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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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The President's Radio Address

November 29, 1997

Good morning. This week, millions of Americans have gathered with family and friends to share Thanksgiving. Much has changed for America since George Washington first proclaimed a day of thanksgiving for our new Nation in 1789. But the Thanksgiving spirit, sharing our good fortune with others, coming together to meet our common challenges—that is as important as ever. That's why we must keep that spirit alive throughout the year through citizen service.

Citizen service must be at the heart of our efforts to prepare America for the 21st century, as we work to guarantee all Americans the opportunity and conditions to make the most of their own lives and to help those who need and deserve it with a hand up. My administration's most important contribution to citizen service is AmeriCorps, our national service program that already has given more than 100,000 young Americans the opportunity to serve our country and earn money for a college education. In community after community, AmeriCorps members have proved that service can help us meet our most pressing social needs.

For example, in Simpson County, Kentucky, AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump three grade levels in reading. In boys and girls clubs all across the country, AmeriCorps members are mentors for at-risk young people. Habitat For Humanity relies upon AmeriCorps members to bring in more volunteers and build more houses. In communities beset by floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes, AmeriCorps members have helped to rebuild homes and restore hope.

Now, AmeriCorps members are mobilizing thousands and thousands of college students from 800 campuses in our America Reads program, to make sure that all our young people can read independently by the third grade. AmeriCorps brings people of every background together to work toward common goals. And after years of partisan fighting over it, I'm pleased that Congress now seems ready to come together to support AmeriCorps.

Today, I'm proposing legislation to give more Americans the chance to serve by strengthening AmeriCorps and our student and senior citizen service programs and extending them for 5 years. This legislation reflects the spirit of the Presidents' Summit on Service, where last spring thousands of Americans pledged to give our children the support they need to make the most of their lives. As General Colin Powell reported this week, we've made a lot of progress since the summit with more AmeriCorps members, more reading tutors for our children through America Reads, more mentoring programs for young people, more partnerships with private businesses and community groups. At Thanksgiving, I want to thank especially the citizens and businesses who have worked with us to ensure that our Nation's surplus food helps to feed the hungry, not fill up dumpsters.

Now we must create more opportunities for people to serve all year long and, through service, to reach out to one another across the lines that divide us. In honor of the spirit of citizen service embodied in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Congress has designated the Martin Luther King holiday as a day of national service. And I'm pleased to announce that our Corporation for National Service has awarded 73 grants to communities from Boston to Los Angeles, to help make this day of service a resounding success. Dr. King once said that everybody can be great because anybody can serve; you only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.

As we look forward to a joyous holiday season, let us pledge to live up to those words by making citizen service a part of our lives every day.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:25 p.m. on November 28 in the Residence at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 29. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), chairman, America's Promise—The Alliance For Youth.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq

November 26, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This report covers the period from September 23 to the present.

Since my last report, the Government of Iraq attempted to defy the international community by unilaterally imposing unacceptable conditions on the operations of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM). On October 29, the Iraqi government announced its intention to expel all U.S. personnel working in Iraq for UNSCOM. Iraq's aim appears to have been to establish an environment under which it could restore its capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction without restriction. For 3 weeks, the Government of Iraq refused to allow American UNSCOM personnel to enter the country or to participate in site inspections, expelled UNSCOM personnel who are U.S. citizens, threatened the safety of the U.S. Air Force U–2 aircraft that flies missions for UNSCOM, tampered with UNSCOM monitoring equipment, removed UNSCOM cameras, moved and concealed significant pieces of dual-use equipment, and imposed additional unacceptable conditions on continued operations of UNSCOM. Two confrontational actions were undertaken in an atmosphere of strident, threatening Iraqi rhetoric, the dispersal of Iraqi armed forces as if in preparation for a military conflict, and the placement of innocent civilian "human shields" at military sites and at many of Saddam Hussein's palaces in violation of international norms of conduct.

On November 20, having obtained no agreement from the U.N. or the United States to alter UNSCOM or the sanctions regime—indeed, having obtained none of its stated objectives—the Iraqi government announced that it would allow UNSCOM inspectors who are U.S. citizens to return to their duties. This encouraging development, however, will be ultimately tested by Saddam Hussein's actions, not his words. It remains to be seen whether the Government of Iraq will now live up to its obligations under all applicable UNSC resolutions, including its commitment to allow UNSCOM to perform its work unhindered.

As expressed unanimously by the five permanent members (P–5) of the Security Council meeting in Geneva November 20, the will of the entire international community is for the unconditional decision of Iraq to allow the return of UNSCOM inspectors to Iraq in their previous composition. I must note that the United States was not briefed on, did not endorse, and is not bound by anything other than the terms of the P–5 statement. Neither the United States nor the U.N. are bound by any bilateral agreement between Russia and Iraq. We will carefully monitor events and will continue to be prepared for any contingency. Iraq's challenge was issued, in part, in response to U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1134, of October 23, in which the Security Council condemned Iraq's flagrant violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and expressed its firm intention to impose travel restrictions on the Iraqi leadership if the long-standing pattern of obstruction and harassment of UNSCOM personnel continued. In the debate of UNSCR 1134, not one nation on the Security Council questioned the need to continue sanctions. The only serious debate was over when and how to impose additional sanctions. UNSCR 1134 was based on the UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 6-month reports to the UNSC that indicated that the Government of Iraq has not provided the "substantial compliance" called for in UNSCR 1115 of June 21, 1997—especially

regarding immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to facilities for inspection and to officials for interviews.

On November 12 the resolve of the international community was further demonstrated when the Security Council voted unanimously to adopt UNSCR 1137—the first new sanctions against Iraq since the Gulf War—condemning Iraq's continued violations of its obligations and imposing restrictions on the travel of all Iraqi officials and armed forces members responsible for or participating in noncompliance. The UNSC in a Presidential Statement condemned Iraq again upon the actual expulsion of the American UNSCOM personnel. The UNSC's solidarity was reflected as well in the UNSCOM Executive Chairman's and IAEA Director's decisions that all UNSCOM and IAEA personnel should depart Iraq rather than accede to the Iraqi demand that no American participate in inspection activities.

As a demonstration of our firm resolve to support the U.N., I directed the deployment of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, escort ships, and additional combat aircraft to the region. In this regard we take note of and welcome House Resolution 322 expressing the sense of the House that the United States should act to resolve the crisis in a manner that assures full Iraqi compliance with UNSC resolutions regarding the destruction of Iraq's capability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction. While the addition of these forces gives us a wide range of military options, should they be necessary, we remain firmly committed to finding a diplomatic solution.

The ongoing crisis is only one chapter in the long history of efforts by the Iraqi regime to flout its obligations under UNSC resolutions. Iraq has persistently failed to disclose fully its programs for weapons of mass destruction. It admits to moving significant pieces of dual-use equipment subject to monitoring. Without full disclosure, UNSCOM and the IAEA cannot effectively conduct the ongoing monitoring and verification mandated by UNSCR's 687, 707, 715, and other relevant resolutions.

