

Remarks at Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico February 3, 1998

Thank you so much for that warm welcome. Thank you, Secretary Pena, for being a truly outstanding Energy Secretary. Thank you, Senator Bingaman, for your long friendship and your leadership. Thank you, Congressman Redmond. I really admire a guy who had enough guts to tell that joke. I wouldn't do it. [Laughter] But you know, the nice thing about that story is everybody knows that 13 doesn't last forever. [Laughter] Unfortunately, 18 comes, and they're gone, and you wish even they were 13 again, you would take.

Thank you, Dr. Browne, for a wonderful, but too brief, review of the operations here at Los Alamos. And we're delighted to be joined today by the Directors of the Sandia and Lawrence Livermore Labs, Dr. Paul Robinson and Dr. Bruce Tarter. I thank Attorney General Udall for being here, the chair of the Corporation Commissioners, Jerome Block, Commissioner Serna, the tribal leaders, and others who have joined us. Thank you all.

I am delighted to be back in New Mexico. We landed Air Force One this morning, and then I got on my helicopter to fly up here, and I told them to fly low so I could see it all. And it was a wonderful, exhilarating experience, as it always is when I come here.

I want you to know that among other things in our budget, there is an item of particular importance, I know, to Senator Bingaman, and I am sure is supported by all members of the New Mexico congressional delegation. Congressman Redmond and I talked about it a little today, but Jeff Bingaman told me a good while ago, in no uncertain terms, that we had to move forward to protect the magnificent Valle Grande, 100,000 unspoiled acres near the Santa Fe forest. And in my budget, there is \$40 million to support this project to secure this land.

There is also other money to preserve national monuments, national parks, and other invaluable cultural resources. This is a very unique and wonderful place. I know all of you understand that. And we want to be good partners in preserving the heritage that all of you cherish and are fortunate enough to live with. So when all the children here in this audience have their

own grandchildren, it will all still be there for them.

Los Alamos in so many ways is the place that forever changed the 20th century. I came here to talk about what we must do to start a chain reaction of opportunity for all our people in the 21st century. This week we took the most important step toward meeting that challenge when I submitted to Congress the first balanced budget since 1969. Think of how long it has been: You heard the Beatles, "Hey Jude"; 1969 was also the year that Neil Armstrong first stepped on the Moon. Now the balanced budget of 1999 will pave the way for America's next great leap forward over the next 30 years.

It will help keep interest rates down. It will free up capital to spur private investment in new business, in new homes, in new education, in research and development. And because we are doing this the right way, there will be funds necessary to make the public investments we need to make our Nation stronger. In this budget we demonstrate that we can balance the budget and still save Social Security for the 21st century by saving the projected budget surplus from either tax cuts or new spending, both of which would be more popular in the short run. But we shouldn't spend that surplus until we know for sure we have secured Social Security for the 21st century, so that the baby boomers don't bankrupt their children when they retire. It is a moral obligation that should override any short-term consideration that any of us have, and I hope all of you will support that.

We can balance the budget and still continue to invest in education. We can hire 100,000 teachers for our elementary schools to lower class size to 18 in the first through third grades, and help to repair or build 5,000 new schools. We can open the doors of college literally to every American with the laws that are on the books now by continuing to fund them through the next 5 years. We can allow hundreds of thousands of middle-aged Americans who've lost their jobs and their health insurance to buy into the Medicare program without burdening the Trust Fund. We can extend child care to a million more children. And most important for you, I think, we can still continue to substantially

increase our commitment to scientific research and technological development, which are key to our success in the new global economy of the information age.

Many of you know this, but the entire store of human knowledge is now doubling every 5 years. Breakthroughs which now seem normal, just a couple of years ago seemed impossible. In the 1980's, scientists identified the gene for cystic fibrosis after 9 years of effort. Last year scientists located the gene that causes Parkinson's disease after 9 days of effort. Within a decade, gene chips will offer a roadmap for prevention of illness throughout a lifetime. And we'll discover cures for many of our most deadly diseases, from diabetes to Alzheimer's to AIDS.

I have worked to increase our investments in research and development for the last 5 years, even as we have reduced the deficit by over 90 percent. And the new balanced budget contains the largest investment in science and technology in history. It includes a \$31 billion 21st century research fund to significantly increase funding for the Department of Energy, the National Institute of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the National Cancer Institute.

It funds critically important initiatives in areas ranging from astrophysics to agricultural technology. Now, just a few minutes ago, I toured the labs here to see some of that 21st century technology our balanced budget will help to develop further. The supercomputers here, along with those at Lawrence Livermore and Sandia Laboratories, are already the fastest in the world. They're already being used to do everything from predicting the consequences of global warming to designing more fuel efficient engines to discovering life-saving drugs to cracking down on Medicare fraud.

Let me just say, parenthetically, it is terribly important that this environmental mission continue, because I have a big job to do as President to convince all of you, and people like you all across America, that there really is a scientific consensus that if we don't do something to slow the rate of greenhouse gas emissions and in fact turn it around and reduce it in America and throughout the developed world and eventually throughout the developing world as well, we will disrupt our climate in ways that are potentially disastrous for people all around the world sometime in the next century.

