the poor, rural areas, a long way from economic activity, are still the poorest people in America.

And so these very dignified, mostly pretty young tribal leaders, men and women, came in; we sat in a circle, according to their request, in the Roosevelt Room in the White House; and they spoke in their turn about the needs of their people. And then after they had done that, the person whom they had designated to be their spokesperson stood up in a very dignified way and said, "Mr. President, we have something to say about our involvement in Kosovo. We know something about ethnic cleansing. We were removed from our lands, and some of the people who did it said that it was God's will, which we hear in the Balkans. And we have seen America come a very long way. And we have signed this proclamation to tell you that we, the leaders of the first Americans, support America's policy to stand up against ethnic cleansing and the murder of people because of their religious and ethnic background."

And then another man said, "I would like to be heard." And this young man stood up with great dignity, and he had a beautiful silver Indian necklace on. And he said this—he said, "Mr. President, I had two uncles. One landed on the beaches at Normandy on D-Day; the other was the very first Native

American fighter pilot in the history of the American military. My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee." He said, "I now have only one son. America has come a very long way from Wounded Knee, to the beaches at Normandy, to the opportunity I have to be in the White House today. And I love my son more than anything, but if he needed to go and fight against ethnic cleansing and the brutality and the murdering of people because of their race or their ethnicity or their religion, I would be proud for him to stand for the United States and for the humanity of man."

No one in the room could breathe, we were so moved by this man in his simple dignity, representing Americans who still don't have a total, fair shot at educational and economic opportunities, who live in places that still don't have adequate health care. But he told a story that needs to be told.

So I say to you, you honor John Conyers tonight—the best way we can honor John Conyers is to say, we've got a pretty picture of the 21st century, and we've got an ugly picture of the 21st century that is every last nightmare that has dogged human society since people came up out of the caves and first got together, and that is fear and hatred of people who are different from us. And we're better than that. And he's helped us to be better than that. And we're going to do better still.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. at the BET on Jazz Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; musicians Kenny Burrell, Donald Byrd, and James Moody; Debbie Dingell, wife of Representative John Dingell; and civil rights activist Dick Gregory.

Remarks on Departure for Seattle, Washington

May 14, 1999

Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation

Good morning. It is now clear that the tragedy at Littleton has helped to create a broad national consensus that we must act

together to protect our children from violence, including taking efforts to keep guns away from children and away from criminals. The question is whether Congress will write that national consensus into law or block it. Thus far, the Senate has not fully lived up to its responsibility.

I am very pleased that on Wednesday a bipartisan majority in the Senate passed two important measures I proposed 2 weeks ago. First, they agreed to ban the import of high-capacity ammunition clips that are used to evade the 1994 ban on assault weapons. Second, they agreed to ban juvenile possession of semi-automatic assault weapons and large-capacity magazines, weapons used—designed only for mayhem. There's no good reason for a child to own an AK-47 or a 15-round ammo clip.

I applaud the Senate for taking these two steps. However, on Wednesday a narrow majority squandered an important opportunity to close the gun show loophole through which tens of thousands of guns are sold each year without background checks. Yesterday I called on the Senate to reconsider that vote. It makes no sense to let criminals continue to use legitimate gun shows as a convenience store for their weapons.

Today the Senate will vote again on a measure purporting to address this issue. However, the new Senate Republican bill is still riddled with high-caliber loopholes. It won't stop criminals from buying guns at gun shows. At the same time, it will open up a new pawn shop loophole that lets convicted felons get guns at a local pawn shop. That's actually worse than current law.

I simply can't believe the Senate will make the same mistake twice. So once again, I ask them to reject this phony proposal and to pass real legislation that requires the background checks necessary to prevent criminals from buying guns at gun shows which they cannot buy at gun stores. This should be a moment for national unity.

I was so pleased today to receive a letter from the major gun manufacturers reiterating their support for our efforts to pass real, enforceable, mandatory background checks at gun shows. They recognize that law-abiding citizens don't need a gun show loophole, only criminals do.

For 6 years, we have made strong, steady progress against crime by elevating results over ideology. Today we have a chance to put aside partisanship, political divisions, and draw special interest power that has dominated our politics on this issue for too long. For the sake of our children, I hope the Senate changes its mind and does the right thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. in the South Portico at the White House.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Americans at Camp Hope, Albania

May 14, 1999

Maj. Gen. William Hinton. Hello, Mr. President. This is General Bill Hinton from Camp Hope in Albania.

The President. Hi, General Hinton. And are you there with Mr. Sykes?

Maj. Gen. Hinton. Yes, Mr. Chris Sykes is here with me from CARE.

The President. Well, first of all, I just wanted to call to applaud your efforts in building and managing Camp Hope. I think it's a very important example of our commitment to give shelter and assistance to the refugees until they can go home. And I'm very proud you were able to do it in such a short time. I know you had a lot of constraints finding the right site and getting the infrastructure up. I think this will help us to get our NATO Allies to do more on other camps as well.

How are you doing with the rest of the work there?

Maj. Gen. Hinton. Sir, the work is coming along very well. We're progressing with the rest of the camp, and we hope to complete the camp for up to 20,000—

[At this point, the telephone connection was interrupted.]

Maj. Gen. Hinton. —hello, Mr. President. Are you there?

The President. Yes.

Maj. Gen. Hinton. In any case, we hope to complete the rest of the camp by the first of June.

The President. That's great. Well, it's good to talk to you again. I hope you will tell all the people in Joint Task Force Shining Hope that I'm very grateful for a job well done.

