I have to go. I'm sorry.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who became Acting President on President Yeltsin's resignation; and Mr. Yeltsin's wife, Naina. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Resignation of President Boris Yeltsin of Russia

December 31, 1999

Today President Yeltsin ends his historic tenure as Russia's first democratically elected President.

Under his leadership since 1991, the Russian people have faced the unprecedented challenge of creating new institutions and building a new life after decades of corrosive Communist rule. His lasting achievement has been dismantling that Communist system and building new political institutions under democratically elected leaders within a constitutional framework. The fact that Prime Minister Putin assumes responsibility today as acting President in accordance with the constitution is but the latest example of this achievement.

The relationship between the United States and Russia under President Yeltsin has produced genuine progress for both our people. Five thousand strategic nuclear weapons have been dismantled, and our nuclear weapons no longer are targeted at each other. We have worked together to eliminate nuclear weapons from the other states of the former Soviet Union. Russia has withdrawn its troops from the Baltic nations. Now its troops are serving alongside Americans to maintain the peace in the Balkans, and Russia was instrumental in achieving peace in Kosovo. We have also had our differences, such as on Chechnya. But President Yeltsin, and my starting point, has always been how Russia and America can work together to advance our common interests. In this spirit, I look forward to working with Acting President Putin as the Russian people begin the process of making the transition from one democratically elected President to another.

To President Yeltsin, let me convey my appreciation for the work we have done together. Hillary and I extend our warmest wishes to you and your family.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who became Acting President on President Yeltsin's resignation. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at Opening Ceremonies of the "America's Millennium" Celebration

December 31, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, good morning, Happy New Year. Thank you, Senator Daschle, to other Members of the Congress who are here. Thank you, Mayor Williams, for your kind comments to Hillary and to me and your outstanding leadership in this city. Thank you, Robert Pinsky, for being here today, and for opening the ears and eyes and hearts of so many young children to the wonders of poetry. Thank you, Dean Baxter. I want to thank the Children's Choir and the Military Band—they were wonderful today and the singing sergeants who have left. I want to thank Ellen Lovell and the members of our Millennial Council, and Terry McAuliffe and all those who made it possible for us to have all these wonderful events today. I also want to thank the Lord for this wonderful weather, so we all feel good being out here.

The New Millennium Choir sang "Rising Like the Sun." Their vitality and their voices are living proof that the light may be fading on the 20th century, but the Sun is still rising on America. Even though this is an opening ceremony, what we celebrate did not begin today, and it won't end tomorrow. Two years ago Hillary and I created the White House Millennium Council to bring Americans together, in her words, "to honor our past and imagine our future." Since then, she has hosted Millennium Evenings at the White House with some of our Nation's most gifted scholars and artists. And people all over the world have participated on the Internet. She has crisscrossed America to save our historical treasures, from Harriet Tubman's home

to Thomas Edison's factory to Native American pueblos. This morning we kick off not only a weekend of celebrations but a whole series of events throughout the coming year that will further mark our new millennium.

This is more than a unique moment for our calendar. It is also a unique moment for our country. Our economy is strong; our social fabric is on the mend. We're moving forward on America's remarkable journey of creating a more unified nation, a more just society, a more perfect Union.

There is no better moment to reflect on our hopes and dreams and the gifts we want to leave our children; no better opportunity to open a new chapter of progress and possibility for all people; no better time to join hands and build the one America of our dreams; no better time to be a truly good neighbor to the people of the world who share this smaller and smaller planet of ours.

So as we honor the past, let us truly imagine the future. I hope every single one of you, sometime today, and everyone within the sound of my voice, will take just a little time to dream about what you want for your grandchildren and their grandchildren and what you would like the story of the 21st century to be.

Now it is my privilege to present the person who has done more than anyone else in America to help us appreciate and properly celebrate the dawn of the new millennium. Ladies and gentlemen, the First Lady of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. at 12th St. and Constitution Ave., NW. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Robert Pinsky, poet laureate; Rev. Nathan D. Baxter, dean, Washington National Cathedral, who delivered the invocation; and Terence McAuliffe, millennium celebration fundraiser. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the "Millennium Around the World" Celebration

December 31, 1999

Good afternoon. I must say after listening to them, I don't know that there's anything I have to add. I want to thank all of you for being here. I thank the First Lady for her conception of this millennium celebration and for all those who helped to make it possible. I thank Secretary Albright for her work for world peace. Governor Gutierrez and the people of Guam, we thank you for sponsoring this event. And we welcome Congressman and Mrs. Underwood, Mrs. Gutierrez and members of your family, Governor. Guam is where America's day begins, you know, and today it's where our millennium begins. I'd also like to thank the Environmental Protection Agency and its Administrator, Carol Browner; the GSA and its Administrator, Dave Barram, who is here with his family; and all others who helped to make this day possible. I'd like to ask you to express our appreciation to the World Children's Choir and the United States Army Brass Quintet. We thank them.

We wanted to spend a part of this day with diplomatic representatives from around the world and with children from around the world to signal the importance of strengthening our global community in the new millennium.

On this day 200 years ago, in 1799, our second President welcomed the 19th century. It then took 6 weeks by boat to get news from Europe. On this day 100 years ago, when President William McKinley marked the start of the 20th century, it took 6 seconds to send a text by telegraph. Today, satellites and the Internet carry our voices and images instantaneously all around the world. Never before have we known as much about each other. Never before have we depended so much on each other. Never before have we had such an opportunity to move toward what the generations have prayed for, peace on Earth and a better life for all. We must both imagine a brighter future and dedicate ourselves to building it. And I ask you all here today to reaffirm the clear understanding that we must do it together.

Two thousand years ago the calendar that turns at midnight began with the birth of a child on straw in a stable, with a single, shining star in the sky. It attracted no notice at the time. Today, as we meet in this international center, though all the world is now a part of this millennial calendar change, we