Iraqi biological and chemical weapons are currently the most troubling issues for UNSCOM. This is due to the innate dual-use nature of the technology—how easily it can be hidden within civilian industries such as, for biological agents—the pharmaceutical industry, and for chemical agents—the pesticide industry. In both cases, Iraq continues to prevent full and immediate access to sites suspected of chemical or biological warfare activities. Until 2 months ago, for example, major aspects of Iraq's pernicious "VX" program (a powerful nerve agent) were unknown to UNSCOM due to Iraqi concealment. UNSCOM is still unable to verify that all of Iraq's SCUD missile warheads filled with biological agents—anthrax and botulinum toxin—have been destroyed. When UNSCOM says it is making "significant progress" in these areas, it is referring to UNSCOM's progress in ferreting out Iraqi deception, not Iraqi progress in cooperating with UNSCOM.

The Iraqi regime contends that UNSCOM and the IAEA should "close the books" on nuclear and missile inspections. But there are still many uncertainties and questions that need to be resolved. Among the many problems, Iraq has:

- failed to answer critical questions on nuclear weapons design and fabrication, procurement, and centrifuge enrichment;
- failed to detail how far the theoretical and practical aspects of its clandestine nuclear efforts progressed;
- failed to explain in full the interaction between its nuclear warhead and missile design programs;
- failed to provide a written description of its post-war nuclear weapons procurement program;
- failed to account for major engine components, special warheads, missing propellants, and guidance instruments that could be used to assemble fully operational missiles; and
- failed to discuss—on the direct orders of Tariq Aziz—its actions to retain missile launchers.

In accordance with relevant UNSCR's, UNSCOM must continue to investigate the Iraqi nuclear and missile programs until it can verify with absolute certainty that all the equipment has been destroyed and that all

the capabilities have been eliminated. Otherwise, Iraq will be able to strike at any city in the Middle East, delivering devastating biological, chemical, and even nuclear weapons.

UNSCOM's work must include vigorous efforts to unveil Iraq's ''Concealment Mechanism.'' Led by elements of its special security services, Iraq has for over 6-years engaged in a massive and elaborate campaign to keep UNSCOM inspectors from finding proscribed equipment, documents, and possibly weapons themselves. Over the years, inspection teams have been prevented from doing their jobs and held—often at gunpoint—outside suspect facilities, providing enough time for evidence to be hidden or destroyed. To rout out Iraq's remaining weapons of mass destruction, UNSCOM must be granted full access to all sites, without exception.

The Iraqi regime contends that it has been forced to defy the international community in this manner out of concern for the well-being of the Iraqi people, claiming that malnutrition and inadequate medical care are the direct result of internationally imposed sanctions. To the contrary, the deep concern of the United States and the international community about the condition of the Iraqi people is evident in the fact that the international sanctions against Iraq have been carefully structured to help ensure that ordinary Iraqis need not suffer. Since their inception, the sanctions against Iraq have had exceptions for the importation into Iraq of foods and medicines. In August 1991, when Iraq claimed that it was unable to pay for its food needs, the Security Council adopted UNSCR 706 (and later 712), authorizing Iraq to sell limited amounts of petroleum on the international market, with the proceeds to be used to purchase humanitarian supplies, and to fund vital U.N. activities regarding Iraq. The Government of Iraq, however ignored the needs of its own people, by refusing to accept UNSCR's 706 and 712.

In April 1995 the Security Council proposed a new oil-for-food offer to Iraq in UNSCR 986, sponsored by the United States and others. UNSCR 986 authorized the sale of up to $1 billion of oil every 90 days for Iraq to purchase food, medicines, and other ''humanitarian items'' for its people. The Government of Iraq delayed implementation of UNSCR 986 for a year and a half, until December 1996.

Since December 1996, the Iraqi regime has continued to obstruct the relief plan. It has reduced the food ration for each person, even as more food was flowing into the country. In fact, there are credible reports that as food imports under UNSCR 986 increased, the regime reduced its regular food purchases, potentially freeing up money for other purposes. There are also reports that Iraq may have stockpiled food in warehouses for use by the military and regime supporters—even though the Iraqi people need the food now. Under UNSCR 1111—the 6-month renewal of UNSCR 986 passed in June 1997—the regime delayed oil sales for 2 months, even while it claimed its people were starving. In Baghdad, the regime staged threatening demonstrations against U.N. relief offices. Under both UNSCR's 986 and 1111, the U.N. Sanctions Committee has had to carefully consider each and every import contract because of the possibility that Iraq may slip orders for dual-use items that can be employed to make weapons into long lists of humanitarian goods.

Since 1990—even at the height of the Gulf War—the consistent position of the United States has been that this dispute is with Iraq's regime, not with its people. We have always been open to suggestions on how UNSCR's 986 and 1111 can be improved or expanded to better serve the needs of the people. The confrontational tactics of the Iraqi government have not altered this position.

Sanctions against Iraq were imposed as the result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It has been necessary to sustain them because of Iraq's failure to comply with relevant UNSC resolutions, including those to ensure that Saddam Hussein is not allowed to resume the unrestricted development and production of weapons of mass destruction. Prior to the Gulf War, Saddam had already used chemical weapons on the Iraqi people and on Iranian troops, and he threatened to use them on coalition forces and innocent civilians in Saudi Arabia and Israel during the Gulf War. By restricting the amount of oil he can sell to a level that provides for the needs of the Iraqi people but does not allow

him to pursue other, nonhumanitarian objectives, international sanctions make it virtually impossible for Saddam to gear up his weapons programs to full strength.

Saddam could end the suffering of his people tomorrow if he would cease his obstruction of the oil-for-food program and allow it to be implemented properly. He could end sanctions entirely if he would demonstrate peaceful intentions by complying fully with relevant UNSC resolutions. The United States has supported and will continue to support the sanctions against the Iraqi regime until such time as compliance is achieved.

Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people, to the region, and to the world, and the United States remains determined to contain the threat posed by his regime. The United States looks forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member but until then, containment must continue.

Regarding military operations, the United States and its coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zones over Iraq under Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch. We have detected myriad intentional Iraqi violations of both no-fly zones. While these incidents (Iraqi violations of the no-fly zones) started several hours after an Iranian air raid on terrorist bases inside Iraq, it was clear that Iraq's purpose was to try and test the coalition to see how far it could go in violating the ban on flights in these regions. A maximum effort by Operation Southern Watch forces complemented by early arrival in theater of the USS NIMITZ battle group, dramatically reduced violations in the southern no-fly zone. An increase in the number of support aircraft participating in Northern Watch allowed increased operating capacity that in turn significantly reduced the number of violations in the north. We have repeatedly made clear to the Government of Iraq and to all other relevant parties that the United States and its partners will continue to enforce both no-fly zones, and that we reserve the right to respond appropriately and decisively to any Iraqi provocations.

United States force levels include land- and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a Marine amphibious task force, a Patriot missile battalion, a mechanized battalion task force, and a mix of special operations forces deployed in support of USCINCCENT operations. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel have been deployed for continuous rotation. USCINCCENT continues to monitor closely the security situation in the region to ensure adequate force protection is provided for all deployed forces.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 9491 adopted in October 1994, demands that Iraq not use its military or any other forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that it not redeploy troops or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam's accumulating record of unreliability, it is prudent to retain a significant U.S. force presence in the region in order to deter Iraq and maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors.

