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we will redeem the promise of America in the 21st century.

To that effort I pledge all my strength and every power of my office. I ask the Members of Congress here to join in that pledge. The American people returned to office a President of one party and a Congress of another. Surely they did not do this to advance the politics of petty bickering and extreme partisanship they plainly deplore. No, they call on us instead to be repairers of the breach and to move on with America's mission. America demands and deserves big things from us, and nothing big ever came from being small. Let us remember the timeless wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin, when facing the end of his own life. He said, "It is wrong to waste the precious gift of time on acrimony and division."

Fellow citizens, we must not waste the precious gift of this time. For all of us are on that same journey of our lives, and our journey, too, will come to an end. But the journey of our America must go on.

And so, my fellow Americans, we must be strong, for there is much to dare. The demands of our time are great, and they are different. Let us meet them with faith and courage, with patience and a grateful, happy heart. Let us shape the hope of this day into the noblest chapter in our history. Yes, let us build our bridge, a bridge wide enough and strong enough for every American to cross over to a blessed land of new promise.

May those generations whose faces we cannot yet see, whose names we may never know, say of us here that we led our beloved land into a new century with the American dream alive for all her children, with the American promise of a more perfect Union a reality for all her people, with America's bright flame of freedom spreading throughout all the world.

From the height of this place and the summit of this century, let us go forth. May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at the West Front of the Capitol. Prior to the address, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist administered the oath of office.

Remarks at the Inaugural Luncheon

January 20, 1997

Thank you very much. First let me thank Senator Warner and Senator Ford, Speaker Gingrich, Leader Gephardt, Senator Lott, Senator Daschle, the inaugural committee for the wonderful job they did with the morning ceremony. I thank all the participants. My good friend Jessye Norman, thank you. You were magnificent. And I thank Santita Jackson and all the choirs who sang today. They were wonderful. And I thank my friend of nearly 25 years, Miller Williams, for that wonderful poem. I will take it as an admonition and keep it close to my heart. Thank you.

Hillary and Chelsea and I have had a wonderful day. We got up early and went to a church service, and it ran a little late—Reverend Jackson was speaking. [*Laughter*] It wasn't his fault; we all were carried away. And it put us all in the right frame of mind for this happy moment.

I feel a great deal of gratitude for many things, but Senator, when I heard you telling that fascinating story of the fight between President Roosevelt and Harry Byrd, Sr., I felt an enormous amount of gratitude that at least so far you have not released the letter you made we write you to make sure we could hold this ceremony today. [*Laughter*] And I thank you for that.

We've been doing this a long time, our country has, and I just want to say to all of you that I worked for a long time on what exactly I would say today, and I believe it very much. I believe we're at a unique moment in history. I believe that the only problems we've never solved in America are the problems of the heart, particularly relating to race. We get better at them, but we've never quite gotten over it.

I believe that it is more possible to imagine our future and shape it now than at any time in the history of the country, with the exception of our entry into the industrial age, when we also had peace and prosperity, and our entry into the 19th century, when Thomas Jefferson decided to buy Louisiana, a decision that Senator Lott and I especially appreciate—[*laughter*]—and a lot of others.

So this is a unique moment. And because it is, to some extent, without precedent and because it is different, we have to imagine the future before we can create it. And when you do something like that, it requires you to make alliances and get outside of barriers that normally govern your lives. So I meant very much what I said about the bipartisan nature of our common task. And tomorrow we will start to work on it.

For today, I think we should all, as the previous speakers have said, enjoy being Americans, enjoy the parade, enjoy the balls, but most of all, enjoy the great gift of our citizenship.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in Statuary Hall at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to vocalists Jessye Norman and Santita Jackson; and poet Miller Williams of Arkansas. Prior to the President's remarks, Senator John Warner, chairman, Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, introduced the President, and Senator Wendell H. Ford, committee vice-chairman, presented him with an engraved crystal bowl.

Proclamation 6968—National Day of Hope and Renewal, 1997

January 20, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today as we celebrate the last Presidential Inauguration of the 20th century and raise our sights with hope and humility toward the challenges of a new age, let us together ask God's guidance and blessing.

This day marks not a personal or political victory but the triumph of a free people who have freely chosen the course our country will take as we prepare for the 21st century.

During the past 4 years, we have grown together as a people and as a Nation. Touched by tragedy, strengthened by achievement, exhilarated by the challenges and opportunities ahead, we have come a long way on our journey to change America's course for the better. We have always been a people of hope—hope that we can make tomorrow brighter than today, hope that we can fulfill our Nation's enduring promise of freedom and opportunity. And we have always known that, by the grace of God and our mutual labor, we can make our hopes reality.

Today, we live in an age of possibility—a moment of rich opportunity that brings with it a deep responsibility for the future and the generations to come. We must seize this special moment with a commitment to do right by those who will follow us in this blessed land.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose life and vision we honor today, recognized that the destiny of each American is bound to the destiny of all Americans; that if we are to go forward, we must go forward together. So, let us pledge today to continue our national journey together. Let us reaffirm our commitment to our shared values of family and faith, work and opportunity. And let us resolve to work together, one Nation under God, to build a bridge of hope and renewal to a new American century.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 20, 1997, a National Day of Hope and Renewal, and I call upon the citizens of this great Nation to observe this day by reflecting on their obligations to one another and to our beloved country and by facing the future with a spirit of hope and renewal.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 22, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 23.