to build a civil society based on mutual respect, compassion, and generosity. They provide our children with the moral compass to make wise choices.

America's reverence for religious freedom and religious tolerance has saved us from much of the hatred and violence that have plagued so many other peoples around the world. We have always been vigilant in protecting this freedom, but our efforts cannot stop at our own shores. We cannot ignore the suffering of men and women across the globe today who are harassed, imprisoned, tortured, and executed simply for seeking to live by their own beliefs. Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right that must be upheld by every nation and guaranteed by every government. The promotion of religious freedom for all peoples must continue to serve as a central element of our foreign policy.

Reflecting our steadfast commitment to this goal, last fall the Congress passed, and I was proud to sign into law, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. This legislation enhances our ability to advance freedom of religion for men and women of all faiths throughout the world. It also establishes a new position at the Department of State—the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom—to ensure that religious liberty concerns receive consistent and appropriate attention at the highest policy-making levels.

On Religious Freedom Day, let us give thanks for this precious right that has so profoundly shaped and sustained our Nation, and let us strengthen our efforts to share its blessings with oppressed peoples everywhere.

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 January 16, 1999, as Religious Freedom Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs, and I urge all Americans to reaffirm their devotion to the fundamental principles of religious freedom and religious tolerance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of January, 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, 8:45 a.m., January 19, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 20.

Remarks to the Global Forum for Reinventing Government

January 15, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Mr. Vice President, Madam Secretary, Mr. Nye, Prime Minister Shipley, Vice President Bell, to the leaders of other nations and international organizations; Mr. Smith from the Ford Foundation and all the others from the private sector in America; and I want to say a special word of thanks to the employees of our Government who are here, without which none of this could be done.

I was glad to hear the joke that the representatives from Thailand told yesterday. I have cut a lot of redtape sideways in my life. I was glad to hear you laugh at the Vice President's remark about using plain language in Government regulations. I think that must be a common problem throughout the world. But mostly, I'm glad to see you in such a good frame of mind about this.

You know, one of the problems with having a continuous reinventing Government effort is that it almost never gets any headlines in the newspaper, and most people who cover it think it is about as exciting as watching paint dry. [*Laughter*] So I think that means that if you're going to do this, you need sort of an extra dose of determination and good humor, because I believe it is truly one of the most important things that those of us in public life today can do.

I've been interested in this for a long time. When I was the Governor of my State, we had what I believe was the first State governmentwide ongoing effort in the country. When I became President, I knew we had

to change old policies and old ways of doing things. Besides, we were flat broke and running a huge deficit. And even worse, the American people had a very low level of confidence in the Government. I used to say that everyone in America thinks that our Government would foul up a two-car parade. We wanted to change all that. We knew it was important for our economy. We knew it was important for our political success. We knew it was important for the integrity of our democracy.

Fortunately for me, Vice President Gore agreed. And he approached this task as he does everything he really cares about, with an astonishing amount of energy, determination, and intelligence. And I'm sure you have seen, he has absorbed about everything there is to absorb about this subject. And if you hang around long enough, he will give you a chance to know everything he knows about it. [*Laughter*]

We have a theory about this; most people think it's so boring we have to have a joke every 3 minutes when discussing it. [*Laughter*] But it is very serious. When the history of our time here is written, the leadership of the Vice President in doing this will be one of the signal achievements of this administration, and I am very, very grateful to him for a superb job.

We also are heavily into reinventing speeches here; you see I crossed out the first paragraph, and I go from page one to page three. So you'll be out of pain before you know it. [*Laughter*]

Let me also say to you we have a selfish reason in hosting this conference. We've not tried to reinvent the wheel. We have tried to borrow good ideas wherever we could find them. We very much want to know what is going on in every other country in the world, just as we want to be helpful to every other country in the world if we can.

I'd like to make just one or two points if I might. First is one you know, but I think it bears repeating: This will not work if it is a one-shot effort, if it is something that happens for a month or 6 months or even for a year. In fact, I think you should measure your success in part by whether you have put in a system so integral to the operation of government—a process—and whether you have embedded in the public's mind the importance of this to the extent that all your successors in whatever offices you hold will have to follow suit. That, I think, is the ultimate measure of whether we are successful. Because no matter how long you serve, no matter how hard you work, you will either leave things on the table that are undone, or new opportunities will emerge with the revolutions and technology in human organization that are constantly unfolding.

Our basic theory has been that we ought to have a Government for the information age that is smaller, that lives within its means, but that actually is capable of doing more of what needs to be done. We believe what needs to be done is that we should focus mostly on giving people the tools they need to solve their own problems. We should help people who, through no fault of their own, can't get along through life without help. But most of what we should be doing is creating the conditions and giving people the tools to make their lives as dynamic as the world in which we live.

I also want to emphasize again how important it is to be able to stand up and say that we are giving people good value for their tax investment, because I found that our people tend to judge the reinventing Government sometimes not by what we think they would. It sounds very impressive to say we have the smallest Federal Government since John Kennedy was President because we are a much bigger Government. But people want to know, well, how does that affect me.

If you say we've saved $138 billion that helped us balance the budget, bring interest rates down, and lower their mortgage rates, that's something people can understand. If you say we reformed welfare, that sounds good. But if you say we have the smallest welfare rolls in 29 years, and we have gotten a lot of people into the work force but helped them with child care and education and transportation, so we're not just putting out numbers, and behind it there are human people suffering because they are cut out of the safety net, that means something.

