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foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraqi Democratic Opposition Organizations

January 19, 1999

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 5(a) of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–338; October 31, 1998), the enclosed report notifies the Congress of Iraqi democratic opposition organizations I intend to designate under the Act.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

January 19, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans: Tonight, I have the honor of reporting to you on the State of the Union.

Let me begin by saluting the new Speaker of the House, and thanking him, especially tonight, for extending an invitation to two guests sitting in the gallery with Mrs. Hastert: Lyn Gibson and Wenling Chestnut are the widows of the two brave Capitol Hill police officers who gave their lives to defend freedom's house.

Mr. Speaker, at your swearing-in, you asked us all to work together in a spirit of civility and bipartisanship. Mr. Speaker, let's do exactly that.

Tonight, I stand before you to report that America has created the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history with nearly 18 million new jobs, wages rising at more than twice the rate of inflation, the highest homeownership in history, the smallest welfare rolls in 30 years, and the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957.

For the first time in three decades, the budget is balanced. From a deficit of $290 billion in 1992, we had a surplus of $70 billion last year. And now we are on course for budget surpluses for the next 25 years.

Thanks to the pioneering leadership of all of you, we have the lowest violent crime rate in a quarter century and the cleanest environment in a quarter century. America is a strong force for peace from Northern Ireland to Bosnia to the Middle East.

Thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore, we have a Government for the information age. Once again, a Government that is a progressive instrument of the common good, rooted in our oldest values of opportunity, responsibility, and community; devoted to fiscal responsibility; determined to give our people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives in the 21st century; a 21st century Government for 21st century America.

My fellow Americans, I stand before you tonight to report that the state of our Union is strong.

Now, America is working again. The promise of our future is limitless. But we cannot realize that promise if we allow the hum of our prosperity to lull us into complacency. How we fare as a nation far into the 21st century depends upon what we do as a nation today. So with our budget surplus growing, our economy expanding, our confidence rising, now is the moment for this generation to meet our historic responsibility to the 21st century.

Our fiscal discipline gives us an unsurpassed opportunity to address a remarkable new challenge, the aging of America. With the number of elderly Americans set to double by 2030, the baby boom will become a

senior boom. So first, and above all, we must save Social Security for the 21st century.

Early in this century, being old meant being poor. When President Roosevelt created Social Security, thousands wrote to thank him for eliminating what one woman called ''the stark terror of penniless, helpless old age.'' Even today, without Social Security, half our Nation's elderly would be forced into poverty.

Today, Social Security is strong. But by 2013, payroll taxes will no longer be sufficient to cover monthly payments. By 2032, the Trust Fund will be exhausted and Social Security will be unable to pay the full benefits older Americans have been promised.

The best way to keep Social Security a rock-solid guarantee is not to make drastic cuts in benefits, not to raise payroll tax rates, not to drain resources from Social Security in the name of saving it. Instead, I propose that we make the historic decision to invest the surplus to save Social Security.

Specifically, I propose that we commit 60 percent of the budget surplus for the next 15 years to Social Security, investing a small portion in the private sector, just as any private or State Government pension would do. This will earn a higher return and keep Social Security sound for 55 years.

But we must aim higher. We should put Social Security on a sound footing for the next 75 years. We should reduce poverty among elderly women, who are nearly twice as likely to be poor as our other seniors. And we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn.

Now, these changes will require difficult but fully achievable choices over and above the dedication of the surplus. They must be made on a bipartisan basis. They should be made this year. So let me say to you tonight, I reach out my hand to all of you in both Houses, in both parties, and ask that we join together in saying to the American people: We will save Social Security now.

Now, last year we wisely reserved all of the surplus until we knew what it would take to save Social Security. Again, I say, we shouldn't spend any of it, not any of it, until after Social Security is truly saved. First things first.

Second, once we have saved Social Security, we must fulfill our obligation to save and improve Medicare. Already, we have extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by 10 years, but we should extend it for at least another decade. Tonight, I propose that we use one out of every $6 in the surplus for the next 15 years to guarantee the soundness of Medicare until the year 2020.

