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and Donna Frisbee, acting executive director. He also referred to Wolfgang and Barbara Puck, owners of the restaurant.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles, California

November 16, 1997

Well, thank you—*chaver*. [*Laughter*] Actually, I learned how to do that—you know, that's just the way we say it in Arkansas. What can I say? [*Laughter*] Walk into any redneck bar on the weekend—[*laughter*]—that's the way we talk.

Thank you, Haim. Thank you, Cheryl. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here. I'm, first of all, delighted to see you all, and I want to thank you for your presence here and for your support. And I want to thank you for having us in your beautiful home and your beautiful tent. [*Laughter*] I used to say, when I was on the stump running for President, I wanted to create a big tent in America that we could keep everybody in. I think we've almost achieved it tonight. [*Laughter*]

You mentioned Yitzhak Rabin, who was my great friend, and we sadly observed the second anniversary of his death just a few days ago. And I've only been through this twice—two anniversaries of his death that I have observed—both times I remember exactly where I was and exactly what I was doing when I heard that he had been shot. And I remember exactly what I did waiting for the news of whether he lived or not. So I've thought a lot about what it was to me that made him so special, because we had a relationship that was one of the most important things that ever happened to me in my life. The thing I liked about Rabin was that he was tough as nails, but he had a great heart and a great imagination. And he understood that the status quo would not work for Israel, and therefore he was prepared to make changes, even though they carried risks.

In a less dire way entirely, that is the general choice that has faced America for the last few years, because when things begin to change in a society, if you want to hold on to your basic values—you can't hold on to your basic values by holding on to old conditions. In order to hold on to your basic values, you have to change conditions; you have to change your approach; you have to be open to new things and even open to taking risks.

Six years ago, when I decided to run for President, I did it basically because I thought that we were not changing fast enough and that we didn't have a strategy about how we were going to get into the 21st century. We were talking about the revolution in telecommunications and software and other things around the table tonight—they are really metaphors for the breathtaking changes that are going on in the way Americans work and live and relate to the rest of the world. And if we want to preserve what is best about America, therefore, we have to be the most aggressive change agents in the world. That is the premise on which I began to seek the Presidency 6 years ago.

I thought the only way to restore opportunity and responsibility and a sense of community in this country was to basically have new ideas that were relevant to a new time. And so we set about doing that. And the people of California were kind enough to vote for Vice President Gore and me and to give us a chance to serve, and we changed the economic policy of the country. We went from trickle-down economics to invest-and-grow economics. We changed the National Government's approach to crime and focused on police, prevention, as well as punishment. We changed our approach to welfare and focused on requiring work but also supporting children. We aggressively embraced the environmental policy designed to facilitate economic growth by improving the environment.

And we did a lot of other things. We tried to take on what I think is a central challenge for almost every family in America today, even quite well-to-do families, even though it's tougher for poor families, and that is, nearly every person I know with young children can cite at least one example where they have felt a conflict between their obligations at work and their obligations to their children. And our society is not sufficiently organized to enable people to succeed at work and at what is everybody's most important job, which is raising good children. It is still

the most important work of every society, and we have given no thought, really, or very little thought as a country to what our national approach ought to be to making sure that no one had to give up being a good parent in order to be successful at work.

So these were some of the challenges we tried to take on. I also have been concerned all my life, but particularly in the last few years, about how we could bridge our old divides of race and deal with all the incredible manifold new diversity coming into our society, respecting that diversity, even celebrating it, but still saying, these are the things which unite us as Americans. We can have one America, no matter how kaleidoscopic we get. As a matter of fact, the richer, the more diverse we get, we can even be stronger as one country.

And finally, I was quite concerned that the temptation would be very great at the end of the cold war for the United States to lay down the responsibilities of world leadership, and I was worried that there would be a vacuum at the very time when we had enormous opportunities in terms of trade and the economy to bring people together and to reinforce democracy, and we had enormous new responsibility. Just because there is no cold war and the threat of two great countries annihilating each other and half the rest of the world with nuclear bombs is receding, we see a whole new set of threats from terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, from international criminal cartels and drug traffickers, and potentially over the next few decades, from more international diseases, infections traversing national borders. Particularly, it will become more pronounced if we have dramatic changes in the global environment. So we needed a new approach there, and so we set about trying to change all these things and a number of others I haven't mentioned.

Five years later, thanks largely to the work of the American people but not unrelated to these changes, we've got the strongest economy in a generation, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the biggest drop in welfare in history, the air is cleaner, the water is cleaner, there are fewer toxic waste dumps, and our food is safer.

We have made a beginning on trying to deal with the conflicts of work and family by passing the family leave law and by providing special tax breaks for people to finance college education, for parents with young children, and for adoption, which is a very important issue to a number of you in this room and also to me.

We're about to expand health care coverage to 5 million more children in working families who don't have it. We're moving the country forward. We have fought back our worst impulses to divide the country over immigrants and over race, and I hope we'll be able to take on a whole range of other issues as I continue this initiative of racial dialog that I started here in California a few months ago.

