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with us in that fight, to imagine that kind of future and to be a part of it. And I am very grateful to you for coming out.

Thank you, and God bless you. I want to go shake hands. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:04 p.m. in Gymnasium 2 of the Intramural Physical Education Building.

Remarks in La Crosse, Wisconsin

January 28, 1998

Thank you so much. Thank you for the warm welcome—the ''warm'' welcome. [*Laughter*] Thank you for being here in great numbers and with great enthusiasm. Thank you for sending Ron Kind to Congress. He's a fine man, and he represents you well. Thank you, Attorney General Doyle. Thank you, Mayor Medinger. Thank you, Secretary Riley, for all you do. Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for getting our blood running—[*laughter*]—and for your magnificent leadership. And thank you, Lee and Ruth Mathison, for reminding us what's best about the United States of America. Didn't they do a good job? Let's give them another hand. [*Applause*]

Were any of you here back in 1992, when the Vice President and I came on the bus? [*Applause*] I remember we had been on the road 18 hours. We got into the Days Inn about 2 o'clock. I could barely speak, and I was bone tired. But the people that were there for us on that night, giving us high fives, making us feel at home, make it a wonderful memory, and it feels good to be back in God's country tonight. And I thank you so much for being here.

The Vice President and I even got to speak on the Clinton Street Bridge. And I remember that.

You've heard everybody talk already about the blessings our country enjoys, and I am grateful for that. I'm grateful for the chance that I had last night to outline the state of the Union and to talk about the future. I'm grateful that we really have opened the doors of college education to all Americans for the first time. And I hope everybody here who is a young person knows that because of the tax cuts and the scholarships and the grants and the work-study program and the AmeriCorps program, you ought to go out and tell everybody they can go to college now, and they never have to worry about that again.

But I want to thank you for what you're doing here to make America work from the ground up, to make America work together to give our kids a better future. I can't mention all the local heroes behind me today, but I want to mention one, Jerry Freimark, who has worked with businesses and students to help students in rural areas gain the skills necessary for 21st century careers in banking and finance by learning over interactive TV.

You know, we forget sometimes that people in small towns and rural areas have the same right to the 21st century future everybody else does. And I want you to know that Al Gore and I will never forget that.

But tonight I don't want to talk about that. I want to talk very briefly about that future, because to me the most important thing we've done in the last 5 years is just to try to make America work again for ordinary people, so that we can be free to imagine the 21st century and we can be free to build it.

In 1962, President Kennedy said, ''The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.'' And I couldn't say that any better tonight. I'm grateful that we have—almost have—a balanced budget. We're going to get one this year or next year. I'm proposing one for next year, and I think it will be balanced before the year is out.

Now, let's talk about what we're going to do. And I just want to mention two or three things. I want all of you to think about this and be involved in it. First of all, it's projected we're going to have a big surplus, cumulative, over the next 4 or 5 years; we haven't had one in 30 years. Naturally enough, people are thinking, well, let's cut taxes or let's spend the money, even though we've still got a debt we've piled up that's quite considerable. What I want to do is to say, before we spend any of that surplus, let's make sure that we have saved the Social Security system so we don't bankrupt our children when the baby boomers retire.

Now, this is a place of community. I can look around—here's a couple who have been married 51 years, still working, with kids. I

want to think about our intergenerational responsibilities. I saw a survey the other day that said young people in their twenties thought it was more likely that they would see UFO's than that they'd ever get to collect Social Security. [*Laughter*]

Now, here's what I have to say about that. I don't want to stop people from watching the ''X-Files.'' Go on and do that. [*Laughter*] But I hope you'll also next year participate in the discussions we're going to have all across America—nonpartisan, across party lines, across age lines—about the Social Security system and what we need to do to make sure that when the baby boomers—and I'm the oldest baby boomer at 51—when people my age and 18 years younger, when we retire—and there's so many of us that there will be more than ever before, more people retired compared to people working—how are we going to save the system in a way that doesn't put undue burdens on our children and, therefore, undue burdens on our children when they're raising their children? I think that's something we all want.

