

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, May 24, 1999  
Volume 35—Number 20  
Pages 895–960

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**Editor's Note:** The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents is also available on the Internet on the *GPO Access* service at <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html>.

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Week Ending Friday, May 21, 1999

**Remarks at a Democratic National  
Committee Luncheon in Seattle,  
Washington**

*May 14, 1999*

Thank you. I couldn't help but thinking when Jack was up here talking and saying all those wonderful things, that Joe Andrew had just said that we would win every election in 2000, from dog catcher to President. And my immediate reaction was, that's not such a great distance. *[Laughter]* That's because I spend too much time in Washington—*[laughter]*—now, when I'm in Seattle, it feels great.

Let me first of all say how grateful I am that the Governor and the mayor are here. Thank you both for coming. Our State party chair; your former mayor and my good friend, Norm Rice, and his fine wife. I thank our officers for coming out here to Washington. And Jack, to you and Ron, my long-time friend, and Ted and Ben and the others who are here who have helped so much—Mr. Marshall and others, I thank you all.

I was thinking when I got on the airplane today—you know, when a politician tells you a true story, your immediate reaction is, it couldn't be true—*[laughter]*—but this is a true story. The first time I ever came to Washington, when I was running for President in 1992, I came rather late. I'd been out there running for quite some time, and I was nervous as a cat. And I knew that Senator Tsongas had been here a lot and had built a lot of support. And I really wanted to make a good impression and there was this event planned and we had a very nice crowd.

And I came into the airport in my modest little plane, and, coincidentally, the Seattle police force, under Mayor Rice, who has been trying to pay me back ever since—*[laughter]*—they were practicing how to provide security and rapid transportation to dignitaries. So here I arrived, you know, as

President Bush used to say, a Governor of a small Southern State—*[laughter]*—in an airplane not quite as grand as the Boeing I fly in today. *[Laughter]* And I look up—I swear, there were more than 50 motorcycle police officers there. *[Laughter]*

And we go, and you know, I know how MacArthur felt with his ticker tape parade in New York City now at the end of the war. And we're going in, you know, and I've got this little two-car motorcade—*[laughter]*—and 50 motorcycles. I mean, I couldn't breathe. I thought, my God, there won't be a person in this town that votes for me. *[Laughter]* And sure enough, I lost the primary in Washington State. *[Laughter]* And I've often thought it was because of those—it was quite a grand thing, you know. I don't have 50 motorcycles today when I go anywhere. *[Laughter]*

But the Seattle police were well-trained and they've always been very polite to me, and I never will forget it, though. Every time I land on the tarmac, I get a little nervous. *[Laughter]*

Let me seriously say the people of Washington State have been very good to Hillary and me and the Vice President, to our administration, in two elections, in 1992 and 1996. We suffered a terrible setback here in the congressional elections in 1994, and then made up a great deal of ground in 1996 and 1998. And I think we will more than make up the rest of the ground in the year 2000, thanks to people like you.

I would like to just—you know, I just made myself a few notes here on the way in. Sometimes I don't even do that. But I've got some things—I don't get to come here as much as I'd like, and I would like to say a few things.

When I made the long trip out here the first time in 1992, I did so with some mixed feelings, because I had a job I loved in a place I loved and my family was doing well and things were going great for us. But I was

very concerned that our country was drifting and divided, that we had all kinds of problems and that no one seemed to be offering a clear vision about what kind of country we were going to be in the 21st century and how we proposed to get there.

And I had in my own mind a very simple idea of the world I wanted our daughter to grow up to live in. I wanted 21st century America to be a place where there was opportunity for every responsible citizen, where we were joined together, across all the lines that divide us, into an American community united by our common humanity and where my country was still the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity.

In short, I wanted to find a way to take advantage of the two great things that are happening in the world today: the explosion of technology and the increasing interdependence of people across national lines, both of which are perfectly embodied in this room, in this city, and in this State, in a way that would give everybody a chance to participate in it and give us a chance to let go of the problems that besiege us.

And it seemed to me in order to do that we had to move beyond the old political debate in Washington. And so I went around the country saying, "I believe if we're committed to opportunity and responsibility and community and to being a 21st century democracy, then we have to find a way to reward entrepreneurship and build the middle class and help the poor work themselves into it. I believe we have to find a way to grow the economy and protect the environment.

"I believe we have to find a way to help people succeed at work and at home, because everybody's most important work is still raising good children. I believe that we have to find a way to reform welfare that requires able-bodied people who can work, to work; but doesn't require them to sacrifice their responsibilities as parents because they can't afford child care or health care.

"I believe we have to find a way to reduce the crime rate, not simply by better enforcement but also by better prevention. I believe that we have to find a way not only to increase the quantity but the quality of education. I believe we can expand trade and lift the environmental and labor standards of

the world instead of driving them lower. I believe that we can be a force for peace in the world and still be willing to use force if it is the only way to achieve legitimate, indeed, compelling objectives."

I believed all that. I also believed that we could do it with a Government that was markedly smaller, but more active, if we focused on what a 21st century mission would be. And for me, it is overwhelmingly the mission of establishing the conditions and then giving people the tools to solve their own problems, but not alone—working together.

Now, all the work that those of us in our administration have done in the last 6 years has been a labor of love to try to take those basic ideas and make them real, working facts of life in America. And I am profoundly grateful for the results. I literally get up and try to live with the spirit of gratitude every day for the good things that many of you have played a large role in bringing to our country: the longest peacetime expansion in our history, over 18 million new jobs, the lowest minority unemployment rate we have ever recorded, welfare rolls about half of what they were before, a 25-year low in the crime rate, the highest homeownership in history, over 90 percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time ever, dramatic progress in the quality of our air and water, more land set aside in perpetuity under this administration than under any administration in the history of the country except those of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt.

We're almost there with our goal of hooking up all our classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000. We have now over 1,000 and will soon have 3,000 charter schools, which I think are the most exciting new innovation in public education. There was one when I became President. We have 100,000 young people who have now served in AmeriCorps, serving their communities as service volunteers. It took us 4 years to get to 100,000; it took the Peace Corps 20 years to get to 100,000 volunteers.

I am grateful for the work we've been able to do in the world to help our friends when they're in trouble, to try to reform the global financial system, to be a force for peace from

Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Bosnia and now in Kosovo. And I am grateful that I had the chance to serve in this job at this time to bring these changes and for the role our Government had, as well as for the role all of you and others like you all across America had.

But I am here today to tell you that the important thing is the ideas—the ideas. If we had the right ideas rooted in the right vision and we had the right attitude about our work, then we can continue that.

You know, I won't be on the ballot in 2000. It's the first time in a long time I haven't been on a ballot. But it is terribly important to me that everyone in America understand that this, on the one hand, didn't happen by accident, but on the other hand, is not dependent upon any person alone, including the President. What matters is that we have the right ideas based on the right vision, and that we have the right attitude about our work.

There was a wonderful article in "The Christian Science Monitor" in the last couple of days, which pointed out that even though I have had what some people might characterize as a fairly tumultuous 6½ years—[laughter]—I had enjoyed more stability in my Cabinet and senior staff than most other Presidents have. There is a reason for that. The people that work on our team know why they're there. They're not there to occupy offices or sit at certain places behind certain name cards at tables or wonder who is leaking on whom in the paper the next morning. They're there because they passionately believe in what we are doing, and they understand that this is a job. It is not about political positioning; it's about putting the people of this country first and having a vision of where you want to go, having guiding ideas, and making them real. That's why I'm here. That's what I want you to understand.

When somebody asks you why you were here today, tell them it's because you like what happened in the last 6 years; we've got a lot more to do, and the vision and the operating ideas of the Democratic Party should continue to guide the United States of America. That is what I believe.

We've got a lot of things to do. We've got to deal with the aging of America. We've got

to deal with Social Security and Medicare and long-term care, and people have to be able to save more for their own retirement. We have to continue to tend to the world economy, and I badly want to prevail in my argument that we must use this surplus in a way that both deals with the aging of America and pays down the debt of the country.

My plan, in 17 years, would give us a debt that's the smallest percentage of our economy we've had since before World War I broke out. And that means lower interest rates, less dependence on foreign capital, higher investment, higher growth, more opportunities for people in high-tech havens like this and in small rural towns like those I represented for so many years. It's very important.

We still haven't come to grips with all the challenges of education. We cannot pretend that we can be the country we want to be until we can offer a world-class education, not just in our universities but in our kindergarten through 12th grades, to all Americans. We still haven't done everything we have to do to help people balance work and family by a long shot. We need to do more with child care; we need to do more with family leave; we need to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights. We have a lot of things we have to do.

We have big environmental challenges. Several of you discussed environmental issues with me today. I'm very proud of the livability initiative we have, to try to bring environmental issues into the practical lives of people in urban communities; and the lands legacy issue we have, to try to add more lands to the permanent legacy of the United States. And I will continue to try to persuade my friends in the other party in Washington, DC, that the crisis of climate change is a real issue that demands a real response from the United States, and that we cannot expect others to do their part unless we're ready to do ours.

But the most important issues we have, I would argue—and if we get this right; the rest of it will work out all right; people in this room will solve half the problems that are out there—the most important thing we have to decide is what kind of country we

are going to be. In the last several days, couple of weeks, the headlines have been dominated by two pieces of sobering news—notwithstanding the Dow going to 11,000 and having 18¼ million jobs and all of that. One, of course, was the tragic killings in Littleton; the other is the ongoing conflict in Kosovo.

I would like to just say a couple of words about that, kind of picking up on what Ron said. I talked with Hillary for a long, long time about what happened in Littleton. And we had a family conversation about it, too. And we talked with Al and Tipper Gore about it, because they've worked on a lot of these cultural and family issues for years.

And then I talked with people all around America. I have to tell you, I do not believe that there is a single thing for us to do; I think there are a lot of big things for us all to do. When we had our meeting Monday to say that we're going to have a national campaign against violence against children, Pam Eakes was there, and I want to thank her for the wonderful work she's done with Mothers Against Violence.

I think that you have to understand that we live in a world where there are a lot of people who are alone even when they're in a crowd, where there are a lot of children who never knew they were the most important person to anyone. And when you have large numbers of vulnerable people, then things that other people can't imagine would be problems can be big problems. So if it's easier for a kid in America to get an assault weapon, whereas it's impossible in most other countries, and you have a higher percentage of vulnerable, disconnected kids, more bad things will happen. If it is easier for a child in America to play an interactive video game where you score by how many innocent people you kill, and you have more vulnerable kids, then it's more likely to have a bad impact.

If we have 300 studies now which show that hours and hours and hours a week after years and years and years and years of watching sustained, indiscriminate violence makes young people less sensitive to violence and to its consequences, if there are a larger number of disconnected kids, then it will have a more destructive impact than in other countries.

So all of us—not pointing the finger at anybody—we've got something to do to rebuild this web of support to build that village that Hillary always talks about it takes to raise a child. There are things for families to do, things for schools to do, things for communities to do, things for the gun industry to do, things for the entertainment industry to do, things for Congress to do.

I hope Congress finally, next week, will get around to passing that bill that closes the loophole on background checks for gun sales at gun shows. They did pass yesterday, in the Senate bills, to raise the age of handgun ownership to 21 and to close the loophole in the assault weapons ban, which has allowed the sale of large ammunition clips if they're imported since 1994. They voted for that, and I applaud them.

But we need to pass all these common-sense measures. We've moved a long way since we had Democrats from Washington State losing elections in 1994 because they voted for the crime bill, with the assault weapons ban, and the Brady bill. We've come a long way. The voters in Florida—not exactly a raving liberal State—voted 72 percent to close the gun show loophole on the ballot. So we're moving in the right direction.

But I don't want to see our attempts to save our children turn into chapter 57 of America's ongoing culture war for someone's political advantage. What I want to see is to see every single segment of our society stand up and say not, "It's someone else's fault," but, "What can I do?" And let's work through it.

How we deal with this issue—you know, we had all those school killings last year. We did a lot of things. We sent out these wonderful handbooks to every school in the country, and they're very, very good. And people were horrified by it, but somehow, when Littleton happened, I think it finally, like, broke a dam in the psyche of America. I think finally people said, "My goodness, this really can happen anywhere."

And we cannot—we owe it to those families and those children who perished not to let this opportunity pass from us. And not to let it disintegrate into finger pointing. Everybody needs to just stand up and say, "Okay, what can I do?"

But we have to be honest about how every one of these things—look, I can make a case that no single thing—whatever you say the problem is—I’ve heard all these arguments. I can stand up and debate you and say, “No, that’s not the problem; something else is the problem.” And I’ve heard it all. And you know, I could take either side in the guns-versus-culture argument.

But the truth is, start with the facts. There are disconnected children in America, some of them in crowds every day. There are a higher percentage of them in our country—for whatever reason—getting killed every year than in other countries, in spite of all of our prosperity and all of our intelligence and all of our technology and all of our everything else. It’s a fact. It’s a human fact.

And all the things that happen to a person in life, and all the opportunities that are present or absent, they all have an impact. And we need to unpack it and quit saying it’s not our problem, and just have everybody show up and say, “Well, what can I do?”

If there was a fire down the street today and we heard the fire bell ring, every one of us would walk outside; we’d walk up to the firemen and say, “What can I do?” That’s the way we ought to look at this. It ought to be an occasion for bringing this country together.

We were talking at lunch, here. I was down in Texas a few days ago with the daughter of James Byrd, the man who was dragged and dismembered to death in Texas, trying to help pass the hate crimes legislation there. And I hope we can pass it in Washington, and the “Employment Non-Discrimination Act.” Why? Because it will make a big statement about what kind of people we are and what our level of mutual respect for people who are different from us is.

And you ask me, “Well, what has that got to do with Kosovo?” Let’s just move into that.

It is the supreme irony of this new millennium—I mean, here we are. We’ve got all these folks here from Microsoft and Boeing, first one place and the other, and everybody’s got all these great—you know, all of you are more technologically literate than me, doubtless.

But isn’t it ironic that you can stimulate virtually every problem in the world with a

software package. You can do things and communicate with people in ways that already are unimaginable. And within 5 years, there’ll be things that we’re not even thinking about now. And these will be accompanied by breathtaking advances in the biological sciences, as the mysteries of the human genome are unlocked and then the interaction of computer technology and the genome project will be completely explosive in ways that I can’t even imagine.

Isn’t it ironic that in this world we’re going to live in, where we’d like to think, “Gosh, you know, we’ll finally run the average life expectancy up to 120 years, and we’ll all be flying around on safe, fast planes, and we’ll be able to get into cars that won’t have traffic jams because we’ll be able to program them all, and they will all run right. And what a fabulous world it will be. And we’re now building an economy that actually requires less energy, not more—if we do it right—so we’re not going to have to burn the planet up after all.”

We have all these grand dreams for our children’s future, and it is threatened by the oldest problem of human society, which is that we have a hard time getting along with people who are different from us—because we’re afraid of them, and once we get our crowd together, it’s easy for somebody to stir us up and turn our fear into hatred. And once we start hating somebody, then it’s easy for somebody else to come along and turn our hatred into violence.

And there’s a little of that in the reported accounts of Littleton. There was certainly that in the death of James Byrd, or in the death of Matthew Shepard. And it is the thing that most bedevils the world in global politics today.

What is consuming the world today? Fights over technology? Not on your life. What happened in Rwanda? Why is the Northern Ireland conflict unresolved? What are they fighting about in the politics of the Middle East today? What are the Balkans about? Who gets the right to sell Apple computers? Whether somebody represents Microsoft in Belgrade? That’s not what they’re fighting about, is it?

They’re fighting about religion and ethnicity and imagined history and old slights—

real and imagined. That's what the whole thing's about.

And I ask you to think about that. Look at Seattle. Next time—just walk down the street, here. That's what you want America to look like, isn't it? Look around this room here. That's what you want America to look like, and that's what you'd like the world of your children to be like.

Now, I don't ask all these ethnic groups, many of whom are still very poor and early on experiencing their democracies—anywhere—not to like each other. Don't even ask them not to fight. But I do not think it is too much to ask, as we have first in Bosnia and now in Kosovo, that there be no ethnic cleansing and slaughter. Or to recognize that if that becomes an acceptable basis of behavior in the world, especially in Europe right at the doorstep of our closet allies and trading partners, that it bodes very ill for the future. We made a terrible mistake with the bombing of the Chinese Embassy, and I regret it more than I can say. I talked to the President of China today and told him that. But you can see that on CNN.

What you do not see on television is the tales told by the refugees of the little village where 15 men had a rope wrapped around them and were burned alive because they happened to be Albanian Muslims, of all the young girls that were systematically raped because they happened to be Kosovar Albanian Muslims and because the people who were oppressing them knew that even though that is horrible in any culture, it is especially awful in theirs.

So I say to you: The reason I talk about all this stuff all the time and the reason we have joined with our NATO Allies and we're doing what we're doing in Kosovo is, I don't want to let the promise of the 21st century be overcome by the oldest poison in human society's history. And America is about to get it right.

The framers of the Constitution knew when they said all of us were created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they were smart people. They were not dummies. They knew we were nowhere near living that.

You go to the Jefferson Memorial and you see one of Thomas Jefferson's great quotes: "When I think of slavery, I tremble to consider that God is just." They knew that. Well, we're about to get it right. And that's why we have to fight to give all our children a safe future. That's why we have to fight against the last vestiges of discrimination, and that's why we are right to stand with our NATO Allies against ethnic cleansing and manslaughter in Kosovo. It is the world we want our children to live in.

I want to close with this story. A couple of days ago, I had 19 Indian tribal leaders in the White House representing the Dakotas and Montana, the Northern High Plains tribes. They are the poorest tribes in America. And you can imagine that their geographical position doesn't make them very well positioned to get a lot of new and modern investment. You want to put a data center there, they'd be glad to have it.

So anyway—and I got a lot of my Cabinet there and they asked if we could sit in a circle in the Roosevelt Room, as was their custom. And so we did. And the tribal leaders, each in their turn, got up and talked and they talked about housing and education and economics and all of that. And then at the end of the meeting, their spokesperson, a very tall man whose name was Tex, believe it or not, the chief of his particular tribe, he pulls out this scroll and it is a proclamation where the tribal leaders are signing an endorsement of the United States' position in Kosovo. And he said to me, "We know something about ethnic cleansing. And America has come a very long way. And we think we should stand with you."

And then another young tribal leader asked if he could speak. And he stood up; he had a beautiful Indian silver necklace on. And with great dignity he said, "Mr. President, I had two uncles. One of them was on the beach at Normandy; the other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the United States military. My great-great grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee. I now am the father of a young son. We have come a long way from my great-great grandfather to my uncles to my son. I love my son more than anything. But because of the distance we have come,

I would gladly have him serve to save the people of Kosovo from having their culture and their lives destroyed.”

And there was not—you couldn’t breathe in this room because we knew that this dignified man representing people with all kinds of problems was the living embodiment of everything that this country ought to be. And his people were here first. All the rest of us are latecomers.

So I say to you: The best politics for our party is to do what is right for our children and our country for the new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Kirtland Cutter Room at the Rainier Club. In his remarks, he referred to event chair Jack Spitzer; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Wayne C. Marshall, regional finance director, Democratic National Committee; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington; Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle; Paul Berendt, chair, Washington State Democratic Party; former Mayor Norman B. Rice of Seattle and his wife, Constance; King County Executive Ron Sims; event cochairs Ted Johnson and Ben Waldman; Pamela Eakes, founder and president, Mothers Against Violence in America; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; President Jiang Zemin of China; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Portola Valley, California**

*May 14, 1999*

Walter, I’d like to say something that I think a lot of us who’ve known you for many years could have been thinking. We laughed about how you’ve always been for losers and now you’ve had a few winners. But one of the reasons that we love you and admire you is that you stuck by the people with whom you agreed, whether they won or lost. A lot of people don’t do that anymore; we appreciate that.

Let me say I’m delighted to be here with Governor Davis and with Sharon, Attorney General Lockyer, Mayor Brown—he’s funny,

isn’t he? *[Laughter]* I would have come all the way out here tonight just to hear Willie do that little schtick he did, you know? *[Laughter]* When I start to get bored with politics and kind of tired I—and you know, it’s 12:30 on my body clock, so I needed a little jolt. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Walter and Martin and Tom, Victoria, all the rest of you who put this dinner together tonight. I want to thank our Democratic Party officers for coming with me: Joe Andrew, Andy Tobias, and Beth Dozoretz.

