Now after I leave you, I am going to go meet with the trade ministers that are here from more than 100 countries. It's a great honor for Seattle, for the State of Washington, and for the United States to have these people come here and to try to come to terms with a lot of these very difficult issues. I want to talk about how we can make sure that ordinary working people all across the world feel that they have a stake in an improving global economic system. I want to assure them that we have to do what is necessary to make sure that economic competition lifts people up everywhere.

Now there are people, again I say, who honestly believe that open trade stacks the deck against ordinary people. Thirty percent of the growth we've gotten in this country, 30 percent, between 1993 and the time of the Asian financial crisis, came because of expanding trade. We had pretty good farm years in there too, folks. It's hard to remember it's been so bad the last year or so, but we had some pretty good years.

And we have got to figure out a way not only to sell the idea but to make it real, that we can continue to pursue these objectives in a way that lifts people's quality of life up and lifts the ordinary living standards up for people throughout the world. We can do that.

Now let me finally say that I know these questions won't be easy. One of the things I've learned in all trade cases is that it once again reaffirms the wisdom of the Italian Renaissance political philosopher Machiavelli, who said—I'm paraphrasing here, but this is almost exactly right—he said there is nothing so difficult in all of human affairs as to change the established order of things, because the people that are going to win will always be somewhat uncertain of their gain; whereas, the people who will lose are absolutely sure of what they are going to lose.

So this will require some amount of imagination and trust and humility and flexibility. But if we're going to have a world, rule-based trading system, then we have got to make it work for ordinary folks. But we in America, we have to take the lead in continuing to make the main point. The world is a better place today after 50 years of more open trade than it would have been if we hadn't had it. Americans are better off today after 50 years of open trade than they would have been if we hadn't had it.

And what has helped us will help the poorest countries in the world, the wealthy countries, and the countries in-between if we find a way to continue to draw together and to deal with the legitimate concerns of the legitimate protesters in the streets of Seattle.

And you know, to me it is a very exciting time. This is a high-class problem, and we ought to treat it as a 21st century challenge, worth our best efforts. If we do, I think we'll get a good result.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. in the Weyerhauser Facility at Terminal 5 at the Port of Seattle. In his remarks, he referred to John Butler, apple grower, who introduced the President; Patricia Davis, president, Seattle Port Commission, and president, Washington Council on International Trade; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington; and Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle.

Exchange With Reporters in Seattle

December 1, 1999

Disruption of the Seattle Round

Q. Mr. President, what message do the violence and protests send to the WTO officials and delegates here?

The President. Let me say this, I think that the WTO officials are quite well aware that the violence is not representative of how the American people feel, that nearly 100 percent of our people abhor what was done and condemn it. We don't believe in violence. We don't believe in people who keep other people from meeting. We don't like that.

I think that what the WTO people are here is to pay attention to the nonviolent protests and should open the process and find a way to legitimately consider the grievances of the poorest nations, as well as those of us who believe that we have to give greater concern to the environment and to labor standards and our trade measures. And I think—that's what I think they should listen to. They should give no consideration to the violent

people because nobody supports them, nobody believes in it, and what they did was wrong. It was just vandalism.

Q. Can a peaceful message go through?

The President. I hope so. That's more up to you, than me. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:07 p.m. while the President greeted the crowd at the ropeline following his remarks at the Port of Seattle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a World Trade Organization Luncheon in Seattle

December 1, 1999

Thank you very much. Ambassador Barshefsky, thank you for your remarks and your work. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a very large delegation from our administration here today, and I hope it's evidence to you of our seriousness of purpose. I thank the Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley; the Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman; our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez, my National Economic Councilor, Gene Sperling; Ambassador Esserman; and my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, all of whom are here, and I thank them.

I want to say that I agree that Mike Moore is the ideal person to head the WTO, because he has a sense of humor, and boy, do we need it right now. [*Laughter*] Did you see the gentleman holding up the big white napkin here before we started? He was doing that to get the light for the television cameras. But he was standing here holding the napkin and Mike whispered to me, he said, "Well, after yesterday, that could be the flag of the WTO." [*Laughter*] We'll have rolling laughter as the translation gets through here.

Let me begin by saying welcome to the United States and to one of our most wonderful cities. We are honored to have you here on a very important mission. Today I want to talk a little bit about the work that we're all here to do: launching a new WTO round for a new century, a new type of round that I hope will be about jobs, development, and broadly shared prosperity and about improving the quality of life, as well as the quality of work around the world, an expanded system of rule-based trade that keeps pace with the changing global economy and the changing global society.

Let me begin by saying that 7 years ago when I had the honor to become President of the United States, I sat down alone and sort of made a list of the things that I hoped could be done to create the kind of world that I wanted our children to live in, in the new century, a world where the interests of the United States I thought were quite clear: in peace and stability; in democracy and prosperity.

To achieve that kind of world, I thought it was very important that the United States support the increasing unity of Europe and the expansion of the European Union; that we support the expansion of NATO and its partnership with what are now more than two dozen countries, including Russia and Ukraine; that we support the integration of China, Russia, and the Indian subcontinent, in particular, into the large political and economic flows of our time; that we stand against the ethnic and religious conflicts that were still consuming the Middle East and Northern Ireland, then Bosnia and later Kosovo; that we do what we could to help people all over the world to deal with such things, including the tribal wars in Africa.

And I thought it was important that we give people mechanisms by which they could work toward a shared prosperity, which is why we wanted to finish the last WTO round; why we are working hard with our friends in Europe on a Stability Pact for the Balkans; why we know economics must be a big part of the Middle East peace process; why we have an Asian-Pacific Economic Forum, where the leaders meet; why we've had two Summits of the Americas with our friends in Latin America; why we're trying to pass the Africa and Caribbean Basin trade initiatives; and why I believe it is imperative that we here succeed in launching a new trade round that can command broad support among ordinary citizens in all our countries and take us where we want to go.

There are negative forces I have tried to combat, in addition to the forces of hatred based on ethnic or religious difference: the