

Statement on Easing Sanctions Against North Korea June 19, 2000

Since last September, when I announced the measures being implemented today to ease sanctions against North Korea, North Korea has maintained its moratorium on missile tests. These measures are supported by our close allies in the region and are part of the process of close coordination between the United States,

Japan, and South Korea recommended by former Secretary of Defense William Perry. We will continue to build on these efforts and on the recent North-South summit to achieve additional progress in addressing our common proliferation concerns.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Austin June 19, 2000

Thank you. I feel—first of all, I feel a little sorry for all of you. You have to look at me, and I'm looking at all this, behind you. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Lynn and Tom for making us feel so welcome in this beautiful, beautiful place. And I want to thank them and Ben and Melanie and everyone else who worked on this dinner tonight, for its success. I want to thank Roy and Mary Spence, who hosted me earlier, for the Democratic Senate candidates and for what they did.

Thank you, Mayor Watson; we're glad to be here. Thank you, Governor Richards. Thank you, Garry Mauro. Thank you, Liz Carpenter, my old friend. Thank you, B. and Audre Rapoport and Dan Morales and John Sharp. Thank you all. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Luci Johnson and, through her, to her mother and her entire family for what they have meant to the United States.

And I want to thank Lyle Lovett for being a good Democrat and a good friend to me and always being there when I've needed him over the years. He made me think that even on my bad-hair days, I could still be President. [*Laughter*] That was probably the last song he'll ever sing for me. [*Laughter*]

I also want to tell you how much I admire and appreciate the work that I've had the chance to do with Tom Daschle and Bob Torricelli and Chuck Robb and Pat Leahy and Ron Wyden. We really do have a big percentage—over 10 percent of our caucus here to-

night. And maybe Ann is right; maybe it's because Texas needs Senators and we need money, but for whatever reason, they're here. And I hope you'll take advantage of it.

Let me say, as is usually the case when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has already been said, but not everyone has said it. [*Laughter*] But I'd like to just make a comment or two, if I might.

First of all, I've had a lot of friends here in Texas, and especially in Austin. And as I look back on the last 7½ years and I look forward to the next approximately 7 months I have to serve, I would just like to say thank you. Thank you for your help. Thank you for staying with us. Thank you for giving me and Al Gore and Hillary and Tipper and our entire administration the chance to do what we've done for the last 7½ years. I've had a wonderful time doing it, and I am very grateful that the results turned out to be pretty good for you, as well as for us. It's been a joy.

Now, I also want to say to you that I thought a lot back in 1992 about what I would like America to be like in 2000, if I should be fortunate enough to be elected and to be reelected. And I believe that one of the reasons that we had some success is that I'd worked as a Governor for a dozen years, through very difficult economic times. I had had a chance to try to come to grips with the major economic and educational and other challenges of the day. And I had a pretty clear idea about what I wanted to do if I got elected. And it turned out that

the ideas that I and many others who worked with me over a decade developed worked pretty well.

I say that to make this point. I'm glad that we've got the longest economic expansion in history. I'm very glad that we have the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. I am profoundly grateful that we have a 20-year low in poverty and a 40-year low in female unemployment and a 32-year low in the welfare rates and a 25-year low in the crime rate. I'm glad the country is at peace and America has been a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. But the question I want to ask you is, what do you intend to do with it?

Our host mentioned the great work that President Johnson and the Congress did 30 years ago-plus, with the civil rights legislation. I would like to remind you that 1961 to 1969 was, until this period, the longest economic expansion in American history. And with that expansion, we got not only the civil rights legislation under of President Johnson, we got Federal aid to education, and we got Medicare, among other things.

So what I want to ask you again is, to me, this election for the Senate and the House and the Presidency will be determined largely by what people think it's about, because times are good and the candidates are presentable, to say the least, from top to bottom. So who you're for depends in large measure on what you think the election is about.

And I just want to make three points tonight, briefly. Number one, this is a big deal. This election is every bit as important as the elections of '92 and '96. Why? Because I've done everything I could to turn this country around and move it in the right direction. And now we have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children.