You know, today we were in Seattle before we came here. And we had all these exciting young people at this fundraiser we did. And a lot of them were kind of high-tech folks. And Joe Andrew got up and said, “In 2000 we’re going to win every election, from President to dogcatcher.” As if that were a great distance. *[Laughter]* I was sort of hoping we would have a wider range than that myself. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Willie Mays for being here again. I want to thank Walter—one of the greatest things Walter ever did for me was arrange for me to meet Willie Mays. And a lot of you know I am a big sports fan, and I collect memorabilia. I’ve got 100-year-old golf clubs and all kinds of things, but the things that I treasure the most are the baseballs that Willie has autographed for me and my wife and my daughter.

And I hope he won’t be embarrassed by this, but I went to Atlanta the other day—oh, a couple months ago—to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the night Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s record. And Hank and Billie are friends of Hillary’s and mine, and we like them very much. So I went down there, and Hank Aaron had 12 Hall of Fame baseball players there—Reggie Jackson and Frank Robinson, just a slew of great players.

And we were sitting there, and I meet all of Hank’s family, and his in-laws, and all these—there were thousands of people there. And I just, sort of off the top of my head, I said, “Hank, who’s the greatest baseball player you ever played with?” He said, “Oh, that’s an easy answer; it’s not even close: Willie Mays.” He said, “Not even close!”

And I personally would like to thank Willie and his wonderful wife for the work they

have done since leaving baseball and for their concern for our children. And I'm delighted to see them.

I just talked to Hillary not long before I came here. She's on an airplane coming back—you may have seen on the news today, she was in Macedonia visiting the refugees there. And I wanted to mention her, in particular, since we're all making jokes at Gray's expense—including himself making jokes at his expense. The very first person who ever told me he would be elected Governor when he had been written off by all of the experts was my wife, who came to California. And she said, "Man, I've been out there and," she said, "I think he's going to win. He knows why he wants the job; he's done a good job, and he inspires confidence." She said, "He inspires confidence in me, and I believe he would inspire confidence in other people." And sure enough, you have, and we're grateful to you, and we thank you.

I would also like to thank Laura Tyson, who was the Chairman of my Council of Economic Advisers and head of my Economic Council, for being here. And she's now an academic, which means that sooner or later, she will have to criticize something I'm doing on the economy. [Laughter] So I'll give her advance dispensation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the hour's late and most of you have heard me give this speech before. [Laughter] I'll tell you a story, one more story. One night in the mid-1980s—I can't remember exactly when it was—Tina Turner came to Little Rock, Arkansas, to do a concert. And you all remember, you know, she sort of faded from the scene and then she made this huge recovery with an album called "Private Dancer." I remember because she had a saxophone player in her band who was a weight lifter. Remember that guy, the guy with the great big arms? He had arms as big as my neck, and he wore chains and stuff—it was a weird deal. [Laughter] But the guy could play.

So she comes to make this concert and she was playing at the Arkansas Fairgrounds and, I forget, Hillary had to go some place that night. So I had six tickets, and I took all these friends of ours and we went. And usually the guy who ran the concert put me sort of 15 rows back in the middle so I had

a real good seat, but I wasn't conspicuous—because I was the Governor, after all. But he knew I loved Tina Turner.

So this night he completely embarrassed me by putting all six of us on the front row in the middle. And behind us there was a lady I later found out was a hairdresser in a small town about 50 miles away, dressed in a tiger outfit—[laughter]—complete with ears and tail and everything. It was an interesting night, all right. [Laughter]

But anyway, here's the point I made about the speech—you all laughed when I said you'd all heard the speech. Tina Turner sang all of her new songs, and everybody loved them. Then at the end of the concert the band started playing the introduction to her first hit, "Proud Mary." And as she walked up to the microphone, with all that energy packed into her, the crowd just went crazy before she ever said anything. So she backed off, and then she walked up again. The crowd went crazy again.

And she looked at the crowd and she said, "You know, I have been singing this song for 25 years, and it gets better every time I do it." So I thought, that's something I'll try to remember as I rock along through life. [Laughter]

I want to make a case tonight that I hope you can remember. We were talking at our table and I was looking at all of you and I remembered little conversations we shared when you came by and we took the pictures. I always am interested as to what motivates people to get involved in politics, to make their contributions, to come to events like this.

And when you go home tonight, I want you to think about why you came and what you're going to do tomorrow and in the days ahead. I am gratified by what has already been said, what the Governor said, what Walter said. I've loved being President. I love working with people like Mayor Brown, because we think we're supposed to actually enjoy what we're doing. And Gray is actually beginning to enjoy what he's doing. [Laughter] I hope it doesn't destroy his whole, sort of, persona, you know. [Laughter] But it is a great privilege to be in public service. You know, everybody talks about what a great

burden it is. Well, nobody made us do this. It is a great privilege. It's an honor.

And I am so gratified that the economy is in the shape it's in. I saw the pain in the faces of the people in California when I was running for President in 1992. And I wanted people here to believe that California was the cutting edge of tomorrow again. I wanted them to be full of optimism and hope, and taking all these initiatives, to meet the challenges of our country.

And I'm grateful for the progress we've made in crime and welfare and education and so many other things. I'm glad that 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time ever. I'm glad that we've got 100,000 young people in AmeriCorps. Many of them have served in northern California. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to get 100,000 volunteers. We got that many in the domestic national service program in 4½ years. I'm proud of that. And I'm grateful for the chance to serve.

But I want to make this point: Whatever role I had in this was not as important as the fact that in 1992, our party united behind a vision and a set of ideas that we have then all worked like crazy for 6 years to make real in the life of America.

And the reason you should be here tonight—because I'm not running for anything—the reason you should be here is not because you're glad I was President and you feel good about what's happened in California, but because you understand that—that there is no indispensable person, but there are indispensable ideas and indispensable attitudes.

I ran for President, and I was happy as a clam at home with Hillary and Chelsea and the life we had. But I was very concerned that our country had no driving vision of what we were going to be like in the 21st century and no strategy to get us there. And I didn't like what I saw in Washington. Everybody was having the same old political debate over and over, sounded like a broken record every day. And if I was bored with it, I can only imagine how people who aren't addicted to politics, like I am, felt.

And we tried to change all that. I really do want our children to live in a world in

the next century where everybody has a chance to live out their dreams, where everybody is expected to be a responsible citizen, where we join together across all the lines that divide us—celebrating the differences but appreciating even more our common humanity, and where America is trusted enough and strong enough to continue to lead the world to greater peace and freedom and prosperity. That's what I want. It's pretty simple.

And I believed in 1992, and I believe more strongly today, that to have that kind of world, we had to have a different approach to politics. First, we had to believe we could grow the economy and preserve the environment at the same time. Second, we had to believe we could grow the economy in a way that had more entrepreneurs like you have in this part of our world, and at the same time make life better for ordinary middle class people and give more poor people a chance to work their way into the middle class.

I believed there was a way you could lower the crime rate not just by prosecuting crime but by preventing it. I believed that we ought to put more money in education, but we had to raise standards, and I was tired of seeing poor people patronized, because I believe all of our children can learn. And lots of other things like that.

I think a lot of times, the debates we have in Washington, they don't resonate very well with the real-world experience people have in California or Arkansas or anywhere else in the country. And the story of this administration has been the story of a relentless effort for over 6 years now to take these basic ideas and that vision and turn them into real, concrete actions and results for the American people.

Now, we still have a lot to do. I'm doing my best to get the Congress to address the challenges of the aging of America, to reform Social Security and Medicare and help people with long-term care, and help people save for their own retirement. I'm asking the Congress to do it in a way that pays down the Government's debt. Did you ever think a politician could even talk about that? Because I believe that we can get the Government debt down in 15 years to its lowest point

since before World War I; and if we do, interest rates will be lower, investment will be higher, there will be more businesses, more jobs and higher incomes. And we will be relatively less dependent on the vagaries of the world financial markets.

I believe that we have to do more to help people balance their work life and their family life. So when I talk about child care or family leave or the Patients' Bill of Rights, what I'm really saying is, most parents are working, and I think it's important for people to succeed at home and at work because the most important work in America is raising good children. And if it doesn't work out, as we often see, there is a grievous price to be paid.

I am concerned in the aftermath of what happened at Littleton, but I am also hopeful because we had all these school shootings last year and people wanted to do things, and a lot of things were done. But I think for the first time, the whole country now believes that what happened with those children could happen in any community. And I believe the whole country wants to do better and also recognizes that many of our children fall victim every year, not in stunning, tragic, big ways but in quiet alleys or in drive-by shootings or in other ways where they can almost die anonymously. And I want us to have a national campaign to make our children's lives less violent.

And I'd like to close with just a reflection on that and what we're doing in Kosovo and point out what I think is—in addition to economic opportunity for all and educational opportunity for all and the sense of general community—I think the most important thing about the Democratic Party on the eve of the 21st century is our vision of what community means at home, and our relationship to the rest of the world. And if you take these two difficult events and break them down, maybe I can make some sense of that.

What I honestly believe about the Littleton situation—and I've spent a lot of time thinking about it. I have been overwhelmingly impressed by almost all of the people I've seen from that community talking on television and going to the town hall meetings. Some of the brave parents, actually already—who lost their children—already able to try

to make some contribution to a safer future for the rest of us. One father who lost his child was with Hillary last week, the day before Mother's Day, to be part of this whole antiviolence movement.

But what I think is that we now understand—I hope we do, as a people—that if we're going to make America a safer place for our children, we have to stop pointing the fingers at one another and start assuming responsibility. We have to—instead of saying, "I wish someone else would do something," we have to say, "Okay, I've shown up for duty. What am I supposed to do?"

Because this is an exceedingly complex thing—Willie and I could have an argument. I could take—you know, we have the—is it the entertainment culture or is it the gun culture? And he could take one side and I could take the other, and then 5 minutes later we could switch roles. We all know how to point fingers—we're good at that—and shift the blame.

Let's start with the facts of life today. For whatever reason, there are more children in the United States, of all races and in all socioeconomic groups, that are at risk of being victims of violence. You would all accept that, I presume; that is a fact, for whatever reason. And there are also children, therefore, at risk of being victims of violence from other young people. Therefore, there are a higher percentage of children in the United States than in most other advanced countries who are themselves vulnerable to violent conduct.

Now, if we start with that, and we say, "Shouldn't we all be doing something," I think we can move to "yes" very quickly. One of the things that you see in all these tragic stories, it's heartbreaking, is how easy it is for children as they come of age and naturally seek their own independence to be strangers in their own homes and not to have people in their schools or their communities that are so connected to them that they can't drift off into the darkness.

So the fundamental thing is, we have to still do a better job trying to help parents understand what it means for children to move into adolescence and to drift away, and to be given both independence and still be held accountable and be involved with their parents and their lives. And we have to help

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.

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

game rating system, the screening technologies that the video people—the Internet people have worked with us to try to help parents screen inappropriate material away from their kids on the Internet.

Today, in my radio address, I said there were two or three other things—I had been studying this and listening—that I think ought to be done. I think that if young people can't see certain kinds of movies, then they shouldn't see the advertisement for the movies if the advertisement has the same stuff that caused the movie to be rated as inappropriate. And that's something I think the entertainment industry can look at and ought to look at very seriously, that the advertising ought to be consistent with the rating in terms of the audience that receives it.

I also think there's a lot of evidence that these ratings are regularly ignored, not by you but by the people who actually sell or rent the video tapes or the video games or run the movie theaters. And the rating system ought to be used by checking ID's. And finally, I believe in light of the most recent research, it would be a very good thing if the industry would reexamine the nature of the rating system, especially the PG-13 as it relates to violence, not because anybody is willfully doing something that they know is going to hurt somebody, not because any one television program or video game or movie will do it, but because we know that by the time a person becomes 18 in America, he or she has seen about 40,000 killings, and because we have a higher percentage of vulnerable people.

But we are determined to do this as a family. When we were at the White House, we sat around a big old table and everybody was there, and everybody was asking, "What can I do?" And I say again to the Congress, this is not the time to let any interest group control doing things that are common sense. How in the world we can let somebody buy a gun at a gun show that they can't get in a gun shop because they've got a criminal background is beyond me. And this is a classic example—to go back to what my leaders said earlier—the people of Florida, not the most liberal State in America, voted last November, 72 percent to close the gun show

loophole with no ifs, ands, or buts, no wrinkles or curlicues or subterfuge.

So I say this is a time for all of us to do this. And how we deal with this, and whether we really come up with a kind of grassroots national campaign, like the campaign that Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving launched that precipitously lowered deaths from drunk driving in America, like the effort that has been made that has precipitously lowered the teen pregnancy rate, like the grassroots effort business made that led to 10,000 business people hiring over 400,000 people off welfare—how we do this will have a lot to say about whether we're really going to build one community.

But there are other things we ought to do, too. And let me come back to Kosovo and talk about—you say, "Well, what's that got to do with this?" Well, first of all, all the studies, the reports indicate that these young men who were involved in this terrible tragedy at Littleton felt like they were a disrespected group and felt like they had to find some other groups to look down on or hate, the athletes, the minorities in the school.

And in Kosovo what you see and what you saw in Bosnia is people who have been ethnically cleansed. That's a sort of sterilized word for being systematically killed, uprooted, raped, having your property records destroyed, having your mosques and your museums and your libraries destroyed, having an effort to basically eradicate your existence.

But it's very interesting. Don't you find it ironic—especially those of you—I was talking to Steven the other day about my library, and we were talking about whether we could have some virtual reality effects in my library in the museum, you know. Sometimes I feel like I'm living in virtual reality, so I'm highly interested in this. [*Laughter*] This is the kind of thing you guys think about when you think about the 21st century, you know? Our kids are all on the Internet, and the human genome secrets have all been unlocked, and we all live to be 135, and we whiz around the world in safe airplanes that never have wrecks. And we'll be driving on the Los Angeles freeways, and there won't be any more

traffic jams because all our cars will be computer programmed and directed and everything will be managed just fine. This is the exciting—and our kids will all have pen pals in Mongolia and Zimbabwe and Bolivia and every place around the world. Technology will bring us together, and there will be a new golden age. That's our sort of image for our children in the 21st century.

Don't you think it is ironic that here we are in the last year of this millennium and that image is threatened by the oldest demon of human society, the hatred of the other? It starts as fear of the other, goes to hatred of the other, goes to dehumanization of the other, goes to killing of the other. Don't you think that's interesting? I mean, these people in Kosovo, they're not fighting over who gets the right to show the latest Hollywood movie in the theaters in Pristina. In Rwanda, they weren't killing each other over who got the latest software package. They're talking about how they worship God and what their ethnic group is, what real or imagined slights they have against one another as groups. And we are not free of it here.

I was in Texas the other day meeting with the daughter of James Byrd, the African-American who was dragged to death in Texas. The other night, I went to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights dinner in Washington and recognized the mother of Matthew Shepard, the young man who was killed in Wyoming because he was gay. So America's got some work to do here, too. We ought to pass the hate crimes act and the employment nondiscrimination act, and we ought to—to show that we understand this.

But let me say, how we respond to Kosovo will determine what kind of world we're going to live in. I think all of you who know me know that I have worked for peace, that I deplore violence, that I have been heartbroken by the people who have been innocents in this battle who have perished.

You know, I'd a lot rather be in Northern Ireland giving speeches to my people about how they ought to put all their guns down. I want to go back and work on peace in the Middle East. I don't even think that we can intervene in all the ethnic conflicts in the world. We're not asking everybody to get along. We can't even ask them not to fight.

But if we cannot stand, after the lessons of the 20th century, against the systematic killing of people and their uprooting because of their religion or their race or their ethnicity, then what kind of world are we leaving to our children?

You know, I had a wonderful day today. I spent the day with my daughter today, and Hillary just got back from Macedonia. That's where she was in the refugee camps. And so we called her and then we got lonesome, and we'd call her again. The three of us were talking about all this. And she was talking to me about these people and how they have lost everything and how they have loved ones they don't even know what happened to. There are tens of thousands of people who are unaccounted for. Nobody knows what happened to them. And she talked about this little girl that was holding her hand while she was speaking. The little girl had no idea what she was saying, just holding her hand.

I saw them in Germany when I was there, the young women and the Muslim families—where rape is an even worse thing than it is in our culture—saying, "I want to talk to you, but these are things I cannot discuss in my family." A 15-year-old boy stood up and said, "I cannot talk about Kosovo," and sat down and started crying.

I ask you to think about this. What Europe and the United States is doing, what we are now engaging the Russians in trying to do—we're not trying to redraw the map of Europe. We're not playing some power game. I don't want to control anybody's life. All I want to do is to create a world in which we do not idly turn away from systematic bigotry based on hatred of the other that leads to mass killing. And I believe, as difficult as all the questions are I have to answer here—God, I grieve for those Chinese people that were killed in that horrible mistake that was made. As difficult as all the questions I have to answer, I would rather answer these questions than answer the question of why am I having a good time in Los Angeles tonight, and we have not lifted a finger to help those people. That is the question I would have no answer to. I would have no answer to that.

They are a part of our community. If you want a world that will really be fit for your children to live in, if you want the benefits

of the modern world, we need at home the philosophy the Democratic Party has brought that we're going to have all these benefits; we're not going to leave anybody behind if we can help it. We're certainly not going to leave anybody behind that's willing to work to be a part of it.

But even more, we have to build a sense of community, where we not only tolerate each other, we actually relish our differences. And we can have the security to relish them and make our lives more interesting, because underneath we know that what binds us together is a whole lot more important than what's different about us.

And I want to close with this story. Tom Daschle told you that we had these tribal leaders come to the White House. And he didn't tell you the whole story.

We had the heads of 19 Indian tribes from the high northern plains, from the two Dakotas and Montana. They asked for a meeting at the White House through Senator Daschle and his colleagues. And then they came into the Roosevelt Room at the White House, which is in honor of Teddy, Franklin, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and Teddy Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize is hanging on the mantelpiece.

And so the tribal leaders said, "Well, could we sit in a circle? That is our custom." So we sat in a circle. And each in their turn, they stood up and said, "Well, here's what we'd like to have help on. Here's our education concerns, our health care concerns, our economic concerns." And I came into the middle of the meeting, listened to it all. It was just fascinating.

Then at the end, the guy who was sort of their main spokesman, the tribal leader, whose name was Tex Hall, interestingly enough, stood up and said, "Well, there's one other thing we want to do." He said, "Mr. President, we want to talk to you about Kosovo." He said, "You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing. And our country has come a long way. And we believe what you are doing is right. And so the chiefs have signed this proclamation supporting it."

And then at the end of the room, another young man who was a tribal leader stood up, and he said, "I would like to speak." He had this beautiful silver necklace on. And he was

very dignified, and he said, "Mr. President," he said, "I had two uncles. One landed on the beach at Normandy. One was the first Native American fighter pilot in the United States military." He said, "My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee." He said, "We have come a long way from my great-great-grandfather's time, to my uncles' time, to this time." He said, "I have only one son, and I love him more than life. But I would be honored if he went to Kosovo to stand up for the human rights of people who are different from the majority."

That is the journey America has made. That is the journey I hope we can help the world to make. And if we do, you will take care of the rest of our challenges.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 p.m. in the Courtyard at the Greystone Mansion. In his remarks, he referred to event cohosts David Geffen, Steven Spielberg, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, founders, DreamWorks SKG studios; Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Sen. Robert G. Torricelli, chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, chair, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Mayor Sandra J. Levin of Culver City, CA; actress Goldie Hawn; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; Judy Shepard, mother of murder victim Matthew Shepard; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in San Diego, California**

*May 16, 1999*

Thank you very much. I was hoping that no one in California had heard that joke I told. *[Laughter]* They liked it in Albany, however. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to Irwin and Joan, first of all, I want to thank you for opening this wonderful home and for giving me a tour of the art and a tour of your family. *[Laughter]* What a wonderful, big, beautiful group they are. And I thank you for your philanthropy and for your commitment to so many good

causes, and for bringing all of us together today. A lot of my old friends are here and some people that I've never had the honor to meet before. I appreciate that.

I'd also like to say how glad I am to be here with Bob and Jane Filner. You know, I deal with a lot of Members of Congress—on occasion, even Members of the other party deal with me. I can honestly say that I have never met and dealt with any Member of the House of Representatives who was more consistent and persistent in trying to get me and the White House to respond to the needs of his district than Bob Filner. There isn't anybody else who works any harder at that, and you can be very proud of that. He's done a very fine job.

I want to thank Assemblywoman Susan Davis for being willing to run for Congress; it's an arduous endeavor. It takes a lot of time, a lot of money, and a lot of heart.

When I was 27 years old in 1974, I ran for Congress, and I lost. I wonder if I'd be here today if I won. *[Laughter]* But I remember, I ran against a man who had 99 percent name recognition and 85 percent approval. And I ran for 11 months, and 6 weeks before the election, I was still behind 59 to 23, and I lost—I got 48½ percent of the vote. I say that just to encourage you. Every election has a certain ribbon, and my instinct is, if you go out there and talk about the things you have done so well in the assembly, the passion you have for educating our children, the role that Federal Government needs to play to support our local schools, and the other issues, I think you'll do very well. And I hope we can be of help.

