

closer and closer to their ideals of equality of opportunity and decency and justice and fairness, and giving everybody a chance to live out their dreams.

Now, that's what this election is about. You have to help your fellow Americans decide which road we're going to walk into the future. And if they understand the choice, I think we ought to give them a hand. [Applause] Thank you.

Remarks at the Chicago '96 Dinner July 2, 1996

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, before I say anything I want to, by way of introduction and being true to my past—back when I had a life and I did other things—I want to say that I enjoyed the music that this fine orchestra has given us tonight, and I think we ought to give them a hand. [Applause] Thank you.

It is wonderful to be back in Chicago tonight. I want to thank all of those who have spoken before and those whom they represent, and all of you for your contribution to help make our convention a success.

I thank Leslie Fox and I want to thank Dick Notebaert, who has done many, many commendable things for our country as CEO for Ameritech, but helping to make sure we have a good convention in Chicago is one that I will especially long remember.

I want to thank my good friend Bill Daley for his fine work. He's always there when you need him. He even came to the White House when I needed him to help me pass NAFTA, and this country is in a lot better shape because of it. And I thank you.

I want to thank the mayor, who, along with many other gifted public officials in this area, including my friend and fellow Arkansan John Stroger—thank you, sir. I think the mayor has made a special point of trying to do what works and trying to make Chicago into a big family. He and Mrs. Daley come from big families, so they can set a good example for the rest of us. But I also believe they've tried to make Chicago into a family.

When I first met Hillary, a long time ago now, and she began to talk to me about Chi-

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to William S. Singer, chair of the reception, and William M. Daley, cochair, Chicago '96, host committee for the 1996 Democratic Convention.

ago, and then I got to know her family and I began to spend a lot of time here, I realized that this was truly a unique city, in some ways perhaps our most American city. I was at an event for Congressman Durbin a few moments ago, and he was talking about his mother being a Lithuanian immigrant. And I said to the group there that when I talked to Hillary last night—we were in France together for the annual meeting of the seven largest industrial nations and Russia, and afterward she stayed on to visit, I think, seven or eight countries in Central and Eastern Europe. She just finished the day in Romania. And so she was bragging on her day in Romania. She said, "Well, I've been in Romania. I'm going to the Czech Republic. I'm going to Hungary. I'm going to Poland. I'm going to Estonia." And she said she was going to a couple other places. And I said, "Well, I'm going to Chicago, and I'll see people from all those places with just one stop." And I said, "You could have stayed home and done all that with a lot less effort, you know." [Laughter] I'm very proud of her, and I'm glad she is doing this for our country. But it makes the point about Chicago.

I'd like to thank Debra DeLee, our convention coordinator, and all of the people here who have worked here on our behalf and on the Democratic Party's behalf. You all know that I'm also indebted to Chicago for a lot of things. My campaign in 1992 got off to a real jump-start here. When I spoke to the leaders of the various State Democratic parties in 1991 here at this very Navy Pier, I announced that David Wilhelm would be my campaign manager, and

I know he and Degee are here somewhere tonight, and I want to thank them.

I have been blessed by a lot of people from Chicago who have helped me immensely: Avis LaVelle and Amy Zisook who are here tonight, and a lot of others of you who have been with me, and I thank you for that.

So this is a special place. It was on Saint Patrick's Day in 1992 that I was essentially declared the nominee of the Democratic Party because of our victories in Illinois and Michigan. And I have a picture in my private office in the White House of Hillary and me, in green, under the confetti in Chicago on Saint Patrick's Day in 1992. I will always remember that.

You know, I think that this great city has hosted more conventions than any city in American history. It has also hosted more Presidents. According to the notes I have here, it says they include Presidents Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, FDR, and Eisenhower. I hope that if your luck holds, I'll make the Democratic line on that list a little longer than it was.

Throughout the history of this great city, from its days as a railroad center to its days as an industrial powerhouse and an ethnic melting pot to its offering a haven of opportunity to African-Americans from the South, including so many from my home State, to the efforts it has made to transform itself as the economic realities of our country has forced those changes, Chicago has time and again come back, always stronger, always better, always proving that it is the city that works.

Mr. Mayor, you and your late father and your mother and all your friends and your colleagues in this city, from all different walks of life and all different racial and economic backgrounds, deserve a lot of credit. You are proving that the cities of this country have a great future in making America what it should be, and I thank you for that.

I also want to thank you all, without regard to your political party, for opening your hearts and minds and your pocketbooks to make this convention a success. This country works best when it has two competing visions, two competing approaches, an honest and open debate, and people who are empowered by that debate to make decisions about what they want for themselves and their families and their future. You have given us a chance to show the Democratic Party at its best. And I think that is important.

