

Oct. 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

Trust for 2 years, after which time the Trust will reimburse the Park Service for any further services. As part of this partnership, it is my expectation that the National Park Service will establish a position of superintendent or site manager to work closely with the Trust in managing this NPS unit.

Section 5(v)(1) of S. 871 vests the powers and management of the Trust in a Board of Directors consisting of the Secretary of the Interior and eight other members appointed by the President. These Presidential appointments would be made from names submitted by the Governor of Oklahoma, the Mayor of Oklahoma City, and the Oklahoma congressional delega-

tion. Because the Constitution does not permit limiting the executive branch's appointment power by requiring nominations from lists of recommendations, I will regard any lists submitted pursuant to that section as advisory.

I commend all those who worked so hard to memorialize the lives of the innocent victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 9, 1997.

NOTE: S. 871, approved October 9, was assigned Public Law No. 105-58.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 1997

October 9, 1997

Warm greetings to all those observing Yom Kippur.

On this most solemn of Jewish holy days, Jews across America and around the world acknowledge the transgressions of the past year and come before God to atone for their sins. It is a time to rectify mistakes, to repair broken bonds between family members, friends, and neighbors, and to reaffirm their sacred covenant with God. Rich with tradition and ritual, observed with strict fasting and devout prayer, the Day of Atonement offers the Jewish people a powerful reminder to begin the new year by seeking what is most important: the mercy of God and the forgiveness of those whom they may have failed.

As our nation embarks upon a season of renewal and reconciliation, Americans of all faiths can learn from the lessons of Yom Kippur. By acknowledging the divisions among us and seeking forgiveness from one another for past injuries and mistakes, we can strengthen our families, communities, and nation and enter the future as a more compassionate and united people.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a blessed Yom Kippur.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 9.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

October 9, 1997

Thank you. Only a fool would speak after both a Baptist minister and a rabbi. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Steve. And I thank Vernon and Ann for having us here. Hillary and I and Chelsea, we've been here a lot over the last several years. This has often been a home away from home and on occasion, in difficult times, a real refuge for us. This is the largest crowd with whom

I have ever dined in this room, with the fewest number of people related to Vernon and Ann. [*Laughter*] But we're all family in a way here, and I thank you for being here.

I thought what might be good to do tonight is maybe I would just talk a couple of minutes and follow up on something that Vernon and Steve talked about, and then see if any of you

had any questions or comments you wanted to make or anything you wanted to say.

Let me begin by thanking you for helping tonight and, for many of you, over many years. I've been feeling rather nostalgic lately, as you might imagine. Last week was the sixth anniversary of the date I declared for President. And we just took Chelsea off to school. A couple of days from now is my 22d wedding anniversary. I'm not feeling so young anymore. And almost five-eighths of my Presidency is over, which I have a difficult time believing.

Let me tell you why I think what we're doing is important. I never will forget when I was trying to make up my mind whether to run for President in 1991. I didn't especially feel compelled to do it. I was having the most wonderful time of my life as a Governor, enjoying enormous success, great approval from our people; our family, our friends, everything was going great. I was very concerned then that our country seemed to be sort of lurching toward this new century and this incredible new era without any real strategy for how to proceed.

And I was also concerned, very frankly, about the quality of the political debate in Washington in both parties. It seemed to me kind of stale and not very helpful. There was a lot of emphasis on what I thought of as "old think," you know—liberal-conservative, left-right, in yesterday's terms—and a whole lot of emphasis on the politics of personal destruction which, regrettably, I have not quite succeeded in eliminating from Washington. It may be part of human nature.

I read a great biography of General Grant the other day, pointing out that his commander in the Union Army, even though he kept winning and his men loved him and everybody thought he was great, was trying to replace him until finally he won at Vicksburg and no one could question whether he was the lead dog in the hunt—whereupon the guy immediately rushed to Lincoln and started talking about how great he was. So maybe this is just part of this town and the way it works.

But I didn't like it very much, because it seemed to me then—it seems to me now—that we have all these incredible opportunities, but we have to be thinking about them in the right way. There is a great role and a need for two parties in this country, but they need to be having a principled debate about the fu-

ture, not yesterday's debate about things that don't really matter anymore.