But again, we should aim higher. We must be willing to work in a bipartisan way and look at new ideas, including the upcoming report of the bipartisan Medicare Commission. If we work together, we can secure Medicare for the next two decades and cover the greatest growing need of seniors, affordable prescription drugs.

Third, we must help all Americans, from their first day on the job to save, to invest, to create wealth. From its beginning, Americans have supplemented Social Security with private pensions and savings. Yet, today, millions of people retire with little to live on other than Social Security. Americans living longer than ever simply must save more than ever.

Therefore, in addition to saving Social Security and Medicare, I propose a new pension initiative for retirement security in the 21st century. I propose that we use a little over 11 percent of the surplus to establish universal savings accounts—USA accounts—to give all Americans the means to save. With these new accounts Americans can invest as they choose and receive funds to match a portion of their savings, with extra help for those least able to save. USA accounts will help all Americans to share in our Nation's wealth and to enjoy a more secure retirement. I ask you to support them.

Fourth, we must invest in long-term care. I propose a tax credit of $1,000 for the aged, ailing or disabled, and the families who care for them. Long-term care will become a bigger and bigger challenge with the aging of America, and we must do more to help our families deal with it.

I was born in 1946, the first year of the baby boom. I can tell you that one of the greatest concerns of our generation is our absolute determination not to let our growing

old place an intolerable burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. Our economic success and our fiscal discipline now give us an opportunity to lift that burden from their shoulders, and we should take it.

Saving Social Security, Medicare, creating USA accounts: This is the right way to use the surplus. If we do so—if we do so—we will still have resources to meet critical needs in education and defense. And I want to point out that this proposal is fiscally sound. Listen to this: If we set aside 60 percent of the surplus for Social Security and 16 percent for Medicare, over the next 15 years, that saving will achieve the lowest level of publicly held debt since right before World War I, in 1917.

So with these four measures—saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare, establishing the USA accounts, supporting long-term care—we can begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to establish true security for 21st century seniors.

Now, there are more children from more diverse backgrounds in our public schools than at any time in our history. Their education must provide the knowledge and nurture the creativity that will allow our entire Nation to thrive in the new economy.

Today we can say something we couldn't say 6 years ago: With tax credits and more affordable student loans, with more work-study grants and more Pell grants, with education IRA's and the new HOPE scholarship tax cut that more than 5 million Americans will receive this year, we have finally opened the doors of college to all Americans.

With our support, nearly every State has set higher academic standards for public schools, and a voluntary national test is being developed to measure the progress of our students. With over $1 billion in discounts available this year, we are well on our way to our goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet.

Last fall, you passed our proposal to start hiring 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Now I ask you to finish the job.

You know, our children are doing better. SAT scores are up; math scores have risen in nearly all grades. But there's a problem. While our fourth graders outperform their peers in other countries in math and science, our eighth graders are around average, and our twelfth graders rank near the bottom. We must do better. Now, each year the National Government invests more than $15 billion in our public schools. I believe we must change the way we invest that money, to support what works and to stop supporting what does not work.

First, later this year, I will send to Congress a plan that, for the first time, holds States and school districts accountable for progress and rewards them for results. My "Education Accountability Act" will require every school district receiving Federal help to take the following five steps.

First, all schools must end social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can't read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. But we can't just hold students back because the system fails them. So my balanced budget triples the funding for summer school and after-school programs, to keep a million children learning.

Now, if you doubt this will work, just look at Chicago, which ended social promotion and made summer school mandatory for those who don't master the basics. Math and reading scores are up 3 years running with some of the biggest gains in some of the poorest neighborhoods. It will work, and we should do it.

Second, all States and school districts must turn around their worst-performing schools or shut them down. That's the policy established in North Carolina by Governor Jim Hunt. North Carolina made the biggest gains in test scores in the Nation last year. Our budget includes $200 million to help States turn around their own failing schools.

Third, all States and school districts must be held responsible for the quality of their teachers. The great majority of our teachers do a fine job. But in too many schools, teachers don't have college majors—or even minors—in the subjects they teach. New teachers should be required to pass performance exams, and all teachers should know the subjects they're teaching. This year's balanced

budget contains resources to help them reach higher standards.

And to attract talented young teachers to the toughest assignments, I recommend a sixfold increase in our program for college scholarships for students who commit to teach in the inner cities and isolated rural areas and in Indian communities. Let us bring excellence in every part of America.

