

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.

But when you go home tonight and you get up tomorrow and somebody says, "Why in the world did you write a check and go to that thing?" Tell them, "Because I believe in the vision and the ideas that the country has followed in the last 6 years. We have a lot more to do, and most important of all, I really want America to be a community and a model to the world, because I want my children to have a future more like my dreams than the worst nightmares we see in the paper."

We can do it, but not unless we work at it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Walter Shorenstein; Bill Lockyer, State attorney general; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco; dinner cochairs Martin Maddaloni and Tom and Victoria O'Gara; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Andy Tobias, treasurer, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; baseball legends Willie Mays and Hank Aaron and their wives, Mae and Billie, respectively; Tom Mauser, whose son, Daniel, was killed in the Columbine High School shooting by gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold; gun control activist Steve Sposato and his daughter, Meghan; and Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of the Oklahoma City Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *May 15, 1999*

Good morning. In the past few weeks, ever since that terrible day in Littleton, people all across America have searched their souls and searched for solutions to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again and to reduce the level of violence to which our children are exposed.

Last Monday, at our White House strategy session on children and violence, representatives of every sector of society agreed on one fundamental fact: Making progress requires taking responsibility by all of us. That begins at home. Parents have a duty to guide children as they grow and to stay involved in their lives as they grow older and more inde-

pendent. Educators have a responsibility to provide safe learning environments, to teach children how to handle conflicts without violence, and how to treat all young people, no matter how different, with respect. They also need to teach them how to get counseling or mental health services if they're needed.

Communities have a responsibility to make sure that there is a village, as the First Lady said, that supports all its children—especially those who don't get their needs met at home. And the community needs to do more to get our kids involved in working with each other and serving the community, not being isolated from it.

And here in Washington, we have a responsibility. We've got a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. There's a broad national consensus on that point. At the White House conference, the gun manufacturers agreed that we need commonsense approaches. Everybody agrees except the U.S. Senate. For example, everyone knows we need a real law to close the deadly gun show loophole, through which thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of guns are sold each year without background checks—even though they'd have to have a background check to be sold in a gun store.

Now, the Senate declined to pass that bill. Even worse, the Senate's substitute bill is riddled with new loopholes, permitting convicted felons to get guns at pawn shops, no questions asked; and making it harder, not easier, for law enforcement to trace guns used in crimes. If the Senate wants to fix the problem, it should fix the problem, not make it worse. The American people deserve better. They know law-abiding citizens don't need loopholes in our gun laws, only criminals do. I sure hope that in the coming weeks the Senate will step up to its responsibility and do the right thing by our children.

I've always said the entertainment industry must do its part, too. In 1993, shortly after I became President, I traveled to Hollywood and spoke there to members of the community about their responsibility. I said then, "You have the capacity to do good, to help change the way we behave, the way we think of ourselves; examine what together you might do to help us rebuild the frayed bonds

of community, to give children nonviolent ways to resolve their frustrations.”

After 6 years of work, the entertainment industry is helping parents to limit children’s exposure to violence, working with the administration on a voluntary rating system for television and the V-chip to enforce it, and on parental screening for the Internet and ratings for all Internet games sales. But there is still too much violence on our Nation’s screens, large and small. Too many creators and purveyors of violence say there is nothing they can do about it. And there are still too many vulnerable children who are steeped in this culture of violence, becoming increasingly desensitized to it and to its consequences and, therefore, as studies show, hundreds of them more liable to commit violence themselves.

By the age of 18, the typical American will see 40,000 dramatized murders. There are those who say they can or should do nothing about this. But I believe they’re wrong. Every one of us has a role to play in giving our kids a safe future. And those with greater influence have greater responsibility. We should see movies and music, TV programs, video games, and advertising for them made by people who made them as if their own children were watching. Members of the entertainment community can make a big difference.

Today I want to issue three specific challenges to them. First, the whole industry should stop showing guns in any ads or previews children might see. Second, I challenge theater and video store owners all across our country to enforce more strictly the rating systems on the movies they show, rent, and sell. You should check ID’s, not turn the other way as a child walks unchaperoned into an R-rated movie. Third, I challenge the movie industry to reevaluate its entire ratings systems, especially the PG rating, to determine whether it is allowing too much gratuitous violence in movies approved for viewing by children.

Our administration is fighting to do all we can to protect children. The entertainment industry should do everything it can, too.