I want to thank Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and all the people on our team for working with the Democratic Party. And I'd like to say a word of appreciation to everyone in San Diego who is responsible for the selection of my friend of 30 years Alan Bersin, the new superintendent of schools. I thank you.

When I saw Alan today—he's got a great gift for one-liners, which I have appropriated over the last 30 years. And so he came through the line today; he looked at me and said, "And I thought you had a hard job." *[Laughter]*

But let me also say I have a very special feeling about this community. I've had some wonderful days here. I've had some wonderful family vacation days here. As you noted, Hillary just got back from Macedonia and a trip to Northern Ireland—a brief trip to Northern Ireland, where we're working to try to close the last gaps in the peace process there—and couldn't be here. And I talked to her this morning on the way down, and she was quite jealous that I was coming back to San Diego. We have nothing but wonderful memories of this great place.

Also, in 1992, when the Vice President and I carried this county, it was the first time since Harry Truman had carried it in 1948 that a Democrat had carried it—and looking at the signs, pro and con, on the way in today, I would say there's still some disagreement about what ought to happen. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, you're here at a fundraiser for the Democratic Party. And I'm grateful for that. I'd like you to know why I'm here. I mean, I'm not running for anything. Maybe I'll try to get on a school board someday, but I won't be on the ballot in the year 2000.

I am here because I believe in what I have done and because I believe that whatever good has come of the country because of my Presidency, I should be grateful for—but I am under no illusion that the most important thing was me, the most important thing was the vision that we shared for America and the ideas we pursued. And I believe it needs to continue. That's why I'm here. And when you leave, I hope you'll be convinced that that's why you were here.

When I ran for President in late 1991 and '92, it was not something I had intended to do until just a few months before in that year. I was very concerned about the problems that our country was having and that there didn't seem to be any driving vision. And I don't think you can run any great enterprise without one.

I also believed—as a Governor—as President Bush said, a Governor of a small Southern State—that most of the rhetoric I heard in Washington, unfortunately often from both parties, bore so little relationship to the world I was living in and the problems I was facing and the way I was having to deal with them. And it seemed to me that we needed

to change the nature of the debate and to come up with some basic ideas that were not then driving policy in Washington, that were new but rooted in the very old-fashioned vision of our country.

I have always believed that when Americans widen the circle of opportunity for all responsible citizens, when they deepen the meaning of freedom, when they strengthen the bonds of community, we do well. And so I went out and said I want a 21st century America where every responsible citizen has the chance to live out his or her dreams, where across all of the differences we have we are bound together more closely as one community and where we are still the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I think to get there we have to think about things in a different way.

For example, I think that we have to think about rewarding entrepreneurs in a way that expands the middle class and gives more poor people a chance to work their way into the middle class. I think we have to believe that we can grow the economy and preserve and even improve the environment. I think we have to believe that we can create a country in which people can succeed, not only at work but at home, in the most important job of any society, raising children. I think we have to believe that we can reduce the welfare rolls and put people in the work force in a way that does not require them to stop being good parents to their children. I think we have to reduce the crime rate, not only by doing a better job of enforcement, but a better job of prevention—something Mr. Bersin did in his previous incarnation as your U.S. Attorney.

Anyway, those are just some of the ideas. I believe that we had to be a much more active force for peace in the world, but I thought we had to be willing to use our power to stand up against terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and ethnic and religious cleansing and killing. And most of the last 6 years have been an effort by the Vice President and our administration, our Cabinet, and all the rest of us, working with me to try to find ways to put those ideas into concrete policies and make them come alive in the country.

Along the way, we've given the American people the smallest Government they've had since John Kennedy was President. Federal establishment is now the smallest it's been since 1962. But it is more active in trying to create the conditions and give people the tools to solve their own problems. And I believe that these ideas resonate pretty well with Americans, whether they're Democrats or independents or Republicans, because they make sense and because they are related to the world toward which we are moving.

Now, there is a lot of the future present in this room in what you all do. It seems to me that the two most dominant elements in the world of the 21st century toward which we're moving, are the explosion of technology and the increasing interdependence of people across national lines. Even our biggest threats grow out of that. We are increasingly vulnerable because of the openness of our society and the openness of our technology to people who would use this for destructive forces.

And what we have to do now is to look ahead to the unmet challenges of the country and bring sort of the same sort of common-sense commitment to that vision. It means politically we have to have good candidates properly financed to have a good message to run in the year 2000 for all of our positions. They have to know why they're running.

You know, whenever anyone comes up to me and asks me if they should run for office, I always say, "Why do you want the job?" And you better be able to tell a total stranger in 30 seconds and then have a 5-minute version on why you want the job. And if you can't answer that question, you shouldn't run. And if you can, ignore the polls and run.

And so I think it's important that we do that. But in the last election, where we had a historic victory in the House of Representatives, you should know that we were outspent by \$100 million. But we still won seats in the House and didn't lose any in the Senate—a truly historic election—because we had a message. We knew what we were for; we knew what we were against; and we had enough to get it across. So it's very important that you're here.

Now, as we look ahead, let me say that in the next 2 years, with all the energy I have,

I'm going to do what I can to get our country to reach across party lines to deal with the aging of America, to reform Social Security and Medicare and do something about making long-term care more available, and helping people save for their own retirement more. I'm going to do what I can to make sure that we finish our work of modernizing our schools, help to modernize facilities; make sure we hook all the classrooms up to the Internet; provide more opportunities for more charter schools, like you have in this school district; and other things that will raise standards; and dramatically increase the resources we provide to local schools for after-school programs, summer school programs, mentoring programs, the kind of things that will help our kids, so that we can have more uniform standards of excellence in education. And there are many other things that I intend to do.

The Vice President has a livability agenda we worked very hard on that we're going to try to pass to try to help all of our communities deal more with traffic problems, with having the need for more green space, as well as setting aside more land in reserve.

I'm very—by the way, just parenthesis—I'm very proud of the fact that our administration has protected more land in perpetuity than any administration in the history of the Republic except those of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. And I think 50 years from now people will be very grateful—even the people in the red rocks area of Utah, who are still kind of mad at me about it, I think they will be grateful.

So there are a lot of things that still have to be done. But I have to tell you, if you ask me to describe in a sentence what I think is the most important outstanding work of the country, I would say it is an attempt to get people to define community in terms of our common humanity instead of our evident differences, both at home and abroad.

And if you look at what happened in Littleton, there are many tragedies and doubtless, a lot of the elements, as it's all unpacked, will turn out to be highly peculiar to the two young men in question, and the whole psychology of murder-suicide. But there is also, clearly, an element of—part of what drove them over the brink was the fact that they

were in a group that was disrespected, and they developed a grievance against those they thought were disrespecting them. And then since they thought they were disrespected, they looked around and they found another group—the minority students in the schools, in this case—that they could then look down on.

I was just in Texas with the daughter of James Byrd, Jr., the African-American who was dragged to death and virtually dismembered by people who killed him because he was black—you remember, about a year ago. I was, the other night in Washington, at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights dinner with the mother of Matthew Shepard, the young man who was killed in Wyoming not so very long ago because he was gay.

And I say this to point out, if America wants to do good around the world—I appreciate what Congressman Filner said about Kosovo, and I want to come back to that—but if you want to do good around the world, we've first got to try to be good at home. And we have to recognize that there is something deep within all of us that represents the oldest curse of human society, which is the propensity to hate the other people who are different from us.

And if you look, isn't it ironic—here we are, you and I were talking about how we had to break everybody's mindset of believing that in order to grow the economy, you had to have industrial age energy use patterns. We had to modernize energy use. But if you look at what they're fighting about in Kosovo or what they fought about in Bosnia or what they slaughtered over in Rwanda or what the continuing turmoil of the Middle East is about or Northern Ireland, they're not arguing about who is going to get the franchise to sell solar panels or who gets to represent Microsoft.

Interesting, isn't it? We're thinking—look at all the high-tech activity in this room. We're thinking about a 21st century in which we want our kids to have pen pals in every conceivable country of the world, travel around, you know, do unimaginable things because of all these technological wonders. We all expect to live to be 125 because by—within the next couple of years the human genome will be totally unpacked and the

intersection of computer technology and biomedical discoveries will doubtless lead to breathtaking and, at present, unimaginable discoveries that will enable us to prolong life, prevent disease, cure disease.

But the biggest problem we've got is the oldest problem of human society. First, people are scared of people that are different from them, and their fear leads them to hate them, and their hatred of them leads them to dehumanize them, and then that legitimizes killing them. And this has been a factor in human relationships since people first joined together in tribes—before there was any writing or any language or anything else. And here we are, on the edge of this great modern age, beleaguered with this.

And so I say to you, to me that is very important. One of the people at our table was telling me that she was a native of Sarajevo, and that these are old and deep differences here. That is true.

I do not believe—if I could move to Kosovo for a minute—I don't believe the United States can intervene in every ethnic conflict. I don't think we can ask people to like each other. I don't think that can be a requirement of international law or a justification for military intervention. We can't even ask people not to fight each other if one group wants to secede and the other doesn't.

But we can say that in the international arena there ought to be certain limits on this. And what is now euphemistically called "ethnic cleansing"—when you unpack it, what does that word mean? That means you look at people who are of a different—in the case of the Balkans, religious group, and therefore—and with a different ethnic history—and you say, "I'm afraid of you; I don't like you; I hate you; I dehumanize you, therefore, I can kill you; I can rape your daughters; I can blow up your mosques; I can blow up your museums; I can destroy your historical records; I can take your own property records, and I can burn them up. I can take the young people of military age and wrap them up and set fire to them while they're still alive. I can do these things because this is my land, and our greatness depends upon our ability to get rid of you."

And in the most benign form, "We'll burn all your villages and run you by the hundreds of thousands off your land, because we can't share this land with you, because you're Muslims and we're Orthodox Christians; you're Albanians, and we're not. And, oh, by the way, 600 years ago the Muslims came through here and had a big battle in Kosovo, and we've hated you all ever since."

Now, what our position ought to be in this is not that we're telling other countries how to live; not that we're telling them how—what their governmental arrangements have to be, but that in Europe—and by the way, I think, anywhere else that the United Nations or others have the power to stop it—we say we know there will be ethnic conflicts; we know there will be civil wars. There's a terrible regrettable conflict going on right now between Eritrea and Ethiopia, who once were one and then split, and now they're, in effect, having their tribal conflict over the border.

No one has suggested—10,000 people have been killed there—no one has suggested that some third party should intervene and fight both of them. That is not what is going on in Kosovo. That is not what Bosnia was about. That was about ethnic cleansing; it's a mass killing of people because of their ethnic and religious background. And if we can't stop that in the underbelly of Europe on the edge of the 21st century, then we're going to have a very difficult world ahead of us—because there will be a lot more of it, they will get aligned with organized criminals, with terrorists, with people who have access to weapons of mass destruction; they will use all this technology and all these open airports and all this other stuff, and these conflicts will not stay confined to the land on which they occur.

So this is in America's interest, but it is also morally the right thing to do. Think about these children who were here today. What do you want their children's America to be like? What do you want their children's world to be like? The 21st century can and should be the most interesting period in all of human history, in a largely, profoundly positive way. But it will not happen unless we find ways to deal with our differences which, after all, as we see in America, make

life much more interesting if they can be respected and celebrated but limited in their impact.

When there is no limit to what you can do to somebody else who's different from you, life quickly becomes unbearable. That is really what is at stake here. Yes, there are many difficulties in this endeavor we have undertaken, we and our NATO Allies, in Kosovo. And you may have many questions in your mind.

But let me ask you this: How would you feel, in this gorgeous setting today, with the birds singing outside and the ocean before us, in all of our comfort, if I came here asking you to give money to the Democratic Party, and I was having to explain to you why we were sitting on our hands and not lifting a finger while those people were killed and uprooted and dislocated? I prefer to answer the hard questions about what we're doing than the hard questions I would never be able to answer to you if we had done nothing in the face of this travesty.

But, remember what I said: We should have a higher standard for ourselves at home. Abroad we are simply saying, "You can have your fights; you can have your arguments; but we're against ethnic cleansing and the slaughter that goes along with it—and if we can stop it, as an international community, we ought to." At home, we have to do better than that. We have to say, "The differences that we have make us stronger, make us better, when we respect and celebrate them, but when we're not consumed by them."

And therefore, I want to say again what I said yesterday and the day before. We need a national campaign to protect our kids from violence. We will never get there unless we first of all teach people respect for one another and, secondly, find a way to connect with every one of our children in a very personal way. A lot of people are strangers in their own homes and they are lost to their parents, to their classmates, and to others. This is a very hard job.

And we will never get there unless all of us ask not, "Who is to blame," but "What can I do?" That's what the entertainment industry ought to do, not because any movie or television or video game caused those young men or others in these other school

killings to do what they did, but because the average 18-year-old sees 40,000 murders by the time he or she is 18, because there are 300 studies now—300—which show that sustained exposure to violence diminishes—and it diminishes one's sensitivity to the consequences of violence; and because we know that we have a higher percentage of kids who spend more time in front of various media and less time with their families, or with their friends doing other things, than virtually every other country; and we have a higher percentage of kids who are at risk. And we don't give families the support we should give to balance family and childrearing—work and childrearing.

So if you have more kids at risk, more vulnerable, and you bombard them with things that will desensitize them, you will increase the number who will fall over the line. It's just like the guns. The NRA slogan is actually, of course, literally true, that guns don't kill people, people do. That is literally true. But people with guns kill more people than people without them. [*Laughter*]

And again, I say if you have more—if you have more vulnerable people and it's easier for them to get assault weapons, or other weapons they have no business getting their hands on, then more of them will fall over the line and you'll have more violence. A lot of you have been involved in that, and I would just close with this—the Government has its responsibility in this crisis, too. And one of our responsibilities is to give both law enforcement and citizens the help they need by having sensible gun restraint measures.

There was a police officer out at the airport today when I stopped at the marine base on the way over here. And when he said, "Mr. President," he said, "I'm a police officer; I'm off duty today; I came out here with my family, and I just want to thank you for taking on that gun fight." He said, "We need all the protection we can get out there and so do the kids."

And all we've done—look what I've asked them to do. I've asked them to close this gun show loophole so you can't buy a gun at a gun show if you can't buy it in a gun shop. We've asked them to—and the Senate has

voted to close the loophole allowing big, multiple-ammunition clips to come in from foreign countries, and to raise the handgun age to 21.

We've asked them to strengthen the Brady bill and reinstate the 3-day waiting period. We've asked them to do a background check on people who buy explosives—which, after Littleton, you will see, is very important—very, very important—and do some other commonsense things that help us to trace and keep records on these weapons. This is crazy, that we would permit our society to put more children at risk than any other society in the world would when we already know we've got more of them that are fragile.

Now, we don't have to point fingers at each other. We should all sort of say, "Forget about who's to blame. We're showing up for duty tomorrow. What can I do?" That's what everybody ought to be asking. But the Congress of the United States needs to pass this legislation, and I was very encouraged that some of the Senators, after the American people expressed their feelings, have begun to change their votes.

But I want to see this as a part of our struggle to be one community. Most of the people—there was a great article in the Los Angeles Times today about a woman from Colorado, rural Colorado, who had her rifle and used it to run off wild wolves that were going to kill her livestock, and who felt so threatened in her way of life by all these city folks, like us, trying to regulate her guns. Well, of course, nobody's trying to regulate her guns—she'd just been told that. And if she needs something other—that she has to do a background check on, she's got nothing to fear.

But I understand, there is that whole other culture out there of people who are law abiding, they pay their taxes, they show up for duty when we need them to fight for our country, to defend us, to do whatever else, and a lot of them just think that this is some big urban conspiracy to take their guns away. Well, it isn't. And we all need to be talking to each other. We need to quit this sort of—you know, trying to make this chapter 57 in the culture war for someone's political benefit.

So I say that to you—hey, if you ask me, yes, I hope we get—before I leave office, I will be very disappointed if we haven't reformed Social Security, committed ourselves to pay down the debt over the next 17 years, reform Medicare, pass my education and my environmental agenda. But the American people will get the rest right if we decide to do what it takes to be one America, if we decide to do what it takes to reach out across all the lines that divide us and say, "You know, our common humanity is more important than our interesting differences."

And if we do that, then we will be able to lead the world to a better place and give our children the future they deserve. That's what I think my party represents. That's what I've worked for 6 years to bring to the American people. And when you leave here today, I hope that's why you believe that you came.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Irwin and Joan Jacobs; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; and Judy Shepard, mother of murder victim Matthew Shepard.

## **Statement on National Crime Statistics**

*May 16, 1999*

Today the FBI released preliminary data showing that crime fell another 7 percent in 1998, with an 8 percent decline in murder and an 11 percent decline in robbery. Crime is now down for a remarkable seventh year in a row. More community police on our streets and fewer guns in the hands of criminals have helped make our communities the safest they have been in a generation.

But tragic events like the Littleton shooting remind us that our work is far from done. We in Washington have a responsibility to support law enforcement officers and pass commonsense gun legislation. We should start by closing the gun show loophole that allows criminals and juveniles to buy guns

at gun shows without so much as a background check. In this way, we can keep the crime rates coming down.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 6 p.m.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Las Vegas, Nevada**

*May 16, 1999*

**The President** Thank you very much. First, I would like to say to Elias and Jody, we're grateful to be here, and thank you for turning the Muzak off. [*Laughter*] And all the televisions—I couldn't compete with them. [*Laughter*] And I thank you for being my friend for so many years, when I was up and when I was down, and for being my mother's friend, something I will never forget, and for having me into your home for the second time.

I thank Senators Reid and Landrieu and Senator Bryan and Bonnie for being here; and Representative Berkley, newly married—glad that Larry came. And your attorney general, Frankie Sue Del Papa; Mayor Jones; and former Governor Miller and his wife who, as of this morning, is Dr. Miller, so we have to be appropriately respectful there. Former Congressman Bill Bray, my good friend; and Chairman Andrew and Beth Dozoretz, our national finance chair, and her husband, Ron. And to all of you, my old friends in Las Vegas, and some of you I have not met before. I'm delighted to be here.

I was sitting here thinking—you know, I've had a rather rigorous schedule. Last week I went to Europe, to Germany, to see our forces who are involved in the operation in Kosovo and then to meet with the refugees. And then I had to go right down to Texas and then to Oklahoma to see the aftermath of the worst—the most powerful tornado ever measured in the history of the United States down there.

And then I came back to Washington, and then I came right back out here a couple of days later; and I was in Seattle, northern California, Los Angeles, San Diego, and now I'm here. So I'm slightly disoriented. And I was wondering if maybe Rich Little would

come and give the speech for me. We would never know the difference. [*Laughter*] And if you got tired of me, then you could hear President Carter, President Reagan, President Nixon, you know—[*laughter*]—sort of a little walk-through of American history. Thank you for coming.

**Rich Little.** Oh, it's a pleasure.

**The President.** I won't take a lot of time today. I enjoyed having a chance to visit with all of you in the line. I would like to begin with what is to me the most obvious thing about this day. I want to thank all of you who brought your children here. I'm delighted to see all these young people here.

When I ran for President in 1991, when I made the decision, it was, believe it or not, a rather difficult one for me to make, because our daughter was in the eighth grade, or then finishing the seventh grade. She was as happy as a clam and doing well, and Hillary and I were doing well. We had our friends, and I had been Governor for, at that time I was in my 11th year. And believe it or not, I was still having a great time. I loved my State; I loved my job.

And I decided to run because I was convinced that our country was sort of stumbling toward the 21st century with no governing vision that would create an America where every person who would be responsible enough to work for it would have opportunity; where all the diversity that you see so glittering in this room, all the differences among us would be respected, even celebrated, but where our common sense of humanity would give us a stronger American community as we grow more diverse; and where our country would still be the world's most important force for peace and freedom and prosperity.

I knew—I believed, and now I believe more strongly—that to have that kind of vision come alive in the 21st century, we had to be able to deal with what was going on here that is different. And what is going on here that is different? We're in the middle of the biggest explosion of technology in the history of the country, in the history of the world. We also are seeing the shattering of all kinds of barriers, making people ever more interdependent and drawing us closer and closer together across all national lines.

Most of that is quite good, but we know there are some serious problems. The global economy and the information revolution has made untold numbers of new millionaires, but it threatens to leave people without an education behind. Drawing closer together has given greater mobility, greater knowledge, greater access to things through the Internet and through travel than ever before; but the open borders and the Internet technology mean that people who want to use it for bad ends can learn how to make bombs on the Internet, and that the possibilities for collision of terrorism and organized crime and weapons of mass destruction are greater, and we have to deal with that.