And so, I set about doing what wound up winning the campaign in '92, saying that we had to focus on keeping the American dream alive, reasserting America's leadership in the world, and rebuilding America's community at home, and that we needed to focus on the future, not the past; on change, not the status quo; on unity, not division; on policies that helped everybody, not just a few. And I think it's fair to say it's worked pretty well, because not only is the economy doing well but crime has dropped for 5 years in a row. We have the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history now—3.6 million people tonight are living in families with payrolls who were living in families with welfare checks 4 years ago. That's something our country can be proud of. We have advanced the cause of the environment and public health. The country is better off.

But if I look ahead to the future, I will say again, the reason this is important, why you're here tonight, and the reason it's important that we continue to be active in the political process and not be apologetic or believe there's anything wrong with it, is that we still have these huge decisions to make and we desperately need a principled debate about the future. That's what we owe our children. That's what we owe this country.

Now, let me just give you a few. The major challenges confronting America for the remainder of this century and for the foreseeable future will be those posed by the globalization of the economy and the society, and the changing nature of the way we work and live as a result of the information and technology revolution. Among other things, one big challenge will be, how do you maintain individual opportunity and give everybody who is willing to work a chance with all this dynamism in the economy, number one? Number two, how do you make sure that we have the requisite set of policies—and maybe most important—to keep this economy going and competitive? That's what I think the fast-track issue is about. Number three, since we have a higher percentage of Americans than ever before in the workplace, how do we help people balance better the demands of work and family, since the most important job anyone ever has is still raising children properly? Nothing else compares to that. If we fail at that,

we can all work like crazy, and then when we're gone, the whole thing will crater.

On the other hand, people shouldn't be asked to choose and face not succeeding as a parent because they can't balance these demands. That's why I worked so hard for the family leave act and the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill and the part of the balanced budget that will enable us to provide health insurance for 5 million more kids and working families who don't have it, because we have to find a way for people to succeed at rebuilding childhood in America and strong families and still keep growing this economy like crazy.

The third thing that I want to say—or the fourth one, on globalization—we also, it seems to me, as Americans, have to put our minds more to bringing the strategies that have brought so many of us so much prosperity into the areas that have not been affected one way or the other by the good things that are happening. And I think we shouldn't miss that. There are areas that have not been affected one way or the other, that just are still static, and they are a great market for America. They're a great growth potential. They're a great potential strength for our future. So, there's that set of challenges.

Then I think we have a set of generational challenges. I think we have to not only preserve Medicare and Social Security for future generations but we have to do it in a way that frees us up to focus on the fact that an enormous number of our children are still born into and reared in poverty and are, therefore, relatively disadvantaged compared to those of us who are not young. And we pay a big price for that.

The next big challenge I think we have is, how do we deal with the very real and, I'm convinced, quite profound environmental challenges that will be presented to the world if China, India, and other countries grow quite wealthy, if they all get rich the same way we did? The President of China is about to come visit me, and we once had an interesting conversation in New York when he said, "Sometimes I think the United States is trying to contain us. And we don't want to be a threat to you, and we don't want you to think we are." And I said, "The only threat you propose to us right now is I'm afraid you want to get rich the same way we did, because if you do it in exactly the same way we did, all your cities will be clogged with pollution and will be heat-

ing up the atmosphere so fast that nothing I do will turn it around." And I could tell he'd never thought about it in those terms.

This climate change issue, I think, is a very real issue. It's only one of many environmental challenges we have to face, but we have to prove that we can do it in a way that permits us to continue to grow the economy and doesn't make us look like we're trying to hold down people in countries that at long last are beginning to come into their own and give their kids a better future. It's a huge challenge. Science and technology—how are we going to deal with the potentials of it? Are there ethical dilemmas? I think there are. I've talked about them in some cases. But the United States has to maintain its leadership in these areas.

Just two more that I think are very important. The world we're living in now, with no cold war and no clear divisions, gives us both an enormous opportunity to advance peace and freedom and democracy and our own security and prosperity, but it also presents us with a whole lot of new challenges that cross national lines. I don't know how many of you saw the article that was in our local paper within the last 2 weeks about how the South American drug cartels are linking up with the Russian mafia gangs who are far more diversified in their operations. So, they're becoming a cash cow for people who don't have as much money but have more connections in more different illegal and violent activities. That's just one little example of what happens.