Fourth, we must empower parents with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurants than on the quality of the local schools. Every school district should issue report cards on every school. And parents should be given more choices in selecting their public school.

When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. With our support, on a bipartisan basis, today there are 1,100. My budget assures that early in the next century, there will be 3,000.

Fifth, to assure that our classrooms are truly places of learning and to respond to what teachers have been asking us to do for years, we should say that all States and school districts must both adopt and implement sensible discipline policies.

Now, let's do one more thing for our children. Today, too many schools are so old they're falling apart, or so over-crowded students are learning in trailers. Last fall, Congress missed the opportunity to change that. This year, with 53 million children in our schools, Congress must not miss that opportunity again. I ask you to help our communities build or modernize 5,000 schools.

If we do these things—end social promotion; turn around failing schools; build modern ones; support qualified teachers; promote innovation, competition and discipline—then we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to create 21st century schools.

Now, we also have to do more to support the millions of parents who give their all every day at home and at work. The most basic tool of all is a decent income. So let's raise the minimum wage by a dollar an hour over the next 2 years. And let's make sure that women and men get equal pay for equal work by strengthening enforcement of equal pay laws.

That was encouraging, you know. [*Laughter*] There was more balance on the seesaw. I like that. Let's give them a hand. That's great. [*Applause*]

Working parents also need quality child care. So again this year, I ask Congress to support our plan for tax credits and subsidies for working families, for improved safety and quality, for expanded after-school programs. And our plan also includes a new tax credit for stay-at-home parents, too. They need support, as well.

Parents should never have to worry about choosing between their children and their work. Now, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the very first bill I signed into law, has now, since 1993, helped millions and millions of Americans to care for a newborn baby or an ailing relative without risking their jobs. I think it's time, with all the evidence that it has been so little burdensome to employers, to extend family leave to 10 million more Americans working for smaller companies. And I hope you will support it.

Finally on the matter of work, parents should never have to face discrimination in the workplace. So I want to ask Congress to prohibit companies from refusing to hire or promote workers simply because they have children. That is not right.

America's families deserve the world's best medical care. Thanks to bipartisan Federal support for medical research, we are now on the verge of new treatments to prevent or delay diseases from Parkinson's to Alzheimer's, to arthritis to cancer. But as we continue our advances in medical science, we can't let our medical system lag behind. Managed care has literally transformed medicine in America, driving down costs but threatening to drive down quality as well.

I think we ought to say to every American: You should have the right to know all your medical options, not just the cheapest. If you need a specialist, you should have a right to see one. You have a right to the nearest emergency care if you're in an accident. These are things that we ought to say. And I think we ought to say: You should have a right to keep your doctor during a period of treatment, whether it's a pregnancy or a

chemotherapy treatment, or anything else. I believe this.

Now, I've ordered these rights to be extended to the 85 million Americans served by Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal health programs. But only Congress can pass a Patients' Bill of Rights for all Americans. Now, last year, Congress missed that opportunity, and we must not miss that opportunity again. For the sake of our families, I ask us to join together across party lines and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

As more of our medical records are stored electronically, the threats to all our privacy increase. Because Congress has given me the authority to act if it does not do so by August, one way or another, we can all say to the American people, "We will protect the privacy of medical records, and we will do it this year."

Now 2 years ago, the Congress extended health coverage to up to 5 million children. Now we should go beyond that. We should make it easier for small businesses to offer health insurance. We should give people between the ages of 55 and 65 who lose their health insurance the chance to buy into Medicare. And we should continue to ensure access to family planning.

No one should have to choose between keeping health care and taking a job. And therefore, I especially ask you tonight to join hands to pass the landmark bipartisan legislation, proposed by Senators Kennedy and Jeffords, Roth, and Moynihan to allow people with disabilities to keep their health insurance when they go to work.

We need to enable our public hospitals, our community, our university health centers to provide basic, affordable care for all the millions of working families who don't have any insurance. They do a lot of that today, but much more can be done. And my balanced budget makes a good down payment toward that goal. I hope you will think about them and support that provision.