Implementation of UNSCR 1051 continues. It provides for a mechanism to monitor Iraq's efforts to reacquire proscribed weapons capabilities by requiring Iraq to notify a joint unit of UNSCOM and the IAEA in advance of any imports of dual-use items. Similarly, U.N. members must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of dual-use items.

The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Iraq's repression of its Shi'a population continues, with policies that are destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life in southern Iraq and the ecology of the southern marshes. The United Nations, in its most recent reports in implementation of Resolution 986, recognized that the Government of Iraq continues forcibly to deport Iraqi citizens from Kirkuk and other areas of northern Iraq still under the Iraqi government's control. Iraq continues to stall and obfuscate rather than work in good faith toward accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during the occupation of Kuwait. The Government of Iraq shows no signs of complying with UNSC Resolution 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people. The U.N. Human Rights Commission's special

rapporteur on Iraq reported to the General Assembly of his particular concern that extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the practice of torture continue to occur in Iraq.

The INDICT campaign continues to gain momentum. Led by various independent Iraqi opposition groups and nongovernmental organizations, this effort seeks to document crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Iraqi regime. We applaud the tenacity of the Iraqi opposition in the face of one of the most repressive regimes in history. We also take note of and welcome H.Con.Res. 137 of November 12, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the need for an international criminal tribunal to try members of the Iraqi regime for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Regarding northern Iraq, our efforts to help resolve the differences between Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have not yet yielded the type of permanent, stable settlement that the people of northern Iraq deserve. The Peace Monitoring Force—sponsored by the United States, Great Britain, and Turkey under the Ankara Process and comprising Iraqi Turkomans and Assyrians—was forced to withdraw from the agreed cease-fire line between the two groups, when PUK forces, joined by the terrorist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) launched a wide-scale attack on the KDP on October 13. The KDP, supported by airstrikes and ground elements of the Turkish army, launched a counterattack on November 8. We have helped to arrange a number of temporary cease-fires and to restore humanitarian services in the course of this fighting, but the underlying causes for conflict remain. We will continue our efforts to reach a permanent settlement through mediation in order to minimize opportunities for Baghdad and/or Tehran to insert themselves into the conflict and threaten Iraqi citizens in this region.

The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) continues its important mission in the Arabian Gulf. The U.S. Navy provides the bulk of the forces involved in the maritime sanctions enforcement authorized under Resolution 665, although we receive much-needed help from a number of close allies, including during the past year: Belgium, Canada, The Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Illegal smuggling of Iraqi gasoil from the Shatt Al Arab waterway in violation of Resolution 661 has doubled since May of this year—reaching an estimated 180,000 metric tons per month—and continues to increase. The smugglers use the territorial waters of Iran with the complicity of the Iranian government that profits from charging protection fees for these vessels to avoid interception by the MIF in international waters. Cash raised from these illegal operations is used to purchase contraband goods that are then smuggled back into Iraq by the same route. We continue to brief the U.N. Sanctions Committee regarding these operations and have pressed the Committee to compel Iran to give a full accounting of its involvement. We have also worked closely with our MIF partners and Gulf Cooperation Council states to take measures to curb sanctions-breaking operations.

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to UNSCR 687 and 692, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued almost 1.3 million awards worth approximately $6 billion. Thirty percent of the proceeds from the oil sales permitted by UNSCR's 986 and 1111 have been allocated to the Compensation Fund to pay awards and to finance operations of the UNCC, and these proceeds will continue to be allocated to the Fund under UNSCR 1111. To the extent that money is available in the Compensation Fund, initial payments to each claimant are authorized for awards in the order in which the UNCC has approved them, in installments of $2,500. To date, 455 U.S. claimants have received an initial installment payment, and payment is in process for an additional 487 U.S. claimants.

Iraq remains a serious threat to international peace and security. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under U.N. Security Council

resolutions. My Administration will continue to sustain and strengthen sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Economic Team and an Exchange With Reporters

December 1, 1997

The 1998 Budget

The President. Today we are planning for the future, and we're working on two issues I wanted to mention briefly.

First, we are about to start a meeting, as you can see, with the economic team, planning for the 1998 budget. This will be the sixth year of our economic plan of invest in our people, cut the deficit, expand America's ability to sell abroad. And as all of you know, the deficit has gone from $290 billion when I took office to $23 billion today. Our economy is the strongest in a generation. And what we are going to be doing now is looking to continue this strategy within the confines of the balanced budget. Keep in mind, we have a balanced budget plan, but we don't have a balanced budget yet. We have to keep that uppermost in our minds.

International Agreement on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The second thing we're going to be doing is continuing to work on the challenge of climate change, with the Kyoto conference in Japan opening this week. The conference begins today. I've asked the Vice President to go to Kyoto early next week to present our approach, which is both environmentally strong and economically sound. All of you know that I believe that global warming is one of the great challenges that America must face over the next few decades, and we must begin now. The challenge is not imminent in the sense that most people can't feel it now, but it is clear, and it is very profound. It is a danger that the world community would ignore only at its peril.

There are still significant differences between the parties on key issues at the conference. The question before us is whether the nations of the world, both the developed and the developing nations, can put their rhetoric aside and find common ground in a way that enables us to make real progress in reducing the danger of global warming. And this can be done, I firmly believe, without undermining the capacity of the developing countries to grow or, for that matter, the capacity of the developed countries to grow.

We have set forward a plan that is both aggressive and achievable. It represents our commitment to do what we promised to do and to work very hard to avoid promising to do something that neither we nor others can do.

The Vice President will lay out the essence of our plan, explain its central goals: a strong target, a vigorous domestic program, reliance on market mechanisms to reduce the cost of cutting emissions, and meaningful participation by the developing countries, because the progress that we need to make cannot be made and, indeed the problem cannot be solved, unless all countries are involved. This is a global problem requiring a global solution.

I'm pleased the Vice President is going to Kyoto to present our position. It shows that we consider this to be a profoundly important issue, and we have taken it very seriously. We have worked very hard on it. An outstanding negotiating team, led by Under Secretary of State Stu Eizenstat, will conduct the negotiations. And I believe that if we all work hard, this will be viewed as a landmark meeting on our way to making progress on this critical challenge.

Q. Mr. President, does that mean your position is negotiable, and will the Vice President be able to negotiate? Or is he simply stating your position?

The Vice President. Can I answer that, Mr. President? I'm not going to be the negotiator. Stu Eizenstat is going to be leading the negotiations. And I would like to make it clear that, as others have said, we are perfectly prepared to walk away from an agreement that we don't think will work. And so it should be crystal clear to all the parties there that we're going to present the U.S. position forcefully and clearly. Mr. Eizenstat has the President's authority to negotiate, but the principles the President laid down earlier will be the ones that have to be met in order for the U.S. to participate.

Q. Sounds hostile.

The President. No, we're not hostile. We're going there in good faith, committed to negotiate within our principles. But I think it's very important that we not do something that appears to be politically palatable but that won't produce the results.

We have a good framework here; we've worked very hard. I personally have spent a lot of time talking to world leaders about this since I announced our position. We spent a lot of time talking about it when I was in Canada at the APEC meeting. I spent a lot of time when I was in Latin America talking to leaders about it. I spent a lot of time on the phone talking to others about it. I talked to President Jiang when he was here.

We're certainly going to negotiate in good faith. But we have to negotiate within the framework of our principles, and our principles are not inconsistent with what others say they want to achieve. So I'm very hopeful.

Attorney General Reno's Decision

Q. Mr. President, have you heard from the Attorney General about her decision regarding an independent counsel?

The President. No.

Q. When do you expect to hear from her?

The President. I don't know. I have not heard anything.

International Agreement on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Q. Mr. President, returning to Kyoto, the United States is proposing one of the more modest proposals of the summit—at the meeting, I should say. What factors led the administration to back away from its earlier proposal to cut greenhouse gases more dramatically?

The President. We didn't have an earlier proposal, that I'm aware of. The Government of the United States in '92, before I became President, signed on to the Rio conference. And we were attempting to come up with a proposal that we thought we could actually meet within the tools available to us and within the realistic options available to me as President and consistent with our desire to maintain our rate of growth but to change the energy basis on which we grow our economy. So we reached a decision we thought was best not only for the United States but that we thought was achievable, and therefore it was responsible for the world.

I think it's very important—keep in mind, we want to set targets that we can hit. At Rio, I think the world did set some targets in good faith, but there was no real system, no mechanism set up, country by country, to implement that. I'm going to do a much better job of that for the United States now. That is, we're going to have a program to pursue our course, and we're going to do it whatever happens at Kyoto. We're going to really work hard at this now. But I think it's important that we have a goal that makes sense. And I've evaluated where the Europeans are, in fact, with their efforts, where the Asians are, where the Latin Americans are, and what I think we can achieve here.

Also keep in mind, I think we need to be looking at this in terms of not just what happens in 2010 but where are we in 2020; where are we in 2030? What our objective has to be is to dramatically slow, freeze, and then reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the developed countries, and then get the developing countries to do the same thing, so that over the course of the next few decades we avoid what is otherwise certainly going to happen, which is a dramatic warming of the planet.

This is a problem that needs—it's a hard problem for democracies to deal with because we like to deal with things that have quick action and quick payoff. This problem has been developing over decades. If you read the Vice President's book and you look at his charts, you see how much worse it's

gotten just in the last few years. But it can't be turned around overnight. And so I think we've reached the right decision.

The Vice President. Mr. President, if I could add just a word on this, I think it's important to note that the position outlined and presented by the President that will be presented formally in Kyoto represents almost a 30 percent cut in emissions that would otherwise take place here in the United States by around the year 2010. That would represent a huge change.

The second point, as the President has said, whether there is an agreement in Kyoto or not, the United States is prepared, under President Clinton's leadership, to unilaterally take the steps that we believe should be taken in order to deal with this problem.

Third point, we see Kyoto as the beginning of the process, not the end of the process. And whether the agreement is reached at Kyoto or not, we will work to make sure that the world community comes together over the next few years and follows a sensible plan to solve this problem. And I'm going in order to demonstrate the commitment of the administration to solving that problem, regardless of whether or not we end up being able to sign on to the agreement at Kyoto.

The President. Let me make just one other point about that to reinforce what the Vice President has said. The goal we have suggested for Kyoto would require a much greater effort from the United States than from the other developed countries in the next few years because we've had so much more growth in the last 5 years than the other developed countries. So that if you use 1990 as a base year, let's say, instead of 1995, 1997, or some earlier year, it's the year that most clearly puts the burden on us since we've had so much more growth than our other developed partners have since that period.

Now, I'm not complaining about that. We have the most to do; we intend to do it. But I think that to imply that our goals are more modest than others doesn't look at—you ought to look at who has to do what work between now and then.

Q. Your goal is more modest now, though, than it was in 1993, when you proposed a goal for the administration. Is it because of the growth? Is that the reason why you——

The President. Yes, we grew a lot more. Frankly, I don't think we have—if you want to meet something with market mechanisms and technology and you don't favor taxes and regulation, then you have to have a more sophisticated system with more, sort of, buy-in, more organized, disciplined partnerships than we've had by and large with the private sector. I think that I have to do a better job of having a disciplined, coordinated effort here, which we intend to do now.

Q. Why not have the Vice President head the negotiations?

The President. Because, for one thing, we need him to do other things over the next 6 days. Stu Eizenstat is a great negotiator. He's the perfect person to do this. The Vice President is going there to announce our policy and to be there and show how important it is. No other country has got someone at the Vice President's level doing the negotiating; that's not how you negotiate these treaties.

The Vice President. You can be sure that both the President and I will remain very active behind the scenes, but all of the negotiating will be done, as is traditional and customary, by the head of the negotiating team.

The President. Let me say, they're not going to run away with this; we'll get daily reports, maybe several times a day, on what's going on. Don't worry about that.

Assistance to the South Korean Economy

Q. [*Inaudible*]—United States and Japan are considering chipping in as much as $20 billion to the IMF-led—[*inaudible*]—loan for South Korea. Two questions. Are those numbers in the ballpark? And secondly, are you at all concerned about the moral hazard risk element of this, by persistently bailing out countries you end up leading to the possibility that they will pursue less prudent national policies rather than more prudent ones in the future?

The President. Well, I would be worried about that if that's what we had done, but that's not what we've done. That is, I favor a strong agreement with the IMF that would actually restore financial stability and confidence in South Korea. And if such an agreement could be made, then I would favor the United States participating along with Japan,

much the same way we did in the recent matter involving Indonesia.

But if you look at what we did in Indonesia, if you look at what we did in Mexico, you see that the moral hazard argument doesn't come into play because we didn't agree to provide assistance and backup financial support until there was in place a rigorous plan that had a high likelihood of success in restoring long-term health and stability to the country. If you look at the results that were obtained in Mexico, they took a lot of tough medicine, they took a lot of hits to their economy, but it rebounded much more quickly than anyone thought it would, and they paid the money back to us ahead of time and at a profit. And if the plan that was adopted for Indonesia is vigorously implemented in good faith, I believe it will have similar results.

When our finance ministers met in Manila, we agreed that that was the formula that we would try to follow, that the country would reach a strong agreement with the IMF, and then if more funds were needed, at least in a backup situation, if the IMF fund should not be enough, then the United States, Japan, and others, in accordance with their ability, would be there to do that. I think we should be prepared to do that in the case of Korea if there's a strong agreement that has a high likelihood of restoring stability and confidence.

Internet Antipornography Agreement

Q. How do you regard the antipornography agreement—[*inaudible*]—Mr. President—[*inaudible*]——

The President. I hope it works. I encouraged them to do it, and I'm glad they're doing it. I wish them well.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China.

