

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Katherine Tauscher, daughter of Representative Tauscher; President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

May 23, 2000

Thank you to the modest Mr. McAuliffe. [Laughter] There's one other person I'd like to thank. I'd like to thank Abe Pollin for making this place available to us tonight. Thank you. And your reward for raising all this money is that you don't have to listen to me give a long speech tonight. You've heard it all.

But I want you to know that I am profoundly grateful. And when we started this campaign year, I was very, very worried that we would be, in this period between April the 1st and August the 1st, swamped by the Republicans financially. And it didn't work out that way, partly because they had a rather competitive primary. And then the idea—and I've been, as you know, I've been exerting some modest efforts, with a lot of your help, to raise money for our party and for our Senate campaign committee and our House campaign committee.

But this is a truly wonderful thing. You know, we'll still have to go out and raise some hard money and do some things. But this really puts the Democrats in a competitive position between now and November. And the gift you're giving the Vice President is, I think, inestimable, and I'm grateful to you for that.

I just want to say one thing. A lot of you have heard me say this before, but I want to say it one more time: The test of a country when times are good may be more severe than the test when times are tough. We don't know when again in our lifetimes, any of us, we will have at once so much economic prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence.

But there are huge, huge questions out there. We saw today, Governor Bush outlined one. You know, both candidates want

to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, but one is not so sure we need either the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Most Americans don't know there's a big difference there and don't understand what that means for their children's lives. But it's huge.

You know, what does national security mean in the early part of the 21st century? How are we going to keep the economy going? And should we pay down the debt or risk a tax cut that will put us in debt again? What are the consequences of either course? Do you think you can grow the economy and make the environment better? Or do you think that's some sort of a subversive plot to destroy free enterprise? Do you believe that we will have to make further efforts, like employment non-discrimination and hate crimes legislation, to be one community in the diversity of the 21st century or not? How are we going to put a human face on the global economy? What's the best way to deal with the aging of America? These are big questions.

And I say this repeatedly, but anybody over 30 years old can remember at least one time in your life when you made a huge mistake, personally or professionally, not because times were so bad but because they were so good you thought there was no incentive to concentrate and no consequence to the failure to do so.

This is a major election. I'm grateful for this dinner. I'm grateful that you're honoring me. I'm grateful for your extraordinary efforts and for Terry's indefatigable energy. But the purpose of all this is to build the future of our dreams for our kids. So I want us to have a huge, good time tomorrow night. And then I want us to go out and spend this money in the wisest possible way to make sure that all the work we've done in the last 8 years is not squandered but instead built upon.

And I thank you for helping the Vice President. I believe he is going to win, and I believe he's going to be a wonderful President. But it's going to be a lot more likely after tomorrow night.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. in the Capital Club at the MCI Center. In his remarks, he referred to Terence McAuliffe, former finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Abe Pollin, owner, National Basketball Association Washington Wizards and MCI Center; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on House of Representatives Action on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 24, 2000

Good afternoon. Today the House of Representatives has taken an historic step toward continued prosperity in America, reform in China, and peace in the world. If the Senate votes as the House has just done to extend permanent normal trade relations with China, it will open new doors of trade for America and new hope for change in China.

Seven years ago, when I became President, I charted a new course for a new economy, a course of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and open trade. I have always believed that by opening markets abroad, we open opportunities at home. We've worked hard to advance that goal of more open and more fair trade since 1993 all the way up to the landmark legislation I signed just a few days ago to expand trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin.

Just this week Speaker Hastert and I reached an agreement that many Members of the House in both parties have already supported, to bring the same kinds of investment opportunity and jobs to America's new markets, to people and places here in this country who have not yet participated in our prosperity, in rural areas, inner cities, on our Native American reservations.

With more than a billion people, China is the largest new market in the world. Our administration has negotiated an agreement which will open China's markets to American products made on American soil, everything from corn to chemicals to computers. Today the House has affirmed that agreement.

We will be exporting, however, more than our products. By this agreement, we will also export more of one of our most cherished values, economic freedom. Bringing China

into the WTO and normalizing trade will strengthen those who fight for the environment, for labor standards, for human rights, for the rule of law.

For China, this agreement will clearly increase the benefits of cooperation and the costs of confrontation. America, of course, will continue to defend our interests, but at this stage in China's development, we will have more positive influence with an outstretched hand than with a clenched fist. The House today has affirmed that belief.

Now, I have spoken personally to many, many Members of Congress. I have heard their concerns and those of their constituents. I know this, for many, was a difficult vote. Decisions like this one test our deepest beliefs. They challenge our hopes, and they call forth our fears. Though China may be changing, we all know it remains a one-party state, that it still denies people the rights of free speech and religious expression. We know that trade alone will not bring freedom to China or peace to the world. That's why permanent normal trade relations must also signal our commitment to permanent change.

America will keep pressing to protect our security and to advance our values. The vote today is a big boost to both efforts. For the more China liberalizes its economy, the more it will liberate the potential of its people—to work without restraint, to live without fear.

In January I pledged an all-out effort to take this important step. I want to thank everyone who has joined in it. I want to express special gratitude to Speaker Hastert for his leadership, to Congressman Archer and Congressman Rangel of the Ways and Means Committee. I also want to acknowledge Congressman Levin and Congressman Bereuter, who authored a provision on human rights that improves this bill and strengthens our ability to stand up for our values.

I thank all the others who spoke out for this action, including all our former Presidents, all the former Secretaries of State, Defense, trade ministers, other Cabinet members, all the military leaders. I thank those who worked for human rights and the rule of law who spoke out for this legislation. And of course, I want to thank all those who worked in this administration: Secretary