Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City

March 11, 1996

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—[*laughter*]—it has a nice ring to it. Thank you, Dick Gephardt, for your words and for your work, and thank you for not losing heart in the last year and for helping me to carry on the struggle that we have fought in Washington.

Thank you, Martin Frost, for your energy. When Martin Frost was up here announcing that this was the most successful event by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee ever held outside Washington I thought, my God, even people in New York can't tell him no. [*Laughter*] Just anything to get him off the phone. [*Laughter*] I still don't know how many things are in Martin Frost's district just because I wanted to stop having him walk a dog to the bone. He's great. We are very fortunate to have Martin Frost in this position of leadership at this time, and I am making fun of him only because of my affection and admiration for him and for the efforts that he's made.

I thank Congressman Rangel and all the members of the New York delegation, all the members of the New Jersey delegation who are here; all the other officials, my former colleagues and good friends, Jim Florio and Mario Cuomo; and to all of you who have come to help in this important endeavor, thank you very much.

I was thinking tonight about what, if anything, I could say that you all haven't heard before, or whether I could say it in a different way. Some of you have heard me say this but a few years ago Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert, and the man that ran the place where the concert was knew that I was a big Tina Turner fan so he gave me six tickets. And so I got up a bunch of my staff and we went to the concert. Normally, I had these tickets. When I got tickets they were carefully buried in the middle of the crowd so I wouldn't be noticed. The Governor doesn't like to be noticed at rock concerts. [*Laughter*]

This time, he put them on the front row. So there I was watching Tina Turner and that tenor saxophone player of hers that looks like he could bench press 500 pounds on a cold day; and she gave the whole concert and at the end of the concert she sang her first big hit, ''Proud Mary.'' And she started to sing it, the band was playing the introduction, the crowd started clapping and she said, ''You know something? I've been singing this song for 25 years, and it gets better every time I sing it.'' [*Laughter*] So I was thinking, what can I say that would kind of replicate that? [*Laughter*]

You all know why you are here. What I'd like to do is to put it in some larger context. You heard Dick Gephardt say what I believe deeply to be the truth: The American people are living through the period of most profound change in the way we work since we moved from being an agricultural to an industrial society. And when you do that it changes the way you live, just as it did 100 years ago when we moved from the rural areas to cities and towns.

Now we are changing the way we work; we are changing the nature of the workplace; we are changing the nature of the global markets, and it's thrown everything up in the air. It is an age of enormous possibility, in which people expect those in public life to change in a manner that is appropriate to the challenges of the time. That is at least the consistent thread you can see in the recent elections.

Now in 1992 most people thought the race was between candidates who wished to have change in America and those who thought we were getting along all right just by going along. In 1996, the election will be between two very different visions of change. And it is very important that every American understand that. There is no status quo option in this election. There should not be a status quo option in this election, but the change could hardly be more profound than the two different visions offered in this election, as you can see now from 3 years of experience.

When I ran for President in 1992 I did it for pretty straightforward reasons: I wanted my country to go into the 21st century with the American dream available to every man and woman, every boy and girl, without regard to race, religion, or background, who was willing to work for it. I wanted to see

our country continue to be the world's leader for peace and freedom, for prosperity and security, in an evermore interdependent but still quite dangerous and unsettled world. And I wanted to see this country come together again around its basic values of responsibility along with opportunity, of family and work, and of community. I was tired then and I'll tell you something, I'm more tired today at seeing people who try to constantly divide the American people at election time for short-term political advantage in ways that clearly undermine the long-term interests of this country, and I hope you are, too.

Now if you look at the last 3 years and you look at where we're going, for my money it is clear which direction we should take and what kind of change we should have. In 1993, the Members that are here took a very courageous stand against unanimous opposition from the other party and said we had to reduce the deficit, but we had to reduce it in a way that would still permit us enough funds to invest in education, in research, in technology, in building the future of the American economy. They said if we did it our way we would have a recession, and therefore they would not support us. We now have 3 years of evidence. They were wrong. They were wrong. Interest rates came down; investment went up. We learned last month now that in the last 3 years and 1 month, 8.4 million jobs have come into the American economy—each year higher wage jobs than the year before.

Four years ago only 20 percent of a modest number of new jobs were high-wage jobs. In 1995 over 55 percent of the new jobs were high-wage jobs. We're generating more jobs and they're better jobs because the strategy is the right one. Why, if we're following a strategy that is right, would we want to take a right turn, a severe right turn to follow a strategy that was wrong the last time it was tried?