And so what I have tried to do for the last 6½ years is to lead first the Democratic Party and then the Nation to a whole different approach to politics nationally, to say that we have enough tough decisions to make, but we're going to put behind the false ones. We believe, for example, we can grow the economy and reward entrepreneurs and still expand the middle class and give poor people a chance to work their way up.

We believe that working people should be able to succeed at work, but also at home, because the most important job of any society is to raise its children well. We believe we can improve the economy and actually improve—not just protect but improve—the environment, because we no longer have to use the same energy patterns of the industrial age to grow the economy. We believe we can reduce crime by not only prosecuting it more vigorously but by doing a better job of preventing it in the first place. We believe we can reduce the welfare rolls without hurting the children on welfare.

These are things we believe we can do. We believe we can be a force for peace from the Middle East to Northern Ireland and still stand up against ethnic cleansing and terrorists. And in large measure, the work that Hillary and I and the Vice President and our Cabinet, our administration and our allies in Congress have done the last 6 years has been a vigorous effort to take these ideas and turn them into policies so they could be made real in the lives of the American people.

We also have tried to change our notion of the primary role of Government. I have

downsized the Government dramatically. Most people have a hard time believing this, but the Federal establishment is now almost exactly the size it was when John Kennedy was President in 1962—smallest Federal Government in 37 years now. But it is more active, and we focus on two things. One, creating the conditions for prosperity and for security, and two, giving people the tools to solve their own problems and to make the most of their own lives.

And I am very grateful for all the good things that have happened in America and for whatever force for good we've been in the world in the last 6 years. And I'm grateful for the people who have expressed their support for me through thick and thin. But I am here today for the Democratic Party because what I want you to understand is, that while I am grateful I had a chance to serve—and I hope that my leadership had something to do with the good things that have happened—the most important thing is, we had the right vision and the right ideas; we had a sense of teamwork, and we got up and went to work every day doing the right things.

And that's why it's important that your Congresswoman be reelected, that we elect a new Democratic Senator from this State, that we win the Presidential election, and that we keep the country on the direction it is going.

I am very grateful to the citizens of this State for voting for me and Al Gore twice, when most people didn't think any Democrat would ever win here again. And I'm very grateful to Governor Miller and your two Senators for making sure that I never made a mistake on a local issue, so that at least I wouldn't fall off the knife edge we were on and we could hold on to our victory.

But what I want to know when you leave here today is, it's important that people who have supported me all these years understand that no person, not even the President, can have a good impact unless you have a good vision, good ideas, a good team, and you're doing the right things. And all of that will be here when I am gone. I won't be on the ballot in 2000. But all these issues really matter. It matters where we stand on these issues.

If I could just mention two or three things today. In the next 2 years, I'm going to do a lot to try to keep this going. We were talking—the Senators and I were, on the way in—we want to have our version of saving Social Security and Medicare, helping people deal with long-term care, helping people to save more for their own retirement. We want to see this debt paid down. Who would have ever thought we'd be paying the debt down? First, you thought you'd be grateful to see the budget balanced. We now have the biggest surplus ever. I want to pay the debt down. I want to pay it down. I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why.

I want to pay it down because I know the more we pay it down, the more we'll have low interest rates, high investment, more jobs, and better incomes. And the less we need to borrow money around the world, the more our friends who are in trouble, who are our trading partners and our neighbors, will be able to borrow money. The Japanese are in trouble today. We want to help them. When they do well, we do well. If they need to borrow money, they can borrow it at less cost if we're paying our debt down. This is a good thing.

I want to do some more things in education. I'm going to spend an enormous amount of time both trying to raise educational standards, to bring technology and good facilities and good teachers to all of our kids, and continue to open the doors of college to all Americans—I want to do that. And there are lots of other things. But what I want to say today, I want to think about one thing. We look at these kids. And look at this audience. Look how different we all are. Look at Elias' background—the story of the American dream—coming out of the Middle East, coming here without a nickel to his name, struggling through college, doing all the things that he has done, and then marrying way above himself. [Laughter]

**Elias Ghanem.** I agree. I agree with you.

**The President.** Having all these wonderful children. Look at all these kids here. I want you to listen. This is the most important thing. You know, if tonight I woke up in the middle of the night, and the good Lord appeared to me and he said, "I'm sorry, but you've already had a heck of a good life, and

I'm not going to let you do all these things. But I will let you do one thing for the next 18 months. You only get to do one thing." And then here's what my answer would be: I would think about Littleton, Colorado, and I would think about Kosovo, and I would say, "It seems to me supremely ironic and very humbling that here we are on the edge of the 21st century, where we have all these wonderful, high-tech dreams for our kids, right?—I mean, these kids can have pen pals in Mongolia and Botswana and Singapore. They can look forward to going everywhere, doing everything; maybe we'll all be living to be 125 years old within 20 years. We'll unlock the mysteries of the human gene and all that.

"Isn't it ironic that on the verge of such an incredible era of discovery and potential that what we are bedeviled by at home and abroad are the oldest demons of human society—these children talking in Littleton about how they were disrespected by the athletes, so they hated them. And then they had to look for someone they could disrespect, so they looked down on the minority kids."

I was in Texas the other day with the very pregnant young daughter of James Byrd, the African-American man who was dragged to death not very long ago there, trying to help them pass the hate crimes legislation, the Texas legislation. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights had its annual dinner last week in Washington, and I went by and acknowledged the presence of Matthew Shepard's mother, the young man who was murdered in Wyoming because he was gay.

Don't you think it's interesting that here we are, celebrating all this wonderful, high-tech, modern future, and what bedevils us most is the darkness of the heart, the fear of the other? It is as old as when people first had to join into tribes to stay alive in the cold and to kill game and to live in caves, before there was language, before there was writing, before there was anything. And maybe at some point there was some rational reason for it.

And then as people developed their religious faiths, very often they fought more over their religious faiths, than the fact that the color of their skin or the nature of their history was different. But when you strip it all

away, it starts with: You're different from me; I'm afraid of you, therefore, I don't like you—no, I take it back; I hate you, therefore, I will dehumanize you; therefore, it's okay for me to kill you. It is a very short step.

And it is easy for us to demonize others, but the truth is, every one of us gets up every day with a little light and a little darkness inside. And it's almost like they're on scales, and we fight this lifelong battle to make sure that the light always outweighs the darkness on the scales.

So if I were given one wish, I would say I would like to build a stronger sense of community in America, and I would like to do something to advance a sense of common humanity around the world. Because if we could do that, you and people like you all over our country would take care of the other problems.

That's why I'm for the hate crimes legislation. That's why I'm for the nondiscrimination in employment bill. That's why I'm for all these sensible gun control measures. That's why I've asked the whole country to join with Hillary and me and Al and Tipper Gore in a national campaign to reduce violence against children. That's why I've spent all my life trying to advance the cause of civil rights. That's why I've worked for peace in the Middle East and Northern Ireland and why I'm proud that we stopped the war in Bosnia and why I'm trying to stop it in Kosovo.

We can't stop every war. People have a right even to fight, sometimes. That's how we, after all, created our country. But on the eve of the 21st century, we should say, "You know, you don't have to like each other around the world, but we won't tolerate mass killing based on religious and racial and ethnic differences."

I know that in a world where we're used to seeing the news be different every day, it is frustrating to some people that this difficulty in Kosovo is not yet done. And I know there are many questions about it. I wish I had time to spend 3 or 4 hours here and answer your questions. But I can tell you this: I would far rather be here today, where we are, standing up against ethnic cleansing, standing for the rights of a different people not to be exterminated—because they hap-

pen to be Muslims and they happen to have Albanian heritage and they happen to have no guns—than if I were here asking you to give money to me, and to our party, and we were sitting on our hands enjoying the sunshine, and I had not lifted a finger to stop it.

And so I leave you with that thought. I have tried to make our party a party where all people of goodwill could feel at home and, more importantly, our country.

Life is infinitely more interesting because it's more different, more various. Look around this room. This is an incredible group of people, from all over everywhere. And if we can respect and celebrate our differences, our lives are literally more fun and almost always more profitable. But if there are no limits on the importance to which we give our differences, life can quickly become unbearable. So I ask you to think about that and help us.

I thank you for your contributions. I thank you for your support. I thank you for your friendship to Elias and Jody. I thank you for helping me be President.

But remember, what has made these last 6½ years, and what will keep America going for the next 220 years, is not any one leader, but it's having the right vision and the right ideas and working together. And we need more of that.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Elias and Jody Ghanem; Senator Richard H. Bryan's wife, Bonnie; Representative Shelley Berkley's husband, Larry Lehrner; Mayor Jan Laverty Jones of Las Vegas; former Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada and his wife, Sandy; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; impersonator/comedian Rich Little; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; and Judy Shepard, mother of murder victim Matthew Shepard.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Las Vegas** *May 16, 1999*

Well, thank you very much. First of all, we've already had a wonderful conversation. I want to thank all of you for that. I want

to thank Brian and Myra for taking me in; and I want to thank Amy for coming back to work for me. [Laughter]

Brian was up here talking, and I was thinking, you know, the only thing that has been sort of a required part of our friendship—besides his mentioning of the nuclear waste issue—is a regular golf outing. And I nearly never beat him. But I was thinking—after all, this is probably the fifth or sixth event we've done here in the last 6 years—I'm the most expensive golf partner he ever had. [Laughter] He would probably dearly like to reconsider this whole deal.

But we've been friends for 30 years now, and then some, and I'm very grateful to be here. Every time I come here and I spend the night here, I feel a renewed gratitude. I also know that all of you felt as I did tonight, all of you who are from Las Vegas were delighted that Elias and Jody came over here and that they threw the reception over at their house, and we had a wonderful time with their children and their friends, and our prayers are with them. And I was very glad that they came over and spent a few minutes with us tonight.

Since we've been talking at the table and because it's quarter to 11, which for us three from the east coast over here is a quarter to 2 in the morning on our body, I'll be quite brief. But I'd like to just ask you to think about a couple of things.

The first is that our country has done very well these last 6½ years—economically and socially—crime rate's down, the welfare rolls are down, homeownership is at an all-time high, minority unemployment the lowest ever recorded. A lot of things are going well. What I would like to say is that I first feel grateful that I've been able to be President, and I hope I have had something to do with that. And I believe we have.

But the reason I'm here tonight, since I'm not running for anything anymore, is that I know that the reason we were able to follow good policies and do good things is that we started out with a vision and ideas that have now been embraced by my party, by the Democratic Party. And they make a difference. And they're different. They're different from what we were doing before, and they're certainly different—as you can tell if

you just pick up the paper in the morning—from what the other party believes in Washington.

Whether the issue is how to take the first big step to get rid of the deficit, or whether we should have a Brady bill or an assault weapons ban, or whether we should target a tax cut so that we can honestly say we've now opened the doors of college to all, because we've got—we've got some friends from Georgia here; we've got a national version of Georgia's HOPE scholarship now—or whether the issue is, now, in the aftermath of the terrible tragedy at Littleton, whether we should have a law passed that closes the loophole that allows, now, people with criminal or mental health histories to buy guns at gun shows they couldn't buy in gun stores or we should also require a background check for people who buy explosives, since we now know that's a very serious problem—we have had two examples, one at Littleton and one in Oklahoma City, which makes, I think, a very compelling case that it's hard to justify a background check on handguns and not have a background check on explosives, and I could give you lots and lots of other examples—but the point I want to make is that ideas matter and vision matters.

And what we've been trying to do—Al Gore and our Cabinet and everybody associated with me for the last 6½ years—is to make real what we pledged to the American people in 1992, that we wanted a country where every responsible citizen would have opportunity and where we would be coming closer together, across all the lines that divide us, into a stronger community, and where we continue to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And we have largely been able to do that. So ideas matter, and that's why parties matter. And that's why I'm grateful for your presence here.

The second point I would like to make is that it's very important for the Democrats to do two things. One, to keep working every day between now and 2000, and not to just get into the same-old, same-old in Washington I used to see, where the two parties fight all the time and nobody shows up for work. I sometimes think that everyone who

works in Washington should be required to spend a week, a month somewhere else, because no other enterprise could survive if people spent all their time fighting and never had to do anything.

So we need to produce results. We need to deal with the aging crisis, the educational challenges we face. I think we ought to pay the debt down dramatically. I think it will really add to our long-term economic health. There are lots of challenges out there. I'm going to work until the last hour, the last day I'm President to try to get things done.

And the third point I want to make is that it's very important that we have good candidates adequately funded to implement these ideas in the 2000 election. Which is why I'm glad you're here and why I'm here.

I said something over at the Ghanem's I'd like to close with. If tonight in the middle of the night I were to wake up and God were standing over my bed saying, "I'm sorry, you can't do all this stuff for the last 2 years; I'm just going to let you do one thing—what do you want to do?"

In the aftermath of Littleton and what I've seen in Kosovo, I would say, "Well, I think it's pretty ironic that in this glitzy, high-tech global economy age where we're about to uncover the mysteries of the human genome so we may all be able to map out our future and live to be 125, that the biggest problems we've got in the world today come from the hatred of the human heart and people's—rooted in our fear of people who are different from us, with religious or ethnic or racial or any other kind of differences."

And if you just think about America's most traumatic moments in the last several years—Oklahoma City, Timothy McVeigh, a government hater—whatever that is—think about poor Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, killed because he was gay, at the outset of his life; James Byrd in Texas, dragged and torn apart because he was black.

Even in Littleton there were suggestions that these young men felt disrespected by the athletes in their school and, therefore, they wanted to get even with them, but by the way, they needed to find somebody they could disrespect, so they disrespected the minority kids in their school, and they targeted them, too.

And I just want you to think about this. The oldest demon of humans living together begins with fear of people who are not in your clan—literally, when we came out of the caves—people who are different from you. And once you fear somebody, it's not very far until you hate them. Then it's not very far from that until you can dehumanize them. Then it's not very far from that until you can justify killing them. Not very far.

We've had a lot of experience in that, in America. We had people who thought God told them to throw the Indian tribes off their lands. We had people who seriously preached in this country from the pulpit that God ordained the slavery that enslaved African-Americans here. We've had experience with what we now see going on in the rest of the world today.

But what I want to say to you is it is not endemic, in the sense that it's inevitable. You know, when the Hutus and the Tutsis fought in Rwanda, and 700,000 people died in 100 days—almost all from machetes—I heard people say, "Well, you know, those are African tribal wars, and the countries are all wrongly drawn, and everything." That's not true. In Rwanda, the borders have been pretty well the same for 500 years. And most of the time people got along.

Now I hear in the Balkans, "You know, those people always fought. They just can't get along." That's not true, either. For most of the last 600 years, those people did get along. They did work together. They managed their ethnic and their religious diversity.

And I just want you to think about that. I want you to think about—you know, we think about, we want our kids to know about computers and speak foreign languages and zip around the world and uncover all these great biological mysteries, and what a wonderful world it's going to be. And that's the world I've been working for. It is threatened by the most primitive impulse in human society, fear of people who are different from us.

And if we want America to do good around the world, we have to be good at home, first. Second, if we want to lead the world for peace and freedom, we've got to stand up against ethnic cleansing and mass killing. That's what Kosovo is about. I know it's a

thorny, complex problem—you and I, we talked about it around the table tonight. All I can—I can't answer every question, maybe, but I can tell you one thing: I'd a lot rather be answering the questions I'm answering tonight and sitting here having dinner with you, looking at those people being run out of their country and being killed and all that stuff, than with America and Europe sitting on its hands and not doing anything to help them. I prefer to answer the questions I'm answering tonight than the questions we would be answering had we done nothing.

And I'll just close with this little story I've been telling the last few days. Last week, when I got back from Europe, and then I got back from Oklahoma, seeing the folks after the hurricane—I mean, the tornado. We had a fascinating meeting at the White House with 19 tribal leaders from the northern high plains. I've spent a lot of time with the Native Americans since I've been in office, trying to work through a lot of their challenges.

And Senator Daschle, our leader, Democratic leader, and Senator Johnson and the two Democrats in North Dakota and Senator Baucus from Montana, they said, "Well, would you please meet with these 19 tribal leaders from these three States, because they're the poorest Indian tribes in America; because it's very hard to get any investment up there, and it's cold and there's a lot of problems?" If you don't have—not all Native American tribes have casinos and make fortunes; that's a big myth. So they said, "You've got to meet with these people."

So we had our—a lot of our Cabinet people came. Then the tribal leaders said, "Now, can we sit in a circle; that is our custom." So we're in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, which has Teddy Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize in it, and a wonderful bust of Eleanor Roosevelt. It's a great little room. So we get rid of the table and we all sit around in a circle.

And they talked, you know, each in their turn about their—you know, it's the education issue or the jobs issue or the housing issue or the health care issue or whatever. And then at the end their spokesperson stands up—and his name was Tex Hall, which I thought was an interesting name for

an Indian chief. But anyway, he said, "Mr. President," he said, "I have this proclamation here that our tribal leaders have signed, endorsing what you are trying to do in Kosovo." And he said, "You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing." And he said, "We'd like—and here we are in the White House today, and we can't turn away from this."

And then this young man crossed the room in the circle, stood up, and he said—he had this beautiful Indian jewelry around his neck. And I mean, when this guy started talking, it just took all the oxygen out of the room. He was very dignified, and he said—"Mr. President," he said, "My two uncles—I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in our history." He said, "My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the American 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee." He said, "We've come a long way from Wounded Knee, to my uncles, to me, standing here in the Roosevelt Room, talking to the President." He said, "I just have one child. He means more to me than anything. But I would be honored to have him go to fight against the destruction of the people of Kosovo, so they don't have to go through all that we have been through."

And I thought to myself, I just wish every American could see this. This is what I ran for President to lift up.

So remember that. If we can learn to get along together and work together and stand for our common humanity, then you and talented people like you all over this country, you'll figure out how to solve the rest of this stuff. It's the most important thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 p.m. in a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Brian L. and Myra Greenspun, and their daughter, Amy; Nevada State Athletic Commission Chairman Elias Ghanem and his wife, Jody; Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of bombing the Oklahoma City Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

**Statement on the Election of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister of Israel**

*May 17, 1999*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Ehud Barak upon his election as Israel's new Prime Minister. The people of Israel have given the new Prime Minister a strong mandate.

I have just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu to thank him for his dedicated service to Israel. I also spoke with Prime Minister-elect Barak to congratulate him and reaffirm our Nation's steadfast support for Israel and its people. I will continue to work energetically for a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace that strengthens Israel's security. I look forward to working closely with Ehud Barak and his new government as they strive to reach that goal with their Palestinian and Arab partners.

**Proclamation 7196—World Trade Week, 1999**

*May 17, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

World Trade Week provides a valuable opportunity to recognize the enormous importance of exports to the United States economy and our way of life. In recent years, exports have contributed to almost one-third of our economic growth, helping to make today's economy the strongest in a generation. Unemployment is at a 30-year low, business investment is booming, and private sector growth is on the rise. Every day, an increasing number of U.S. companies and farmers realize how crucial exports are to their bottom lines. Every day, more and more American workers benefit from the fact that exporting firms pay higher salaries, experience fewer closings, and generate jobs at a faster rate than do firms that do not export. That is why we must continue to open markets and expand trade opportunities. At the same time, we must work to ensure that increased international trade benefits the world's peo-

ple, promotes the dignity of work, and protects the environment and the rights of workers.

As important as world trade is to our economy today, we are only beginning to utilize the commercial potential of the newest international marketplace: the World Wide Web. Today the Internet connects nearly 150 million people around the world. Each day 52,000 additional Americans join that number, and users are making as many as 27 million purchases on the Web each day. Forecasts predict that, in just a few years, global electronic commerce—e-commerce—will grow to more than \$300 billion annually. By 2005 Internet usage in countries around the world may account for more than \$1 trillion worth of global commerce.

Recognizing the enormous power and promise that e-commerce holds for American businesses and consumers, my Administration is working to build a framework for global electronic commerce that will keep competition free and vigorous, protect consumers, guarantee privacy, and give users—not governments—the responsibility of supervising Internet trade. Working with the Congress, industry, and State and local officials, we have enacted legislation that places a 3-year moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. We also ratified an international treaty to protect intellectual property online. Last year, representatives of 132 countries followed our lead and signed a WTO Ministerial Declaration to refrain from imposing customs duties on electronic commerce.

Working with our trading partners, industry, and consumer advocates, we are extending traditional consumer protections to the arena of electronic commerce. Without imposing burdensome regulations that might stifle growth and innovation, we have offered incentives to online companies to give consumers the protections they need to conduct business on the Internet with security and confidence. Finally, we are working to speed the completion of the global information infrastructure, a series of networks that sends messages and images at the speed of light.