And just as I saw you all clapping, because a lot of you—particularly those of you who are my age or a little younger, those of us who are baby boomers, we know it would be terribly wrong for us either to bankrupt the Social Security system or bankrupt our kids making them pay for us. We know that would be wrong. Believe me, it is just as wrong, and potentially even more devastating, for us not to deal now in a responsible, disciplined way with the problem of global climate change, even though our grandchildren, perhaps even our great-grandchildren, would be the ones to bear the greatest consequences.

We know now things that we couldn't have ever known before because of what science is teaching us, and it enables us to take small steps now to avoid having to take huge and more burdensome steps later to do what is clearly right. So I think that it is almost impossible to exaggerate the responsibility and the opportunity these labs have to build a consensus necessary in our country to do what has to be done to both continue to grow our economy at a brisk rate but to do it in a different way so that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And I thank you for your work on that.

Now, that to me is just the beginning. Today I also want to announce to you that that balanced budget includes over \$500 million—\$517 million, to be exact—to help the Department of Energy develop the next generation of supercomputer technology. Just recently, we signed contracts with four leading United States companies to help to build supercomputers that will be 1,000 times faster than the fastest computer that existed when I took office. By 2001, they'll be able to perform more calculations in a second than a human being with a hand-held calculator could perform in 30 million years.

Now, even a person as technologically challenged as me can understand that is a big deal. [Laughter] It is a good investment. It is an investment we must secure. Of all the remarkable things these supercomputers will be able to accomplish, none will be more important than helping to make sure the world is safe from the threat of nuclear weapons.

For more than 50 years, since we first split the atom and unleashed its awesome force, the nuclear threat has hovered over our heads. Throughout the cold war and the arms race, it has been an ever present threat to our people and the people of the world. For 5 years I

have worked to reduce that threat. Today, there is not a single Russian missile pointed at America's children. But we have to do more. Last fall I sent the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to the Senate for its advice and consent. In my State of the Union Address last week, I asked the Senate to approve that treaty this year. By banning all nuclear tests for all time, we open a new era of security for America.

At the same time, our national security requires that we maintain a nuclear arsenal strong enough to deter any adversary and safe enough to retain the confidence of our military leaders, our political leaders, and the American people.

Five years ago I directed the development of the stockpile stewardship program to maintain our nuclear arsenal through science. The program is an essential safeguard to accompany the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In fact, I don't think we can get the treaty ratified unless we can convince the Senate that the stockpile stewardship program works, that we will be secure while we try to make the world safer from the dangers of nuclear development and nuclear use in other countries. Now, by combining past nuclear data with the high-tech simulations that computers like those here at Los Alamos make possible, we are keeping the arsenal safe, reliable, and effective. And we're doing it without detonating a single explosion.

I just received a briefing, as you heard, by Dr. Browne and the other Directors of our national labs on the stewardship program. They confirmed that we can meet the challenge of maintaining a nuclear deterrent under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty through the stockpile stewardship program. This Test Ban Treaty is good for America's security. Already, four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, General Colin Powell, General David Jones, and Admiral Bill Crowe, have all endorsed it. I also discussed the issue last week when I had my annual meeting with our Nation's senior military leadership, all of our four stars, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the heads of various commands around the world. General Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and General Habiger, the Commander in Chief of our Strategic Command, have both given their treaty their full support. This is in America's interests.

Five years ago I extended the moratorium on testing passed by Congress in 1992. The Test Ban Treaty will hold other nations to the same

standard we already observe; that is its importance. Its ban on all nuclear explosions will constrain the nuclear powers from developing more advanced and more dangerous weapons, making a costly arms buildup less likely.

It will also make it more difficult for states that don't now have nuclear weapons to develop them, because without testing there's no way for them to know whether a new weapon will work as it is designed or whether it will work at all. The treaty will also put in a place an extensive global network of monitoring stations to detect and deter nuclear explosion on land, underground, beneath the sea, or in space. Our national security demands that we monitor such nuclear weapons programs around the world. We have to do that with or without the Test Ban Treaty. But with the treaty in force, we will gain a powerful new tool to do that monitoring.

The great scientist Louie Pasteur once said that he held, and I quote, "the unconquerable belief that science and peace will triumph over ignorance and war, that nations will come together not to destroy, but to construct, and that the future of humanity belongs to those who accomplish the most for humanity." With the new balanced budget, with our commitment to science and technology, with our commitment to the Test Ban Treaty, with the work you have done here and at the other labs to assure the safety of the treaty through the stockpile stewardship program, all these things are helping to build a stronger America for the 21st century, a safer world for our children in the 21st century, and a legacy worthy of America's glorious past. For your role in that, I thank you very, very much.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Main Auditorium of the Administration Building. In his remarks, he referred to John C. Browne, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory; New Mexico Attorney General Tom Udall; Jerome D. Block, chair, and Eric P. Serna, member, New Mexico Corporation Commission; Gen. Henry H. Shelton, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Gen. Eugene E. Habiger, USAF, Commander in Chief, U.S. Strategic Command.