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to build on our strength, and to sustain American leadership over the years to come, Congress must join me in a partnership for the future.

## Remarks at a Dinner for Senator John F. Kerry

*November 4, 1997*

Thank you very much, John, Teresa, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would very much like to thank Senator Kerry for explaining the commitments he made in the last election, because we were all wondering why we were here tonight. [*Laughter*] And now we know we've come to help Reverend Kerry keep his vow of poverty. [*Laughter*]

Let me say on a only slightly more serious note, I liked a lot of things about the campaign of 1996. I liked the fact that we were able to go out and finally say that there were two different visions of this country. The American people voted for one of them in 1994; they voted for another one in 1992. They fought us on everything we tried to do with the economy, with crime, with welfare, with the environment. The results were in, and the American people made a judgment.

And John Kerry in many ways had to run the most difficult of all races for an incumbent, because he had to run against a sitting Governor who was immensely popular and was not sort of a cardboard cutout of the contract on America. And I was absolutely determined that if I could do anything to help him get reelected, I would do it. And I loved every minute of every day I ever spent in Massachusetts, and I was tickled that he won.

And I might say, in the campaign that he had to put together to win, with the grassroots support and the intensity, it was—Massachusetts became the only State in the country where every single Republican running for Federal office was removed. And it was a great, great effort. And it is not because—contrary to what a lot people think—the State is a doctrinaire liberal State; that's just not true. Those of you who live there know that. [*Laughter*]

So, I'm glad to be here. I'm also glad to be here because I do consider that John and Teresa are sort of soulmates of mine and Hillary's and our whole crew. They believe in the nobility of public service, and they believe in the imperatives of change.

You know, when I came here back in '93, one of the reasons I ran for President is that I really thought our country was getting in deeper and deeper and deeper trouble and drifting more and dividing more because Washington continued to be dominated by the same old stale debates and name-calling and categorizing that didn't bear much relationship to the real world in which I lived.

You know, on the budget, are you going to cut taxes and explode the deficit, or spend more money and just run it up a little less? On crime, were you tough or soft? That's the dumbest thing I ever heard. I never met anybody who was for crime. I'm still looking for the first person to come and say, you know, ''My policy is, vote for me and I'll bring you more crime.'' [*Laughter*] We should either treat everyone on welfare as if they're pikers who are milking the system, or just give them more money for the same system—all these things that you heard in these debates and it was—it was so jangling. And I realize a lot of it—now I know a lot of it is the way it is presented to the people through the interlocutors. But what we tried to do was to change the way people thought.

And I agree with John—a lot of—I'm not sure that it's all that clear to the American people that that's been done, but it is true. I said, you know, on the economy, why don't we cut the deficit and balance the budget and find a way to spend more money on education and research and technology? If we had the right priorities and right discipline, we could do that. And everybody said I was crazy, but 4 years later—we started with a $290 billion deficit, we have one that's $22 billion now, and we're spending more money on education. We just opened the doors of college to all Americans that are willing to work for it in this last balanced budget, thanks in no small measure to John Kerry's support and the fact that he stepped up to the plate in 1993 and helped us when everybody in the other party said I was bringing a recession to America.

On welfare, we said able-bodied people should be required to work, but don't take

away the guarantee of health care and nutrition from those children, and give child care to the parents, because the most important job any of us ever have is taking care of our children.

On education, we said we want to spend more money, but we want to raise standards, too. On crime, we said, yes, be tough, but how about being smart for a change. Put more police on the streets, and take the assault weapons off the street. If somebody's got a criminal or a mental health history, don't let them buy a gun. That may seem common sense to you, but the leaders of the other party and almost all their members opposed us on every single one of those things.

And we were just determined to break new ground. John understood it from the beginning. He knew that we had to break new ground not only to make the Democratic Party a majority party but, far more important, to bring the country together and to move it into a new century. And I'm proud to be here for that reason.

Today he was one of a majority of our caucus voting to invoke cloture on the fast-track legislation, which I think is a very good thing for America. It will give me a change not only to break down more barriers to our goods and services but also will give me more leverage to do what those who oppose us in our party say they want, which is to lift the labor and environmental standards that other countries observe, as well. So I feel comfortable here because I think we're engaged in an important enterprise.