Across America people are coming together, saying, “Yes, together we can change this culture of violence; together we can give our children a safer future and a culture of values we’ll be proud to pass on to future generations.” We can do it together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:26 p.m. on May 14 in the library at the Rainier Club in Seattle, WA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Radio Remarks on the Observance of Armed Forces Day

May 15, 1999

Armed Forces Day was created in 1950 as a way for Americans to thank our men and women in uniform for their service and sacrifice. Our Nation has changed a good deal since then. But our debt to the Armed Forces is as great as ever.

From the Persian Gulf to the Americas, from Korea to Kosovo, you are protecting the freedom so many Americans gave their lives for in this century and helping to build a safer world for the next century.

We ask a lot from our Armed Forces, and we owe you a lot in return, especially at a moment of such great challenge to our service men and women around the world. I am determined to work with Congress to give you the equipment and training you need and the pay and quality of life you deserve. The security you have given us supports our strong economy—we must ensure that you and your families share its benefits. So on this Armed Forces Day, all Americans join me in gratitude for your service to our Nation.

NOTE: The President’s remarks were recorded at 3:31 p.m. on May 14 in the library at the Rainier Club in Seattle, WA, for later broadcast. The transcript of these remarks was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 15. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

**Statement on the Observance of
Armed Forces Day, 1999**

May 15, 1999

The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated in 1950, to acknowledge the debt all Americans owed to the courageous men and women who had fought a great war for freedom. Our nation has changed a great deal over the last half-century, but our debt to the Armed Forces remains as great as ever. Each year, Armed Forces Day gives us an important chance to pause and remember the service and sacrifice that keeps our nation in the vanguard of freedom. On behalf of all Americans, I thank the men and women of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard for all they do to keep our nation strong and secure.

Today, the world's prayers are with the people suffering the horrors of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and with the brave Americans and allies coming to their aid. But Kosovo is only one of many places our armed forces are making a difference. From the Persian Gulf to the Americas, from Korea to the Mediterranean, our men and women in uniform are superbly performing their mission: deterring war, protecting the freedom so many Americans gave their lives for in this century, and creating confidence that the next century will be more peaceful than the last.

Every time I meet with our servicemen and women, I am inspired by their patriotism, skill, and selfless dedication to the ideals that make this nation great. America is proud of the greatest force for freedom the world has ever known.

On this Armed Forces Day, all Americans join me in gratitude for their service to our nation.

William J. Clinton

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

**Remarks at a Democratic
Congressional and Senate Campaign
Committees Dinner in Beverly Hills,
California**

May 15, 1999

I have never before had the honor of being the warmup act for Andrea Bocelli, but I will. I will do my best. [*Laughter*] I want to—and if I sing a little, you will just have to— [*laughter*]. I want to say first of all how grateful I am to all of you for being here, especially to the chairs and the cochairs of the dinner and, of course, to David and Steven and Jeffrey. I want to thank my leaders, Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt. I was looking at them up here. We knew each other, of course, before I was elected, but not so well as we do today. And I can tell you that it is a joy and an honor every day to work with them. They are people that we can really be proud of.

And I have seen them in far less comfortable circumstances than we find ourselves tonight, and they are what they seem to be, and they're always there for the American people.

I'd like to thank Governor Davis and Sharon for coming. I'm thrilled by his success and was honored to be asked to campaign here a time or two last year.

And I want to echo what has already been said about Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer. They are on the forefront of this still ongoing and yet unfolding struggle to protect our children on the gun issues, and I want you to give them a big boost tonight and a lot of support, because it's been pretty tough there, although the American people did a great job in turning some of those votes around last week.

I'd like to thank Senator Torricelli for being here. It's his unhappy, or sometimes happy, duty to go around and try to make sure that we've got someone to actually run for all these Senate seats and take on some very tough fights. I thank Congressman Kennedy and your Congressmen, Henry Waxman and Brad Sherman, for being here. And

Mayor Levin gave me a gift from the city tonight, so I'm delighted to be here. [*Laughter*]

And I'm glad to be here in, as far as I know, the only beneficial product to the Teapot Dome Scandal here—this beautiful place.

Most of what needs to be said has already been said, but I would like to try to put a few things in perspective, talk a little bit about some of the events of the present that are of great concern to people.

When I came to California in 1991 and early '92, this was a very different place in a different country. People were divided and confused and drifting and frustrated. And I believed very strongly it was because we had no overriding vision for our future, no strategy to achieve it, no way, therefore, of pulling the American people together and getting us pointed in the right direction. And that's really why I got in the race for the President.