Let me say we must step up our efforts to treat and prevent mental illness. No American should ever be afraid—ever—to address this disease. This year, we will host a White House Conference on Mental Health. With sensitivity, commitment, and passion, Tipper Gore is leading our efforts here, and I'd like to thank her for what she's done. Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you.

As everyone knows, our children are targets of a massive media campaign to hook them on cigarettes. Now, I ask this Congress to resist the tobacco lobby, to reaffirm the FDA's authority to protect our children from tobacco, and to hold tobacco companies accountable while protecting tobacco farmers.

Smoking has cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars under Medicare and other programs. You know, the States have been right about this: Taxpayers shouldn't pay for the cost of lung cancer, emphysema, and other smoking-related illnesses; the tobacco companies should. So tonight I announce that the Justice Department is preparing a litigation plan to take the tobacco companies to court and, with the funds we recover, to strengthen Medicare.

Now, if we act in these areas—minimum wage, family leave, child care, health care, the safety of our children—then we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibilities to strengthen our families for the 21st century.

Today, America is the most dynamic, competitive, job-creating economy in history. But we can do even better in building a 21st century economy that embraces all Americans.

Today's income gap is largely a skills gap. Last year, the Congress passed a law enabling workers to get a skills grant to choose the training they need. And I applaud all of you here who were part of that. This year, I recommend a 5-year commitment to the new system so that we can provide, over the next 5 years, appropriate training opportunities for all Americans who lose their jobs and expand rapid response teams to help all towns which have been really hurt when businesses close. I hope you will support this.

Also, I ask your support for a dramatic increase in Federal support for adult literacy, to mount a national campaign aimed at helping the millions and millions of working people who still read at less than a fifth grade level. We need to do this.

Here's some good news: In the past 6 years, we have cut the welfare rolls nearly in half. You can all be proud of that. Two years ago, from this podium, I asked five companies to lead a national effort to hire

people off welfare. Tonight, our Welfare to Work Partnership includes 10,000 companies who have hired hundreds of thousands of people. And our balanced budget will help another 200,000 people move to the dignity and pride of work. I hope you will support it.

We must do more to bring the spark of private enterprise to every corner of America, to build a bridge from Wall Street to Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to our Native American communities, with more support for community development banks, for empowerment zones, for 100,000 more vouchers for affordable housing. And I ask Congress to support our bold new plan to help businesses raise up to $15 billion in private sector capital to bring jobs and opportunities to our inner cities and rural areas with tax credits, loan guarantees, including the new ''American Private Investment Company,'' modeled on the Overseas Private Investment Company.

For years and years and years, we've had this OPIC, this Overseas Private Investment Corporation, because we knew we had untapped markets overseas. But our greatest untapped markets are not overseas; they are right here at home. And we should go after them.

We must work hard to help bring prosperity back to the family farm. As this Congress knows very well, dropping prices and the loss of foreign markets have devastated too many family farms. Last year, the Congress provided substantial assistance to help stave off a disaster in American agriculture. And I am ready to work with lawmakers of both parties to create a farm safety net that will include crop insurance reform and farm income assistance. I ask you to join with me and do this. This should not be a political issue. Everyone knows what an economic problem is going on out there in rural America today, and we need an appropriate means to address it.

We must strengthen our lead in technology. It was Government investment that led to the creation of the Internet. I propose a 28-percent increase in long-term computing research. We also must be ready for the 21st century from its very first moment, by solving the so-called Y2K computer problem.

We had one Member of Congress stand up and applaud. [*Laughter*] And we may have about that ratio out there applauding at home, in front of their television sets. But remember, this is a big, big problem. And we've been working hard on it. Already, we've made sure that the Social Security checks will come on time. But I want all the folks at home listening to this to know that we need every State and local government, every business, large and small, to work with us to make sure that this Y2K computer bug will be remembered as the last headache of the 20th century, not the first crisis of the 21st.

For our own prosperity, we must support economic growth abroad. You know, until recently, a third of our economic growth came from exports. But over the past year and a half, financial turmoil overseas has put that growth at risk. Today, much of the world is in recession, with Asia hit especially hard. This is the most serious financial crisis in half a century. To meet it, the United States and other nations have reduced interest rates and strengthened the International Monetary Fund. And while the turmoil is not over, we have worked very hard with other nations to contain it.

