are willing and able to work, should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

We should reward every American who wants to and can stay active and productive. I encourage Congress to send me a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age.

Eliminating the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age is a first step toward Social Security reform. I remain committed to making bipartisan progress on Social Security this year. I ask Congress to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Moving forward on these two, simple steps would be a substantial downpayment on Social Security reform. It would demonstrate that we can work together, building the bipartisan trust necessary to finish the job of meeting the long-term Social Security challenge.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Elaine Bloom in Miami, Florida

February 29, 2000

Thank you. Well, I was looking out at the beautiful vista—first, I was looking down on you. Did you see me up there? And I was looking at this magnificent home and thinking how fortunate we are, all of us, to be in this country at this moment, to be free citizens, to be able to come here to support someone in whom we believe.

I want to begin by thanking Phil and Pat Frost. They have been with me a long time, too, and I am honored to be here in their magnificent home. I want to thank all of you who helped to spearhead this immensely successful event for Elaine tonight. I want to say that I'm glad that her children, David and Anne, are here, and I'm sorry the judge couldn't come. But far be it for us to get him in trouble. We want him to stay on the bench and make good decisions. [*Laughter*]

I want to say how grateful I am for the friendship and support I have enjoyed from Congressman Peter Deutsch and his wife, Lori, who is here. And I thank them so much for their service to the United States. And Representative Sally Heyman, we're glad you're here.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime personal friend Bill Nelson. I am thrilled that he is running for the Senate and thrilled he is doing so well.

I want you to know why I'm here tonight, besides the fact that I've been dying to see Phil and Pat's house. I'm here for three reasons. One is, Elaine was there for me when only my mother thought I could be elected. [*Laughter*] And she reminded me tonight that when we first met, she said, "Now, look, I'm going to ask you some questions, but I want you to know in advance I'm going to be for you anyway, so you don't have to tailor your answers, just shoot me straight." And we've been shooting each other straight now for, well, more than 8 years.

I'll never forget when the first significant victory I won was in the Florida Democratic Convention when they had this straw poll. And Elaine and some of my other supporters hauled Hillary and me from meeting to meeting to meeting. I thought New Hampshire was tough till I met these people in all these little caucuses, you know. I had to answer 400 questions. When I got through with that caucus, I said, "I hope we did well, but I'm so tired, I don't care whether we win or not anymore." [*Laughter*] It was an amazing experience. And we had a lot of opponents, a lot of good people running for

President in 1992. And we got a majority of the Florida Democrats at that caucus, and I feel profoundly indebted to Elaine Bloom.

The second reason I'm here is because she embodies the philosophy that we call the new Democratic philosophy that is conservative in part but also liberal in part. I believed, when I ran for President, that there was something really wrong with the way things were going in Washington. I felt that it bore no reasonable relationship to the work I had done for a decade as Governor, the work that she was trying to do here in the legislature with people like Governor Chiles and Governor, now Senator Gramm before him. The work of getting people from different walks of life together, defining goals, defining opportunities, defining problems, then figuring out what to do about them.

Washington was a place where, maybe because people felt they were so far from their constituents and it was so hard to get that 15 seconds on the evening news at night, they seemed to me to be more interested in sort of lobbing rhetorical bombs at one another and putting each other in little boxes and repeating over and over and over again the fights of yesterday as America kept moving into tomorrow.

I was absolutely convinced then that there was nothing wrong with this country that couldn't be fixed by what was right with it. And so, with Elaine's help, with the Frosts' help, with a lot of you in this room, I asked the American people to give me and then give me and Al Gore a chance to see if a unifying philosophy of opportunity for every American and responsibility from every American and a community including all the people of this country could lead us to new ideas and a new direction. And now it's worked out pretty well.

And I am immensely gratified to have been a part of the progress this country has made. I'm proud of it, and I know I am not solely responsible for it. If it hadn't been for—[*applause*]—Thank you. It wouldn't have been possible if this country weren't the greatest environment for entrepreneurs and business people in the world. It wouldn't have been possible if the American people weren't committed to working harder and smarter, and as the economy grew they didn't ask for inflationary pay increases. They understood they were in a world economy, and they ought to be tied to the growth of their enterprises. It wouldn't have been possible without the support of the members of my party in Congress, who, without any help from the Republicans, voted to bring the deficit down in 1993, got interest rates down, and started this long job-creating boom. So I am very grateful.

But the third reason I'm here is the most important of all, and that is that in 11 months or so I'll be just another citizen, but the work of America goes on. We've turned this country around. We're moving in the right direction. But if you really think about what you'd like America to be, there's a great deal yet to be done.

Yes, we've turned deficits to surpluses. But I think we ought to take this country completely out of debt, for the first time since 1835, to keep interest rates down for a new generation. Yes, the schools are getting better and more of our kids are going to college. But I don't think we ought to stop until we've got the certainty that every child, without regard to race or income, can get a world-class education and every person can go on to college and stay there for 4 years and not have to drop out because of the cost.

I don't think we should stop until we find a way for every American to have affordable health care, until we find a way to—[*applause*]—thank you. And Florida—I don't think we should stop until we know that when the baby boom generation retires—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers; that's everybody born between 1946 and 1964—when we all get into our retirement years, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I don't believe we should stop until we have modernized Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and secured it so that the baby boomers can retire without the gnawing worry that we will be an awesome burden to our children and our children's ability to raise our grandchildren.