If you can say to a small business person, it used to take weeks or months for us to process your request for a loan, and now it takes a matter of days, and the form was once

an inch thick, and now it's a page long, that means something to people because it affects their lives.

And so I would say to all of you—I made a lot of jokes about it, but I do think we have to find ways to talk about this that make it interesting to our people and that bring it home to them, because that is the best guarantee of our continuing to work.

One other point I'd like to make is for national governments—most national governments have regulatory and other relationships with the private sector and also have financial relationships with local government. I believe a very important and increasingly important aspect of this whole reinventing Government issue will be how do national governments relate to their private sector. We're trying harder and harder to do less regulation and instead to create incentives and frameworks to solve problems that meet national goals. How do national governments relate to local governments? This is very controversial in our country from time to time. My theory is, just because we gave out money last year in the way we've been giving it out for 20 years, in education, law enforcement, or any other issue, doesn't mean we should continue to give the money out that way if it doesn't work anymore.

We had this huge argument back in 1994 when we tried to pass a crime bill because, interestingly enough, our conservatives argued that it was wrong for the Federal Government to give money to local governments only if they would agree to hire police officers and put them on the street and have them work in a certain way. But we had learned from local governments that work that that was all that works to bring the crime rate down. So we jammed through this bill, and the people who were against it screamed and hollered that I was presuming to tell police chiefs what to do. Nothing could have been further than the truth. The police chiefs told me what to do. And what we told the people, between the President and the Congress and the police chiefs, was, ''You can't have this money unless you do what they say works.''

And we now have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years, partly because of the improvement in the economy but partly because law enforcement works better. We have gone 30 years in which we had tripled the crime rate—violent crime rate—and increased our police forces only 10 percent.

So I think that there is a way in which we should look not only to the internal operations of our own Government, how our systems work and how they serve the people, but how the relationship between Government and the private sector and national governments and local governments can work more effectively.

Finally, let me say that I think that we have—and I'm sure all of you already know this—but I think we have a very strong vested interest in each other's success. If we didn't learn anything from 1998 and the financial turmoil we experienced all over the world, it is that, in the world we live in, competition is good, but failure of our competitors is bad. Competition is good, but the failure of our competitors is bad. We want competition to work within a framework in which we all do better, in which we urge each other on, economically, socially, politically, every way to higher levels of humane development so that the United States, for example, clearly has an interest that when the Government of Russia tries to put in place a system that will fairly assess and collect taxes.

Quite apart from the obvious interest we have, and all of you do, in having a system that will help us to continue to reduce the nuclear threat, the United States has an interest in the success of governments in Asia developing regulatory systems that will minimize the spread of financial contagion. We have an interest in nations in Africa and in Latin America and elsewhere who are trying to develop with limited resources the very best possible education and health systems. We have an interest in learning from nations all over the world that have done a better job than we have in managing their natural resources and developing sound environmental policies while growing their economy.

We have an interest in seeing how the European nations are trying to adapt their social welfare systems that were created after World War II to the demands of the information age, so that they can lower unemployment, increase job growth, and still maintain

the integrity of a genuine social safety net—big issue for developed countries. We have lower unemployment and greater inequality; they have more equality and higher unemployment. How can we bridge the gap? And we're interested in the experiments in Great Britain and the experiments in the Netherlands and in other countries. We have an interest. And if those countries succeed, we are not threatened; our lives are enhanced. And I think we should all have that attitude.

Finally, let me say that this is about more than economics. It's even about more than having our customers happy, although I must say one of the biggest kicks I've gotten as President is when a major national business magazine said that the Social Security agency was the best large organization in America, public or private, at providing telephone service to its customers. I like that.

This is about, in my judgment, the preservation of the vitality of democracy. In some countries that are new democracies, it may be about the preservation of democracy itself. But in the end, every one of us serves because people believe in the possibility of self-government through Representatives. To the extent that people do not believe their Representatives will handle their money for public purposes the way they themselves would, democracy itself is diminished; human potential is diminished. The capacity for worldwide cooperation is diminished.

So I say again, you may not get the headlines back home for this. You may have to tell your own jokes because you won't be able to make anybody else laugh. But never underestimate the profound and enduring importance of what it is you have come here to discuss. We are honored to have you here, and we thank you for your contribution and your dedication.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Dean Atcheson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph Nye president, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government; Prime Minister Jenny Shipley of New Zealand; Vice President Gustavo Bell of Colombia; and Bradford Smith, vice president, Ford Foundation.

Proclamation 7163—Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 1999

January 15, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

January 15 would have marked the 70th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man of great vision and moral purpose whose dream for our Nation set into motion such powerful, sweeping changes that their impact is still being felt today. While he was taken from us too soon, we still have with us the gifts of his vision, convictions, eloquence, and example. We still hear the echo of his voice telling us that "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' "

We know what Dr. King did for others. He energized and mobilized a generation of Americans, black and white, to join in the struggle for civil rights, to respond to violence, hatred, and unjust incarceration with the spirit of peace, love, and righteousness. He taught us that we could not claim America as the land of justice, freedom, and equality as long as millions of our citizens continually and systematically faced discriminatory and oppressive treatment. He challenged us to recognize that the fundamental rights of all Americans are forever interconnected, for "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Martin Luther King, Jr., awakened America's conscience to the immorality of racism. He was the driving force behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. For African Americans, this landmark legislation meant that the opportunity for a quality education would no longer be impossible, the levers of the voting booth would no longer be out of reach, and the purchase of a dream home would no longer be unattainable. Millions of Americans—of every race and background and culture—live brighter lives today because of Martin Luther King, Jr.