But what a country does with its prosperity is sometimes just as stern a test of its judgment, its wisdom, and its character as what a country does when its back is against the wall. There is not a person here tonight over 30 years old who cannot recall at least one time in your life when you made some sort of a mistake, a personal or a business mistake, not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well you thought you did not have to concentrate. And one of the things that you learn as you get older is that nothing ever lasts. And for those of us that have been through

a few tough times, we say thank God for that. But when you're going through these good times, it's well to be humble and not to engage in too much self-congratulation and not to break your concentration.

So I will say again, I think this election will be determined by what the American people think it is about. And I believe it should be about building the future of our dreams for our children. I believe it should be about what we propose to do with our prosperity. And if you start from that premise, then you have to say, well, what do you think we ought to do with it?

I think the most important thing we can do is to keep it going and spread its benefits to the people and places that still aren't part of it. I think we need to make sure that all of our families have a chance to make the most of it. That means we have educational and health care and environmental challenges we need to meet. I think it's important that we continue to keep our eyes on the future and not be satisfied with where we are. I'm glad we've got a crime rate that's at a 25-year low. I think we ought to make America the safest big country in the world. I'm glad the air and the water are cleaner. I think we ought to turn back the tide of global warming. I'm glad that more people than ever are going to college. I think we ought to open the doors to every child who is qualified to go to college, and money should never be a bar to anybody going ever again.

Then, if you think that's the subject, then the second point I want to make to you is this. It's an important election; it ought to be about what we're going to do with our prosperity. Point number two, there are real and profound differences between the parties. This does not have to be an election where, like all too many in the past, we see one exercise after another in character assassination, where you think you don't really have a campaign unless you can convince the people that your opponent is just one step above being a bank robber. That is not true. You can start with the Presidency and go to the Senate races and the House races and say, "You know, we've got perfectly presentable candidates here, but there are real differences." That's my second point. It's a big election; there are real differences.

Now, here's my third point. We're the only party who wants you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] And I suppose I should take that as a great compliment. But you need to understand, and you need to talk to people. That's why these Senators are here. You wouldn't be here if you didn't understand that. But there are profound consequences. The next President is going to appoint somewhere between two and four Justices of the Supreme Court. And both of them bring commitments to the Presidency about those appointments, and they are different. And the Congress will have to ratify or reject those decisions—the Senate, alone. That's just one example.

I'll give you another example. I was the first leader of any nation in the world to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a dream of President Eisenhower and President Kennedy and President Johnson. Every President for the last 50 years has longed for the day when we could ban nuclear testing, so we could keep other countries from becoming nuclear powers. And it now happens at a time when our own experts tell us, because of those of you in the high-tech business who are involved in weapons, we can simulate testing, and we don't have to test anymore. So banning nuclear testing makes the world a lot safer place. That's what I believe.

The Republican Senate voted against the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They made us the only major country in the world to reject the Test Ban Treaty—America, alone. Everybody else said it's the right thing to do—except India and Pakistan haven't come along yet, and I went over there to try to stop a conflict that could go into a nuclear war, pleading with them to stop it, when our own Senate said, "Oh, let's go on and test. Who cares?"

Now, this affects the lives your children are going to lead. In the future, you're going to have to worry about, when I'm long gone, not just the United States and Russia but whether terrorists in other states are going to use the tools of modern technology, which make everything smaller, to bring many weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological—around. I think we missed a terrific opportunity not to lead the world toward a safer place. We turned around and walked away from 50 years of Republican and Democratic history. And we better reverse it. We ought to ratify the Test Ban Treaty. Your decisions on the White House

and the Senate will determine whether we do. And you need to make up your—[inaudible].

I'll give you a few other examples. We're for a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights. Some of us—I'm strongly supportive of the right kind of managed care, but I think that the patients ought to come first. They're against the Patients' Bill of Rights. We believe we ought to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare that all of our seniors can afford and have a chance to buy. They don't favor that. I could just go on and on and on.