Memorandum on Integration of HIV Prevention in Federal Programs Serving Youth

December 1, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Integration of HIV Prevention in Federal Programs Serving Youth

Adolescence marks a major rite of passage, a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a period of significant physical, social, and intellectual growth and change. It is also a period of experimentation and risk-taking. The choices that young people make during these years profoundly affect their chances of becoming healthy, responsible, and productive adults.

Unfortunately, too many young people lack the support and self-esteem needed to make sound decisions, and end up putting their lives and their futures at risk. Today, it is estimated that one-quarter of all new HIV infections in the United States occur in young people between the ages of 13 and 21. This means that two Americans under the age of 21 become infected with HIV every hour of every day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in some communities as many as one in thirty 18- and 19-year olds may be HIV-positive.

For young people who become infected, there are promising new treatments available to help them live longer and more productive lives. Yet these treatments only forestall the progression of the disease; they do not constitute a cure. In fact, AIDS is the sixth leading cause of death among young people 15–24 years old (and the leading cause of death among African Americans of the same age group). The loss of so many young Americans to this terrible epidemic is a threat to this Nation and should serve as a call to action.

My Administration is firmly committed to doing everything within its power to end the AIDS epidemic. That includes finding a cure for those already infected as well as a vaccine to keep others from developing the disease.

This commitment also includes reaching out in new ways to enable young people to protect themselves from acquiring or spreading HIV infection.

Accordingly, I hereby direct:

- That each Federal agency, within 90 days, working with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) identify all programs under its control that serve young people ages 13–21 and that offer a significant opportunity for preventing HIV infection; and
- That each Federal agency, in collaboration with the HHS and ONAP, develop within 180 days a specific plan through which said programs could increase access to HIV prevention and education information, as well as to supportive services and care for those already infected.

William J. Clinton

Proclamation 7056—World AIDS Day, 1997

December 1, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For more than 15 years, America and the world have faced the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS. This devastating disease respects no borders and does not discriminate. In every city, town, and community, we have lost sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, life partners and friends. HIV and AIDS have affected us all, regardless of income, region, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or age. Sadly, both the number of people living with AIDS and the number of new HIV infections is rising worldwide. This year, as we observe the tenth World AIDS Day, we recognize with particular concern the toll HIV and AIDS continue to take on our children and youth.

The statistics are heartbreaking. In America alone, more than 7,500 children under the age of 13 have been diagnosed with AIDS. Every hour of every day, two more Americans under the age of 21 become infected with HIV. Around the world, more than 1 million children are living with HIV and AIDS. Twelve hundred children die of AIDS each day, even as 1,600 more become infected with the HIV virus. Compounding this tragedy is the terrible reality that many of the world's young people who are living with HIV and AIDS do not have access to the life-extending drugs and medical protocols that our scientists and doctors have developed. There is also a critical shortage of prescription drugs suitable for children suffering from pediatric HIV and AIDS. Of the 14 approved drugs for adults and adolescents, only five are approved for children.

From the earliest days of my Administration, we have sought to meet the challenges posed by AIDS with increased resources and action. I am proud of our success, with the cooperation of the Congress, in dramatically increasing funding for AIDS prevention measures and research. Such programs and research have helped to slow the spread of HIV and AIDS and have made possible the production of new drugs that are extending the lives of people with HIV and AIDS here at home and around the world.

But our progress against the scourge of AIDS has not been the result of government action alone. We have been able to make these great strides in understanding and treating HIV and AIDS thanks in large part to the hard work and commitment of thousands of researchers, health care providers, and clinical trial participants. I am proud as well of the resounding response of courage, compassion, responsibility, and love that the AIDS crisis has brought forth from our people. The lesbian and gay community, particularly in the early years of this epidemic, energized existing organizations and created new institutions to respond to the unmet needs of those living with HIV and AIDS. Educators and activists, members of religious and civic groups, business and labor organizations, and tens of thousands of other men and women of goodwill have joined together to comfort the afflicted and bring an end to this disease.

We can rejoice in our progress, but we cannot rest. In May, I announced a new HIV vaccine initiative, and I am pleased that the global community has joined together in

making the development of this vaccine a top international priority. Within 10 years, we hope to have the means to stop this deadly virus. But until we reach that day, I call on every American to remain with us on our crusade to eradicate this terrible epidemic and care for those living with AIDS along the way. As we mark World AIDS Day this year, we must continue to provide care for the sick and ensure that all have access to the treatment they need. And one of our most important tasks now is to strengthen our efforts to educate young people about HIV and AIDS and to make available to them and others at high risk effective prevention programs. By giving our children real hope for a future free from the shadows of HIV and AIDS, we can best commemorate the many loved ones we have already lost to the disease during its long and tragic course. May their enduring memory light our journey toward a vaccine for HIV and a final cure for AIDS.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1, 1997, as World AIDS Day. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of the other territories subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to defeating HIV and AIDS and to helping those who live with the disease. I encourage every American to participate in appropriate commemorative programs and ceremonies in workplaces, houses of worship, and other community centers and to reach out to protect our children and to help all people who are living with AIDS.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of December, 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-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:02 a.m., December 2, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 3.

Proclamation 7057—National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, 1997

December 1, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Driving is a privilege enjoyed by millions of Americans. It offers us freedom, mobility, and the chance to discover what lies over the next hill or around the next bend in the road. But driving also brings with it serious responsibilities. Among the most important of these is a driver's responsibility to stay sober. Tragically, many Americans ignore this responsibility.

Drunk or drugged drivers are a menace not only to themselves, but also to the communities in which they drive. Last year alone, they killed more than 17,000 of their fellow citizens and injured thousands more. Research has shown that teenage drivers and those aged 21 to 34 are most likely to drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

We must reaffirm our commitment to educate these and all drivers about the dangers of operating a vehicle after consuming alcohol or drugs, and we must strengthen law enforcement efforts that will prevent impaired drivers from getting behind the wheel in the first place. We must also work together as a national community to make drunk and drugged driving socially unacceptable, and continue to support educational programs and legislation that teach all our citizens the terrible risks of drunk and drugged driving. By doing so, we can prevent thousands of deaths and injuries each year and protect our families, our friends, and ourselves from becoming victims of this deadly behavior.

I am proud of the "Zero Alcohol Tolerance" legislation that 45 States and the District of Columbia have adopted, making it illegal for drivers under the age of 21 who have been drinking to drive a motor vehicle. I call upon all Americans, including policymakers, community leaders, State officials, parents, educators, health and medical professionals, and other concerned citizens to continue to support such legislation and to work together to save lives. I challenge

American businesses to take a stand against impaired driving both on and off the job and to remember that an alcohol- and drug-free workplace is the right and responsibility of every worker. Finally, in memory of the thousands who have lost their lives to drunk and drugged drivers, I ask all motorists to participate in "National Lights on for Life Day" on Friday, December 19, 1997, by driving with vehicle headlights illuminated. In doing so, we will call attention to this critical national problem and remind others on the road of their responsibility to drive free of the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1997 as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. I urge all Americans to recognize the dangers of impaired driving; to take responsibility for themselves and others around them; to prevent anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs from getting behind the wheel; and to help teach our young people about the importance and the benefits of safe driving behavior.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of December, 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-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 3, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4.

