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Letter to the Members of the Federal Election Commission on Campaign Finance Reform

February 5, 1998

To the Members of the Federal Election Commission:

I strongly support action to end the soft money raised by both political parties. That is why last year I asked the Federal Election Commission to ban soft money, under its current legal authority. I am very pleased that your General Counsel has proposed a new rule prohibiting national parties from raising soft money. Banning soft money fundraising by national party committees will enable our election laws to catch up with the reality of the way elections are financed today, and along with new campaign finance reform legislation, will take significant strides toward restoring public confidence in the campaign finance process.

Now I ask you to step up to your responsibility and act, within your legal authority, to end the soft money system. The American people deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

February 5, 1998

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening, and welcome to the White House. To Prime Minister and Mrs. Blair, members of the British delegation, to all our distinguished guests, let me say that the bad news is you have to listen to two brief toasts; the good news is it comes at the beginning of the dinner. We are delighted to have all of you here.

Tonight, in honor of the Prime Minister's visit, I would like to go over some of the highlights of the so-called special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. It began rather early in our history, this special relationship. [*Laughter*] In 1785 Thomas Jefferson, soon to be our first Secretary of State, insisted that the United Kingdom was an evil empire whose time was running out. [*Laughter*] "The sun of her glory is fast descending to the horizon," he said, with uncharacteristic myopia.

In 1814 marauding English soldiers gave new meaning to the term "global warming" when they torched the White House where we sit tonight—[*laughter*]—along with much of the surrounding countryside. My predecessor James Madison was lucky to escape with very few belongings and a chastened view of our defense capabilities.

But Mr. Prime Minister, we are a forgiving people. And we learned a valuable lesson on that night in 1814: From now on, let's get these guys on our side. That's been the core of our foreign policy ever since. [*Laughter*]

When we think over the challenges of the 20th century, it's extraordinary what our two nations have been through together, decade after decade, staring down the darkest threats in the history of humankind. We would not have survived this turbulent century without the grand alliance joining our peoples. Through common values and a common language, we have forged an uncommon friendship.

Let me take this opportunity to announce that in honor of your visit, the place where you and Cherie are staying will now be forever known as Blair House. [*Laughter*]

Tonight we look forward to a new millennium and a 21st century alliance for peace, prosperity, and progress. We have a rare chance to bring fruition to a century's worth of partnership. We can define the new century before it begins, escaping the 20th century's darkest moments and seizing the new century's most brilliant possibilities. We can stand together against tyrants. We can help peace flourish from Bosnia to