If you break down all these barriers to information, to movement, to money—all the things that are making it possible for many of you to do so well in the world—organized forces of destruction can equally take advantage of those declining barriers to cause us new and different problems. So you will have—in our lifetime, we'll have to face problems of terrorism, organized crime and drugs, and ethnic and racial and religious hatreds spawning wars, not to mention the fact that diseases will travel across international borders more quickly, especially if there are compounding environmental problems.

These are new challenges. We have to be thinking about them. We cannot afford to be mired in a debate that either makes us smaller than we are, keeps us torn up and upset all the time, or distracts us away from the real challenges of our people. And I have to say,

you know, you've all heard me say this in the beginning, but I think the two most important things that we can really do for our own people are make sure that we give genuine excellence of education to every child and give everybody in America the opportunity to go to college who is willing to go and work for it, and find a way to make a strength rather than a weakness of our diversity.

I can't tell you—I don't want to embarrass him, but I had a wonderful talk with Dr. Wong at dinner, whom I admire so much, and he was telling me that he and the President of China graduated from the same university from the same department a few years apart. So we have an American, who has done a great thing in our country, who can be a part of our attempts to have a peaceful future with China.

We also have people from India, from Pakistan, from every country in Latin America, from every country in Europe, from every country in Africa. This is an incredible gift, and we should not blow it. And a lot of people think I talk about this more than I should, but it's great. If you saw what I saw and the way I see it, how much time I have to spend getting people around the world to stop killing each other and essentially stop behaving on primitive or childish impulses, whether it's in Bosnia or the Middle East, or Rwanda and Burundi, or Northern Ireland, and you realize that these people—oftentimes they go along for years and they do just fine, and then something snaps, they're poorly led, and they disintegrate into destructive behavior. We need to be able to be a model to the world that will stand as a stern rebuke to that kind of conduct so that we can spread it around.

Now, these are the kinds of things that political debates ought to be about. We will always have a difference with our friends in the Republican Party, but it's not yesterday's difference. Fundamentally, I believe that what we stand for is—if I could just sort of ad lib with the quote that Steve gave about relationships—what we believe is that our individual lives are more fulfilled when we work together through strong units—families, communities, businesses—and that Government is one of those, and that there are some things we have to do together that we can only do through Government, that we can't do in other ways.

And I say that as the man who downsized the Government more than President Reagan

did, gave more authority to State and local governments, and privatized more operations than President Reagan did, but stood strongly for doing more in education and health care and research, in science and technology, in environmental action than Presidents of the other party and Members of Congress of the other party.

I think this is what we're about. And we have to be—we have to imagine the future and then try to define it. And we should welcome a principled debate on the other side. We should welcome debates within our party. I noticed there has been a lot of publicity lately about the debates within the Republican Party about whether they should just keep on their Government-hating tirade or whether they should have a more sophisticated view, and they're debating that. I think that's a healthy thing for them. And it will be a good thing for the country.

We need this. And that's what you're contributing to. I'm telling you, if we find a way to really provide opportunity for everybody, if we find a way to resolve our intergenerational responsibilities, if we can find a way to grow the economy and preserve the environment and even improve it, if we can keep America ahead of the curves and live together as one country, and finally, if I or my successors can persuade a heavy majority of the American people that we have to lead in this world that we no longer dominate—the most frustrating thing for me in terms of communication is, no matter how many talks I give or how many times I give this speech, most Americans, I think, still don't—they may trust me to do it, but they still don't necessarily agree that it's in our interest to be involved in an aggressive way with other countries and their future. But if we can do these things, the best days of this country are still out there.

And that is what your contribution is about. It's about giving us a chance to do that, and I hope you'll be very proud of it. You ought to be happy with the results today, but the main results will come when most of us aren't around anymore. And that's just as it should be.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; dinner hosts Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., and his wife, Ann; President Jiang Zemin of China; and dinner guest Dr. C.J. Wong.