Appropriately, the theme of this year's World Trade Day observance is "Trade, a Worldwide Web of Opportunity." Linking

businesses and customers around the clock, 7 days a week, the Web provides even the smallest companies with the opportunity to do business on a global scale. We are about to enter a new and unprecedented era in world trade, and America's businesses, workers, and consumers are poised to embrace this opportunity and continue our leadership of the world economy.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 16 through May 22, 1999, as World Trade Week. I invite the people of the United States to observe this week with events, trade shows, and educational programs that celebrate the benefits of international trade to our economy.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth 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, 11:25 a.m., May 18, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

**Proclamation 7197—National Defense Transportation Day and National Transportation Week, 1999**  
*May 17, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Throughout America's history, our transportation system has played a profound role in the security and development of our Nation. As early as the Revolutionary War, America's merchant marine carried cargo to help defend our national interests and uphold our democratic ideals. In the 1800's, as many Americans migrated westward, new roads and canals facilitated travel and trade, helping to unify our young country and to bolster our growing economy. And in the

20th century, few innovations have had the same far-reaching effect on our society as the airplane—now a critical part of our national defense and our robust economy.

Representing 11 percent of the U.S. economy and related to one in every seven American jobs, today's transportation industry continues to grow and thrive. Millions of Americans rely on its readiness for business and leisure travel. And we can be pleased by the improved safety of our transportation system. In 1998, the rate of traffic fatalities in America fell to its lowest level since record-keeping began in 1966. Last year also marked a milestone in aviation safety when, for the first time in our history, there were no reported passenger fatalities on scheduled U.S. air carriers.

Securing the continued strength and safety of our transportation system is among my highest priorities as President. My Administration has acted aggressively to improve the security of our rail system, and, by initiating a new program to encourage Americans to buckle their seat belts, we are working to improve the safety of vehicular travel. As we face the challenges of a new century, we must build on these achievements to ensure that our transportation system remains the finest in the world.

Last year, I was proud to sign into law the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the largest public works legislation in our Nation's history. TEA-21 invests \$198 billion in our transportation infrastructure. The Livable Communities for the 21st Century Initiative represents another integral part of our transportation strategy for the coming century, providing communities with tools and resources to ease traffic congestion, preserve green space, and pursue wise regional growth strategies. These comprehensive programs will help communities across America create a higher quality of living and secure sustainable economic growth as we work to forge more livable communities for ourselves and for the next generation of Americans.

In recognition of the ongoing contributions of our Nation's transportation system and in honor of the devoted professionals who work to sustain its tradition of excellence, the United States Congress, by joint

resolution approved May 16, 1957 (36 U.S.C. 120), has designated the third Friday in May of each year as "National Defense Transportation Day" and, by joint resolution approved May 14, 1962 (36 U.S.C. 133), declared that the week in which that Friday falls be designated "National Transportation Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Friday, May 21, 1999, as National Defense Transportation Day and May 16 through May 22, 1999, as National Transportation Week. I urge all Americans to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth 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, 11:25 a.m., May 18, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

### **Remarks Prior to Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 18, 1999*

**President Clinton.** Well, let me just begin by saying how delighted I am to have His Majesty here today. The United States values our relationship with Jordan very much. We hope to have a discussion about the opportunity and the obligation we have to continue the peace process in the Middle East. I think we've both talked to Prime Minister-elect Barak about that.

And we are also very much committed to Jordan's economic renewal. And the supplemental appropriation bill now working its way through the Congress has, among other things, \$100 million in support for Jordan, and I believe it will pass in the next few days, so I'm very encouraged by that.

And I'm delighted to have you here, Your Majesty.

### **Israeli Election and Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** What would be the first step, Mr. President, towards a renewal, a revival of the peace process? Do you have anything in mind, I mean, have you set any dates?

**President Clinton.** No. Well, we have to, first of all, await the formation of a government in Israel. They probably have only known for a few hours what the distribution of the vote is by parties, in terms of what the composition of the Knesset will be. And so I think General Barak is entitled to a few days to put a government together.

**Q.** Why do you have so many hopes about this? I mean, why are you suddenly encouraged?

**President Clinton.** Well, I think that, clearly, the whole issue of the peace process was an issue; and I think because of his military service, the question of General Barak's devotion to the security of Israel is not in question. But he has evidenced an intention to continue the peace process. And if he's willing to do it, I think that we're certainly both willing to do it and we're hopeful that we'll have a chance to do so.

**Q.** Mr. President, what can the United States do to help further this peace process at this point?

**President Clinton.** Well, we have an accord at Wye to implement and we have a lot of work to do on the final status issues. I think the roadmap is out there. And we'll do what we've always done. I've been working at this for 6 years, and I'm looking forward to continuing. I'll do what I have done under all the previous leadership of Israel and what we have worked very closely with Jordan to do.

### **Jordanian Economy**

**Q.** Mr. President, the U.S. and you, personally, have been very supportive to Jordan in the past few months. What immediate plans do you have now to help Jordan's economy, in addition to the \$100 million?

**President Clinton.** Well, that's what—we're going to have a conversation about that. I hope that Jordan can receive some relief on its debt problem from other countries. The United States has already done about all we can on that; we've done quite a bit.

But I think other nations could do more to help Jordan, and I know His Majesty has been working on that. And I would like to see more action on that, and I will do what I can to support that.

#### **Apache Helicopters in Kosovo**

**Q.** Why is the United States, sir, stalling the use of Apache helicopters in Kosovo?

**President Clinton.** Well, first of all, I think that's a mischaracterization. This is a military campaign with clear objectives. And military leaders will make their decisions about when and under what circumstances to use the Apaches. As General Clark and others have made clear, when the weather is good, as it generally is at this time of year, most of what the Apaches could do can be done with the A-10s at less risk.

But those are judgments there being made; I don't really understand this implication that the United States is stalling. They're a military asset that's there; they're there to be used under appropriate circumstances when the military commanders decide that it should be done. It's not a political decision in any way, and it should not be.

#### **Ground Troops**

**Q.** With the air war now in its second month, are you giving more consideration to ground troops?

**President Clinton.** Well, first of all, I think the air war has accomplished quite a bit, and there's a lot more that it can accomplish. I, and everyone else, has always said that we intend to see our objectives achieved and that we have not, and will not, take any option off the table.

But we are making progress, and I am convinced that we will achieve our objectives one way or the other. And I'm very hopeful, obviously, that the diplomatic efforts that are being made in the State Department and with the Russians will bear some fruit. But if they do not, we will continue to press ahead. But I do believe that they've done an excellent job and—now over 20,000 sorties—a great deal of what we have been trying to accomplish has been done. I don't think that we or our Allies should take any options off the table and that has been my position from the beginning, but we ought

to stay with the strategy we have and work it through to the end.

#### **Jordan-U.S. Relations/Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** Your Majesty, what do you hope your talks with the President will result in? And do you think the climate in Israel now is more conducive to making progress in the peace process?

**King Abdullah.** Well, I think we have many issues to discuss with the President, and one of the main things is to thank the overwhelming support that the President has shown Jordan over the many years, but especially with the passing away of His Majesty. And again, the President went out of his way, and the American administration and government, to support us through this very difficult time.

Vis-a-vis, obviously, the elections in Israel were very, very optimistic. I just had the opportunity to speak to Prime Minister-elect Barak and wish him well. And we had the opportunity of seeing him in Jordan only several days ago, and we see eye-to-eye on many issues and we're very optimistic of taking the peace process forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak of Israel; and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

#### **Statement on Withdrawal of the Nomination of Brian Atwood To Be Ambassador to Brazil**

*May 18, 1999*

Today Brian Atwood asked me to withdraw his nomination to be the United States Ambassador to Brazil. I have accepted his request with reluctance and regret.

Few people in public life have better combined the qualities of professional competence and moral purpose. Brian Atwood has served with distinction as Administrator

of the Agency for International Development, making it more effective while tenaciously defending its mission and its independence. He has helped put the fight against poverty, civil strife, and disease in the developing world at the heart of our foreign policy, where it belongs, and where I am confident it will stay. When I asked him last month to lead America's effort to bring aid to the refugees escaping Kosovo, I knew we would be getting the very best. That is what America gets every time Brian Atwood goes to work.

In his statement today, he said that Washington owes us nothing but the "opportunity to serve." I believe we owe Brian Atwood something more: our gratitude for continually making a difference in the lives of millions of people around the world.

I thank him for his many contributions and for his willingness to stay on as our AID Administrator, where he is doing an outstanding job as our Kosovo humanitarian coordinator. And I am confident he will have many opportunities to serve our Nation again.

### **Statement on Senate Action on Legislation Requiring Child Safety Locks for Guns**

*May 18, 1999*

I want to commend the Senate for reversing its position of last year and voting overwhelmingly today to require that child safety locks be provided with every gun sold. This was a courageous, commonsense vote that will help prevent tragic shootings and gun-related accidents in the future.

I also want to thank Speaker Hastert for agreeing that we should close the gun show loophole and raise the age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21. The Senate should likewise put progress over politics and give its strong backing to these reasonable measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. I urge Senator Lott to let the Senate keep working on the juvenile crime bill and give every Senator the chance to vote on these commonsense provisions.

### **Statement on the Cease-Fire Agreement in Sierra Leone**

*May 18, 1999*

I welcome the signing of a cease-fire agreement today in Lome, Togo, by President Kabbah of Sierra Leone and the leader of the Revolutionary United Front rebels, Foday Sankoh. I want to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Economic Community of West African States, and to the U.N. for helping to bring about this agreement which marks an important first step towards peace.

The conflict in Sierra Leone has killed tens of thousands of people—6,000 in the first month of this year alone. Half a million men, women, and children have become refugees, and one-fifth of Sierra Leone's population has been uprooted.

With the continued commitment and engagement of both parties, the cease-fire and the confidence-building measures outlined in the agreement today can pave the way for the negotiation of a durable peace agreement. I welcome the agreement as a step toward providing for guaranteed safe and unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to all people in need, and hope that the world might soon witness an end to the needless suffering of Sierra Leone's people.

I urge all parties to implement the agreement in good faith.

### **Memorandum on Assistance for Kosovar Refugees**

*May 18, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99-23

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to \$15 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to meet urgent

and unexpected humanitarian requirements associated with the Kosovo crisis.

These funds will be used to meet the urgent and unexpected needs of refugees, displaced persons, victims of conflict, and other persons at risk due to the Kosovo crisis. These funds may be used, as appropriate, to provide contributions to governmental, international, and nongovernmental organizations. As necessary, funds will also support requirements associated with the U.S. program to provide refuge in the United States for up to 20,000 Kosovar refugees, and for administrative expenses of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

You are authorized and directed to inform the appropriate committees of the Congress of this determination and the use of funds under this authority, and to arrange for the publication of this determination in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Memorandum on the Korean Energy Development Organization**

*May 18, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99-24

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* U.S. Contribution to KEDO: Certification Under Section 582(c) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as enacted in Public Law 105-277

Pursuant to section 582(c) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as enacted in Public Law 105-277, I hereby certify that:

- (1) the United States has initiated meaningful discussions with North Korea on implementation of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula;
- (2) the United States has reached agreement with North Korea on the means for satisfying U.S. concerns regarding suspect underground construction; and
- (3) the United States is making significant progress on reducing and eliminating

the North Korean ballistic missile threat, including its ballistic missile exports.

You are authorized and directed to report this certification to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma**

*May 18, 1999*

On May 20, 1997, I issued Executive Order 13047, effective at 12:01 a.m., eastern daylight time on May 21, 1997, certifying to the Congress under section 570(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208), that the Government of Burma has committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma after September 30, 1996, thereby invoking the prohibition on new investment in Burma by United States persons, contained in that section. I also declared a national emergency to deal with the threat posed to the national security and foreign policy of the United States by the actions and policies of the Government of Burma, invoking the authority, *inter alia*, of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701-1706).

The national emergency declared on May 20, 1997, must continue beyond May 20, 1999, because the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Burma. This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
May 18, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:08 p.m., May 18, 1999]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting the Notice of  
Continuation of the National  
Emergency With Respect to Burma**  
*May 18, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to Burma is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 1999.

As long as the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma, this situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 20, 1999.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
May 18, 1999.

**Remarks on Departure for  
New York City**  
*May 19, 1999*

**Reauthorization of the Elementary and  
Secondary Education Act**

Good morning. I'm delighted to be joined this morning by the Secretary of Education and by my Domestic Policy Adviser, Bruce Reed, to discuss the very important issue of our children's schools.

In my State of the Union Address this year, I said that in order to meet our responsibility to create 21st century schools for all our chil-

dren, we have to do a far, far better job of spending the \$15 billion in Federal aid we send to our schools every year.

Building these kinds of schools has been a passion for me, for the Vice President, for Secretary Riley, for our entire administration. We have worked with Members of Congress and education leaders, people in every State of the country, for over 6 years now. We have supported higher standards, better teachers, new technology, modern facilities, innovations like charter schools, character education, school uniforms.

But we know fundamentally that if we are going to change the way our schools work, we must change the way we invest Federal aid in our schools.

On the way down here, just down the walk, the Secretary of Education said we have been working very hard to promote school standards around the country; now we have to get the standards actually into the schools. This week I am sending legislation to Congress designed to do just that.

First, this legislation strengthens accountability for results. It says that States and school districts that choose to accept Federal aid must take responsibility for turning around failing schools, or shutting them down. It says they must give parents report cards not just on their children but on the children's schools. It says school districts must have strong discipline codes that are fair, consistent, and focused on prevention. It says they must make sure that teachers actually know the subjects they are teaching. It says they must stop the practice of social promotion, not by holding students back but by making sure they have the support to meet the higher standards.

This legislation triples funding for after-school and summer school programs, provides for smaller classes, and requires other early interventions that lift students up.

Second, this legislation will put more highly trained teachers in our Nation's schools. It requires that all new teachers pass subject matter and skills tests, that all teachers be given the support they need to improve their knowledge and skills. It allows Congress to finish the job we started last fall of hiring 100,000 new, highly trained teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

Finally, the legislation will help give all our children safe, healthy, and disciplined learning environments. For the first time, it will require schools to adopt comprehensive school safety plans, use proven antidrug and antiviolence prevention programs, intervene with troubled youth, establish security procedures for schools, and give parents an annual report of drug and violent incidents at their children's schools.

It also expands the character education efforts the Secretary of Education has done so much to advance, promotes alternative schools for disruptive students, and strengthens our policy of zero tolerance for guns by requiring that any student expelled for bringing a gun to school receive appropriate treatment and counseling before being allowed back into class.

As I said yesterday, we must do everything we can to keep guns out of the hands of our children. I want to commend the Senate for yesterday's overwhelming, bipartisan support for child safety locks. And I commend Speaker Hastert for his leadership in supporting background checks at gun shows and for raising the age of handgun ownership to 21. I urge the Senate to keep working on the justice bill—the juvenile justice bill—and to bring these commonsense measures to a vote.

Now, these education ideas are not Democratic or Republican, nor were they dreamed up in Washington. They were invented and proven successful in the laboratories of democracy at the school, city, and State levels. They preserve and enhance the flexibility that States and districts need to run successful schools. If the Federal Government fails to act, the best of these practices will spread, but much more slowly. Just remember, it took 100 years for laws mandating universal education to spread from a few States to every State. That pace of change might have been all right in the 19th century; it won't do in the 21st. We do not have the luxury of waiting and continuing to subsidize failure.

Nothing we can do will more surely unite our people and strengthen our Nation than giving all of our children a high-quality education. We know what works. Our schools, our educators have shown us what works. It is time to put that as a condition of success

in the investment of Federal aid in every child in America. And I want to thank the Secretary of Education and Mr. Reed and everyone else who has worked on this program.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

### **Remarks at the Launching of the Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation in New York City**

*May 19, 1999*

Thank you very much. Chairman Gargano, Governor, Secretary Slater, thank you all for all you have done to make this day come to pass. I thank the leaders of Amtrak, the MTA, the Port Authority, the Post Office; Mr. Peck, the Commissioner of Public Buildings; the distinguished architect who has drawn a beautiful plan. Speaker Vallone, Mr. Green, Senator D'Amato, thank you for pushing this. And Mrs. Moynihan, you haven't yet been acknowledged, but you had a lot to do with the arm twisting on this, and I thank you, too. Thank you very much.

Senator Moynihan has been called the Nation's best thinker among politicians since Lincoln, and its best politician among thinkers since Jefferson. Today we might say he also may be the best arm twister since Farley. *[Laughter]* You know, it was said that Jim Farley actually knew the names of 50,000 people by heart. Pat Moynihan knows 50,000 ways to get any politician to do what he wants. *[Laughter]*

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the fact that he gave me an opportunity to be a small part of this day and this project. For decades he has worked to give voice to the dreams of New Yorkers, to create a new Penn Station truly worthy of the name and of this wonderful city.

If I can borrow a few words from the famous inscription on this building: Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night could have stopped Pat Moynihan from bringing this day to pass.

Throughout his public career, which has spanned so many different jobs in so many different places in the United States and

abroad, Senator Moynihan has always cared about preserving our history and our spirit through our great buildings. Nearly 40 years ago, President Kennedy challenged him to revitalize Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue, to bring back civic pride to the heart of our Nation's Capital. He never gave up on that goal, a job he completed with the dedication of the Ronald Reagan Building a year ago this month.

Thirty-five years ago, when I went to Washington, DC, for the first time as a wide-eyed college student, Pennsylvania Avenue was a mess and a disaster. Today, it is a tribute to our history, to our values, and to our future, thanks to the vision of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Many people also forget that in addition to helping to rescue Union Station in Washington and Grand Central Station here—which he was whispering in my ear about while we were waiting for our turn—back in 1962 he authored the wise principles that guide the Federal Government's architecture decisions today. In the words of your distinguished architect, David Childs, Senator Moynihan is a true inspiration to everyone working in architecture and urban design.

This latest project also, as he and others have said, is an example of how this Senator and his allies have also fundamentally changed the way we invest in transportation. He has secured vast resources not simply for concrete and for mass transit, but for communities, for historic preservation, and for advanced technologies to meet the 21st century needs of America.

I thank him and Senator D'Amato and Secretary Slater for fighting to see that we did not turn the transportation bill in Washington into just another road-building bill, without any concerns for the needs of urban America and others who need mass transit, intermodal transportation, and a broader vision of how we will reconcile our desire to have livable, sustainable communities and to get around in a hurry. He did that, along with the others, and I thank them all. New York can be very, very proud of every one of them.

Let me finally say that this Penn Station—I was astonished by how brief Senator Moynihan was, but I noticed that the closer he

comes to getting his way, the shorter his speeches get. [Laughter] Back in '93, when he first talked to me about it, I got the whole load of wax, man. [Laughter] I knew everybody—I knew the people who had planted the explosives on Penn Station in the '60s. [Laughter] I knew the whole history of the thing. And as we made progress, you know, his words became fewer as his satisfaction increased. But I think it's worth noting that this journey to this moment has not only been a public service, but a point of personal pride for this quintessential New Yorker and American.

Senator Moynihan grew up in this neighborhood, shined shoes around the corner. As a young ensign, he used to fall asleep in the rooms off Penn Station's grand ticketing hall as he waited for his train back to Norfolk. Grand public buildings like the old Penn Station and the New York Public Library became like home, especially for a boy whose family kept moving to a new apartment just about every year.

I tell you this story not only to capture what this journey must mean for him but to remind us of the fundamental significance of our great public buildings. Because whether you are a wealthy industrialist or just a person with a few dollars to your name, you can feel ennobled, as people did—ordinary citizens and great ones alike—in the old glass and steel cathedral that was Penn Station. People without tickets could come to the old Penn Station in the afternoon just to dream about what it would be like to get on the train, and watching the crowds go by.

When I was a young man, I used to go to train stations and watch people and wonder what they were doing, where they were going, and I always felt better when I walked out than when I walked in. I'll bet nearly everybody here has had a similar experience.

Now, Mr. Childs' design is not intended to replicate the old Penn Station, but it will have, as you see, the same stunning effect for everyone. Here in this beautiful McKim, Mead, and White building the Postal Service has graciously now agreed to share, this design will take the best elements of the past and create a remarkable station for the future.

Of course, there will be some hurdles—the environmental and historic preservation requirements, which I’m quite certain will be met—but the other hurdle is money. One of Clinton’s laws of politics is, if someone stands up and shakes his finger and says to you, “this is not a money problem” he is almost always talking about someone else’s problem. [Laughter] I want to do what I can to help close the funding gap. I will ask the Congress to increase the Federal commitment to this project by \$60 million over the next 3 years.