Interview With Jodi Enda of Knight-Ridder Newspapers

December 1, 1997

President's Thanksgiving Holiday

The President. How are you doing?

Ms. Enda. Great, how are you?

The President. I'm great. I had a great weekend; I'm in good humor.

Ms. Enda. Got a lot of golf in, I see.

The President. I played twice, and I saw tons of movies. I had my whole, huge—my little extended family was there; both my nephews were there. We had lots of folks there. I liked it. We must have had 20 people at Thanksgiving dinner, and I liked it.

President's Initiative on Race

Ms. Enda. Oh, that's great. Well, I know we don't have a lot of time, so let's get to this race issue.

When we talked about race last, way back in February, you said you wanted to embark on a major initiative that would change the culture of America. Now we're halfway through your one-year program, and there's been a lot of criticism that things have been a little bit slow. And I was wondering what you intend to do in the next 6 months and how you feel about this criticism.

The President. I think some of it's justified. I think it took time to get the board—to get it organized, to get it staffed up, to get started. And that's why I always left open the possibility of having this thing take more than a year. I mean, I may want to do some things—I'm certain that I want to do some things after the year elapses, but we may be able to have the major report to the American people I want within a year's time. But I think some of that's justified.

On the other hand, I think the board now is working very hard. Judy Winston and our staff are working very hard. We're beginning to get some of our specific policy initiatives out. The announcement I made for the scholarship program for people to teach in inner-city areas, the work that Secretary Cuomo is doing on discrimination in housing and trying to find community-based solutions so you won't just be dealing with individual acts of discrimination, but you'll be changing the environment—we'll have a lot more of those coming up in civil rights enforcement, in education, in the economy, a lot of other things like that. So I think you'll see a lot more policy initiatives coming out.

We will have—we'll be doing—the second thing we said we would do is to basically talk about what's working, put out—set the facts of racial life, if you will, in America today, put out promising practices, recruit leaders; I think you'll see a lot of that.

And the dialog will become increasingly more public and pitched to a wider national audience, beginning with this townhall meeting. We've been spending a lot of time, and we'll continue to do that, meeting with small groups of people—I have here in the White House and, of course, the board has. But I want to notch up the public dialog, and I think this is a good time to be doing that.

So, on balance, I'm quite pleased with the people that have been involved, with the efforts they're making, and with the number of people who want to be involved and who complain when they're not. I think that's a healthy thing, too. That shows that people are interested in talking about this and working on it and trying to get it right. So, on balance, I'm quite upbeat.

We got off to a little bit of a slow start, but that partly was my fault because I announced it, and then we had to put it together. I mean, we knew what we wanted to do, but we had—it just takes time to put something together. And now I think we're running well now, and I think it will get better.

Ms. Enda. What other kinds of policy initiatives are forthcoming?

The President. Well, I know we'll have one on civil rights enforcement, for example. We're looking at what we can do not only to adequately fund and beef up the EEOC but what we can do to use the EEOC and perhaps much better coordination with all the other civil rights agencies in Government to find alternative ways of resolving these disputes, so that you not only remedy a specific act of discrimination but you change the climate, the environment. You get people to working together and talking together and you change the dynamics of workplaces all across America.

We will have some more initiatives in the area of the education and economic opportunity. We've got this ongoing effort now, which I'm very proud of because I think it's going to make a difference, in the economic area to get more of these community development banks out there that will make more loans to minorities to start businesses or to expand small businesses. Because I have always believed that the central thing that our society needed—let me back up and say, I've always believed that ultimately the answer to building one America was to give people the chance to do constructive, positive work or, if you're younger or between jobs, learning as you work—learning and work in a positive environment that was free of racial discrimination. So I think there has got to be an economic and an educational component to all this that we keep uppermost in our minds. So we'll do that.

Ms. Enda. In terms of both economics and education, one of the most divisive issues right now in this country is affirmative action. You said earlier this year that you were going to look for an alternative to affirmative action that would accomplish the same goal of diversity without running into problems in the courts and among voters. Have you come up with an idea on that?

The President. Well, I think there are some things that can be done, although—you know, my position on affirmative action is that we should, as I said when I spoke at the National Archives, we should mend it, not end it. That's what the Court in *Adarand* required us to do. The Court imposed some limits on affirmative action in the economic sphere.

Ms. Enda. Right, but a lot of voters seem to want to end it.

The President. Well, some voters do and some voters don't. We just won a big fight in Houston, and the mayor did a superb job, and they asked me to do a radio ad for it, and I did, for their position, to keep the program. And the Supreme Court—what I read from the Supreme Court's declining to take the California case is they basically said, look, we've put the limits, the constitutional limits on affirmative action in *Adarand*. By declining to take this case, they seem to be saying that there is no constitutional duty to have an affirmative action program, so we're going to leave it in the political sphere. It's now going to be up to the people and their elected representatives. That's the way I read the two cases. I think that's a fair reading of it.

And so what I think ought to be done is, number one, we ought to continue to make sure that if we have the programs, they're carefully targeted and they don't amount to quotas and nobody is getting anything they're not qualified for. When they're under attack,

I think they ought to be vigorously defended. And then I think we have to look for other ways to increase the access of minorities to educational, housing, and economic opportunities.

But after all, that's what the empowerment zones, that's what the community development financial banks were all about; that's what our Community Reinvestment Act enforcement is all about. Over 70 percent of all the loans made to minorities in the history of the Community Reinvestment Act have been made since I've been President. So we have always looked for alternatives to affirmative action to work.

Now, I noticed Glenn Loury—I don't know if you saw Glenn Loury's column recently about how he had now been excoriated by some of the right because he wasn't simon-pure on all these issues. He made a point about affirmative action that I don't have an answer for. I think that if you look at what we've done in education, we'll soon be at a point where we can tell everybody, if you stay in school and behave yourself and get your grades, you can go to college. But we don't want to have all the public institutions of higher education segregated, I don't think. I know I don't. And Glenn Loury made a point that I have not found a substitute for. I do think we can do more to bring economic opportunity to people; I do think we can do more to bring educational opportunity to people. And I think that will help to create more of an integrated environment.

Loury's point in his article of why he's supported some continuing affirmative action was that networking is important, if you want to build an African-American middle class, if you want Hispanic-Americans to develop a culture where it's unacceptable to drop out of school and they stay in school, and they not only have a good work ethic, they have a good education achievement ethic, and then you want them to be rewarded, you have to develop these networks.

And one of the things that affirmative action does both in terms of giving people a chance to participate in business, that governments do with private businesses, and in terms of getting into certain institutions of higher education is to build a networking, the patterns of contact that then help their children, their relatives, their associates on both sides to begin to meld into a more integrated environment. And I don't think—so far I have not seen anything that I thought would fully compensate for that.

Now, in education, there are—Texas has passed and California is looking at this so-called 10 percent rule, or 8 percent rule—that is, 8 percent of the—the top 8 percent of this graduating class can go to any State institution they want to. But that is clearly a way of—another way of achieving the same goal.