Maj. Gen. Hinton. Mr. Sykes is here, sir, and of course, he already has 400 refugees on board.

Chris Sykes. How are you, Mr. President?

The President. I'm fine.

Mr. Sykes. Okay. It's been a great exercise—

The President. Well, I really appreciate the way you've worked with our military to organize and design the camp. And I want to thank CARE and all the NGO's that are working there.

Exactly how many are there now?

Mr. Sykes. We've got exactly 409 now, and we'll be receiving another 500, which we're in the process of receiving as you speak.

The President. Well, that's good news. I think it's good for them—go ahead.

Mr. Sykes. Yes—we're moving right ahead on schedule, and we should be able to speed up our rate of reception. The initial influx has come in from Kukes, and we're prepared for any influx from Macedonia, as well.

The President. Well, that's great. I think we may have a little influx from Macedonia. The situation there is not the best, and we've got a lot of pressure. So I hope we can really do a good job of getting as many people as possible there.

Mr. Sykes. Well, sir, we'll keep this camp going on schedule, and we're looking for sites for two more camps right now.

The President. That's great. I know they need all the help they can get. They've taken a lot of folks, and I know a lot of them are in homes, but I think from here on out we're going to have to have more camps and good ones.

Mr. Sykes. Yes, sir. We've got a good contractor here helping to build these camps and we'll keep trying to find the right sites.

The President. Well, I appreciate it. I know it's tough work, but you're doing something really important. And it will be temporary, but it may be a while. And so we've

got to do the best we can. And I'm very grateful to both of you.

Mr. Sykes. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you, Chris, and thank you, General. It's good to hear your voice. Take care.

Maj. Gen. Hinton. Thank you, thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 9:40 a.m. The President spoke from the Oval Office at the White House to Maj. Gen. William S. Hinton, Jr., USAF, Commander, Joint Task Force Shining Hope, and Chris Sykes, camp manager, CARE, at the Camp Hope refugee site, located 60 miles from the city of Fier, Albania.

Statement on Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation

May 14, 1999

I am deeply disappointed that, by the narrowest of margins, the Senate has refused to close the gun show loophole while creating other dangerous loopholes to our gun laws. If the Senate's decision is left to stand, it will be easier for criminals to get guns and harder for law enforcement to do its job. Criminals will be able to get guns at gun shows and pawn shops, no questions asked, and Federal law enforcement won't be able to ensure gun sellers' compliance with laws or to trace firearms later used in crimes. If the Senate wants to do right by the American people, it will once again bring up the Lautenberg amendment, when all Members are present, and close the gun show loophole once and for all.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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.

May 8

In the morning, the President traveled from Austin, TX, to Oklahoma City, OK, where he toured the tornado damaged areas by helicopter.

In the afternoon, the President took a walking tour of the tornado damage in Del Aire, a neighborhood in Del City, OK. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

May 10

In the afternoon, the President met with President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil in the Oval Office to discuss global, regional, and other issues.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stuart E. Weisberg to be a member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

May 11

In the morning, the President met privately with 15 corporate leaders in the Cabinet Room to discuss the new markets initiative.

Later, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA, where he toured the Sweet Auburn Market.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Don Christiansen and Robert Valentine to serve as members of the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission.

May 12

In the evening, the President met with tribal leaders in the Chief of Staff's office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffrey Rush, Jr., to be Inspector General at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Prudence Bushnell to be Ambassador to Guatemala.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jack E. Hightower to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ray Marshall as a member of the National Skill Standards Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 5 and continuing.

May 13

In the evening, the President attended a Democratic National Committee (DNC) Jefferson Trust dessert reception at a private residence.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Eulee, FL, on May 25-30.

The President announced his intention to designate Edward B. Montgomery to serve as Acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Arthur L. Money to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jane Slate Siena to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Parker Westbrook and Arva Parks McCabe as members of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

May 14

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Jiang Zemin of China concerning the Chinese Embassy bombing in Belgrade.

Later, the President traveled to Seattle, WA, where he attended a DNC luncheon at the Rainier Club.

In the late afternoon, the President traveled to Palo Alto, CA, where he attended a DNC dinner at a private residence.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kevin Gover as a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center.

The President announced his intention to appoint Karen Lau Sullivan as U.S. Representative to the Pacific Community.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

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 May 10

M. Michael Einik, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mark Wylea Erwin, of North Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Mauritius, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros and as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Seychelles.

Christopher E. Goldthwait, of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Chad.

Edward E. Kaufman, of Delaware, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2000 (reappointment).

Larry C. Napper, of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Coordinator of the Support for

Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

East European Democracy (SEED) Program, vice Ralph R. Johnson.

Donald Lee Pressley, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Agency for International Development, vice Thomas A. Dine, resigned.

Submitted May 12

Joseph Limprecht, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Albania.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

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.

Released May 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed on the White House Strategy Meeting on Children, Violence, and Responsibility

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of President Cardoso of Brazil

Released May 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released May 14

Transcript of a press readout by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: U.S. Ports No Longer Closed to Vessels Owned and Operated by the Government of Montenegro

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Court of Appeals' ruling on clean air standards

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved May 13

S. 453 / Public Law 106-27
To designate the Federal building located at 709 West 9th Street in Juneau, Alaska, as the "Hurff A. Saunders Federal Building"

S. 460 / Public Law 106-28
To designate the United States courthouse located at 401 South Michigan Street in South Bend, Indiana, as the "Robert K. Rodibaugh United States Bankruptcy Courthouse"