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Remarks at a Private Party in Chicago
January 9, 2001

We had a rally upstairs. You heard them, didn't you? In the ballroom. A little loud. And I hope we didn't interrupt you. So there's an overflow crowd in the lobby, and they said, "They have to go through the edge of another ballroom." [*Laughter*] So here I am. [*Laughter*] So I've invaded your dinner. [*Laughter*] Well, thank you for the wonderful, warm welcome. I'm in Chicago today to basically say goodbye to the people of Chicago and Illinois, as President.

It's a very happy day for me in many ways. This hotel—since you're here for that, I should tell you, this hotel plays a huge role in my life. And I have two pictures of this hotel. That's what I told them upstairs, I have two pictures of this hotel which I look at every day of my life. One is of the lobby on Saint Patrick's Day of 1992. Hillary and I are standing there with green graffiti—not graffiti, what do you call it?—confetti, not graffiti, confetti—[*laughter*]—it's been a long day and a long 8 years—[*laughter*]—confetti coming down, because that's the night that we won the Democratic primary in Illinois, which basically sealed my nomination.

The second picture was my mother and my father dining here in 1946. And that's in my private office in the Residence of the White House. I look at it every night—every single night. So I've seen those two pictures of this place every day for 8 years. This is also where I basically kicked off my campaign in Illinois in December of 1991, and so I'm very happy to be here.

And I wanted to come here for my last appearance in Chicago as President. And I want to tell all of you that it's been an honor to serve. I'm glad my country is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. I thank all of you for the role that you've played in revitalizing our country. And I wish only the best for the future.

I've said many times, and I'll say again, America may find people who do this job better than I have, but you will never find anybody who loved doing it any more.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in the Empire Room at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd in Chicago
January 9, 2001

Let me ask you a question. Did you hear what went on upstairs? This is troubling. Half are saying yes; half are saying no. Let me say to all of you, I'll give you a brief version of what I said there.

First, I want to thank Chicago and the State of Illinois for being so good to me. I thank Mayor Daley for his leadership and partnership and for making it possible to prove that our crime policies and our welfare policies and our economic policies would all work, because they worked here in Chicago.

I thank Bobby Rush for helping me in '92. I thank Bobby and Dick Durbin and the entire crowd in your congressional delegation who have been so good to me. But Senator Durbin, I especially thank you for all the things you've done. Thank you.

I thank Bill Daley for being a superb Secretary of Commerce and a brilliant campaign manager. What I told them upstairs was, Bill Daley ran the first Presidential campaign in history that was so clearly winning, a court had to stop the vote in order to change the outcome. It was brilliant.

Now, I want to say two other things. Upstairs, I said that this hotel was very important in my life. I spoke to the Democratic chairs here in December of '91. I had my party here on Saint Patrick's Day in 1992 when we won the primary.

Were you there? Some of you were there. And I still have a picture in my little office off the Oval Office of Hillary and me standing here in this lobby with the confetti coming down on Saint Patrick's Day. I've had it there every single day for 8 years to remind me that Chicago and Illinois made me President.

I thank you for voting for us overwhelmingly in '92, in '96. I thank you for a fabulous convention in 1996, which was a joy. And I thank you for sticking with us in the year 2000, which you did. I thank you for that.

I thought—it was really important to me to come here before I leave office to say thank you. And I also want to bring you greetings from the new Senator from the State of New York. Hillary said to tell you hello. And I told Senator Durbin that you should just sort of consider that Illinois also has two Democratic Senators again.

I am honored to have been President at a time when a lot of changes were going on in America and in the world. And as I look back, I am profoundly grateful that our country is so much stronger and more united and more successful and so much more future-oriented and self-confident today than it was 8 years ago when we started. And you had a lot to do with that.

I believe politics and public service is a team sport. And you can have a great quarterback; you can have a great captain; but if you don't have a team, you're going to lose every time. So you were my team, and we won for America together.

So when you think about the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years or the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded or 22.5 million new jobs or 25 million people taking advantage of the family leave law or 13 million more people getting college tax aid through the HOPE scholarship tax credit or over 3 million more kids with health insurance or 90 percent of our little kids with immunization against serious diseases for the first time or more land set aside for protection for all time than any time in 100 years—when you say all those things—that wasn't just me; it wasn't just us with the Democrats and the Congress; it was you, too. We did it together. We were a team, and I thank you for that.

The last thing I want to say is this. I want you to keep fighting for the future. And I'll be there with you. I'll just be a citizen, but I can serve well. I've still got a voice. I've still got a heart, and I've got a mind to spend the rest of my life trying to pay America back for all the good things the American people gave me these last 25 years.

So don't get discouraged; don't be frustrated by what happened in November. But don't be passive. Just take a breath and keep looking forward and keep doing what will come naturally, to fight for the things we believe in, to build the future we want for all of our children together.

I can honestly tell you that in 11 days at high noon, when I walk out of the White House for the last time as President, I will leave more optimistic and more idealistic about the people of this country and their potential, and especially about the young people of this country, than I was the day I took the oath of office in 1993.

I love you. Thank you. God bless you. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. in the lobby of the Palmer House Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and Gore 2000 campaign director William M. Daley. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq

January 9, 2001

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 575 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106–429), enclosed is a report on plans for the provision of humanitarian assistance for the Iraqi people and for the commencement of broadcasting operations by the Iraqi National Congress.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON