

Good luck to the children here, and God-speed in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Atrium at the Ronald W. Reagan International

Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Carl T.C. Gutierrez of Guam and his wife, Geraldine; and Delegate Robert A. Underwood of Guam, and his wife, Lorraine. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Death of Elliot Richardson

December 31, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn that Elliot Richardson died today in Boston. Elliot Richardson was a man of uncommon integrity, who put the Nation's interests first even when

the personal cost was very high. He was an unparalleled public servant, a lawyer, a diplomat, a soldier, and a prosecutor. America was honored by his service, and we will miss him.

Remarks at a Dinner for the Millennium Celebration Creators

December 31, 1999

Thank you so much. Good evening. It's a real honor for Hillary and Chelsea and me to welcome all of you to the White House. Tonight I rise to offer three toasts. The first is to all of you. It is an honor to turn this page in history with you because so many of you, each in your own way, have contributed so indelibly to the narrative of this American century.

The second toast I offer is to my wife, for it was she who inspired us all to welcome the new millennium by honoring our past and imagining our future. Over the past 2 years leading up to this wonderful night, no one has done more to infuse this milestone with national purpose. And I am very grateful to her and to all those who have helped.

The third toast is, in a way, the most daunting, because I'm supposed to say something profound to a thousand years of history in 2 or 3 minutes. In the State of the Union I get a whole hour—[laughter]—to talk about a single year, and usually I run over. [Laughter] Tonight we rise to the mountaintop of a new millennium. Behind us we see a great expanse of American experience and before us vast frontiers of possibility still to be explored.

I think we would all agree that we are most fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. We end this century and the millennium with

soaring optimism. Never before has our Nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity, social progress, and national self-confidence, with so little internal crisis or external threat. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity and, therefore, such a profound responsibility to build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams.

When our children's children look back on this century, they will see that this hopeful and promising time was earned by the bravery and hard work of men and women who, in the words of our great poet laureate Robert Pinsky, did not merely celebrate our oldest ideals like trophies under glass but kept them bright with use. They will see this moment was earned through the hard-won fight for freedom, from the beachheads of Normandy to the buses of Montgomery to the villages of Kosovo. At home and abroad, it has been our great privilege to advance the light of human liberty.

They will see this moment was earned through the drive for discovery. At the outset of the century, not even the most farsighted of our forebears could have predicted all the miracles of science that have emerged from our labs: antibiotics and vaccines, silicon chips and

the Internet, microscopes that envision the infinitesimal, and telescopes that elucidate the infinite, soon-to-be complete blueprint for human life itself.

And they will see that this moment was earned through a passion for creativity. National power may spring from economic and military might, but the greatness of a nation emanates from the life of the mind and the stirrings of the soul. So many of you have contributed to that greatness, and we are all grateful.

In this century, American artists of the page and the canvas, the stage and screen, have drawn from our diverse palate of cultural traditions and given the world a great gift of uniquely American creations with universal and timeless appeal.

The new century and the new millennium will bring a cascade of new triumphs. We see new hope for peace in lands bedeviled by ancient hatreds, new technologies both opening the storehouse of human knowledge for people across the globe and offering the promise of alleviating the poverty that still haunts so many millions of our children. We see scientists rapidly approaching the day when newborns can expect to live well past 100 years, and children will know "cancer" only as a constellation of stars. But by far, my most solemn prayer for this new millennium is that we will find, some-

how, the strength and wisdom in our hearts to keep growing together, first, as one America and then, as one people on this ever smaller planet we all call home.

If you look at the glowing diversity of race and background that illuminates America's house on this evening, a vivid illustration, we see that human capacity is distributed equally across the human landscape. I cannot help but think how different America is, how different history is, and how much better, because those of you in this room and those you represent were able to imagine, to invent, to inspire. And by the same token, I cannot help but dream of how much different and how much better our future can be if we can give every child the same chance to live up to his or her God-given potential and to live together as brothers and sisters, celebrating our common humanity and our shared destiny.

This is the future I hope every American will take a moment to imagine on this millennial evening. This is the future I pray we can all join together to build. So I ask you to join me in a toast to yourselves, to the First Lady, and to our shared future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

Remarks at the "America's Millennium" Celebration

December 31, 1999

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we celebrate. The change of centuries, the dawning of a new millennium are now just minutes away. We celebrate the past. We have honored America's remarkable achievements, struggles, and triumphs in the 20th century. We celebrate the future, imagining an even more remarkable 21st century.

As we marvel at the changes of the last hundred years, we dream of what changes the next hundred and the next thousand will bring. And as powerful as our memories are, our dreams must be even stronger. For when our memories outweigh our dreams, we become old, and it is the eternal destiny of America to remain forever young, always reaching beyond, always be-

coming, as our Founders pledged, "a more perfect Union." So we Americans must not fear change. Instead, let us welcome it, embrace it, and create it.

The great story of the 20th century is the triumph of freedom and free people, a story told in the drama of new immigrants, the struggles for equal rights, the victories over totalitarianism, the stunning advances in economic well-being, in culture, in health, in space and telecommunications, and in building a world in which more than half the people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time in all history. We must never forget the meaning of the 20th century or the gifts of