It was not the easiest of races. I was laughing with Goldie Hawn tonight because I remember her being in the Biltmore in Los Angeles on June 2, 1992, when I was nominated for President, really officially. I won in California and New Jersey and Ohio that night, so it was clear that I had enough votes to be nominated. And all the stories were the exit polls showing that Ross Perot was really in first place, and I was in third place. I say that to caution you about reading too much into any polls. [*Laughter*]

But I knew something, I thought, about the American people, about where we were at this moment in our history, and where I thought we ought to go. Just 6 weeks later there had been a complete reversal in the polls, and thank the good Lord, they stayed that way through November, and the people of California were very good to me and to Al Gore and to our families and our administration, twice. And a I am very, very thankful.

What I want you to do—you know what all the individual issues are, but what I want you to think about tonight, just for a minute, before we hear a magnificent performer and before you go home and you go back to your lives tomorrow and the days ahead, is what you would say to people if they asked you why you came tonight. You could say, "Well,

Geffen made me." [*Laughter*] Or there's a lot of things you could say.

But I hope you will have some really good answers. I guess the first thing I'd like to say to you is, obviously, this is a fundraiser for the Congress. It's not for me. I can't run anymore. And I'm here because I believe very strongly that the people you just saw should lead the majorities in the House and Senate; because while I am very grateful for the opportunity I have been given to serve the American people as President and for whatever role I was able to play in this remarkable economic turnaround and the big drop in crime and welfare and the improvements in almost all the indicators of social health—the lowest minority unemployment in history, the highest homeownership—all the things that are moving in the right direction, I'm grateful that we've had a chance to be a force for peace and freedom around the world. What I want you to understand is, first, most of what we have done could not have been done, had it not been for the support I received from the Democrats in the Congress; second, most of what we stopped could not have been stopped, had it not been for their support. And third and most important, what we did grew out of a vision of 21st century America, as a place where there is opportunity for every responsible citizen, where we celebrate our differences but we come together in one community, and a place that can still lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity and out of a willingness to think in different ways about the future, to break out of the old vices that were paralyzing Washington.

We believe, for example, that we can reward successful entrepreneurs, like many of you in this audience, and still expand the middle class and give poor people a chance to make it. We believe we can grow the economy and improve the environment. We believe we have an obligation to help people succeed not just at work but also at home, because raising children is the most important job of any society.

We believe these things. We believe that we can have a quality and excellence and high standards and accountability in education. We believe we can be a force for peace in the world and still stand up if we

have to, against ethnic cleansing and weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

And the work of the last 6 years has largely been our combined efforts to take these ideas and that vision and hammer them into specific proposals. It's what animates our efforts today to deal with the aging of America, with the reforms of Social Security and Medicare, doing something about long-term care, helping people to do more to save for their own retirement.

It's what's driving me now that we have a big surplus instead of a huge deficit to say that we ought to deal with Social Security in a way that pays down the debt for the first time in anybody's memory, so that 17 years from now, we could actually have the smallest debt this country's had since before World War I, which will mean for our children, lower interest rates, a stronger economy, less dependent on the vagaries of the world economy.

We believe that we have to continue to improve the environment in ways that are tangible. I'm proud of the fact that the air is cleaner, the water is cleaner, and we set aside more land than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts, in our term, but we have a lot more to do. And this environmental issue will continue to dominate public concern for at least another 30 to 40 years. So we still have more to do.

But what I want to say to you is, those of you who are here because you've helped me through thick and thin for all these long years, this did not happen by accident, nor did it happen just because I was President. It happened because we had the right vision and the right ideas, and we worked to make them real. And it couldn't be done without the help of the people who have spoken before me and what they represent, and they deserve the chance to be in the majority so that we can see these ideas fully implemented in the beginning of the 21st century. That is what I want you to think about when you leave here tonight.

Let me say, in spite of all the good news, most Americans have been sobered in the last several days because of the terrible tragedy at Littleton and the ongoing conflict in Kosovo. And I would like to say to you that I think how we respond to both of these will

say a lot about what kind of country we have for years to come.

And I believe that the ideas that I've tried to infuse into all of our work ought to be looked at against the backdrop of these two issues. I do think—you heard Dick Gephardt talking about what the person who lost a child at Littleton said, "Don't let my child die in vain." I do believe that, even more than all the terrible tragedies that happened last year, because of the sheer scope and power of this event, it touched a deep nerve in America that has profoundly opened up our country to a serious examination of what it would take to give our children a safer childhood.