And let me tell you something. We can do it. It won't be too difficult. But we have to do it in a nonpolitical way, and we have to do it as friends and neighbors and family members. La Crosse can be the model for how we save Social Security for the 21st century, and I hope you'll support us in that.

The second thing I want to say is, we've got to save our education system for the 21st century. I could just feel it last night at the State of the Union. I was talking about all the things we had done to open the doors of college, and people were cheering all over America. They thought, ''Oh, my goodness, that's something I won't have to sweat.'' Why were we cheering? Why? Because we know we have the best system of higher education in the entire world. No one questions that. I want, in the 21st century, people to be able to say with the absolute same conviction, we have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the entire world.

The third thing I want you to think about is what we can do—and I talked a little about it last night—to bring more investment into the inner-city areas and into the small towns and rural areas that have been left behind in this recovery. You know as well as I do, we still have a lot of people leaving the farm. The average farmer in America is 59 years old today.

Now, I don't have all the answers, but I come from a rural State that had tough inner-city areas. And I'm proud of the fact that we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, and I'm glad we've got the highest percentage of people in the work force in history. But you know and I know that there are still people who are working hard and don't have enough to live on, and there are still people who would like to work who don't have jobs. And you know and I know that the prosperity we have seen has still not swept into every neighborhood in America.

So I ask you, let's find a way in the 21st century to make free enterprise reach every rural community and every inner-city neighborhood. We can do it if we'll do it together.

The next thing I'd like to mention that I think is very important, and the Vice President talked about it a little bit, is the environment. We have a lot of environmental challenges. I'm very proud of the fact that, compared to 5 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; we have fewer toxic waste dumps; our food supply is safer. I am proud of that. But we do have—the Secretary made that joke about El Niño, and I loved it because I was shaking up here, too, but the truth is that the scientific opinion in the world is virtually unanimous that the climate of the Earth is warming at an unsustainable pace—even on this cold night. And we know that just small changes in temperature can affect great changes in the surface of the Earth and the way we live.

We know what's mainly causing it: It's greenhouse gases, the stuff we put out in the air from powerplants, from homes, from factories, from farms, from cars, from trucks—you name it. We also know that without a lot of effort, if we really put our mind to it, we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and grow the economy.

Now, every time we have faced a new environmental challenge, pessimists have said, ''Oh, goodness, if we do that, maybe we can clean the environment, but it will shut our economy down.'' It has never happened. We have the cleanest environment in history and

the strongest economy we've ever had. And I want you to make a commitment here that places like the University of Wisconsin can figure out how to find the technological ways to have the efficient cars, the efficient trucks, the efficient homes, the efficient office buildings, the efficient factories, the efficient electricity generators to make sure we save this planet for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. We can do that in the 21st century.

Finally, I want us to really tap the full measure of the scientific and technological potential of this country. Ron Kind said he hoped that his child and the child he's about to have might be two of those that I talked about last night when I said children born in the next couple of years might well live to see the 22d century. That is literally true. We have proposed, the Vice President and I and our administration, to create a research fund for the 21st century to make an unprecedented effort in the National Institute of Health, the National Cancer Institute, the National Science Foundation. I hope you will support that.

I hope you will support something that may seem a long way from La Crosse. I hope you will support our mission in space and the international space station. Why? Because when John Glenn, at 77 years old, goes up into space, we're going to learn something about how people's bodies work down here on Earth. A lot of our space research is helping us not only to find out what's in the heavens and to protect ourselves in the future but also to find out what's going on here on Earth, how to preserve our environment, how to improve our health. It may seem a long way from La Crosse, but we have learned that we dare not turn away from the frontiers of knowledge. We need to embrace them and make them work for the good of humanity, and we can do it, and I hope you will support that.

The last thing that I want you to think about for the 21st century is how we can make all of America work the way these local community heroes work in their communities. How can we reach across the lines that divide us?

I know that in La Crosse you had a conference on race last month, with the leadership of Thai Vue and June Kjome and Roy Heath and other citizen heroes that are here today. I want to thank them for that. And I thank all of you who participated.