At the same time, we have to continue to work on the long-term project, building a global financial system for the 21st century that promotes prosperity and tames the cycle of boom and bust that has engulfed so much of Asia. This June I will meet with other world leaders to advance this historic purpose, and I ask all of you to support our endeavors.

I also ask you to support creating a freer and fairer trading system for 21st century America. I'd like to say something really serious to everyone in this Chamber in both parties. I think trade has divided us, and divided Americans outside this Chamber, for too long. Somehow we have to find a common ground on which business and workers and environmentalists and farmers and Government can stand together. I believe these are the things we ought to all agree on. So let me try.

First, we ought to tear down barriers, open markets, and expand trade. But at the same time, we must ensure that ordinary citizens

in all countries actually benefit from trade, a trade that promotes the dignity of work and the rights of workers and protects the environment. We must insist that international trade organizations be more open to public scrutiny, instead of mysterious, secret things subject to wild criticism.

When you come right down to it, now that the world economy is becoming more and more integrated, we have to do in the world what we spent the better part of this century doing here at home. We have got to put a human face on the global economy.

We must enforce our trade laws when imports unlawfully flood our Nation. I have already informed the Government of Japan that if that nation's sudden surge of steel imports into our country is not reversed, America will respond.

We must help all manufacturers hit hard by the present crisis with loan guarantees and other incentives to increase American exports by nearly $2 billion. I'd like to believe we can achieve a new consensus on trade, based on these principles. And I ask the Congress again to join me in this common approach and to give the President the trade authority long used and now overdue and necessary to advance our prosperity in the 21st century.

Tonight I issue a call to the nations of the world to join the United States in a new round of global trade negotiations to expand exports of services, manufactures, and farm products. Tonight I say we will work with the International Labor Organization on a new initiative to raise labor standards around the world. And this year, we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world.

If we do these things—invest in our people, our communities, our technology, and lead in the global economy—then we will begin to meet our historic responsibility to build a 21st century prosperity for America.

You know, no nation in history has had the opportunity and the responsibility we now have to shape a world that is more peaceful, more secure, more free. All Americans can be proud that our leadership helped to bring peace in Northern Ireland. All Americans can be proud that our leadership has put Bosnia on the path to peace. And with our NATO allies, we are pressing the Serbian Government to stop its brutal repression in Kosovo, to bring those responsible to justice, and to give the people of Kosovo the self-government they deserve.

All Americans can be proud that our leadership renewed hope for lasting peace in the Middle East. Some of you were with me last December as we watched the Palestinian National Council completely renounce its call for the destruction of Israel. Now I ask Congress to provide resources so that all parties can implement the Wye agreement to protect Israel's security, to stimulate the Palestinian economy, to support our friends in Jordan. We must not—we dare not—let them down. I hope you will help.

As we work for peace, we must also meet threats to our Nation's security, including increased dangers from outlaw nations and terrorism. We will defend our security wherever we are threatened, as we did this summer when we struck at Usama bin Ladin's network of terror. The bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania reminds us again of the risks faced every day by those who represent America to the world. So let's give them the support they need, the safest possible workplaces, and the resources they must have so America can continue to lead.

We must work to keep terrorists from disrupting computer networks. We must work to prepare local communities for biological and chemical emergenices, to support research into vaccines and treatments.

We must increase our efforts to restrain the spread of nuclear weapons and missiles, from Korea to India and Pakistan. We must expand our work with Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet nations to safeguard nuclear materials and technology so they never fall into the wrong hands. Our balanced budget will increase funding for these critical efforts by almost two-thirds over the next 5 years.

With Russia, we must continue to reduce our nuclear arsenals. The START II treaty and the framework we have already agreed to for START III could cut them by 80 percent from their cold war height.

It's been 2 years since I signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. If we don't do

the right thing, other nations won't either. I ask the Senate to take this vital step: Approve the treaty now, to make it harder for other nations to develop nuclear arms, and to make sure we can end nuclear testing forever.

For nearly a decade, Iraq has defied its obligations to destroy its weapons of terror and the missiles to deliver them. America will continue to contain Saddam, and we will work for the day when Iraq has a Government worthy of its people.