I also want to say a special word about the campaign finance reform issue because John's worked very hard on that. He didn't take any PAC money running for Senator. I didn't take any PAC money when I ran for President. And I started off being the next-to-least well-known person in the field in New Hampshire.

Now, some say, well, is there any difference between the two parties because the Democrats raised so-called soft money? All I know is what John just said: All of our Senators, 100 percent of them, said bring the bill up, we'll vote for it.

But I think it's also important that you understand what's driving campaign finance reform. I do not believe that campaigns are too costly and require contributions that are too large because people like you are running up to us throwing big checks at us to try to get major influence. I think what happens is people like you worry that people like us are going to get beat if we don't have enough money to buy increasingly expensive advertising. In other words, this is not a supply-driven problem. This is a demand-driven problem. And some of the people that excoriate us the most over this campaign finance problem—I haven't noticed any of them calling me and offering to give all the people who observe stricter limits free or reduced air time. That is the problem. So we have to find a way solve it. It's more likely that we'll solve it because John Kerry is in the Senate. And it's important because the faith of ordinary citizens need to be restored in the day-to-day processes of our institutions—all of them.

You know, when we denigrate other people in terms of their motives and what they're doing to institutions, when we attack people personally, when we pretend that people are somehow ethically inferior to ourselves—when we do that, any of us, whether we're in public life or the press or whatever—we may gain a short-term advantage, but in the end what we do is we increase public disillusionment with all institutions. And that's what all the surveys show is going on.

I had a fascinating conversation with Senator Dole not long after the election. He came by the White House and we sat and talked. And I said, ''You know, Bob, you've been here in this town a lot longer than I have.'' He said, ''Yeah, that's what I tried to convince the voters of.'' [*Laughter*] And we were having a great talk. And I said, ''Now, tell me the truth. Is politics in Washington more honest or less honest today than it was 30 years ago?'' He said, ''My Lord, it's not even close.'' He said, ''It's far more honest today than it's ever been. There's far less corruption, far less impropriety.'' He said, ''It's by far the best it's ever been.''

Why don't the American people think that? And insofar as any of us ever contribute to their not thinking that, we ought to reconsider our positions. We need to fix the campaign finance system because it's over 20 years old; it's no longer consistent with the

present realities of campaigning. But many of the very people who say, ''All those politicians, they're all raising too much money,'' a lot of those people vote for the people who have the most effective negative television ads on, or just the most television ads on.

So we have to say this is an American responsibility. We have to work through it. And we need to find a commonsense solution to this, not a name-calling solution. But we'll do it. We always figure out how to do these things. It's more likely that we'll do it because John Kerry was reelected to the Senate.

Let me just make one general point. If you look at the fight we had over the Contract With America, if you look at what we tried to do with the economy, with the environment, with crime, with welfare, all these issues, if you look at the arguments we have over affirmative action or over whether we should open positions of public service to gays and lesbians, or any of these issues, you see a contrasting view of how we should define our American community. And in a funny way, that may be the most important issue of all.

My three little watch words are: opportunity, responsibility, community. Everybody ought to have an opportunity, everybody ought to be responsible, and everybody who is responsible should be part of our community. And if we can reach across all the lines that divide us to make one America, then everything else will probably come out all right. That's what I believe.

But we are having a debate today that you could see in the '92 election, in the '94 election, in the '96 election, that I predict will play itself out for another decade or so, about how we're going to define America in the 21st century: What will it mean to be an American? How will we define our country? And it's a debate we periodically have.

The first time we had it, ironically, it was the predecessors of the Republican Party, the Federalists, who gave the right answer, when John Marshall became the Chief Justice of the United States and basically said there are times when there must be one Nation, one law guaranteeing the constitutional rights of the American people, the minority as well as the majority.

Eighteen sixty, Abraham Lincoln redefined the Nation, said, ''If I have to give my life, I'll do that to keep the country together and to recognize the rights of people previously oppressed.''

In the Progressive Era, Theodore Roosevelt, coming out against abuses of child labor, the preservation of our natural resources, using the power of the Nation to bring us together and to look to the future and to put our children first, redefined again the importance of our conscious working together as a Nation, and the Government as an instrument of citizens coming together.