The nuclear threat has been reduced. We've been a positive force for peace in Bosnia and Haiti and Northern Ireland and in the Middle East, troubled though the peace process is today. And we have begun to bring the world together, I think, around a shared approach not only to our common opportunities through trade and economic cooperation and dealing with common concerns over human rights but also in dealing with these terrorist problems and other related problems.

So I think it's a very different country today than it was 5 years ago, and I am very gratified for all the people who have helped. So the first and most important thing I'd like to say tonight to all of you is thank you. I think it is very important that you understand there is a direct connection between the decisions people make in elections, the policies that are put in, and the consequences that flow. And the system we have today requires us to be able to raise funds so that we can communicate.

I would very much like to see campaign finance reform passed. I've worked hard on it. We've tried for 5 years. The forces that benefit from the present system keep trying to keep it, but I will say this, too—and a lot of you—I'm sure that Lew Wasserman has probably been contributing to campaigns as long as anybody in this room—would say the escalating costs of campaigns is like the escalating costs of making movies or the escalating costs of anything else. You don't raise the

money and then look for something to throw it at. The costs go up, and you raise the money to meet them.

So if we're going to have meaningful campaign finance reform, we also have to have a meaningful way to lower the cost of candidates communicating with the electorate, through free or reduced air time for people who accept spending limits and other things like that.

But you ought to be proud tonight that you have played a role in moving your country to a better place over the last 5 years. You also ought to know that we are nowhere near done, for two reasons. One is that a lot of things still need to be done. The second is that the American people are almost evenly divided, or they go first one way and then another, between what I think are the two dominant governing philosophies today, represented by the two parties.

My philosophy is that the Government should be smaller and less bureaucratic but should be strong enough to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives and that there are things that are very important for us to do as one America. Even though we often agree on things, the Republican philosophy is that Government is basically the source of our problems, and it would be better if there were less of it, even if there is more inequality and more unfairness. And I don't agree with that. I've done everything I could to lift the burdens of Government from the American people but to bring the benefits of our common endeavors to moving the country forward. And as you see in all these elections that are genuinely contested, it's a near-run thing. The American people are still trying to work this through as we define what it means to be an American and what America means as we move into a new era.

I can only say this, in addition to thank you, you should all be very excited to be alive now, and grateful, because we have the chance—the chance—to give not just our country but the world the 50 best years in all of human history, in terms of freedom from genuine fear of extinction, elevation in material conditions, resolution of a lot of our most difficult problems if we work together, and we really work at it.

And in terms of the difficulties, they always attend this level of change. And every time this country has gone through a change, we've had a big debate about what America means. We had a big debate in the beginning about what America means. A lot of people in the beginning thought America meant a bunch of States that basically had to put up with a National Government so we could have a common currency and some trade rules and we could raise an army if anybody ever threatened us, otherwise, go away and leave us alone.

Then, because our Constitution said all people were created equal, but slaves were three-fifths people, we had another debate about what America means that led to the great Civil War. And we said, no, America means all people are created equal. And it changed the politics of America for another 40 or 50 years.

Then the industrial revolution came on. We had another debate about it, and Theodore Roosevelt, first, then Woodrow Wilson, said, ''This can't be American to say, yes, we want to have these great factories rising up, but we don't want 9-year-olds working 12-hour days and 6 days a week in factories. That's wrong. It's a good thing to get all the resources we can out of the land, but we ought to save our national parks, we ought to save our natural resources. We owe something to our grandchildren and to their grandchildren.''

When Franklin Roosevelt came in and one in four Americans was out of work and he had to face the threat of Hitler, we had to redefine again what the role of America was. The same thing happened in the civil rights crisis. That's what's going on today, and you should be very excited to be a part of it.

You know, when I became President, the Internet was still the province of physicists. It is now the fastest growing human organism in all of history. While we've been having dinner, there are probably a million new sites on the Net. Things are happening at a pace and in a way, in dimensions we could never imagine before. This is good. It's basically a good time.

But there are challenges we have to face. I'll just mention a few of them. We've got

the budget balanced. We've reformed Medicare for the next 10 or 12 years; it's going to be fine. We have not fully come to grips with the implications of the retirement of the baby boomers on Social Security and Medicare. How are we going to do that? I personally think it's very important to preserve them because of the large number of Americans who would be in a world of hurt if they weren't there. But we have to do it in a way that does not bankrupt our own children as they attempt to raise their children. Can we do it? Of course we can. But we have to do it.

In the area of criminal justice, the crime rate has been coming down for 5 years, but it's not coming down so much among children between the ages of 12 and 18. Most crime by juveniles is committed between 3 in the afternoon and 7 at night, when the parents are still at work or coming home. We haven't thought about how our schools, our community centers, and other things—how should they be organized? If we know that this is when it occurs and we don't really want to jail a lot more kids and we'd like to keep them out of trouble in the first place, we need a national commitment to give these kids the future they need.

We finally got a vote out of Congress for the first time to establish national academic standards and voluntary exams to see whether kids were meeting them, but we still haven't implemented it, and I'll have to fight it every step of the way for the next 3 years. But I'm telling you, it is wrong to let children get out of school without the basic educational skills they need to do well in this modern economy, and we will never overcome our economic and racial problems until we do it.