Ms. Enda. Do you support those plans?

The President. Well, I think in the case of Texas, since they have gotten rid of direct affirmative action, it's sort of an indirect affirmative action, I think it's all right and it will at least keep them from—it will keep the State from having more segregated institutions of higher education and more segregated professional schools, which I think is a good goal.

And I think most Americans can accept it because there's, by definition, evidence there that people have achieved academically in an environment and, therefore, are likely to be able to achieve in another and, therefore, likely to be considered worthy.

Ms. Enda. One of the big problems that I've talked to Judy Winston about and others involved in your initiative is stereotypes, that stereotypes are so widespread now and this is not something that you can wipe away by passing a law. Do you have some ideas on how to change stereotypes and also how to—do you intend to take the media on in terms of how the media promulgates stereotypes?

The President. Let me answer the question separately. First of all, yes, we do. I think what we want to do to take on stereotypes is get the facts out there. Most stereotypes are wrong, I mean, by definition. And so we need to get the facts out. The American people need to know what the facts of life are about people of different backgrounds and races than themselves. Then we need to get these promising practices out so people can see that there are ways to overcome problems that do exist.

And then what I hope to do by having these televised dialogs is to get people—to

have them on their own, by families, by communities, by schools, by workplaces, everyplace where they don't now exist, because I think that ultimately that having any positive personal experience with someone of a different race, and having more than one, breaks down the stereotypes that exist, because then you start treating everybody based on how you find him or her. And I think that's a very, very important part of this.

Now, the second thing, on the media, I don't think that it's—there are some portrayals of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans and white southern Americans and others in the media that reinforce preexisting stereotypes. But to be fair, there have also been any number of remarkable portrayals of minorities in ways that shattered stereotypes and allowed people to see each other in terms of their shared values and experiences and perceptions. So I don't think that the media can be fairly singled out for unilateral condemnation. I think that what I'd like to see done in the media is more—first of all, more portrayals of people who go against stereotypes; and secondly, more effort to show people in environments that are working across racial lines to solve real problems and give people what they need, which is a safe environment, a good education, a good job, and then how people can work together in those positive situations to have good lives.

So rather than take—what I'd like to do is to point out maybe some stereotyping that can be destructive, some things that go against stereotypes and be completely enlightening, and then talk about what we can do to actually get people in their personal lives to shatter stereotypes so they're not using the media as a substitute for real-life experience one way or the other.

Ms. Enda. One thing that has happened in people's personal life that a lot of polls show is that there is a lot more interracial dating going on than there used to be, interracial marriages. Do you think that's one way to help resolve this racial problem? How do you feel about that issue?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I think there's no question about it. When people are together as people, they relate to each other as people. Sometimes people who are passionately liberal on racial issues find that they meet people of different races and they don't like them very much. [*Laughter*] They treat them as people—that's good. That's the absence of discrimination, in a funny way. And then sometimes they like each other very much and sometimes they fall in love. And when they do, they ought to get married. I mean, that's—I think it's a good thing. And I don't think there's any question that it helps to break down stereotypes and build bridges.

I know in the military—and I've spent—obviously, because of my position, I've spent a lot of time with our people in uniform. I've visited a lot of bases; I'm on a lot of ships. But on the bases in particular, or when I go to Camp David on the weekend, I'm with military families a lot. And there are a not unsubstantial number of interracial families. And I was with a couple yesterday in church at Camp David and I saw those beautiful children that were the products of their union, and I thought to myself that everybody people come in contact with, whoever had a problem about race will have less of a problem. I don't think people should get married to make a statement; they ought to get married for the right reasons. But I think that it is a positive thing.

Ms. Enda. How do you feel about the Piscataway case being settled out of court?

The President. Well, I think it was—we had, we in the Justice Department and the White House, did not think it was the right case for the Supreme Court to come to grips with the larger issues of affirmative action. The facts were not good. And so I think, on balance, it was a good thing that the Court will not be called upon to make sweeping generalizations about affirmative action on constitutional grounds on a set of facts which are, to put it mildly, atypical.

Because, I mean, that was—I would not have favored some attempt just to keep the Supreme Court from deciding on the case. They've already decided on affirmative action in the context of Government contracts in *Adarand*. But the facts were not—it was an atypical set of facts. And the Supreme Court—it's hard enough for the Supreme Court to make momentous decisions that elicit from, in a general area, the larger principles of the Constitution and how they'll be

applied if the facts are unquestionably representative of the class of cases involved—it's hard enough. Or if there's just a few variations. Here's a case where the facts were quite different from the normal class of cases involved and, therefore, the risk of almost unintentional error, I think, was quite great. So I think on balance it was a good thing.

Ms. Enda. One of the areas where a lot of people agree that there's huge amounts of discrimination remaining is in police, the way police treat people in terms of arrests and the way the courts treat them. Do you intend as part of your race initiative——

The President. Absolutely, yes. One of the things that I think we have to do, first of all, is try to get this out on the table in a way that is both forthright but not threatening.

I had a group of African-American journalists in here a few months ago, and virtually everybody in the room said they had been stopped by a police officer for no apparent reason. I mean, it was chilling to me. And now I just sort of—every time I'm in a room now with a number of African-Americans and Hispanics I'll cite this just to see how many people will speak up and say, ''Well, that's exactly what happened to me; it's happened to me a lot.'' Just today I was meeting with a guy who said, ''Oh, yeah,'' he said, ''I got stopped once just waiting for a taxicab, like there was something I was doing wrong, standing there waiting for a taxicab, in my suit.''

Ms. Enda. So what do you intend to do about it?

The President. Well, I think one of the things we need to do is to find a—we need to find, I think, a highly visible public forum to try to air this, as I said, in a nonthreatening way, where we just really get people to get the facts out and talk about it. Because it is something—in some ways I think it eats at some communities in America as much as anything in terms of continuing evidence that discrimination exists, even though we've made a lot of progress. And I just think it's very important to deal with.

Ms. Enda. Is there something that you, as President, can do about it? Is this something that you're going to take on publicly?

The President. Yes, I want to be involved in this. I want this talked about. Of course, there are laws about this. If somebody is actually—this kind of conduct can reach a point where it amounts to a violation of Federal civil rights laws. But what we really want to do is to find a way for police, in good faith, to enforce the law and to prevent crimes, but to do it in a way that doesn't stereotype—to go back to your word—stereotype minorities just because they are minorities in certain places at certain times of the day.

Ms. Enda. So what would you tell police officers, then? Do you have a message for them?

The President. Well, first of all, I would say that the community policing law, if every major area and even smaller areas, has community-based policing, this is far less likely to occur, because then people are more likely to be stopped or at least questioned in passing because they're strangers in the neighborhoods, rather than because of the color of their skin.

And if the policeman happens to be white and the person stopped and questioned happens to be black or Hispanic or Asian—or the other way around, some variation of that—if there is a real community-based, connected law enforcement program, then people will not all automatically assume it was a race-based deal. They'll say, no, no, this person was stopped because the policeman didn't know him, because he was a stranger to the neighborhood, because there's been a crime down the street in the last 5 minutes, and this is the only person they saw that they didn't know.