If you look at the role this country is playing in the world, I am proud of the fact that there are no Russian missiles pointed at the United States. I am proud of the fact that the United States Senate has ratified the START II treaty. I am proud of the fact that we have been a force for peace and freedom from Haiti to Northern Ireland, from the Middle East to Bosnia. I'm going to get on an airplane tomorrow and fly to Egypt to try to help get the Middle East peace process back on track by establishing the conditions of security, without which no people can make an honorable peace. And I want your support in that.

I'm proud of the fact that after 6 years of haggling around, the Members here passed a balanced crime bill that put another 100,000 people on the street in police uniforms and that the crime rate is coming down all across America and that the poverty rate and the welfare rolls are down. I am proud of that. Now does that mean that we should run on our record? No. But our record is an indication that we know what we're doing and that the direction is right, that the pace of change—the direction of change is right.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, there are all kinds of things going on in this world because of the pace of change that are apparently contradictory. I was in New Jersey today, and they were asking me about the corporations that are downsizing their employees there. How can we be creating 8.4 million jobs and people be losing jobs? I know that there are hourly wage earners that have not gotten a raise. I know there are areas in the inner cities and rural areas that have still not gotten the benefits of the economic recovery.

But let's start with first things first: Do no harm. The 8.4 million jobs we have in this country in the last 3 years is the sum total of the net jobs generated by all the big seven economies in the world; that is the other six have netted out zero, and we've netted out 8.4 million. So let's not diminish what has been done. We have to continue to create the jobs.

Then we have to create the conditions of economic security without undermining the dynamism of the economy. The old safety net systems we had don't work anymore because the nature of work and the nature of the workplace is changing. We have to find new ways to do that without undermining the dynamism of the economy. We can do it. We can do it.

I'll just give you one example. There is a bill on the floor of the Senate right now that has been voted out of the committee that

has about 50 cosponsors, Republican and Democrat, which says simply that you can't lose your health insurance if you have to change jobs or if somebody in your family gets sick. The business lobbies and the labor groups are all for it; only the health insurance groups are opposing it. And it has not been brought to a vote. But that is wrong. That bill should pass. That is the kind of thing we need to do, and you ought to ask for it to be.

We have to find new and innovative ways to make it easier for small businesses to take out 401(k) pension plans and for people to keep their pensions when they change jobs. We have to set up education and training opportunities that are immediately there when people are dislocated and that are there for a lifetime. In the tax cut proposal that I have made, I think the most important tax cut we could give the American people is a tax deduction for all costs of education after high school for up to $10,000 a year. That is the sort of thing we ought to be doing.

If you look at this whole area of education, this is a big area. We know that the added benefits of education to income, to productivity, to being able to find a new job when you're dislocated are far greater now than they were just 10 years ago. The earnings gap between high school graduates and college graduates in their first year of work has doubled in a decade. We know that.

Therefore, we should be investing in the potential of our young people, starting with Head Start. We should help schools who are willing to go for national standards of excellence and be held accountable for them but who have poor children and limited resources to get the help they need as long as they're shooting for higher standards and they're being held accountable. We should do more to help people with good loan programs and good scholarship programs, not less. The people who want to cut education funding would make all of our economic problems worse. If you want to see the American people grow and grow together, be for the party that is for investing in education in ways that will have returns to the American economy and for all people.

Today the Vice President and I were in New Jersey talking about another one of our great challenges. We visited a Superfund site that has only been partially cleaned up. And we cannot finish the cleanup because the Congress in this year is running the Government by continuing resolution with a big cut in environmental enforcement. And they wanted to pass a huge cut in environmental enforcement as a part of the budget bill that covers the EPA.

Now, you have to decide. They believe that we have to give up on a lot of environmental protection to grow the economy, and that the best thing you can do for the economy is just to get out of that whole business and let the people who were affected come in and rewrite the laws however they like. We believe that you can grow the economy over the long run only by protecting the environment. We have not been bullheaded about this. We've cut back on a lot of bureaucracy that was unnecessary. We have moved prospective Superfund sites that really weren't polluted out of that category so that they can be developed in cities all across America. We have worked in unique partnerships with businesses from the Big Three on a clean car that will triple automobile mileage to 50 or 60 companies now that we have said if you could meet the clean air and clean water standards on your own, you can throw away the rule book; all we want are results. But we will never, never knowingly do anything that will undermine the environmental future of this country.