If you look at the economic changes that are going on and the big argument we had over fast track—which I still think will be resolved in a positive way, for my position, some time next year—when a plant closes, you see it. When trade adds jobs, it's one here, 10 there, 50 the other place. People are traumatized by the churning of the economy even when the unemployment rate is low. Does that mean that we should run away from trade? It's ridiculous. You know, we could try, and it would still happen; we just wouldn't benefit from it. But it is true that no society, no wealthy country in the world has figured out how to get all the benefits of all this economic change and still help the people that are temporarily dislocated to start their lives anew, to be on an equal or better footing and to do it in a hurry.

So the answer is trade more. Get rid of more trade barriers, but do more and do it more quickly to help people that aren't very well suited for this modern economy, in terms of their skills, move into the mainstream again. And we don't have a system to do that. No other country has a very good system either. But we ought to have the best, and we're nowhere near the best. And we can do better, and we must.

In 1994, a lot of people didn't like what I proposed in health care. But I said if we didn't do something, the percentage of uninsured people would go up and, sure enough, it has. So here we are with the world's best medical care and more and more people without any health insurance. We've got to find a way to make health insurance affordable and to emphasize quality care at the same time. Can we do it? Of course we can. But we can't do it by having bogus debates about the things that don't have anything to do with this. We have to have a practical as well as passionate and compassionate approach to this.

And let me just mention one or two other things. I'm convinced this challenge of climate change is real. I have reviewed every document I can get my hands on. I am convinced the climate of the Earth is warming at a rapid rate that is unsustainable. I am also absolutely convinced that the technology is there, or right over the horizon, to enable us to continue to grow like crazy and drastically change the basis of energy consumption in this country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every one of us should be concerned about that. That's something we owe to our children and our grandchildren.

Most of us in this room won't live to see a terrible adverse circumstance, in all probability. But turning 6 billion people around cannot be done on a dime. It's going to take 20 or 30 years of hard work. It's the sort of thing democracies aren't very well suited to do. But we've got to be visionary enough and

disciplined enough to say, this is a gift we're going to give our grandchildren, and we're going to start now.

The last point I want to make—I don't want to get into the details on this so much—but it is very important that we recognize that our security problems in the future, in all probability, will not be the United States against some other big country. I hope to goodness we can reach a constructive accommodation and partnership with all the major nations of the world. I hope we can build a trading network in the Americas and one with the Asia-Pacific and that we can continue to advance democracy and human rights throughout the world. But there will always be organized forces of destruction that will seek to profit from opportunities in whatever situation exists. The more society becomes integrated around the globe, the more open our borders are; the more we move money and technology and people around rapidly, the more vulnerable we will be to organized crime, to drug syndicates, to terrorists, and to people who can take advantage of small-scale weapons of mass destruction.

That's why I'm working so hard on this biological and chemical issue. We have got to be firm in making sure that we've done everything we possibly can to set up a system which protects the world from the worst aspects of the new security threats in the same way we worked hard during the cold war to keep the world from being blown up. It is the same sort of challenge; it just will happen in a lot of different places. Can we do it? Of course we can, if we have the vision and the determination to do it.

So I guess what I want to say to you is this is a great time to be alive, and it is a great time to be a citizen of the United States. It is a great time to be involved in the political process, but don't ever think it doesn't matter. It has serious consequences what you do or don't do, what you're committed to or what you withdraw from. And your presence here tonight I hope at least gives you the satisfaction that you've helped to make America a better, stronger, more unified country than it otherwise would have been. And I hope it will redouble your determination to make sure that when we finish our business here, that this country will be in great shape for the best 50 years in all of human history.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Haim Saban, chairman and chief executive officer of Saban Entertainment, and his wife, Cheryl; and Lew Wasserman, chairman emeritus, MCA, Inc.

Remarks to Cessna Employees in Wichita, Kansas

November 17, 1997

I think we should give them another hand. They were fabulous, weren't they? [*Applause*] Thank you, Tanya and Jodee. Thank you, Russ Meyer. Thank my friend Eli Segal for doing such a great job in getting other companies into this endeavor. Thank you, Michael Starnes, for the incredible support that the United States Chamber of Commerce is giving to this effort.

I thank Secretary Glickman and Secretary Herman and Secretary Cuomo, who is not here, for the work they have done in supporting this endeavor and others like it around America. I'd also like to thank the large number, the unusually large number of public officials who are here today, proving that we come to celebrate a victory for America, a victory of people, not party or politics but an old-fashioned victory for American dignity and possibility, for people succeeding at work and succeeding in raising their children, an old-fashioned reaffirmation that our American dream is still very much alive and well if we all pitch in and do our part. So thank you, Governor Graves, and thank you, Senator Roberts and Senator Brownback, Congressman Tiahrt, Congressman Ryan, Mayor Knight, and the other State officials and legislative leaders and council members who are here. I am very grateful to all of you for being here.

The sign says it's all about people, and I would like to suggest that you consider renaming the 21st Street Campus to the 21st Century Campus, because you really are an embodiment of the future America has to make.