Now, last month, in our action over Iraq, our troops were superb. Their mission was so flawlessly executed that we risk taking for granted the bravery and the skill it required. Captain Jeff Taliaferro, a 10-year veteran of the Air Force, flew a B–1B bomber over Iraq as we attacked Saddam's war machine. He's here with us tonight. I'd like to ask you to honor him and all the 33,000 men and women of Operation Desert Fox.

Captain Taliaferro. [*Applause*]

It is time to reverse the decline in defense spending that began in 1985. Since April, together we have added nearly $6 billion to maintain our military readiness. My balanced budget calls for a sustained increase over the next 6 years for readiness, for modernization, and for pay and benefits for our troops and their families.

We are the heirs of a legacy of bravery represented in every community in America by millions of our veterans. America's defenders today still stand ready at a moment's notice to go where comforts are few and dangers are many, to do what needs to be done as no one else can. They always come through for America. We must come through for them.

The new century demands new partnerships for peace and security. The United Nations plays a crucial role, with allies sharing burdens America might otherwise bear alone. America needs a strong and effective U.N. I want to work with this new Congress to pay our dues and our debts.

We must continue to support security and stability in Europe and Asia, expanding NATO and defining its new missions, maintaining our alliance with Japan, with Korea, with our other Asian allies, and engaging China.

In China, last year, I said to the leaders and the people what I'd like to say again tonight: Stability can no longer be bought at the expense of liberty. But I'd also like to say again to the American people: It's important not to isolate China. The more we bring China into the world, the more the world will bring change and freedom to China.

Last spring, with some of you, I traveled to Africa, where I saw democracy and reform rising but still held back by violence and disease. We must fortify African democracy and peace by launching Radio Democracy for Africa, supporting the transition to democracy now beginning to take place in Nigeria, and passing the ''African Trade and Development Act.''

We must continue to deepen our ties to the Americas and the Caribbean, our common work to educate children, fight drugs, strengthen democracy and increase trade. In this hemisphere, every government but one is freely chosen by its people. We are determined that Cuba, too, will know the blessings of liberty.

The American people have opened their hearts and their arms to our Central American and Caribbean neighbors who have been so devastated by the recent hurricanes. Working with Congress, I am committed to help them rebuild. When the First Lady and Tipper Gore visited the region, they saw thousands of our troops and thousands of American volunteers. In the Dominican Republic, Hillary helped to rededicate a hospital that had been rebuilt by Dominicans and Americans, working side-by-side. With her was someone else who has been very important to the relief efforts.

You know, sports records are made and, sooner or later, they're broken. But making other people's lives better, and showing our children the true meaning of brotherhood—that lasts forever. So, for far more than baseball, Sammy Sosa, you're a hero in two countries tonight. [*Applause*] Thank you.

So I say to all of you, if we do these things—if we pursue peace, fight terrorism, increase our strength, renew our alliances—we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to build a stronger 21st century America in a freer, more peaceful world.

As the world has changed, so have our own communities. We must make them safer, more livable, and more united. This year, we will reach our goal of 100,000 community police officers ahead of schedule and under budget. The Brady bill has stopped a quarter million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns. And now, the murder rate is the lowest in 30 years and the crime rate has dropped for 6 straight years.

Tonight I propose a 21st century crime bill to deploy the latest technologies and tactics to make our communities even safer. Our balanced budget will help put up to 50,000 more police on the street in the areas hardest hit by crime and then to equip them with new tools, from crime-mapping computers to digital mug shots.

We must break the deadly cycle of drugs and crime. Our budget expands support for drug testing and treatment, saying to prisoners: If you stay on drugs, you have to stay behind bars; and to those on parole: If you want to keep your freedom, you must stay free of drugs.

I ask Congress to restore the 5-day waiting period for buying a handgun and extend the Brady bill to prevent juveniles who commit violent crimes from buying a gun.

We must do more to keep our schools the safest places in our communities. Last year, every American was horrified and heartbroken by the tragic killings in Jonesboro, Paducah, Pearl, Edinboro, Springfield. We were deeply moved by the courageous parents now working to keep guns out of the hands of children and to make other efforts so that other parents don't have to live through their loss.