If you want to create more high-wage jobs, if you are concerned about people in a lot of these big companies that are being dislocated, invest more in the companies of the future that will be cleaning up the environment and preserving the environment. It is good for the economy, and it is essential for our quality of life. It's a big choice for you to make.

Two very different views of change. If you look at the challenge of crime and drugs and violence, it is still a huge challenge. Last week we kicked off the new tenure of our drug czar, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who was, until he retired as a four-star general and the commander of our Southern Command south of our borders, the most decorated American soldier still in uniform. He is a good man and a brilliant man who believes

we have to have a combination of enforcement to interdict drugs before they come into the country, enforcement of the laws here, and prevention and treatment programs.

If you believe that we have to have a balanced approach to that, that is our view of the world of the future. If you look at the crime bill, we finally have done something as a country that is working on crime. For years the American people thought it wouldn't work. Mr. Schumer carried on his long and lonely battle for the assault weapons ban. Thank you, sir.

The battle for the Brady bill, far more partisan than it should have been. When I went up to New Hampshire not very long ago, I was talking to a lot of those folks and I said, you know, in New Hampshire and Arkansas where I come from, more than half the adults have a hunting or fishing license or both. We lost a Congressman in New Hampshire in 1994 because he voted for the assault weapons ban. I told him, I said, you know, you folks just had a great deer season. And contrary to what they told you in 1994, every New Hampshire hunter who wanted to go deer hunting with a weapon that he had in 1994, got to do it; they didn't tell you the truth. But I'll tell you who doesn't have guns, over 60,000 felons couldn't get a gun because of the Brady bill. We were right and they were wrong. They were wrong.

The program to put 100,000 police officers on the street is plainly working to drive down the crime rate. The police commissioner of this city was on the cover of one of our major magazines just a few weeks ago because of the success of community policing. We are now making community policing possible all across America. I have been in community after community where police chief after police chief has come up and said, Mr. President, the National Government never did anything for us before, never really did anything for us to help us fight crime. But those community police officers, they're helping us to prevent crime.

We can't jail our way out of this crisis. We have to get to know the people on each block. We have to get to know these kids. We've got to make it safe to walk to school. We've got to increase security by preventing crime. Community policing works. Their answer is to turn it into a block grant and hope for the best. Our answer is to stay with the law enforcement people of this country and do what works. It's a big difference, two different views of change. And the American people will have to decide. If we're bringing down the crime rate and people desperately, desperately want to be safe on their streets, why in the wide world would we take a dramatic u-turn and move away from a strategy that is making the American people safer? That is the right thing to do, and these Democrats need your help so that we can stop any attempt to back away from something that is lowering the crime rate and making the American people safe.

You know, we talk a lot about families and family values. Well, in the last 3 years, maybe the best thing we did for family values was to pass the family and medical leave law. I'm proud of that. I wish it hadn't been as partisan an issue as it was. We had a few members of the other party for it.

We've worked hard, the Vice President and I have, for the V-chip and the telecommunications bill, and I thank Congressman Markey who is here, who really was the father of that fight, trying to improve the quality of television that our children see.

I guess it just depends on how you define it, but you know, the real family heroes to me in this country are the millions of parents that tomorrow will get up and go to work. They'll work full-time, all week, for the minimum wage, for $4.25 an hour. And they'll come home and try to raise their kids on it, and they'll obey the law and pay their taxes, do their best to get by. If we don't raise that minimum wage within a year, it will be at a 40-year low in terms of what it will buy. I don't know about you, but that's not my idea of the 21st century America I want. The Democrats are, I believe, to a person for raising the minimum wage. And we can't even get a vote on it. That is the difference in our approach from theirs.

And let me just say, in the end I think it all comes down to what you think our role is together. If you were to ask me: Mr. President, what is the most important lesson you have learned as President? I would say it is that we don't do very well when we're di-

vided, but when we're united, the American people never lose. And I believe the role of our Government in Washington should be to help individuals and families and communities make the most of their own lives and to meet these challenges of the future, to build stronger families and better childhoods for all children; not, not under the guise of a popular label like welfare reform, be tough on children. We should be tough on work, not tough on children.

We should build an educational system that gives everybody opportunities for a lifetime. We should build a new fabric of economic security for everyone willing to work for it, that does not undermine the dynamism of the American economy, which is the envy of the world. We should continue the fight against crime and violence in ways that will work. We should continue the struggle to meet our environmental challenges in ways that will enhance our economy and protect our precious quality of life. We should not withdraw from a world that needs our leadership for peace and freedom.