We believe we ought to tackle the problem of climate change. Some of their Members still think it's some sort of subversive plot to wreck the American economy. In the digital economy, much of which is represented on this porch tonight, it is now no longer necessary to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere around Austin, Texas, for people to grow wealthier. In fact, for the first time in history we can grow wealthier by improving the environment instead of polluting it. That's what we believe. They don't agree with us about that.

Now, you may think that's a pretty esoteric subject. I don't. The children in this audience tonight will find in 20 to 30 years that will be one of the two or three most important issues they have to face, unless we turn it around right now. It's a big issue. There are consequences in this election.

On the matter of public safety, I think you all know that I am not the favorite person of Charlton Heston or his executive director, Wayne LaPierre. [Laughter] But all they can do is shout generalities, because there hasn't been a single hunter miss a day in the deer woods because of me in 7½ years. [Laughter] I listened to all that when I signed the Brady bill, when I signed the assault weapons ban.

And now, we believe that there should be no guns around children, that don't have trigger locks. We believe that large ammunition clips ought not to be imported into America to evade our assault weapons ban. We believe that a crook shouldn't be able to get a gun at a gun show that the crook can't get at the gun store without a background check.

Now, these are not radical things, but what I want to tell you—this is an interesting argument, because it's not like there's no evidence here. The same crowd that's against this told me 7 years ago, when I signed the Brady bill, that all it would do is inconvenience legitimate

gun owners and be a terrible burden, and it wouldn't help anything. Well, a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers later who didn't get handguns because of what the Brady bill required in the background check, we have a 35 percent decline in gun crime. And I'll say again, not a single Texas hunter has missed a day in the deer woods. They are wrong about this, and there's a difference about this.

And I don't care how low the crime rate has gone; anybody that thinks this country is safe enough has not spent enough time where the crime rate is high. We ought to keep going until this is the safest big country in the world. We owe it to our kids.

We think—I'll just say one other thing. I believe that one of the reasons America has done so well is that our prosperity has been broadly shared, that we've had over 22 million new jobs, that we've got the lowest minority unemployment rate among Hispanics and African-Americans ever recorded. We favor raising the minimum wage, because we need it; and they don't. We favor dramatically increasing what's called the earned-income tax credit, which is an income tax refund to poor working people with children, especially those with three or more kids; and they don't.

Now, this is not negative. You should listen to them and let them tell you why they're against what we're for. But we should not be under any illusions that there are no consequences to this election. If you want the prosperity to continue, you should know that there are two different approaches. If you want us to be sure we can guarantee excellence in education to every young person, you should know there are two different approaches. If you want working people to have a chance to succeed at work and raising their kids, whether they work at one of your wonderful companies or

whether they work in this hot weather serving your food tonight, there are two different approaches.

And so I say, all I can ask you to do between now and the election is to help our people, but talk to other people. And don't let the American people—I don't mean just here in Austin or in Texas, but I mean all over the country where you have friends—people must understand. All I want to know is that, when I walk out the door on January 20th, the American people took this election seriously. They understood that we turned this country around, that we had the chance of a lifetime, that there were differences, and they understood what the differences were. And in their own heart and mind, they voted to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I know if that happens, everything's going to be all right.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:12 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Tom and Lynn Meredith; former Lt. Gov. Ben F. Barnes of Texas and his wife, Melanie; Roy M. Spence, Jr., founder and president, GSD&M ad agency, and his wife, Mary; Mayor Kirk P. Watson of Austin; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; former Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro; author Liz Carpenter, co-founder, National Women's Political Caucus; Bernard (B.) Rapoport, chairman emeritus and founder, American Income Life Insurance Co., and his wife, Audre; former Texas State Attorney General Dan Morales; former State Comptroller John Sharp; Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of Lady Bird and former President Lyndon B. Johnson; musician Lyle Lovett; and Charlton Heston, president, and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.