

the schools do a better job of connecting and telling kids how they can find nonviolent ways to deal with their conflicts, and how they can count no matter what group they're in and how they can be treated with respect no matter what group they're in.

I don't see how anybody can dispute the fact that it's crazy to have a country where, you know, criminals can buy guns at gun shows they can't buy at gun stores. I mean, I think that's a pretty hard case to defend.

I think it's a hard case to defend to say we've abolished assault weapons—thanks in no small measure, by the way, to a citizen from San Francisco named Steve Sposato, who lost his wife in a shooting, a man who happened to be a Republican. I met him and his daughter. So we abolished assault weapons, but we let people keep bringing in these big ammunition clips and selling them legally as long as they were imported, as opposed to homegrown. How come these things are in the law? These things don't happen by accident, folks. I did the best I could back in 1994. I pushed that thing as hard as I could push. So now we have a sense all over the country we should close the loopholes.

Florida, not normally known as a raving liberal State, voted 72 percent in a public referendum to close the gun show loophole, and we're having trouble getting it done in Washington. That's not good. It's not going to kill the NRA to change its position. The gun manufacturers did, and I applaud them. They deserve a lot of credit. There have been—one of the most outstanding groups in this whole debate are the gun manufacturers, coming and saying, "Okay, let's clean up this business. Let's have responsible, commonsense controls. We want people to be able to hunt; we want to support the rights of sportsmen; but we don't need that. We need to deal with this."

So they have their responsibility. But so, too, does the entertainment industry. You can say if you start from their perspective, just like you can say if you start from the gun perspective, "Guns don't kill people, people do." Right? If you start from the entertainment perspective, you can say, "Well, we show these movies and we sell these video games in Europe and you don't have this level of violence." You can say that—in other

words, from anybody else's perspective, you can always say this.

But here is the thing. Start with the kids. We have more kids getting hurt and more kids hurting other kids. Start with the facts. And we now have over 300 studies that show that the volume of sustained exposure to violence through the media—and now increasingly through interactive video games—is so great that it desensitizes children dramatically to the impact of violence and the real consequences of it, and therefore makes the most vulnerable children more likely to go over the edge.

Now, having said that, we have to find some commonsense things we can do. For example, you could change the whole advertising strategy of a lot of these games and other media outlets and not have a lot of the problems you have. But lots of other things can be done. I'm trying to make a larger point here. How we respond to this and whether we take on something really big and important like this and do what the Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving did to drive down drunk driving; or do what the 10,000 business people did to hire 400,000 people off welfare so people wouldn't be just thrown in the streets—how we respond to this and whether we respond to this as one community coming together instead of pointing the finger at each other will define in large measure what kind of country we're going to be in the 21st century.

And the same is true of Kosovo. What in the world have these two things got in common? Well, in both cases, there at least is some evidence that part of the problem was one group of people looking down on another group of people and getting to where they hated them and then getting to where they thought it was legitimate to take them out. And if you look all over the world today, from the Middle East to the Balkans, to Rwanda and Africa, to the still unresolved conflict in Northern Ireland, what is at the root of most of the world's problems on the edge of the 21st century? Is it that the Kosovar Albanians don't have as good computers as the Serbs? Are we fighting over some software secret in central Africa? Not on your life. The economics are bringing people together. That's

one of the reasons we're going to get this thing done in Ireland this year.

What is dividing people on the edge of this brave new brilliant high-tech interdependent world are the oldest demons of human society: our hatred and fear of people who are different from us. First, you're scared of them, then you hate them, then you dehumanize them, then it's okay to kill them. And isn't it ironic that we're sitting here a stone's throw from Silicon Valley, dreaming about the marvels of modern technology and at risk of being held hostage to the oldest, most primitive human designs?

So you want to know why we're in Kosovo? Because it's in Europe, where we were pulled into two wars in the 20th century, and the cold war, and because we had the capacity to stand against that kind of ethnic cleansing and slaughter; and because when we couldn't get it done for 4 long years in Bosnia, there was a trail of 2½ million refugees and a quarter of a million people dead, and we still had to get in and put Humpty Dumpty back together again and tell people they had to stop killing each other because of their different religious and ethnic background.

But I'm telling you, there are common threads to what is there—the hatred of those boys built up in Littleton, hatred looking up at the athletes, hatred in their minds looking down at the minorities. The hatred in what happened when that poor man, James Byrd, was murdered in Texas and his body was torn apart, hatred in what happened to Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. It's all the same thing.

We're all scared. Not anybody in the world is not scared from time to time. How many days do you wake up in a good mood and how many days do you wake up in not such a good mood? Every human being has got a little scale inside. It's like the scales of justice and hope and fear. And some days, the scales are just perfectly in balance, some days they're just—you're crazy with hope and some days you're gripped with fear.

And the more fearful you are, the more people who are different from you seem to present a threat. And here we are. Look at California. Look at San Francisco. Look at Seattle, where I was today. Look at the diversity of our population, racial and otherwise—religious, all the differences you can imag-

ine—sexual orientation, the whole 9 yards. Look at all the differences in our population.

In our dreams, all people get a chance to become what God meant for them to be and we pull together. In other words, we finally got a chance to be the country our founders said we ought to be when they knew darn well we weren't. I mean, when only white men with property could vote, they said all are created equal, and they knew what they were doing. These guys were not dummies.

Every now and then, I go over to the Jefferson Memorial and read what Thomas Jefferson said, "When I think of slavery, I tremble to think that God is just." He knew exactly what he was doing. They knew that this whole struggle would be sort of an endless effort to try to make real these ideals. And here we are about to do it. And are we going to let the whole thing go haywire because of the most primitive impulses in human society, both inside our country and beyond our borders?

That man that blew up the Federal building in Oklahoma City, he was poisoned with hatred and a sort of blind irrational notion that if you worked for the Federal Government there was something inherently bad about you. And I believe the distinguishing characteristics of our country in the 21st century has to be that we constantly, consistently reaffirm that for all the differences among us—we don't have to like each other, but we have to respect each other. We have to tolerate each other, and we have to actively affirm each other's common humanity. And if you want all this modern technology to be put at the service of your children's dreams instead of terrorists and madmen, then you have got to say this is one thing America will stand for, overall, above all, beyond everything else.

And that is what all these incidents have in common. We must not let the great promise of the modern world be undermined by the most ancient of hatreds. We cannot fundamentally alter human nature, but we can alter the rules by which all of us let our nature play out. And we can call forth our better selves. That is what we have worked for 6½ years to do. And you know as well as I do, if the economy works better it's easier to do.