And yes we should continue to reform the Government. But my fellow Americans, let me remind you that the Federal Government today is the smallest it's been since 1965, under legislation adopted entirely by Members of our party, without a single, solitary vote from the other side, not one. We are removing 16,000 pages of regulation from the books that we think are not necessary. But what we do not wish to remove is the ability of your Nation to work together, to strengthen the childhoods of poor children in America, to help those working families out there who have children with disabilities, to recognize the dignity of people who have to rely on Medicare and Medicaid for their health care in this world.

We don't believe we should walk away from our partnership with the police on the beat or our partnership with the teachers in the classroom or our partnership with our allies around the world for peace and freedom.

So I say again, if you ask me to put it in a word, it is: Do you believe we're all in this together, or would you rather go back to the time when Americans were left to fend for themselves?

This is not about big Government. The era of big Government if over. It's about whether you want a weak, divided Government that says, I hope you do well, but you're out there on your own. The American people don't want that. When there is a disaster, nobody wants a weak Emergency Management Agency. When a small business person needs to start a business, nobody wants a weak SBA. Do you know that your SBA, your Small Business Administration—we've cut the budget and doubled the loan volume in the last 3 years? And we had to, because we have to make up in new businesses what we're losing in big businesses.

Businesses owned by women alone have created more jobs in the last 3 years than the Fortune 500 have laid off. And the Small Business Administration helped that. So we can do a lot of talk about how nice it would be if we had 20 more seats and Dick Gephardt were Speaker and all of that, that would be really nice for all of us who have to work for you. But the main thing is what your life and your children's life and your country is going to be like. And I'm telling you this election is about two very different visions of change. There is no status quo option.

And you now have a clear, unambiguous record of where we stand and where they stand on all the critical issues for the future. And I ask you not just to stop with the contribution you made tonight, but as citizens in every way you can, with all your voice and all your heart and all your energy to say to all your friends from now until November: We have to go forward together. We have to do this together. We can't go back to a time when the American people were told to fend for themselves. When we are together, we never lose. The 21st century can be America's greatest time if we will go there together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. on the roof at the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Congressman Martin Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; former Gov. Jim Florio of New Jersey; former Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York; and entertainer Tina Turner.

Proclamation 6871—National Poison Prevention Week, 1996

March 11, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we recognize National Poison Prevention Week, we can be proud of the 35 years of public health efforts that have dramatically reduced the number of childhood deaths caused by poisoning. Measures such as child-resistant packaging and the lifesaving work of poison prevention experts have raised awareness of this important issue and given families and caregivers strategies to safeguard young people from harm.

Nevertheless, the American Association of Poison Control Centers estimates that over one million children each year are exposed to potentially toxic household materials. The Poison Prevention Week Council, a coalition of 38 national organizations dedicated to ending this threat, distributes valuable information to poison control centers, pharmacies, public health departments, and others to aid community poison prevention efforts. In addition, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has long required child-resistant packaging for a number of medicines and household chemicals. The recent development of such packaging that is easier for adults to open will mean more conscientious use of hazardous products and a decreased risk of accidental poisoning.

This week and throughout the year, we must remember that small safety measures—such as using child-resistant packaging correctly and keeping harmful substances locked away from children—can save lives. And if a poisoning occurs, a poison control center can offer emergency intervention. By keeping these simple measures in mind, we can better protect our children and make home safety a routine part of our daily lives.

To encourage the American people to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisoning and to take preventive steps, the Congress, by Public Law 87–319 (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of each year as ''National Poison Prevention Week.''

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 17 through March 23, 1996, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:20 a.m., March 12, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 13.

Message to the Congress on Iran

March 11, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby report to the Congress on developments concerning the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order No. 12957 of March 15, 1995, and matters relating to the measures in that order and in Executive Order No. 12959 of May 6, 1995. This report is submitted pursuant to section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c) (IEEPA), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa–9(c). This report discusses only matters concerning the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order No. 12957 and matters relating to that Executive order and Executive Order No. 12959.

1. On March 15, 1995, I issued Executive Order No. 12957 (60 *Fed. Reg.* 14615, March 17, 1995) to declare a national emergency with respect to Iran pursuant to IEEPA, and to prohibit the financing, management, or supervision by U.S. persons of the development of Iranian petroleum resources. This action was in response to actions and policies of the