After she lost her daughter, Suzann Wilson of Jonesboro, Arkansas, came here to the White House with a powerful plea. She said, "Please, please, for the sake of your children, lock up your guns. Don't let what happened in Jonesboro happen in your town." It's a message she is passionately advocating every day. Suzann is here with us tonight, with the First Lady. I'd like to thank her for her courage and her commitment. [*Applause*] Thank you.

In memory of all the children who lost their lives to school violence, I ask you to strengthen the Safe and Drug-Free School Act, to pass legislation to require child trigger locks, to do everything possible to keep our children safe.

A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt defined our "great, central task" as "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." Today, we're restoring the Florida Everglades, saving Yellowstone, preserving the red rock canyons of Utah, protecting California's redwoods and our precious coasts. But our most fateful new challenge is the threat of global warming; 1998 was the warmest year ever recorded. Last year's heat waves, floods, and storms are but a hint of what future generations may endure if we do not act now.

Tonight I propose a new clean air fund to help communities reduce greenhouse and other pollution, and tax incentives and investments to spur clean energy technology. And I want to work with Members of Congress in both parties to reward companies that take early, voluntary action to reduce greenhouse gases.

All our communities face a preservation challenge, as they grow and green space shrinks. Seven thousand acres of farmland and open space are lost every day. In response, I propose two major initiatives: First, a $1-billion livability agenda to help communities save open space, ease traffic congestion, and grow in ways that enhance every citizen's quality of life; and second, a $1-billion lands legacy initiative to preserve places of natural beauty all across America from the most remote wilderness to the nearest city park.

These are truly landmark initiatives, which could not have been developed without the visionary leadership of the Vice President, and I want to thank him very much for his commitment here.

Now, to get the most out of your community, you have to give something back. That's why we created AmeriCorps, our national service program that gives today's generation a chance to serve their communities and earn money for college.

So far, in just 4 years, 100,000 young Americans have built low-income homes with Habitat for Humanity, helped to tutor children with churches, worked with FEMA to

ease the burden of natural disasters, and performed countless other acts of service that have made America better. I ask Congress to give more young Americans the chance to follow their lead and serve America in AmeriCorps.

Now, we must work to renew our national community as well for the 21st century. Last year the House passed the bipartisan campaign finance reform legislation sponsored by Representatives Shays and Meehan and Senators McCain and Feingold. But a partisan minority in the Senate blocked reform. So I'd like to say to the House: Pass it again, quickly. And I'd like to say to the Senate: I hope you will say yes to a stronger American democracy in the year 2000.

Since 1997, our initiative on race has sought to bridge the divides between and among our people. In its report last fall, the initiative's advisory board found that Americans really do want to bring our people together across racial lines.

We know it's been a long journey. For some, it goes back to before the beginning of our Republic; for others, back since the Civil War; for others, throughout the 20th century. But for most of us alive today, in a very real sense, this journey began 43 years ago, when a woman named Rosa Parks sat down on a bus in Alabama and wouldn't get up. She's sitting down with the First Lady tonight, and she may get up or not, as she chooses. We thank her. [*Applause*] Thank you, Rosa.

We know that our continuing racial problems are aggravated, as the Presidential initiative said, by opportunity gaps. The initiative I've outlined tonight will help to close them. But we know that the discrimination gap has not been fully closed either. Discrimination or violence because of race or religion, ancestry or gender, disability or sexual orientation, is wrong, and it ought to be illegal. Therefore, I ask Congress to make the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" and the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act" the law of the land.

Now, since every person in America counts, every American ought to be counted. We need a census that uses modern scientific methods to do that.

Our new immigrants must be part of our One America. After all, they're revitalizing our cities; they're energizing our culture; they're building up our economy. We have a responsibility to make them welcome here, and they have a responsibility to enter the mainstream of American life. That means learning English and learning about our democratic system of government. There are now long waiting lines of immigrants that are trying to do just that. Therefore, our budget significantly expands our efforts to help them meet their responsibility. I hope you will support it.

Whether our ancestors came here on the *Mayflower*, on slave ships, whether they came to Ellis Island or LAX in Los Angeles, whether they came yesterday or walked this land a thousand years ago, our great challenge for the 21st century is to find a way to be one America. We can meet all the other challenges if we can go forward as one America.