For the last 3½ years I have tried to break out of this debate that dominated our political life for too long, because it seemed to have no relationship to reality: one side saying Government is the problem, another side saying Government is the solution. I think the solution is to do what works. That's what Chicago does: what works to give people opportunity, what works to reinforce responsible behavior, and what works to bring us together as a community. And if we do that we will be rewarded.

We are going to have the opportunity as a people to actually decide which road we want to walk into the 21st century, and I think that is very exciting. And I hope that the American people will get caught up in the spirit of that in this election year and not be diverted by the politics of division and destruction that too often dominate the easy moments in the headlines.

For there are fundamental questions we have to come to grips with. What's the best way to guarantee opportunity for every American willing to work for it? If we have come to the end of the industrial era and we are living in a world dominated by information and technology, if the cold war is being replaced not just by a global economy but a global society, how are we going to guarantee that everybody has a chance to live out their dreams? Not to guarantee a result, but a chance. If the world is being dominated on every continent, it seems, by new security problems from terrorism to organized crime, abusing the openness of a global society, how are we going to keep this most diverse of all of the world's democracies from being consumed by the kind of ethnic and religious and racial conflicts that are literally destroying countries and peoples all over the world? In other words, how are we going to bring out our best and beat back the darker impulses that are latent in every society?

I believe with all my heart that the best days of this country are still ahead of us. And when I imagine what I want America to look like when my daughter is my age and, hopefully, I've got a whole nest of grandkids to worry about, when I've long since forgotten about politics, I want it to be the most peaceful period in world history. I want it to be a period where people compete with one another in economics, education, and athletics, and not in military contests.

I want it to be a period when we are making unprecedented efforts to solve the remaining mysteries of biochemistry so that we can unlock the terrible problems that still plague us, that take too many people away from this life before their time. I want it to be a period where people in this country without regard to their racial or religious background or their gender or wherever they start out in life actually have a chance, if they work hard and behave in responsible fashion, to dream their own dreams and live them out. And I believe there is a very good chance that we can achieve that.

I want it to be a place where we have at least learned to work with our friends and neighbors to limit terrorism and limit organized crime and limit the spread of weapons of mass destruction from abroad. And in this country we have worked to bring safety and sanity back to our streets and neighborhoods.

And Mr. Mayor, I just want to say, you mentioned the crime bill. One of the things that I believe is critical to the success of our democracy is making families believe that they can actually bring children into this world and raise them in their neighborhoods and send them to school every day with a reasonable expectation of safety. It is not true that the crime problem is insoluble. We can make it better. We are making it better. And if we keep working on it we will return to the days when we are actually surprised when we see the evening news lead with the report of a serious crime. That's when we'll know we have won. But we can do that, and that is an important part of the 21st century we should all be trying to build as well.

When my daughter is my age, I want us to have unraveled the great mystery that we must unravel if we're going to continue to grow and see all these developing countries, particularly the populous ones like China and India, grow, which is how can we grow the economy and enhance the environment instead of destroying it. We don't want global warming. We don't want more greenhouse gases. But we do want more growth, and we want our neighbors around the world to have more growth so they can buy more of our products. We have to make a commitment as an American people together to the cause of environmental enhancement and economic growth. And no one has solved it entirely yet. I want America to lead that fight. And we'll be in a position to do it.

These are the things I think about when I imagine what I want our country to look like. And my goal is to have a convention here in Chicago that will enable the American people to know the vision we started with; what we, as a party, have achieved; what we stand for and what we believe the honest, important differences are between ourselves and the Republicans. And then I want us to go out of Chicago and give this election back to the American people, on the big, sweeping issues that will help all of us to answer the question, what do we want our country to look like 20 years from now?

If Chicago can give that gift to America it will be in part because I will be looking to Chicago to illustrate what happens when you have an effective crime bill, what happens when you have effective strategies to open educational opportunities to people, what happens when you have effective strategies to try to give private sector investors an incentive to invest in neighborhoods that have been long since forgotten. In other words, how do you make America work?

You are a shining example of that. I believe all America will be very proud of you when this is over. And I believe if we can prove that Chicago is working and that there is a partnership involved in that, as the mayor said, then we have a much better chance of having too much when America debates the big important issues and people are really free to ask and answer that question: What do I want my country to be like for my children and my grandchildren? What do I believe America should stand for 20 or 30 or 40 years from now? That is the question we will decide in this election, whether we do it consciously or unconsciously. Chicago will help us to do it with a clear head and a strong heart. And for that, I thank you very much.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Navy Pier. In his remarks, he referred to Leslie Fox, executive director, Chicago '96, host committee for the 1996 Democratic Convention; Richard C. Notebaert, cochair, Chicago '96; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and his wife, Margaret; John Stroger, president, Cook County Board of Commissioners; Avis LaVelle, former press secretary to Mayor Daley; and Democratic fundraiser Amy Zisook.