

our mission in Iraq with our British allies. I know that our thoughts and our prayers, indeed, those of all the American people, are with them tonight. And I wanted to say that what they are doing is important. It will make the world a safer, more peaceful place for our children in the 21st century.

I'd also like to say a word now about the Special Olympics. More than 30 years ago Eunice Kennedy Shriver had an idea as simple as it was revolutionary, to give young people with disabilities the chance to know the thrill of athletic competition, the joy of participation, the pride of accomplishment. Out of that powerful idea, dreamed up at a kitchen table and launched at a backyard in Rockville, Maryland, Special Olympics grew and grew and grew.

Just think of it, if you can remember back to the time before the Special Olympics, many people actually believed that people with disabilities were incapable of performing the most basic everyday activities, let alone competing in sports. But this year, 30 years later, there are

more than one million Special Olympic athletes throwing the javelin, swimming the 500-meter butterfly, walking the balance beam—something most of the rest of us cannot do—[laughter]—and inspiring hope all over the world.

So tonight I ask all of you to stand and join me in toasting Eunice Kennedy Shriver; her wonderful family, who have supported her every step of the way; to all the people who work so hard year-in and year-out to make Special Olympics possible; and to the athletes who are an inspiration to us all—to Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics. Ladies and gentlemen, Eunice Shriver.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Hillary Clinton.

## Remarks at the Conclusion of the Special Olympics Dinner

*December 17, 1998*

Thank you. This has been a wonderful night. Hillary and I want to thank all the artists who have graced this stage. They have brought something special to this part of the White House lawn and this beautiful tent that we've never had before. They certainly have helped to put us all in the holiday spirit, including our good friend Whoopi, who I thought was terrific tonight, even in the breaks.

I feel very proud to be a part of this special evening to pay tribute to Special Olympics. Tonight we celebrate 30 years of breaking down barriers and building up hope, 30 years of widening the circle of opportunity, 30 years of helping Americans with disabilities to reach their highest potential. Tonight we celebrate the victory of the human spirit. We see the power of that spirit every single time an athlete like Loretta runs a race, every time a young person realizes the wonder that he can swim faster than almost anybody else in the pool, every time a parent's heart fills with pride as her child steps with confidence onto the winner's block, and

every time a volunteer learns the joy of helping people with disabilities to make the most of their abilities.

As Special Olympics enters its fourth decade, this legacy is being passed from generation to generation, in a circle of hope, as the children of Special Olympics volunteers take their place in the dugouts and on the sidelines and as former competitors become coaches and mentors to new young athletes. The Special Olympics torch, which began as a small flicker of light in 1968 in Chicago, now burns brightly all around the world as a symbol of acceptance and pride.

Tonight, we thank all of you, every single one of you who have made this possible: the Shriver and Kennedy families, without whose vision there would be no Special Olympics; the thousands of supporters and volunteers whose dedication sustains that vision; the millions of athletes whose courage inspires and challenges all of us. And we salute the next generation

of Special Olympics heroes who will keep that flame alive in the 21st century.

Now, I'd like to ask all the artists here with us tonight to come back on stage and sing just one more song for you, Eunice, and all the rest of us, and for Special Olympics.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:10 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to comedienne Whoopi Goldberg; Special Olympics athlete Loretta Clairborne; and Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Hillary Clinton.

## Remarks at a Meeting With the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS December 18, 1998

[Office of National AIDS Policy Director Sandra Thurman made brief opening remarks and introduced the President.]

*The President.* Thank you very much. I want to get right to the subject of listening to all of you, but I would like to say that, as all of you know, we had a very good couple of days when we finally made the budget last year. We've had a lot of good increases, a lot of things that I know you care so much about, but we've got a lot of work to do, especially in prevention and in the vaccine development. I think we're going to—[inaudible]—pretty soon.

I would prefer, I think, because we've met before and I try to stay familiar with our concerns—I think we've done a good job of getting the money into the programs this time, but there's a lot more we can do—[inaudible]. However, you organized this. [Laughter].

[At this point, Council Chair Dr. H. Scott Hitt introduced the cochair of the Council's Racial Ethnic Populations Subcommittee, Rev. Altigracia Perez, who led the participants in a prayer. Dr. Hitt then commended the President for his commitment to AIDS research.]

*The President.* Thank you.

[Dr. Hitt emphasized the need for better AIDS awareness efforts in ethnic communities, noting that many Americans infected with HIV were unaware of it. He stated that thousands of HIV-infected people could not get the Public Health Service recommended early treatment, but instead had to wait until they became disabled from the disease to become eligible. Council member Rabbi Joseph Edelmet remarked that the Council's duty was to ensure that help and

treatment, such as needle-exchange programs and drug therapies, for those living with HIV/AIDS continued into the next century. He presented the President with a dreidel, the traditional Hanukkah toy, and said the Council's hope was to revive the President's vision of a zero rate of transmission and equitable access to care. Council member B. Thomas Henderson, a person living with HIV, noted the progress made under the President's leadership, but pointed out the need for reform in Medicaid coverage for HIV/AIDS to enable patients to receive early treatment prior to disability. Citing a Health Care Financing Administration evaluation which concluded that could not be done in a budget-neutral manner, Mr. Henderson suggested that the administration needed to look for offset cost savings beyond Medicaid and consider a budget window longer than 5 years, rather than relying solely on demonstration-program legislation introduced by Senators Jeffords and Kennedy. He concluded that drug cost issues needed to be addressed at the same time.]

*The President.* Well, I'll see what I can do about that. You know, generally, this whole medical coverage problem is getting worse in America. It reminds me of that old joke that the Republicans used to tell on us; they told me, if I voted for Barry Goldwater, we'd get involved in Vietnam too much. And I did, and sure enough, it happened. [Laughter] And they said, when they attacked Hillary and me for our health care plan, they said that, if people supported it, things would get worse. And sure enough, they did. [Laughter]

We've had—these coverage problems have gotten quite profound, and as a consequence,