As a tribute to Senator Moynihan, and because it’s the right thing to do, I hope that Members in both parties, in both Houses, will join with me to secure this funding. We’re not quite there yet. Others will have to do more as well. But if we all do our part, we can honor one of the first great buildings of the 20th century and create the first great public building of the 21st century. In so doing, New York once again can provide a model for the entire Nation.

The First Lady and I have worked very hard to help communities to honor the past and preserve it as part of our gift to the new millennium. Just today she awarded the first Save America’s Treasures grants, to help meet urgent preservation needs across our Nation, from conserving the second largest collection of Thomas Jefferson’s personal correspondence, to restoring Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, Ebenezer Baptist Church.

I know our Nation is still young, and sometimes still we lose sight of the enormous value of the history that is embodied in our buildings, our documents, our artifacts, our monuments. We must do better in preserving the past, and in building new buildings and monuments which capture our vision of the future, the enduring commitment we have to our freedom, and the public space that makes community more possible, and reminds us of our common humanity across all the lines that divide us.

That is what this building will do. I hope at this moment of great prosperity and optimism for the United States, we will use the example of this project to redouble our determination to build great buildings and dream big dreams for the future.

Again, I want to thank all of you who never gave up on this ambitious project. I want to urge you never to give up on it until it is completely finished. And on behalf of Senator Moynihan, Senator D’Amato, myself, and all others who will be out of office when it is finally done, I hope you’ll invite us to the building dedication.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the James A. Farley Building. In his remarks, he referred to Charles A. Gargano, chairman of the board, Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; architect David Childs; Peter F. Vallone, New York City council speaker; Mark Green, New York City public advocate; former Senator Alfonse M. D’Amato; and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s wife, Elizabeth.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in New York City**

*May 19, 1999*

Thank you very much. First of all, I want to say a real thank you to Jack and to Phyllis for having us here. I’ve been in their home in New Jersey; I’ve never been here before, and I wanted to come. And as you can see from the pictures on the wall, the Vice President has been here. [Laughter] And I’ve been rather jealous of this. [Laughter] To say this is an interesting house would be an understatement. [Laughter] And I’m just delighted to be here. And I thank them for opening their home to us.

I also want to thank Gerry Ferraro for being here. And Congressman Kostmayer, thank you for being here. And I want to thank Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and Fran Katz and everybody at the DNC for the work they’ve done.

You know, Joe and I, we just finished a western swing; Joe and Beth and I, we’ve been out on the west coast. And about every time he got up to introduce me, he said, “You know, we’re going to win every election from the White House to dogcatcher.” And I keep pointing out to him that that is not such a great distance. [Laughter] He acts like that’s such an encompassing term, you know.

[Laughter] He hasn't been paying attention to Washington lately. [Laughter]

But let me say, I just came—a lot of you know this, but I just came from a remarkable event with Senator Moynihan and the Governor and a lot of the transportation authorities here. We announced new plans for the new Penn Station and the old Farley Post Office Building. And a lot of you—you probably saw, the last day or 2, the New York Times had a nice piece on the architectural plans and what was going to be done. But this is something that Pat Moynihan talked to me about way back in '93. And I also announced that we were going to put \$60 million in our budget over the next 3 years to help pay more of the Federal share to build this. But I wanted to sort of use it as a metaphor for the point I want to make here.

For whatever reason, I think nearly everybody who has been involved in this project has been captured by the idea of it. And most everybody with any sense of the past at all deeply regrets the fact that the old Penn Station was destroyed and, with it, a lot of memories of New York and of magnificent architectural creation.

And so anyway, this little project, it was like a lot of Pat Moynihan's ideas. It was a little bit ahead of its time, and it took a while to catch hold. But I signed on early and told him to just call me back when there was something to do.

And so slowly it sort of picked up steam and people kind of got together. So we announced it today, and everybody felt so good about it. And I was trying to think to myself why they felt so good about it. I think it's because it captures the past and it also throws people into the future in a way they feel good about, because beautiful public spaces really help us to build a community across all the lines that divide us; maybe because nearly everybody alive can remember sometime in his or her life, maybe when we were all much younger and had more free time, when we were sitting in a train station just watching people go by, felt free and kind of elevated by it.

But I say that because, to me, what I've tried to do for the United States is to give us a sense that we could meet all our challenges but that we had to meet them to-

gether. That meant that everybody had a role to play and some citizen responsibility. It also means that with all of our diversity, which ought to be celebrated, not just tolerated but celebrated, we have to realize that what binds us together is even more important.

And the story of the last 6 years has been an effort to try to take the ideas that I developed over a long period of time and that I developed a belief in, and that I talked to the American people about in '92 and again in '96, and turn those ideas into policies that then could be made real in the lives of the American people.

And I'm very grateful for the good things that have happened in this country. But I came here today to say to you that for whatever role I played in it, I think the far more important contributing factor was that we had the right ideas, rooted in the right vision of America, and we had a good team and we showed up for work every day. And we intend to continue doing it down to the last day.

That elicited a few laughs, but anybody that's ever watched any national capital in politics knows that it's no small achievement to get your team to show up for work every day, because an enormous amount of time and energy is always devoted to trying to divide your team and distract them and wonder who's dropping the dime on whom in the morning paper, so they won't work. Instead, they'll spend all their time calling each other names or being torn up and upset or worrying about something other than the people's business.

So I am here today because for whatever role I have played in this, I know the most important thing was that we had the right vision and the right ideas, and we brought teamwork, and we showed up for work every day. And we need to keep doing that. And America needs to make that decision again. And every time you give the people a chance to have a referendum on whether they want politics to be about politicians and the politics of personal destruction or whether they want it to be about people and progress and unity, they always make the right choice. But you have to put the choice before them which means we need good candidates and

they have to be adequately financed, and we have to keep the message out there.

The other point I'd like to make rather briefly is that I think it's quite important for us, even though we have now reached a point where Presidential elections almost take 2 years, which I think is wrong—I actually—I announced in October of '91, 13 months before the election. And that was a short campaign. I waged a short campaign. But I think it's very important, particularly for the Democrats, because we have been the party of vision and progress and of trying to pull the country together and not drive wedges among the people—it's particularly important for us to keep working, to keep working, to keep producing.

There are things which won't wait until 2001. For example, Jack mentioned that we'd balanced the budget, and we now have the biggest surplus ever. I have offered the Congress a plan that would save Social Security and Medicare and actually pay the publicly held debt of the United States down to its lowest point since before World War I in 15 years.

Now, why do I think that's a good idea? Because I think it will keep interest rates lower and investment higher and create more jobs and raise incomes. It will also make us relatively less dependent on international capital markets at a time when I am doing my very best to stabilize them, so we don't have another Asian financial crisis, and we don't have to worry about spending an enormous amount of money to keep it from spreading to Brazil or all the things that those of you in finance know we have been working on the last 2 years.

But I can't say for sure what will happen 10 years from now. I can say for sure, 10 years from now, that if we have a terrible recession and we have to deficit spend, it will be a lot better to do it if we've got a much lower debt base than we have. I can say for sure that if there's another round of global turmoil 10 years from now, we'll be much more immune to it if we've got a smaller debt and our interest rate structures are smaller.

So these are important things. We need to do them now. We don't need to be waiting around. We need to continue our efforts at educational excellence. Today I introduced

a bill into Congress—I announced it just before I came up here—every 5 years we have to reauthorize the general bill by which we give Federal money to public schools in New York and everywhere else. It's called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. By and large, this money is given to help schools that have a lot of poor kids or a lot of kids whose first language is not English or a lot of kids who have special needs—disabilities—their targeted aid. And a lot of it is given to provide for other kind of special purposes, technology in the schools and things like that.

None of it, however, is related to results. I have been working for 6 years to get everybody to embrace the idea that we had to have standards and accountability, and we ought to do a better job making sure teachers know the subjects they're teaching and all this. But we've never really been able to move these standards into the schools. So it's basically—whether they're being observed or not is a function of the character of the local leadership or the commitment of the local political leadership or the State leadership.

We now have a chance to actually change the way schools work. If we say, okay, for the next 5 years we're going to take all the research that has been done and take the uncontestable findings and make the pursuit of those findings a condition of the money—no social promotion but don't say the kids are failures; give them all summer school or after-school programs—this works. Identify the schools that are failing and turn them around or close them down, let the kids go some place else. Have charter schools, have districtwide school choice. Do something to give the kids other choices.

Those are just a couple of examples of the kinds of things that I think we have to do. We also—I have to tell you, though, it's not—the Federal Government and others are going to have to find a way to put more money into teaching because we're going to have a 2-million teacher shortage the next decade, with more kids coming into the schools.

Now, we already have too many teachers out there, teaching science and math courses,

especially, for which they have not been academically prepared, and in which they, themselves, have not passed performance exams. So it's all very well—we've got to invest more money in this, and we've got to be more flexible about getting people into teaching in all kinds of ways that actually know the subjects we expect them to teach.

So these are some of the things that are in this bill. I think this is quite important. This could have a lot to do with what America looks like 10 years from now. If we can't give—everybody knows we've got the best higher education system in the world and, relatively speaking, a higher percentage of people going into colleges than other countries. No one seriously believes that we're giving all of our kids the best elementary and secondary education in the world. And until we can do that, we won't be able to take full advantage of this astonishing diversity in our student body.

And I think this is, by the way, a huge asset for us in the global economy, to have all these kids from all these different countries. Just go to the New York school system and look. This is a big deal. This is a plus, not a minus. This is a good thing in a global society to have this but only if we can give these kids a chance to learn what they need to know to do well in the world they will become adults in.

Let me just mention one or two other things. The aftermath—Hillary and I are going out to Littleton, Colorado tomorrow. And the aftermath of that shooting, I think, has had an even more profound impact on the country than all the school shootings last year did. And you can see it by what is happening in the Congress now. I think there is finally a feeling that it's time for everybody to stop making excuses; it's time for everybody to stop trying to place blame, and instead just basically say, "I would like to assume whatever my share of responsibility is for giving a safe childhood back to our children."

And there's something for the gun people, the entertainment people, and the Government people to do. There's also something for the school people and the parents to do, and the kids, themselves. But I would just like to make a couple of points.

Number one, the American people can take a lot of pride in the fact that in the United States Senate—that would never have passed any reasonable gun control on a bet 6 months ago—over 70 Senators last night voted to impose child trigger locks on the gun manufacturers. They voted to raise the age of handgun ownership to 21. And they voted on—I don't like the bill they voted for because it's got too many loopholes, but at least they're moving toward closing the gun show loophole.

The Speaker of the House yesterday came out for closing the gun show loophole and for raising the gun ownership age to 21. This is good. The Democrats who have been for this for years should reach out the hand across the aisle and say, "Look, this is good."

We've come a long way since 1994 when one of the principal reasons we lost the House of Representatives in the '94 election was the lobbying of the NRA against our Members who voted for the crime bill, with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. Ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania, he knows. We lost at least a dozen and perhaps as many as 20 seats solely because of this. This is a different country than it was then.

And the grieving of the American people for these children and the recognition that these two young men, who had gone to such a dark place in their own minds, had a Tec-9 and were making bombs, large numbers of them, I think it really registered on people. And we have a chance, therefore, to do something good.

While I was in California last weekend I told the entertainment community I thought that they should stop advertising what is violent that might be shown to kids who couldn't see the movies or rent the movies or the video games; that the advertising—people who are exposed to the advertising ought to be rated in the same way that the people who are exposed to the underlying product, and that the whole rating system ought to be reevaluated in terms of gratuitous violence.

Now, this doesn't mean that the people that manufacture guns or the people that manufacture movies or video games are personally responsible for anything. But it does mean—we know this—we know that kids are

spending more time on their own, less unsupervised time, that their parents, when they're with them, are more tired because they're often working two jobs, than at any previous time. We know this. And therefore, we know that there will be more of them who will be vulnerable.

And if that is true, and you have easier access to guns and explosives, on the one hand, and on the other hand, you have now over 300 studies that say that sustained exposure to violence—and the average 18-year-old has now seen 40,000 televised murders on movies or TV or a video screen—40,000—and we know that the vulnerable among us are made more vulnerable, then the whole mixture is a cauldron out of which some dramatically terrible things will happen.

And you don't have to blame anybody personally for this, but we all have to say, "Look, we've got to do something about this." Then I think there has to be a national grassroots campaign in every community involving religious institutions and schools and other groups patterned on what the Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving did, patterned on the national anti-teen-pregnancy campaign—grassroots, value-based, personal contact with all these kids to try to really dramatically reduce this. And believe me, it can be done.

The last thing I'd like to say is, I've been in a lot of schools and there are—some schools do better than others with counseling programs, with peer mediation programs, with intervention programs that ultimately lead to mental health for the kids who need it, and also with just trying to set an environment in which people are encouraged to be in groups, but the groups are not encouraged to look down on one another and provoke social discord. I mean, there's a lot that can be done in the schools by the students.

And finally—a person came up to me the other day—everybody says, we need to do more to try to make it easier for parents not to lose touch with their kids. And anybody who has ever raised a child through adolescence knows that it's an interesting challenge. I mean, you want your child to become independent, to have space, to begin even to have things that aren't necessarily shared

with you. But you don't want to lose the connecting cord.

And we have—it's interesting, isn't it, that we think we should get help in education and instruction and support for everything from losing weight to improving our athletic skills, to figuring out how to use a computer to how to make money in the stock market. And yet, we don't think anybody ought to have instruction in the most important things in life. And this grassroots campaign ought to be out there helping parents to deal with the challenge of having their children come of age and get that independence they're entitled to without severing the cord that they don't want severed. This is a big deal.

And you know, our family and Al and Tipper Gore, we've worked on a lot of these issues for years and years and years. And we're going to spend a lot of time on this in the next 18 months.

The last thing I'd like to say—I'd like to say just a word about the world, because people are so interested, especially in the crisis in Kosovo now. We have tried in the last 6 years to be a force for peace, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Bosnia. We've tried to be a force for reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and we've made a lot of progress in that and for standing up against terrorism and the emerging threats of biological and chemical weapons in the hands of organized criminals or terrorists. We've worked on all that. And we've tried to expand global prosperity through trade initiatives.

But I think it's ironic—and Jack said it at lunch, he said, "It's interesting to me, in this great, modern world we live in, we still can't figure out what to do about genocide"—since that's what World War II was really about. And I think if you think about what characterizes the modern age in a positive sense—an explosion of technology, especially in the telecommunications area; computer science increasingly being merged with the biological sciences, so that when the human genome project is completed we'll be able to get a map of—the genetic map of ourselves and our children and our grandchildren, and it should move us very rapidly over the next 15 years to another dramatic increase in life

expectancy. So that's the first thing, this explosion of technology and its immersion with telecommunications and with the biological sciences.

And then the second thing is the world getting closer together, national borders becoming more porous, the interconnections of people becoming closer. Isn't it ironic when we're dreaming of our children all learning how to speak different languages, having E-mail pen pals in Asia and Africa and Latin America, and all this sort of interesting stuff that we want to dream about, that the number one problem we're facing in the world today is the incredible, durable persistence of the oldest demon of human society, the fear of people who are different from us. And the fear leads to loathing. The loathing leads to dehumanization. The dehumanization leads to the justification of killing. And the justification of killing then often leads to the justification of systematic killing, based on racial or ethnic or religious difference.

But it is the oldest problem of human society. And it is a true irony that when we—I look at these young people here, and I think: Gosh, the world they'll live in 30 years from now will be full of things that I can't even imagine. Will they really be burdened by this primordial madness that manifested itself in Bosnia or in the little villages of Rwanda, where 700,000 people at least were hacked to death in a hundred days, in a country not a colonial creation, those people had been living together for 500 years, or Bosnia, where a quarter of a million people died, and 2½ million people were made prisoners, and mosques were burned, and libraries and museums were burned up, and books were destroyed that were priceless—or what's going on in Kosovo?

Will the people of Northern Ireland take the last step that's still hanging them up to make peace? Will the evident desire of the voters in Israel for peace and security find a concrete expression in the next few months?

The biggest problem to all of it is when it gets right down to the lick log, it's hard to hold hands with somebody who's really different from you and jump off into a common future. It's hard.

And I know a lot of people that question what I have done and how I have done it in Kosovo. All I can tell you is I'm convinced that I've done the right thing in the best available way. And one of the things you hire a President to do is to think about all the implications of all the options that are available. But I would far rather be here today answering the questions that I have to answer to the American people and to the press about what we have done and why we have done it and how we have done it, than I would like to be here today asking you to contribute money to our party and to our cause if I were sitting on my hands and letting those people be butchered and thrown out of their homes and plundered and their records erased.

And I think the fact—it's amazing to me how many American Jews have told me they support what we are doing for Kosovar Muslims. It is a great thing. It is something special. We have no territorial ambitions there. We have no economic ambitions there. We, in fact, are going to have to spend more money to help them rebuild the area and build it higher than it was. What we want is for our children to be able to live in the world where they can maximize the explosion of technology and maximize the openness of borders, and you cannot do that in a world where you're worried about being blown up by a terrorist who is driven by ethnic, religious, or racial hatred.

That is what this is about. It's very much in our security interests to do this. But it's because of the world toward which we're going. If this were 1950, it wouldn't be. The world we're going to live in does not need a Europe consumed, even at its edge in southeastern Europe, by this kind of hatred.

Let me just close with this story. I've been telling this for 5 days now, but I was overwhelmed last week. I had an experience which to me embodies the best in this country. Last week, at the request of our leader in the Senate, Senator Daschle, and the other four Democratic Senators from North and South Dakota and Montana, we hosted in the White House a meeting of 19 Native American tribal leaders from the upper plains States.

They are the poorest of all of our Indian tribes. And most of them don't have any gambling. They don't have any population density. And it's long way from here to there, so they don't get a lot of new investment. And they haven't been part of this great booming economy. They haven't noticed that the stock market went from 3,200 to 11,000 in the last 6½ years. It just totally escaped them. I mean, they haven't felt this.

So they came to the White House. And the first thing they did was, they said, well, now—and we met in the Roosevelt Room, which is a room that some of you have been in—it's commemorated, basically dedicated to Franklin and Eleanor and Theodore Roosevelt. And Theodore Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize is on the mantelpiece there, which he got for helping to end the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.

So they say, "Well, can we get all this stuff out of here and sit in a circle? That's our custom." So we get the table out and everybody is sitting in a circle. And a lot of Cabinet members were there. And their spokesperson was a 6'6" tribal chief named Tex Hall—not exactly your Native American name, but anyway, that's his name. [*Laughter*] So he gets up and speaks and then everybody speaks, and they talked about the education concerns and the health care and the economic concerns. And I came in about midway through the meeting; they all were talking. So at the end, Chief Hall, he stands up again, and he said, "I want to tell you something." He said, "There's something else we want to do before we go." He said, "We have a proclamation here we have signed supporting what you are doing in Kosovo," representing the poorest Americans, right, and the first Americans. He said, "You see, Mr. President, we know something about ethnic cleansing. And our country has made a lot of progress, and here we are today, and we think we should stand up against it."

And then this other young man said that he wanted to speak. And he represented one of the tribes in South Dakota. He wasn't very tall, and he had this beautiful piece of Indian

jewelry on around his neck, silver jewelry. And he said this—you think about this when you leave here today, about what kind of country you want in the 21st century—he said, "Mr. President, I had two uncles. One of them was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the American military. My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Calvary at Wounded Knee," he said, "and here I am in the White House." He said, "We have come a long way from my great-great-grandfather to my uncles to this day. I have only one son and he means more to me than anything. I would be proud for him to go and fight against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo." He said, "We know what is right now." And you could not hear anyone breathe in that room.

I ask you to think about that. This is a different country than it was 6½ years ago. It needs to be a different country 6½ years from now. We have still so much to do. But if you made me choose one thing I could do in the next nearly 2 years I've got left, it would be to bring the American people closer together, not to give up our fights and our disagreements and our arguments but to just remember this is quite an extraordinary place. We have had quite a journey. We have a lot to do at home and abroad, and we'll be able to do it if we don't forget that what binds us together is more important than all the things that divide us.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Jack and Phyllis Rosen; former Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine A. Ferraro; former Congressman Peter H. Kostmayer; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and Fran Katz, national finance director, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George Pataki of New York; Columbine High School gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

**Statement on House Commerce Committee Action on the “Work Incentives Improvement Act”**

*May 19, 1999*

I commend the House Commerce Committee for its overwhelming bipartisan support for the “Work Incentives Improvement Act” today. By unanimously endorsing this legislation, the committee has taken an important step towards removing significant barriers to work for one of our Nation’s most significant untapped resources—millions of people with disabilities. The committee’s action, under the leadership of Chairman Bliley and Congressman Dingell, parallels the overwhelmingly bipartisan support that the Roth/Moynihan/Jeffords/Kennedy version of this legislation received from the Senate Finance Committee.