Then a funny thing happened. The mantle of carrying the Nation on shifted from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party, and Woodrow Wilson took it up. And then it was reinvigorated under Franklin Roosevelt in the Depression and World War II and then under Harry Truman. And then after the war, there were, frankly, progressives in both parties who shared a consensus that maybe the cold war helped them to hold together. After all, it was a Democratic Congress and President Nixon that produced the EPA and the first Clean Air Act.

Then in the last two decades, you have seen again a splitting apart of the consensus of what it means to be an American. We, as Democrats, believe that individual rights are important. We believe our individual values are important. We believe what happens to all children affects our children. We believe we don't have a child to waste. We're proud of our heritage, but we think we owe everybody else's as much respect. And we believe that our Government should not be a pain in the neck, it shouldn't be any bigger than necessary, but it ought to be strong enough to give people the tools to make the most of their own lives and to build strong families and strong communities.

Increasingly, the other party has said that Government is the problem, and that we're bound together as a community if we say we believe in the same things, but we really don't have any enforceable obligations to one another. I disagree.

But if you look at the real debates we've had—on welfare reform, I had no problem with requiring everybody on welfare to go to work. I had a big problem with taking away

the guarantee of health care and nutrition from their kids, for example. On crime, I had no problem with making people who did terrible things serve longer sentences. But I knew we'd lower crime more if we put l00,000 cops on the street and took the assault weapons off the street. And it turned out that was right. But those were joint decisions we made together for the common benefit of everyone.

I want you to think about the political debates that we see just in the next 2 years, and you remember what I said tonight. And you will see people redefining their own allegiances based on new issues for a new time and what they think binds us together as a country.

I'm convinced that we were able to win the White House because more and more people who thought they were Republican or independent, who lived in suburbs, began to feel common cause with their neighbors and be willing to make common policies that affected us all in ways that they didn't before—on the budget, on crime, on welfare, on education, you name it, across the board.

But I think that's what makes our party special. It's not liberal/conservative. It's whether you believe that you are a piece of the main and a part of the whole, whether you really believe that your family will only be as good as it can be if everybody else's family has a chance, too. That is the single driving passion of our party today, and I think John Kerry embodies it. And I'm proud to be with him tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Kerry's wife, Teresa.

## Remarks on Fast-Track Trade Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

*November 5, 1997*

***The President.*** Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, Senator, Members of the Congress, thank you so much for being here. And to the members of the administration, thank you for your efforts on fast track.

The choice Congress confronts this week will profoundly affect our growth, prosperity, and leadership well into the new century, for Congress must decide whether to extend the President's fast-track authority to negotiate agreements that tear down unfair trade barriers to our exports and create high-wage jobs in our economy.

Yesterday a bipartisan majority in the Senate voted overwhelmingly to move forward on extending fast-track authority. On Friday, the House of Representatives will vote on fast track, and I strongly encourage the House to take the same bold stand for America's future. A Member of Congress who votes for fast track is doing the right thing for America.

If we turn our backs now on trade and fail to seize the opportunities of the global economy, our competitors will eagerly take our place. That is an ''America last'' strategy. It's unacceptable; it won't work.

The rejection of fast track won't create any new jobs or raise any American incomes. It won't advance environmental or labor standards abroad. It would reduce our ability to do both. And I think that is very important. By freezing the status quo, we would simply be saying that we are going to freeze ourselves out of getting a fair deal in other markets; we are going to sit by while other countries get a better deal in other markets; and at the same time, we are going to reduce our influence on the labor and environmental standards in other countries and undermine our ability to continue to grow the American economy and create good, new jobs here.

Still, there are things that we have to do to try to continue to push the elevation of labor and environmental standards around the world as we press for open markets, and I believe we owe it to ourselves and our future to leave no one behind who is willing to work and learn in order to compete and win in the global economy.

Our social compact ever since I came here has always been opportunity for everyone who is responsible and a community in which all Americans have a chance. That's why we've worked hard with Congress to create a package of initiatives which I will include in my next budget to equip all people to reap the rewards of change. We know that the