You know, barely more than 300 days from now, we will cross that bridge into the new millennium. This is a moment, as the First Lady has said, "to honor the past and imagine the future."

I'd like to take just a minute to honor her. For leading our Millennium Project, for all she's done for our children, for all she has done in her historic role to serve our Nation and our best ideals at home and abroad, I honor her. [*Applause*]

Last year, I called on Congress and every citizen to mark the millennium by saving America's treasures. Hillary has traveled all across the country to inspire recognition and support for saving places like Thomas Edison's invention factory or Harriet Tubman's home. Now we have to preserve our treasures in every community. And tonight, before I close, I want to invite every town, every city, every community to become a nationally recognized "millennium community," by launching projects that save our history, promote our arts and humanities, prepare our children for the 21st century.

Already, the response has been remarkable. And I want to say a special word of thanks to our private sector partners and to Members in Congress of both parties for their support. Just one example: Because of

you, the Star-Spangled Banner will be preserved for the ages. In ways large and small, as we look to the millennium we are keeping alive what George Washington called ''the sacred fire of liberty.''

Six years ago, I came to office in a time of doubt for America, with our economy troubled, our deficit high, our people divided. Some even wondered whether our best days were behind us. But across this country, in a thousand neighborhoods, I have seen, even amidst the pain and uncertainty of recession, the real heart and character of America. I knew then that we Americans could renew this country.

Tonight, as I deliver the last State of the Union Address of the 20th century, no one anywhere in the world can doubt the enduring resolve and boundless capacity of the American people to work toward that ''more perfect Union'' of our Founders' dream.

We're now at the end of a century when generation after generation of Americans answered the call to greatness, overcoming depression, lifting up the disposed, bringing down barriers to racial prejudice, building the largest middle class in history, winning two World Wars and the long twilight struggle of the cold war. We must all be profoundly grateful for the magnificent achievement of our forebears in this century. Yet, perhaps, in the daily press of events, in the clash of controversy, we don't see our own time for what it truly is, a new dawn for America.

A hundred years from tonight, another American President will stand in this place and report on the state of the Union. He—or she—he or she will look back on a 21st century shaped in so many ways by the decisions we make here and now. So let it be said of us then that we were thinking not only of our time but of their time, that we reached as high as our ideals, that we put aside our divisions and found a new hour of healing and hopefulness, that we joined together to serve and strengthen the land we love.

My fellow Americans, this is our moment. Let us lift our eyes as one Nation, and from the mountaintop of this American Century, look ahead to the next one, asking God's blessing on our endeavors and on our beloved country.

Thank you, and good evening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Jean Hastert, wife of Speaker J. Dennis Hastert; Evelyn M. (Lyn) Gibson, widow of Detective John M. Gibson, and Wenling Chestnut, widow of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut, whose husbands died as a result of gunshot wounds suffered during an attack at the Capitol on July 24, 1998; terrorist Usama bin Ladin, who allegedly sponsored bombing attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Capt. Jeffrey B. Taliaferro, USAF, Chief, Wing Weapons, 28th Operations Support Squadron, 28th Bomb Wing; and Sammy Sosa, National League Most Valuable Player in 1998.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd in Buffalo, New York

January 20, 1999

Thank you. Wow! Good morning. Good afternoon. [*Laughter*] I want to say, first of all, how very grateful that Hillary and Al and Tipper and I are that you all came out to see us today to make us feel so welcome. I want to thank your mayor, your county executive, Mrs. Eve, and especially Congressman John LaFalce for being here with us. He is a great man.

You know, we don't want to put you through the speeches and everything because you have the monitors here, and you're going to see them. But let me say that Buffalo has been wonderful to me and to Hillary, to Al and Tipper. We are so grateful. We remember when we came here together in 1992. And I'm always glad to come back, even in the snow. Yes, that's right. This guy says, ''This ain't nothing.'' [*Laughter*] And we had some buffalo wings in the holding room.

And we just want you to know how much we appreciate you, how much we appreciate the support that you've given us in two elections, how grateful we are for the chance to serve, and how committed we are to the agenda that I outlined last night. Let me also—we want you to be committed to it, too.