Americans with disabilities can and do bring tremendous energy and talent to the American workforce, but the unemployment rate for all working-age adults with disabilities is nearly 75 percent. One of the most glaring problems is that people with disabilities frequently become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they go back to work. This puts people with disabilities in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and work. The “Work Incentives Improvement Act” would improve job opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing access to health care and employment services.

Justin Dart, one of the foremost leaders of the disability community, has said that the “Work Incentives Improvement Act” is “one of the boldest since the landmark passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.” As I indicated in my State of the Union Address, I could not agree more with him. I urge Speaker Hastert and Majority Leader Lott to move promptly to schedule votes on this important and long overdue legislation.

**Memorandum on Assessment of Space Launch Vehicles**

*May 19, 1999*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense*

*Subject: Assessment of Space Launch Vehicles*

Our national space transportation capabilities are critical to the overall strength and stability of our commercial, civil, and national security space sectors.

As we enter the 21st century, reliable access to space will be more important than ever in accomplishing our national goals. It is vitally important that we fully understand the root causes behind the recent launch vehicle failures and take corrective action. Therefore, I request that you, in coordination with the Director of Central Intelligence and the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), provide me with an interim report in 90 days and a final report in 180 days on the causes of these failures and actions required to ensure our future access to space.

I have asked Dr. Neal Lane, my Assistant for Science and Technology, to work closely with you, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Administrator of NASA on this important issue.

**William J. Clinton**

cc: The Director of Central Intelligence, The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, The Assistant to the President for Science and Technology

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

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Iraq’s Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions**

*May 19, 1999*

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

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution

(Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). My last report consistent with Public Law 102-1, was transmitted on March 3, 1999.

### **Overview**

There have been no United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections in Iraq since December 15, 1998. On January 30, 1999, the UNSC established three assessment panels on Iraq to address disarmament, humanitarian, and Kuwait-related issues. Brazilian Ambassador to the United Nations Celso Amorim, who chaired the panels, presented the panels' conclusions to the Security Council on April 6.

The disarmament panel confirmed UNSCOM's earlier findings that Iraq has failed to comply with its obligations under UNSC resolutions, and that significant disarmament issues have not yet been resolved. It also confirmed the validity of the disarmament and monitoring plan endorsed by Resolution 715.

The humanitarian panel noted that, despite considerable improvements in the humanitarian situation since the oil-for-food program began, serious problems remain. The report highlighted the Government of Iraq's failure to order and distribute critical supplies, and its inequitable distribution practices. It also identified a significant shortfall in revenue for the oil-for-food program. This problem has been largely caused by low oil prices during the last year, but Iraq's limited oil production capabilities have also been a factor.

The Kuwait-issues panel cited Iraq's failure to comply with its requirement to provide information on Kuwaiti and other missing persons from the Gulf War, as well as its failure to comply with the requirement to return property stolen during the Gulf War, including Kuwait's national archives.

The 6-month reports submitted to the Security Council by Ambassador Butler and IAEA Director-General Mohammed El Baradei in April 1999 reflected the refusal

by Iraq to add substantively to their ability to resolve outstanding disarmament and monitoring issues. In New York, UNSCOM continued to implement its mandate: by assessing the situation on the ground in Iraq after the military action in December, by choosing new sites for future inspection, by refining inspection protocols, by continuing a dialogue with member nations to obtain information about Iraq's past and present activities, and by continuing to improve the Export-Import Monitoring Mechanism.

The United States continues to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program.

We are convinced that as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, he will continue to threaten the well-being of his people, the peace of the region and the security of the world. We will continue to contain these threats, but over the long term the best way to address them is through a new government in Baghdad. To that end, working with the Congress, we have deepened our engagement with the forces of change in Iraq to help make the opposition a more effective voice for the aspirations of the Iraqi people.

### **U.S. and Coalition Force Levels in the Gulf Region**

Saddam Hussein's record of aggressive behavior compels us to retain a highly capable force in the region in order to deter Iraq and respond to any threat it might pose to its neighbors, the reconstitution of its WMD program, or movement against the Kurds in northern Iraq. We demonstrated our resolve in mid-December when forces in the region carried out Operation Desert Fox to degrade Iraq's ability to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction and its ability to threaten its neighbors. We will continue to maintain a robust posture and have established a rapid reinforcement capability to supplement our forces in the Gulf, if needed.

Our forces that deployed to the region include land- and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a Patriot missile battalion, a mechanized battalion task force and a mix of special operations forces deployed in support of U.S.

Central Command. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel are also deployed. Because of the increased air-defense threat to coalition aircraft, we have also added a robust personnel recovery capability.

### ***Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch***

The United States and coalition partners enforcing the no-fly-zones over Iraq under Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch continue to be subject to multiple anti-aircraft artillery firings and radar illuminations, and have faced more than 35 surface-to-air missile attacks. Additionally, since the conclusion of Desert Fox, Iraqi aircraft have committed over 120 no-fly zone violations.

In response to Iraq's repeated no-fly-zone violations and attacks on our aircraft, I have authorized our aircrews to respond directly and forcibly to the increased Iraqi threat. United States and coalition forces are fully prepared and authorized to defend themselves against any Iraqi threat while carrying out their no-fly zone enforcement mission and have, when circumstances warranted, engaged various components of the Iraqi integrated air defense system. As a consequence, the Iraqi air defense system has been degraded substantially since December 1998.

### ***The Maritime Interception Force***

The multinational Maritime Interception Force (MIF), operating in accordance with Resolution 665 and other relevant resolutions, enforces U.N. sanctions in the Gulf. The U.S. Navy is the single largest component of the MIF, but it is frequently augmented by ships, aircraft, and other support from Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Kuwait, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the UAE, and the United Kingdom. Member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) provide logistical support and shipriders to the MIF and accept vessels diverted for violating U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Kuwait was especially helpful in providing significant naval and coast guard assistance. We are expanding our efforts to en-

courage participation in the MIF from nations in northern Europe and South America.

Although the export of refined petroleum products through the Gulf has significantly declined since Operation Desert Fox, the MIF continues to patrol the waters to prevent a resurgence of petroleum-product smuggling. Furthermore, the MIF provides a deterrent to ships smuggling prohibited items into Iraq in violation of U.N. sanctions and outside the parameters of the humanitarian oil-for-food program. In early April, the MIF conducted the latest in a series of periodic search operations in the far northern Gulf near the major Iraqi waterways. These operations disrupted smuggling in the region without interference from Iraq. Kuwait and the UAE have stepped up their own enforcement efforts.

In December 1998 and again in April 1999, Iraq relocated surface-to-surface missile batteries to the coastal area of the Al Faw Peninsula. The missiles in question, with a range of nearly 60 nautical miles, could reach far into the North Arabian Gulf and posed a serious threat to the MIF. The deployment of these missiles to a position from which they could engage coalition naval forces was carried out in concert with the increased attempts to shoot down aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones and constituted an enhancement of Iraq's offensive military capability in southern Iraq. On both occasions, coalition aircraft responded to the threat posed by these missiles and are authorized to continue to do so as necessary.

### ***Chemical Weapons***

April reports to the UNSC President reconfirmed January's findings that UNSCOM identified as priority chemical weapons disarmament issues: VX; 155mm mustard shells; an Iraqi Air Force file of chemical weapons documents; R-400 bombs filled with CBW (field inspections needed); and chemical weapons production equipment (field verification is needed for 18 of 20 shipping containers UNSCOM knows were moved together). The reporters identified as key monitoring priorities the ability to verify Iraqi compliance at listed facilities and to detect construction of new dual-use facilities.

### **Biological Weapons**

April reports to the UNSC President re-confirmed January's findings that UNSCOM identified as priority outstanding biological weapons disarmament issues Iraq's incomplete declarations on "the whole scope of the BW program." The declarations are important because "Iraq possesses an industrial capability and knowledge base, through which biological warfare agents could be produced quickly and in volume." The report also identified the importance of monitoring dual-use biological items, equipment, facilities, research and acquisition at 250 listed sites. The effectiveness of monitoring is "proportional to Iraq's cooperation and transparency, to the number of monitored sites, and to the number of inspectors."

### **Long-Range Missiles**

April reports to the UNSC President re-confirmed January's findings that UNSCOM identified as priority missile disarmament issues: 50 unaccounted for, SCUD conventional warheads; 500 tons of SCUD propellants, the destruction of which has not been verified; 7 Iraqi-produced SCUDs given to the army, the destruction of which cannot be verified; truckloads of major components for SCUD production that are missing; the concealment of BW warheads; and the lack of accounting for VX-filled warheads. The report identified the capability to monitor declared activities, leaps in missile technology, and changes to declared operational missiles. There are 80 listed missile sites.

### **Nuclear Weapons**

In a February 8, 1999, report to the UNSC President, IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei summarized previous IAEA assessments of Iraq's compliance with its nuclear disarmament and monitoring obligations. The report restates that "Iraq has not fulfilled its obligation to adopt measures and enact penal laws, to implement and enforce compliance with Iraq's obligations under resolutions 687 and 707, other relevant Security Council resolutions and the IAEA OMV plan, as required under paragraph 34 of that plan."

The IAEA continues to plan for long-term monitoring and verification under Resolution

715. In its February 8 report to the Security Council, it restated that monitoring must be "intrusive" and estimated annual monitoring costs would total nearly \$10 million.

### **Dual-Use Imports**

Resolution 1051 established a joint UNSCOM/IAEA unit to monitor Iraq's imports of allowed dual-use items. Iraq must notify the unit before it imports specific items that can be used in both weapons of mass destruction and civilian applications. Similarly, U.N. members must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of such dual-use items. Following the withdrawal of UNSCOM and IAEA monitors, there is no monitoring by UNSCOM or IAEA inspectors of dual-use items inside Iraq, although some limited monitoring in certain sectors can be carried out by OIP inspectors. This factor has presented new challenges for the U.N. Sanctions Committee and is taken into consideration in the approval process. The United States has placed holds on a number of contracts that might otherwise have been approved as a result.

### **The U.N.'s Oil-for-Food Program**

We continue to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program. Transition from phase four to phase five (authorized by UNSC Resolution 1210) was smooth. As in phase four, Iraq is again authorized to sell up to \$5.2 billion worth of oil every 180 days. However, because of a drop in world oil prices, Iraq was only able to pump and sell approximately \$3.1 billion worth of oil in phase four; recent increases in world prices should provide increased revenue for this phase of oil-for-food.

As of April 5, under phase five of the oil-for-food program, 340 contracts worth nearly \$1 billion have been approved. As of April 5, the United States had 145 phase four and 13 phase five contracts on hold pending clarification of questions about the proposed contracts.

Three assessment panels were formed in January to look at Iraqi disarmament, the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and Iraq's obligations regarding Kuwait. The panels presented their reports to the Security Council in April. The United States supported an examination of the current situation and exploration of ways to improve humanitarian conditions, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups such as children under age five and pregnant and nursing women. The United States has expressed its support for raising the cap on Iraqi oil exports under the oil-for-food program in order to meet humanitarian needs, and for certain other proposals made by the humanitarian assessment panel.

Resolution 1210 maintains a separate oil-for-food program for northern Iraq, administered directly by the United Nations in consultation with the local population. This program, which the United States strongly supports, receives 13 to 15 percent of the funds generated under the oil-for-food program. The separate northern program was established because of the Baghdad regime's proven disregard for the humanitarian needs of the Kurdish, Assyrian, Yezedi and Turkoman minorities of northern Iraq, and its readiness to apply the most brutal forms of repression against them. In northern Iraq areas where Baghdad does not exercise control, the oil-for-food program has been able to operate relatively effectively, as documented by the humanitarian assessment panel. The Kurdish factions have set aside their differences to work together so that Resolution 1210 is implemented as efficiently as possible.

Humanitarian programs such as oil-for-food have steadily improved the life of the average Iraqi living under sanctions (who, for example, now receives a ration basket providing over 2,000 calories per day, a significant improvement in nutrition since the program began) while denying Saddam Hussein control over oil revenues. We will continue to work with the U.N. Secretariat, the Security Council, and others in the international community to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are met while denying any political or economic benefits to the Baghdad regime.

### ***Northern Iraq: Kurdish Reconciliation***

Since their ground-breaking meeting with Secretary Albright in September 1998, Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Jalal Talabani, Chairman of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have met four times to continue their work towards full reconciliation. Both parties have condemned internal fighting, pledged to refrain from violence in settling their differences, and resolved to eliminate terrorism by establishing stronger safeguards for Iraq's borders. In particular, both parties have committed themselves to deny sanctuary to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), to eliminate all PKK bases from the region and to safeguard the Turkish border. The parties believe that key decisions on Iraq's future should be made by all the Iraqi people together at an appropriate time and through a regular political process. Their work is thus meant to implement a framework of regional administration until a united, pluralistic, and democratic Iraq is achieved. A Higher Coordination Committee (HCC) made up of senior representatives from the PUK and the KDP meets regularly in northern Iraq, and Officials of the State Department are in frequent contact with the parties to further the reconciliation process.

The United States is committed to ensuring that international aid continues to reach the north; that the human rights of the Kurds and northern Iraq minority groups such as the Turkomans, Assyrians, Yezedis, and others are respected; and that the no-fly zone enforced by Operation Northern Watch is observed. The United States will decide how and when to respond should Baghdad's action pose an increased threat to Iraq's neighbors, to regional security, to vital U.S. interests, and to the Iraqi people, including those in the north.

### ***The Human Rights Situation in Iraq***

The human rights situation in Iraq continues to fall far short of international norms, in violation of Resolution 688. For over seven years, the Iraqi government has refused to allow the U.N. Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur for Iraq, Max Van der Stoep, to visit Iraq. U.N. human rights monitors have never been allowed in. Meanwhile,

increasingly disturbing reports of the most serious nature continue to emanate from Iraq. For example, 2,500 political prisoners have been summarily executed without due process of law since Fall 1997, according to detailed reports Mr. Van der Stoel received. Often, the bodies are said to have been returned to the victim's families showing clear signs of torture.

The assassination of three of Iraq's most senior Islamic clerics is of special concern. In February, Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sader—the most senior Shia cleric in Iraq—was assassinated, along with two of his sons, after attending Friday prayers in Najaf. This follows the similar killing of Sheikh Borojourni in April 1998 and Ayatollah Ah al-Gharawi in June 1998. In each case, the killings reportedly followed months of arrests and interrogations by government security services, and have been widely attributed to agents of the regime. The deaths also come in the context of a resurgence of repression in southern Iraq, as the regime works toward the destruction of the Marsh Arabs' way of life and the unique ecology of the southern marshes. The regime also continues to ignore appeals by Mr. Van der Stoel and others for access by human rights monitors to investigate these reports.

In the north, outside the Kurdish-controlled areas, the government continues the forced expulsion of ethnic Kurds and Turkomans from Kirkuk and other cities. In recent months, hundreds of families have reportedly been expelled from Kirkuk. Reports from the Kurdish-controlled areas where the displaced persons are received indicate that they are forced to leave behind almost all of their personal property. Due to a shortage of housing, many are still living in temporary shelters.

### ***The Iraqi Opposition***

We are deepening our engagement with the forces of change in Iraq, helping Iraqis inside and outside Iraq to become a more effective voice for the aspirations of the people. We will work toward the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people—a government prepared to live in peace with its neighbors, a government that respects the rights of its citizens.

On April 7–8, the Executive Council of the Iraqi National Congress met at Windsor, in the United Kingdom. The meeting produced three important results: it elected a seven-member interim "Presidency Committee;" it created an "outreach committee" to expand the INC's membership and build links to regional states; and it decided that a meeting of the INC National Assembly would be held no later than July 7, at a site to be determined. We applaud the Council members for this constructive, forward-looking meeting.

Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska attended the meeting as U.S. observer along with Special Coordinator for the Transition of Iraq, Frank Ricciardone, as well as other State Department officials and staff from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I believe the joint U.S. Executive-Congressional team underscores the deepening cooperation within the U.S. Government on this important issue.

The interim INC Presidency Committee met for the first time on April 10. The group reportedly established a principle of rotating leadership and discussed plans to send a delegation to the United Nations to express views on humanitarian and human rights issues.

### ***The United Nations Compensation Commission***

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Resolutions 687, 692, and 1210, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued over 1.3 million awards worth over \$7 billion. Thirty percent of the proceeds from the oil sales permitted by UNSC resolutions have been allocated to the Compensation Fund to pay awards and to finance operations of the UNCC. Pursuant to decisions of the UNCC Governing Council, certain small claims are to receive initial payments of \$2,500 toward the amounts approved on those claims before large claims of individuals and claims of corporations and governments may share in the funds available for claims payments. As money from Iraqi oil sales is deposited in the Compensation Fund, the UNCC makes these initial \$2,500 payments on eligible claims in the order in which those claims were approved by the

UNCC. To date, the U.S. Government has received funds from the UNCC for initial installment payments on approximately 1,685 claims of U.S. claimants.

### **Conclusion**

Iraq remains a serious threat to international peace and security. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under Security Council resolutions. The United States looks forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member. I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

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

### **Remarks on Departure for Littleton, Colorado**

*May 20, 1999*

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I have just met with my foreign policy team, but before I speak on the situation in Kosovo, I want to say a few words about school violence. As all of you know, in a few moments I am leaving for Littleton, Colorado, where Hillary and I will meet with students and families from Columbine High School.

The news this morning of another school shooting, this one in Rockdale County in suburban Atlanta, is deeply troubling to me, as it is to all Americans. We thank God that the injuries to the students do not seem to be life threatening. This incident, again, should underscore how profoundly important it is that all Americans come together in the face of these events to protect all of our children from violence.

There is debate going on in the Senate today relevant to that, and we must press ahead aggressively with the national campaign that we met about here a week ago Monday. We have got to do this.

The national security team has just briefed me on what has been accomplished to date in Kosovo by the air campaign, on the progress of our diplomacy with our allies in Russia, on the humanitarian situation on the ground. I want to speak about some of the recent developments, but first I want to say a word about one person who has been critical to our efforts in Kosovo, and indeed, to our entire national security program. I am pleased to announce that I have nominated General Hugh Shelton to a second term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Over the last 2 years, he has provided extraordinary leadership, unwavering dedication to our men and women in uniform, unstinting efforts on behalf of military readiness and modernization. Our Nation is fortunate that this critical post will continue to be filled by someone of his experience, ability, and character.

Now, he also has, as all of you have noticed, great stature. We were joking in there a few moments ago, in a situation that is not really funny, that we had a vote about whether I should renominate General Shelton; and Secretary Cohen, Secretary Albright, Mr. Berger, and I voted for it, and he voted against it. But we overruled him, and he's going to serve another term.

Let me say that our effort in Kosovo was strengthened by the vote in the House of Representatives to approve the supplemental funding we requested last month. It is absolutely imperative that the Senate follow suit without delay. The measure will allow us to keep bringing aid to the refugees until they go home, to help the neighboring countries feeling the brunt of the crisis. Most important, it will give our military what it needs to see its mission through while maintaining the readiness of our forces around the world.

As all of you know, there are some things in the bill that I did not support, but it is terribly important that this aid be released as soon as possible to those other countries and to the refugees and that we get the support for the military. I will sign the bill as soon as it gets here, and it is important that it be passed without delay.

Now, let me again say what we are doing. The refugees must go home with security and self-government. The Serbian forces must

leave Kosovo. An international security force with NATO at its core must deploy to protect people of every ethnicity and faith in Kosovo. On this, our country is speaking with a single voice, as we see by the strong bipartisan support for the measure.

From the beginning, we have said that we believe that a peaceful resolution that meets these conditions would serve our interests, and we will continue to pursue one with our Allies and with Russia. We will also continue our military campaign until the conditions are met. I believe the campaign is working. Each day we hear reports of desertions in the Serbian Army, dissension in Belgrade, unrest in Serbian communities. President Milosevic should know that he cannot change the fundamental terms that we have outlined, because they are simply what is required for the Kosovars to go home and live in peace.

The question is not whether ethnic cleansing will be reversed but how much of the military will be destroyed because of his intransigence along the way; how much damage will be done to Serbia because of his delays? NATO is united in our determination to persist as long as it takes to achieve these goals.