And I can tell you, the people my age, we think about this a lot. And I'm trying to get this Congress to lengthen the life of Social Security, to lengthen the life of Medicare, to add a prescription drug benefit, but we can't stop until that's done. I'm proud of the fact that we've done a lot to save the Everglades, but I don't think we should stop until we reverse the tide of global warming and prove we can grow the economy as we improve the environment.

I'm proud of the fact that we've made progress for peace and freedom around the world, but there are still threats from biological and chemical and nuclear weapons. There are threats from terrorists. And there are still profound problems in every corner of the world that people have because of their racial, religious, ethnic, and tribal differences. And we shouldn't stop.

And I can tell you that it profoundly matters who is in the Congress. It's a big deal whether Bill Nelson gets elected to the Senate or not, more than you can imagine. There's going to be somewhere between two and four justices appointed to the Supreme Court. I hope that Vice President Gore will be making those appointments, but the ultimate backstop is the Senate.

That's another reason I'm so interested in the Senate race from New York—one of many. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank—so many of you tonight said something nice about Hillary or said you were helping her, and I'm very grateful to you for that.

It matters because we're going to have to decide whether to follow the path of fiscal responsibility or not. We have doubled spending on education and training in my term, while getting rid of the deficit. And we did it by giving you the smallest Government in 40 years, by eliminating hundreds of programs. Was that a conservative decision or a liberal decision? Well, it was conservative: We got rid of the deficit. It was liberal: We doubled spending on education and training. That's the kind of discipline and values and vision we need. It matters.

And finally, I'd like to thank all the law enforcement people who are here for supporting Elaine Bloom. One of the reasons I wanted to be identified with her is that she knew you could be a Democrat and still believe we ought to drive the crime rate down and that you could be tough and smart about crime. That's very important to me.

I don't know if you had a chance to watch the news tonight, but a 6-year-old child near Flint, Michigan, shot another 6-year-old child and killed her today. Now, I don't know all the facts yet. I thought I had them, and I didn't. The first version I had wasn't right, but anyway, somehow—what's a 6-year-old kid doing with a gun, anyway? And what can we do about it?

I've supported putting 100,000 police on the street. I've supported more efforts in the drug war. I've supported putting 50,000 more police out there now in high-crime areas. But we've got to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children. We just do. There's a huge difference there. Is that conservative or liberal? The NRA crowd says that's liberal. I think that I'm trying to conserve life. I think it's conservative in the best sense, and I think it's the right thing to do.

So I'm here because I feel obligated to a woman I love, not only because she supported me, because when she disagreed with me or was worried about it, she'd call and chew me out about it. And I like that. Too many people are afraid to tell Presidents what they think, and that's what gets Presidents in trouble. She was a true friend. She always told me exactly what she thought. I'm here because she shares my philosophy. But mostly I'm here because of you, and because when I'm just a citizen and I'm not President anymore, I want my country to do well.

I said something today at lunch I'd just like for you to think about, and I'll say it much briefer tonight. The last time we had—we now have the longest economic expansion in history. The last longest economic expansion in history was 1961 to 1969, the years in which I grew up, graduated from high school, went to college, and finished college.

When I graduated from high school in '64, Lyndon Johnson was President, passing civil rights legislation. We thought the economy would boom forever. We thought the civil rights problems would be solved in law, not in the streets. We thought we would prevail in the cold war without any division in our country.

When I graduated from college 4 years later, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. The streets of Washington had burned after Dr. King was killed, and this country was divided right down the middle on the Vietnam war, and we were divided in a Presidential election where President Nixon said he represented the silent majority, which meant those who disagreed were in the loud minority, people like me.

And we've been having these "us" and "them" elections ever since—"us" and "them" politics. Now, the country has been turned around, but we have big challenges out there. And what I want to say to you is that, in 1964, if anybody told us the wheels had run off by 1968, no one would have believed it.

This is not just a time for celebration; this is a time for humility and for resolve. As a citizen—not as President, as an American—I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build a future of our dreams for our children. That work will have to be done by the people who will be here after the 2000 election.

That's the most important reason I am here. I trust Elaine Bloom with my daughter's future, with my grandchildren's future, with the future of America. And I ask you all to be vigilant and disciplined and active in this election. Just because we're doing well doesn't mean you can relax. You should feel a heavier obligation. And whenever you are tempted to think it doesn't matter, you remember this story I told you tonight. I have waited 35 years. We've got a second chance, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Phillip and Patricia Frost, reception hosts; Elaine Bloom's husband, Philip, a judge in Florida's Eleventh Circuit, and her children David and Anne; State Representative Sally Heyman; Senatorial candidate Bill Nelson; and 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI. Elaine Bloom is a candidate for Florida's 22d Congressional District.

Memorandum on Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

February 29, 2000

Presidential Determination No. 2000–16

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Act"), I hereby determine and certify that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries (and certain jurisdictions) have cooperated fully with the United States, or have taken adequate steps on their own, to achieve full compliance with the goals and objectives of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances:

The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(B) of the Act, I hereby determine that it is in the vital national interests of the United States to certify the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries:

Cambodia, Haiti, Nigeria, and Paraguay.

I have determined that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries do not meet the standards set forth in section 490(b) for certification:

Afghanistan, Burma.

In making these determinations, I have considered the factors set forth in section 490 of the Act, based on the information contained in the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 2000. Analysis of the relevant U.S. vital national interests, as required under section 490(b)(3) of the Act in the case of the countries certified on this basis, is attached. Given that the performance of all of these countries/jurisdictions has differed, I