And last Monday I had a lot of people from every sector of our society into the White House, with Hillary and Al and Tipper, to talk about how we could have a national campaign against children's violence in the same way that we have seen other national campaigns prevail in the past. And what I'd like to say is—what I've pleaded with people to do is not to make this chapter 57 in the ongoing American culture war saga. You know, if the house next door here were burning down, we'd probably all be willing to go over there and help put the fire out.

And think how absurd it would be if Norm looked at David and said, "I'm not going to help put the fire out because it's your fault you left your car running outside the house, and its sparks from the fumes caused the fire." And David said, "Norm, if you'd quit smoking years ago, you wouldn't have put a cigarette over in the yard, and that's what caused the fire." And so everybody gets in a fight about who's at fault here, and we let the house burn down. That is a dumb thing to do. This is far more important. We can't let those children have perished in vain. And I don't know—you know, probably a lot of you are like me. I have watched the parents of these children being interviewed. I have seen the school people. I have seen some of the wounded children. I have been, on the whole, profoundly moved and impressed by these people, by the depth of their faith and their conviction and their genuine striving to understand and go beyond this.

So for me, I think we ought to—since I think what happens to our kids is more important than whether the house next door burns down, I think we ought to have the same attitude. We ought to say, “Okay, I’m showing up for work. Tell me what I can do.” And I believe that we have to do more to help parents do their job, whether it’s better child care or family leave programs or, literally, people helping people understand that your kids can become strangers in your own home.

And I agree with what has already been said. It is a fact that most parents in America spend far less time with their children today than they used to spend. That is not free. That’s why I say, we will never be the society we want in the new century until we better balance work and family.

I think we have to help the schools do more. I was in a fabulous school in Alexandria, Virginia, the other day—that’s the most culturally diverse school district in America now, just across the river from the White House—where they have peer mediation programs and counseling services and mental health services, and a 1-800 anonymous hotline that if one kid calls and says, “I’m worried” about another one, they know it will be followed up on, and they know they will be kept anonymous. We have to do those kinds of things. We have to give every school the ability to protect our children better.

I think the people in the gun business ought to come to the table and help us. And I want to say one thing that wasn’t mentioned, that I’m very proud of, is that the gun manufacturers, who for years sided always with the NRA and always opposed all these measures, have changed. And every one of you who believes that it’s a good thing that we raise the handgun ownership age to 21 and that we close the loophole—and Senator Feinstein’s assault weapons bill, so now we can stop these big ammunition clips from coming in—it’s never had any purpose, anyway.

We can also thank the gun manufacturers who supported the legislation this time in Congress and had the kind of civic responsibility that we need more from every American. I appreciate that.

Now, we’ve still got a lot of work to do. We’ve got to do background checks on explosives. We’ve got to get this gun show loophole closed in the right way. And I’m going to watch it pretty close, because unlike most Americans, I’ve actually been to a lot of these gun shows. It was part of my job description at one time when I was Governor of Arkansas. And I enjoyed them greatly, but they ought to have background checks, and they ought not to have loopholes.

So that’s a big part of it. I also believe—let’s talk about the entertainment issue. You know, I think the—here’s the way I look at this. It’s like the NRA can say, “Guns don’t kill people, people do.” That’s true, but people with guns kill more people than people without them. And we’re the only country in the world that has no reasonable restrictions. There are now over 300 studies that show that sustained lifetime, week-in and week-out, night-in and night-out, exposure to indiscriminate violence through various media outlets over a period of time makes people less sensitive, both to violence and to the consequences of violence.

Now, for most kids, it won’t make any difference. But if you have a society where we have already positive—there are more kids who are spending less time with their folks and less time being connected to somebody that they know they’re the most important person in the world to, and if that same society has those same kids having easier access to weapons, then desensitizing them will be more likely to push those that are vulnerable into destructive behavior.

Now, that doesn’t make anybody who makes any movie or any video game or any television program a bad person or personally responsible with one show for a disastrous outcome. There’s no call for finger-pointing here, but we just look around and we know that all these things go together, starting with the raw material that you’ve got more kids who are more isolated, some of them in their own homes, strangers.

So I would like to say, first, like I said about the gun manufacturers, it ought to be put in the record that the entertainment industry for 6 years has worked with Al Gore and me and with our administration on the V-chip, the television rating system, the video