Let me just make one other point about Kosovo. In the last few days, we have seen more disturbing evidence of the atrocities committed against innocent Kosovars, including some of the first photographic proof of massacres of unarmed people. In trying to divert attention from these crimes, Serbian forces are only committing more by placing civilians around military targets. It's like pushing someone in front of an oncoming train and then trying to blame the train for running them over. We will not allow this cruel tactic to deceive or divert us from our goal. We need to stay focused and patient in pursuit of our simple objective, to defend the right of a people to exist on their land without being subject to mass expulsion and mass murder. With continued support from Congress and the American people, that is exactly what we intend to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of

the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

### **Remarks to the Community of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado**

*May 20, 1999*

**The President.** Thank you very much. Do that cheer for me one more time.

**Audience members.** We are—Columbine! We are—Columbine! We are—Columbine!

**The President.** Thank you.

Dr. Hammond; Mr. DeAngelis; President DeStefano and the State legislators, county commissioners; Attorney General Salazar; especially Governor Owens, thank you for being here. To all the officials who are here; most especially to the students of Columbine and the students who are here from Chatfield and Dakota Ridge. And Heather Dinkel, thank you for standing up here in front of this big crowd and making a fine talk. Weren't you proud of her? She did a good job representing you today. [Applause]

I want to say a special word of thanks to the families who met with Hillary and me before we came over here, for telling us the stories and showing us the booklets commemorating the lives of their very special children. I also want to thank the fine young people who still are hospitalized with whom I spoke by telephone yesterday—two of them, Patrick Ireland and Sean Graves, are here today. They left the hospital to be here.

I know there are some other people here who are also still injured who have come. I thank all of you for coming. This has been a long, hard month for all of you, and as Hillary said, it's been a hard month for America.

You heard her say that part of our job in these last 6 years, more than we ever could have imagined when we moved to Washington after the election in 1992, has been to be with grieving people, after the Oklahoma City building was blown up and the Embassies were blown up and our airmen were killed in the bombing in Saudi Arabia and so many other occasions—and last year several times—after violence in schools. But something profound has happened to your

country because of this. I want you all to understand that. I'm not even sure I can explain it to you.

One of the incidents of school killing last year occurred in my home State. It's a small State. I was Governor there 12 years. I knew the people involved; it was heartbreaking. One of the mothers of one of the children who was killed still works with us for safer schools and safer childhoods. And all America grieved. But I think they thought, "Oh, this is terrible, I wish somebody would do something about this."

But somehow, when this happened here—maybe because of the scope of it, and I think mostly because of you, how you reacted, all of you, the relief workers, the law enforcement people, the family members who were brave enough to speak—there was a different reaction. People thought, "This has happened in my neighborhood; what can I do?" I say that because you have a unique chance—a chance—to make sure that the children of Columbine are never forgotten.

But first, you have to deal with you and your lives. You're all left with searing memories and scars and unanswered questions. There has to be healing. There has to be answers. And for those things that will not heal or cannot be answered, you have to learn to go on with your lives.

I hope you have been comforted by the caring not only of your neighbors but of your country and people from all around the world. All America has looked and listened with shared grief and enormous affection and admiration for you. We have been learning, along with you, a lot about ourselves and our responsibilities as parents and citizens.

When America looks at Jefferson County, many of us see a community not very different from our own. We know if this can happen here, it can happen anywhere. And we see with admiration the fundamentally strong values and character of the people here, from the students to the school officials, to the community leaders, to the parents.

I think most Americans have looked at you and thought, among other things, that—God forbid—if something like this should ever happen to us, I hope we would behave as

well. I hope we would also hold on to our faith as well.

I am impressed that you are moving forward. Most of the children have returned to school, even returned to sports and other activities. I am proud of all of you who are, in your own way, going back to living your lives, looking toward the future, to commencement or college or a summer job or just getting back to the ordinary business of life, which takes an extraordinary effort now. But I have to say, I think what's impressed me most is the way, in the midst of this, you have held on to your faith.

One of the greatest moments of grief in my life occurred 15 years ago, when Hillary and I had to go to the memorial service for a young man who was a senior at Yale University, a Rhodes Scholar, on the football team, the editor of the newspaper, the leader of his class academically. This young man happened to come from an African-American family in our hometown and a poor family at that. His father was a minister in a very small church. And we had the service in the high school auditorium.

His father was lame, and he walked with a pronounced limp. And he gave his son's eulogy, walking down in front of us with his limp, saying, "His mother and I do not understand this, but we believe in a God too kind ever to be cruel, too wise ever to do wrong, so we know we will come to understand it by and by."

In the Scriptures, Saint Paul says that all of us in this life see through a glass darkly. So we must walk by faith, not by sight. We cannot lean on our own wisdom. None of this can be fully, satisfactorily explained to any of you. But you cannot lose your faith.

The only other thing I really want to say to you is that throughout all your grief and mourning and even in your cheers and your renewal and your determination to get on with your life and get this school back together and show people what you are, there is something else you can do, and something I believe that you should do for yourselves and your friends, to make sure they will be remembered. Every special one of them.

Your tragedy, though it is unique in its magnitude, is, as you know so well, not an isolated event. Hillary mentioned there was

another school shooting in Atlanta today. Thankfully, the injuries to the students don't seem to be life threatening. But there were several last year which did claim lives.

We know somehow that what happened to you has pierced the soul of America. And it gives you a chance to be heard in a way no one else can be heard, by the President and by ordinary people in every community in this country. You can help us to build a better future for all our children: a future where hatred and distrust no longer distort the mind or harden the heart; a future where what we have in common is far more important than what divides us; a future where parents and children are more fully involved in each other's lives, in which they share hopes and dreams, love and respect, a strong sense of right and wrong; a future where students respect each other even if they all belong to different groups, or come from different faiths or races or backgrounds; a future where schools and houses of worship and communities are literally connected to all our children; a future where society guards our children better against violent influences and weapons that can break the dam of decency and humanity in the most vulnerable of children.

One thing I would like to share with you that I personally believe very much: These dark forces that take over people and make them murder are the extreme manifestation of fear and rage with which every human being has to do combat. The older you get, the more you'll know that a great deal of life is the struggle against every person's own smallness and fear and anger and a continuing effort not to blame other people for our own shortcomings or our fears.

We cannot do what we need to do in America unless every person is committed to doing something better and different in every walk of life, beginning with parents and students and going all the way to the White House. For the struggle to be human is something that must be a daily source of joy to you, so you can get rid of your fears and let go of your rage and minimize the chance that something like this will happen again.

Because of what you have endured, you can help us build that kind of future, as virtually no one else can. You can reach across

all the political and religious and racial and cultural lines that divide us. You have already touched our hearts. You have provoked Hillary and me and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore to reach out across America to launch a national grassroots campaign against violence directed against young people. You can be a part of that.

You can give us a culture of values instead of a culture of violence. You can help us to keep guns out of the wrong hands. You can help us to make sure kids who are in trouble—and there will always be some—are identified early and reached and helped. You can help us do this.

Two days from now, you're going to have your commencement. It will be bittersweet. It will certainly be different for those of you who are graduating than you thought it was going to be when you were freshmen. But as I understand it, there will be some compensations. Even your archrivals at Chatfield will be cheering you on. When you hear those people cheer for you, I want you to hear the voice of America, because America will be cheering you on. And remember that a commencement is not an end. It is a beginning.

You've got to help us here. Take care of yourselves and your families first. Take care of the school next. But remember, you can help America heal, and in so doing you will speed the process of healing for yourselves.

This is a very great country. It is embodied in this very great community, in this very great school, with these wonderful teachers and children and parents. But the problem which came to the awful conclusion you faced here is a demon we have to do more to fight. And what I want to tell you is, we can—together.

I close here with this story. My wife and I and our daughter have been blessed to know many magnificent people because the American people gave us a chance to serve in the White House. But I think the person who's had the biggest influence on me is the man who is about to retire as the President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

He is 80 years old, he served 27 years in prison. For 14 years he never had a bed to sleep on. He spent most of his years breaking rocks every day. And he told me once about

his experience. And I asked him: "How did you let go of your hatred? How did you learn to influence other people? How did you embrace all the differences in, literally, the centuries of oppression and discord in your country and let a lot of it go away? How did you get over that in prison? Didn't you really hate them?"

And he said, "I did hate them for quite a long while. After all, look what they took from me—27 years of my life. I was abused physically and emotionally. They separated me from my wife, and it eventually destroyed my marriage. They took me away from my children, and I could not even see them grow up. And I was full of hatred and anger." And he said, "One day I was breaking rocks, and I realized they had taken so much. And they could take everything from me except my mind and my heart. Those things I would have to give away. I decided not to give them away."

I see here today that you have decided not to give your mind and your heart away. I ask you now to share it with all your fellow Americans.

We love you, and we need you.  
Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:37 p.m. in the gymnasium at Dakota Ridge High School. In his remarks, he referred to Jane Hammond, superintendent, Jefferson County Schools; Frank DeAngelis, principal, Columbine High School; Jon DeStefano, president, Jefferson County School Board; State Attorney General Ken Salazar and Gov. Bill F. Owens of Colorado; and Columbine High School students Heather Dinkel, student body president, and Patrick Ireland and Sean Graves, students wounded in the April 20 attack. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

**Statement on the Shooting  
at Heritage High School  
in Conyers, Georgia**  
*May 20, 1999*

Today's shooting at Heritage High School in Georgia was deeply troubling to us all. In the wake of these terrible incidents, all Americans must come together and do everything we can to protect children from vio-

lence. I applaud the Senate for today's historic vote to close the gun show loophole and keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

**Statement on Senate Action  
Approving the 1999 Emergency  
Supplemental Appropriations Act**  
*May 20, 1999*

Today the Senate approved the emergency resources I requested to support our mission in Kosovo. Congressional support for this mission means our military forces can sustain the air campaign until we prevail. It sends a clear signal to the Milosevic regime that the Congress and the American people are committed to this mission. And the resources I requested for the Defense Department will keep our military readiness strong.

At the same time, the bill includes resources critical to helping the international community and the frontline countries of southeast Europe cope with the massive humanitarian crisis and other immediate spillover effects of the conflict and Milosevic's brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing.

This emergency funding package will also provide urgently needed resources to help Central Americans repair and rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. With these funds, farmers can plant new crops in the final weeks of the growing season; roads, hospitals, and schools can be rebuilt; and Central Americans can look to the future with hope, knowing that America is standing with them. The legislation will support the improving prospects for peace in the Middle East by providing additional assistance to strengthen Jordan's economy and security. This emergency funding also provides resources for victims of natural disasters at home, and for our farmers in distress due to depressed crop prices.

While I am pleased that Congress has finally acted to fund our mission in the Balkans, to support the Middle East peace process, and to help American farmers and the victims of Hurricane Mitch, it is unfortunate that Members tacked unnecessary and ill-advised special projects onto essential emergency legislation. Were it not for the pressing

needs in Kosovo, Central America, the Middle East, and America's heartland, I would have rejected several of these measures that reward special interests, weaken environmental protection, and undermine our campaign to stop teen smoking. This is no way to do the people's business, and I will not tolerate this kind of special interest meddling as we complete the annual budget process.

This final legislation does show significant improvement upon Congress's earlier versions. Gone are the Congress's proposed cuts that weakened anti-terrorism programs, especially Embassy security upgrades; that threatened to undermine global economic stability by denying U.S. funds to multilateral development banks; and that imperiled the Government's ability to continue fixing its computers for the year 2000. Congress also removed or modified certain objectionable riders that, for example, would have blocked our efforts to protect the sensitive waters in Alaska's Glacier Bay, and weakened the Endangered Species Act.

It is a mistake for Congress to use this bill as a vehicle for a range of special interest provisions harmful to the environment and to the prudent stewardship of our Nation's natural resources. Several highly objectionable provisions remain in the final bill. For example, there are provisions that undermine our ability to ensure that mining on Federal lands is done in an environmentally responsible manner. And by extending a moratorium on the Department of Interior's proposed oil valuation rules, the Congress is preventing the collection of fair royalty payments from the oil companies that extract oil from public lands. Again, I want to be clear that, were it not for the truly emergency needs to which this bill responds, I would be rejecting these environmental riders. I call on Congress to end these stealth attempts to weaken environmental and public health protections. I have vetoed bills in the past because they contained anti-environmental riders and, if necessary, am fully prepared to do so again.

Finally, Congress passed up an important opportunity to protect our children from the death and diseases caused by tobacco. This is wrong. I am also extremely disappointed

that the Congress acted against recoupment of funds collected by the States from tobacco manufacturers and does not require States to use even a portion of those funds to prevent youth smoking. Even though 3,000 young people become regular smokers every day and 1,000 will have their lives cut short as a result, most States still have no plans to use tobacco settlement funds to reduce youth smoking. I will closely monitor State efforts in this area, and I will continue to fight for a nationwide effort to reduce youth smoking through counter-advertising, prevention activities, and restrictions on youth access to tobacco products.

### **Radio Remarks on Disaster Relief Provisions in the 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act**

*May 20, 1999*

On behalf of the many thousands of citizens struggling to put their lives back together following the recent string of devastating tornadoes, I want to thank the Congress for its approval of the supplemental budget. Some \$900 million in funding will go immediately to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to ensure there will be no interruption in assistance to the disaster victims in Oklahoma, Kansas, Tennessee, Texas, and other States.

Vice President Gore and I saw the devastation first hand. We know that many families lost not only loved ones but also everything they own. All these families remain in our prayers. And we want them to know that their Government will continue to be there for them throughout their time of need.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 6:30 p.m. in the Oval Office on May 19 for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Proclamation 7198—National Safe Boating Week, 1999**

May 20, 1999

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

In America, a country bordered by oceans and blessed with numerous lakes and rivers, recreational boating enjoys a long and proud tradition. From generation to generation, families pass on their appreciation of the water and share the pleasures of nature's beauty and bounty. Annually, more than 74 million Americans take part in recreational boating activities with their families and friends.

While boating is a wonderful form of recreation, it can also present many dangers. Human error and poor judgment contribute to most recreational boating accidents. Recent statistics indicate that 86 percent of all boating accidents are attributable to operator-controlled factors, such as excessive speed, inattention, failure to follow required navigation rules and practices, and lack of knowledge about boats and the boating environment.

Even with adequate training and preparation, boaters can still have accidents. That is why it is crucial for everyone using our waterways to wear a life jacket. Recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics indicate that 90 percent of drowning victims were not wearing life preservers. Most of the victims were small boat users—many in remote areas. In such potentially dangerous circumstances, wearing a life jacket is essential. This message is so important that the National Safe Boating Campaign theme for the second year is "Boat Smart from the Start! Wear Your Life Jacket!"

Many recreational boating organizations, including the National Safe Boating Council and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments continue to help save lives by reminding us of the importance of wearing life preservers and following safe navigation rules. However, each individual must take responsibility for his or her personal

safety and for the well-being of family and friends. By taking appropriate precautions, we can all enjoy our Nation's waterways safely and securely.

In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 131), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the 7-day period ending on the last Friday before Memorial Day as "National Safe Boating Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton**, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22 through 28, 1999, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion and to urge all Americans to practice safe boating habits not only during this week, but also throughout the year.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth 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, 9:41 a.m., May 21, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 24.

**Statement on Signing Legislation Authorizing Appropriations for the Peace Corps**

May 21, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 669, a bill authorizing appropriations for the Peace Corps for Fiscal Years 2000 through 2003, which passed the Congress with bipartisan support. This legislation represents a major step toward a goal that the Congress established for the Peace Corps in 1985, and that I reaffirmed in January 1998: expanding the Peace Corps to 10,000 volunteers. This is an important day in the history of the Peace Corps, and I wish to thank the many

Members of the Congress who helped make passage of this legislation possible. I also wish to congratulate Mark Gearan for his leadership and outstanding work as the Director of the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps and the women and men who serve our country as volunteers embody some of our finest traditions and values—a spirit of service, a strong sense of altruism, and an enduring commitment to make the world a better place. Peace Corps volunteers have touched the lives of many people in more than 130 countries, and every American can take great pride in their service.

This bill will help ensure that many more of our citizens can offer their skills and serve our country as Peace Corps volunteers. This legislation is a strong statement of our Government's continued, bipartisan support for the work of our volunteers and their contributions to international understanding. In particular, I thank Senators Jesse Helms, Joseph Biden, and Paul Coverdell, who served as Director of the Peace Corps under President Bush, and Christopher Dodd, who served as Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic. I also express my appreciation to Representatives Ben Gilman, Sam Gejdenson, Tom Campbell, David Bonior, Donald Payne, and Earl Pomeroy. I also want to express my gratitude to the other returned Peace Corps volunteers who have continued their service to our country as Members of Congress: Representatives Tony Hall, Sam Farr, James Walsh, Christopher Shays, and Tom Petri.

Finally, I wish to thank the thousands of Peace Corps volunteers who are serving our country around the world. At the end of this fiscal year, more volunteers will be serve overseas than at any time in the last 25 years. Our country owes you a debt of gratitude for your service.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
May 21, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 669, approved May 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-30.

## **Statement on the Budget Surplus**

*May 21, 1999*

Today I am pleased to announce that we are on track to reach the largest annual budget surplus ever. Thanks to solid fiscal discipline, the surplus at this point in the fiscal year is \$64.7 billion, the largest in history over a comparable period.

When I came into office just over 6 years ago, we faced a deficit that had already risen to a staggering \$290 billion and was projected to be over \$400 billion in this fiscal year. The Vice President and I, working with Congress, set this country on a new course of fiscal discipline, enacting two strong budget packages in 1993 and 1997. As a result, we have begun to pay down the Nation's debt. In this quarter alone, we expect to pay down \$116 billion of privately held marketable Federal debt, the largest sum ever in a single quarter.

Reducing the debt lowers long-term interest rates for home mortgages and autos and lowers borrowing costs for businesses, fueling private sector investments for continued economic growth. Despite the good news, this is not a time for complacency. We must renew our commitment to this sound economic strategy by making responsible investments in our people, working for open markets, and maintaining the fiscal discipline that is beginning to lift the crushing burden of debt from our children and grandchildren. It is especially critical that we create a bipartisan consensus for saving the surplus and paying down our national debt in a way that strengthens the solvency of both Social Security and Medicare.

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## **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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

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### **May 15**

In the afternoon, the President traveled from Palo Alto, CA, to Los Angeles, CA.

**May 16**

In the morning, the President traveled to San Diego, CA, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Las Vegas, NV.

**May 17**

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

The President declared a major disaster in Colorado and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on April 29 and continuing.

**May 18**

The White House announced that the President will send a Presidential mission led by Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and Rev. Jesse Jackson, Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, to attend the Fifth African/African-American Summit on May 17–21.

**May 19**

In the morning, the President traveled to New York, NY, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President met with Representative Bill Archer in the Oval Office.

The President named Patrick A. Mulloy as a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

**May 20**

In the morning, the President traveled to Littleton, CO, where he met with the families of those killed in the Columbine High School shooting.

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

The President announced his intention to nominate Lee Sachs to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Markets.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul S. Miller to be Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Amy Achor to be the youth member and Christopher Gallagher for a second term to be member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anthony Musick to be Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to appoint Garry Mauro, Jack Quinn, and Eli Segal as members of the Fannie Mae Board of Directors.

The President announced his intention to appoint James W. Evatt, John H. Mattingly, Dennis J. Picard, Michael T. Smith, and Lawrence A. Weinbach to the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

**May 21**

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by storms, flooding, and tornadoes on May 16 and continuing.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**

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

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**Submitted May 18**

Jack E. Hightower, of Texas, to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for a term expiring July 19, 1999, vice Robert S. Willard, resigned.

Jack E. Hightower, of Texas, to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for a term expiring July 19, 2004 (re-appointment).

**Submitted May 20**

Robert Clarke Brown, of Ohio, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring November 22, 2005 (reappointment).

James B. Lewis, of New Mexico, to be Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact, Department of Energy, vice Corlis Smith Moody, resigned.

Lewis Andrew Sachs, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Gary Gensler.

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### **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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

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#### ***Released May 17***

Statement by Counsel to the President Charles Ruff on the President's 1998 Public Disclosure Report

#### ***Released May 18***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of remarks by the First Lady on briefing on her trip to the Balkans

Statement by the Press Secretary: Presidential Mission Travels to the Fifth African/African-American Summit

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan

#### ***Released May 19***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

### *Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999*

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Initiates Review on Space Launch Failures

#### ***Released May 20***

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit to North Korea by Dr. William J. Perry

Statement by the Press Secretary: Colombian Peace Process

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Mara Rudman as Counselor to the President and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

#### ***Released May 21***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a radio actuality by Vice President Gore on the Iowa disaster declaration

Statement by the Press Secretary on passage of the 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Sean Maloney as Assistant to the President and Staff Secretary

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### **Acts Approved by the President**

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#### ***Approved May 21***

H.R. 432 / Public Law 106-29  
To designate the North/South Center as the Dante B. Fascell North-South Center

H.R. 669 / Public Law 106-30  
To amend the Peace Corps Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 through 2003 to carry out that Act, and for other purposes

H.R. 1141 / Public Law 106-31  
1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act