Let me say to you—I said last night to the American people, we are more interdependent on each other and on the rest of the world than ever before. I mean, whether we like it or not, a third of our economic growth that we all celebrate came because we're selling things to people around the world. We represent 4 percent of the world's population and, thanks to our hard work and God's good fortune to us, we have about 20 percent of the world's wealth. So we have to work with others around the world.

And when you do business with people, you also have to be good partners, good neighbors, good friends. You have to care about them, and you have to get them to kind of reach out of their own prejudices and problems. I spent a lot of time working on getting people to stop behaving like fools, frankly, and hating each other because they have different races or different ethnic backgrounds or different religious backgrounds, whether it's in Bosnia or Northern Ireland or the Middle East or in Africa—around the world, the whole world is tormented by that. Now, here in America, we're becoming more and more and more diverse. And if we can prove to the world that we can live together, work together, learn together, and serve in our communities together, you can bet your bottom dollar we'll get along together. And America will still be the shining light of freedom and hope in the world well into the 21st century. And that's what we have to do.

I thank you again for having us here, for waiting in the cold—or the warm—[*laughter*]—and I don't know how many of you were at the Packers' welcome home party, but I thank them for showing up. [*Laughter*] Hang in there. There's always next year.

I will never forget looking out on this sea of people tonight, this beautiful old restored street, all the American flags, reading the stories of the American heroes. This is the best of America. This is the best of our past and the hope of our future. And together, we can make America's best days ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the La Crosse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Wisconsin Attorney General Jim Doyle; Mayor John Medinger of La Crosse; Lee and Ruth Mathison, who introduced the President; and Thai Vue, June Kjome, and Roy Heath, community service volunteers.

Statement on the Nomination of General Joseph W. Ralston to be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

January 28, 1998

I am pleased to announce that I have nominated General Joseph W. Ralston for a second 2-year tour as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Ralston has served with distinction as Vice Chairman over the past 2 years, providing excellent advice and support for two Secretaries of Defense and two Chairmen. His experience with the Quadrennial Defense Review and major defense policy issues, along with his demonstrated leadership skills, ensure that the position of Vice Chairman will continue to be filled by the high caliber of individual needed for this challenging and vital post.

Statement on the Senate Republican Child Care Proposal

January 28, 1998

Earlier this month, I unveiled an ambitious initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. Last night, in my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to reach across party lines to work on this important issue. I am very pleased that today, Senators Chafee, Hatch, Snowe, Roberts, Specter, and Collins proposed a child care package that, like mine, significantly increases child care subsidies for poor children, provides additional tax relief to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care, creates a tax credit for businesses that provide child care to their employees, and improves State enforcement of health and safety standards. I look forward to working with Members of Congress in both parties to enact comprehensive child care legislation to meet the needs of children and families.

I believe that by continuing to work together on a bipartisan basis and by taking the best proposals from both sides of the aisle, we will achieve legislation that helps Americans fulfill their responsibilities as workers and, even more importantly, as parents. With this important contribution from Senator Chafee and his Senate colleagues, we move significantly closer to enacting child care legislation that is right for America's children.

Proclamation 7065—Year of the Ocean, 1998

January 28, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, and more than half the world's population lives within 50 miles of a coastline. We rely on the ocean as both a source and sustenance of life on our planet. It contains a wondrous abundance and diversity of life, from the smallest microorganism to the mammoth blue whale. It is a key source of food, medicine, energy, commerce, and recreation for the peoples of the world, and the more we learn about its influence on climate and weather, the more we realize its impact on our safety and quality of life.

We are only beginning to understand the depths of the ocean's mysteries, but we are quickly learning one crucial lesson: the ocean's resources are limited, and we must work together to preserve them. Many areas are already overfished; decades of pollution, including industrial waste, sewage, and toxic runoff, has taken its toll on the health of the ocean and its living creatures. Many species of fish are threatened with extinction, and even our precious coral reefs, once a safe haven for an amazing variety of animal and plant life, have suffered greatly.

Because the ocean is a treasure that all nations of the world share in common, we must work in partnership to become wise stewards of its many riches. We must strive together—at local, national, and international levels—to preserve the ocean's health, to