This is the flip side of the marriage issue and the dating issue. There will always be—as long as you've got some policemen who are of one race and they work in a neighborhood where some people are of another race, there will always be times when people of different races are in law enforcement and in contact with each other. What you want to do is create an attitude on the part of the law enforcement officer that they don't stop people just because they're black or brown or whatever; and in the community, that people aren't stopped just because of their race, that there is another reason there.

So I think the way policing is done, as well as the attitudes of the people in law enforcement, are both important to getting rid of this problem. I've talked to enough police officers to know that a lot of people have done this and not intentionally done it, not thought they were doing it. Some people have done it and known exactly what they were doing. But this is a complex problem, but it deserves, in my view, a public and honest airing. And I think this race commission can do a lot of good by providing a supportive way for people to come forward and say whatever is on their mind about this.

Ms. Enda. So is that something that you expect them to take on?

The President. Yes. But I expect that I'll be involved in it, too. I really care a lot about it, and I've been quite affected by what people have told me about it.

Ms. Enda. It sounds like it. You support the death penalty, but a lot of people claim that in its implementation it's racist. That seems to be sort of a contradiction because you care so much about racial differences.

The President. Yes, but you know, the only—actually, the evidence that troubles me most—first of all, I think the death penalty should be opposed or supported based on whether you believe A, it's ever appropriate to do it, and, B, whether you think it can be done with almost no chance of error if it's done seldom enough and with enough proof.

But the real racial disparity in the death penalty which bothers me a lot that's never talked about—there's only one Supreme Court case on it, came out of Georgia—is that if you look at jury decisions and prosecutorial decisions, the evidence is that there's not so much racial disparity tied to the defendant, but instead, tied to the race of the victim. That's what all the research shows. And that's a subject for another day. But I still support the death penalty, but it really disturbed me.

I never will forget, once in my home State a black teacher was horribly, horribly brutalized and then killed by two students. And the prosecutor—the death penalty was not sought. And I thought to myself if the positions were reversed, it would have been. And it wasn't because the boys were white, although they happened to be—if they were black it would have been the same decision. That's what I believe. I think that all over the country, if you look at the real research, the research shows it's not so much the race of the criminal defendant as it is the race of the victim that determines a lot of decisions.

Ms. Enda. And is there something you can do about that?

The President. I don't know about that. I don't know about that. But since the Supreme Court ruled on it, there hasn't been much done. But that was a close case, even in this Court. It was about 8 or 9 years ago. Do you remember the case?

Ms. Enda. Which case was that?

The President. It was a Georgia case. And I think it was only a 5–4 decision. I think it was. But it's been a long time. It could have been—the years run together too easy, but it was several years ago.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:42 p.m. in the Oval Office. In his remarks, the President referred to Judith A. Winston, Executive Director, President's Advisory Board on Race; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; and Glenn C. Loury, professor, Boston University. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

December 1, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Governor. I want to thank Jeff and Andy for hosting this event tonight, and I thank all of you for being here. I just came in with at least three members of the White House staff. I think Ginny Apuzzo is already here, but I came in with Sandy Thurman, Craig Smith, and Richard Socarides. And if anybody else is here from the White House, I apologize for making an omission.

Let me say to all of you, first, I really appreciate your being here tonight and your support for our party. Five years ago when I became President, I felt very strongly that our country needed a common, unifying vision to get us into the 21st century that included all Americans who were willing to work hard and obey the law, that guaranteed

opportunity in return for responsibility, and that maintained the leadership of our Nation in the world.

Five years later I don't think any serious observer could question the fact that our country is in better shape than it was 5 years ago on virtually every front. The economy is in the best shape it's been in in a generation. We have made genuine progress in resolving a lot of our deepest social problems. The crime rate is dropping in virtually every community in the country. The welfare rolls have dropped by more than at any time in history. We have begun to try to reconcile the demands of work and family, which is in some ways the central dilemma that people with school-age children face and with preschool children.

And we have taken on a lot of issues that had not been taken on before—the dangers of tobacco to children, something Mr. Tobias has been on me about since long before he ever thought I could become President—[*laughter*]—the issue of having legal guns in the wrong hands and illegal guns getting into the country when they shouldn't; and also this issue of what it means to be inclusive.

On World AIDS Day I think it's worth pointing out that we've made a lot of dramatic progress in how fast we're moving drugs from the testing stage to approval to market. The increases in investment across the board have helped to lengthen and improve the quality of life of people living with HIV and AIDS. And I still believe that we will be able to find a cure within the next few years if we continue to intensify our efforts.

Now, one of the things that I would like to say, since this is a Democratic Party fundraiser, is that there is a direct chain of events between your support of our efforts and the things which happen in this country. And if you go back over the last 5 years—and I won't mention many, but I'd like to mention just a few—and you look at the areas where there has been a partisan fight and then you look at the areas in which there has been bipartisan cooperation, in both areas you can see the signal difference it makes to have a strong party representing the values that we represent.

If you look at the partisan fights—I'll just mention two—in the '93 budget fight, we didn't have a single—a single—Republican vote, but before the Balanced Budget Act kicked in, we'd already reduced the deficit by 92 percent because of the work that we did, while increasing investments in medical research, in treatment, in education, in health care, and reducing the budget 92 percent—it was our kind of budget—and reducing income taxes on working families with incomes under $30,000.

If you look at the crime bill debate we had in '94, we had a few—and I thank God for them—we had a few Republican votes on a strategy which is now universally accepted as having a dramatic impact on lowering the crime rate: putting 100,000 police on the street, passing the Brady bill, passing the assault weapons ban, passing preventive programs. In the last session we actually got a lot of—a substantial amount of money through the Congress for after-school programs for kids who would otherwise be wandering on the streets or for work programs for kids who are out of school.

Juvenile crime has not dropped as much as regular crime. The overwhelming percentage of juvenile crimes is committed between 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 7 o'clock at night.

So that—on these issues, I think history shows we were right.

Where there was bipartisan cooperation—I'll just mention two—in the welfare reform bill, because I had a party in the Congress that would back me, I was able to veto the bill twice when it tried to take guaranteed health care and food away from poor children in welfare families and because it lacked an adequate commitment to child care for people who were going to work. So when we signed the bill, I think it was a much better bill plainly because of the contribution our party made.

In the balanced budget bill last summer, which I am strongly in favor of, it is true that some of the more liberal members of our caucus didn't vote for it, but over two-thirds of the Democratic caucus voted for that balanced budget for a very good reason: It contained the biggest increase in child health since Medicaid passed in 1965, the

biggest increase in aid to public education since 1965, the biggest increase in opening the doors of higher education since the GI bill in 1945, and a huge increase in medical research through the NIH.

So again I say, the parties make a difference because they bring to bear their views on public decisions. And if people didn't help them get elected, they wouldn't be able to do that.

If you look at where we are today—I'd just like to mention one or two things. I believe that we are moving to deal in a more open way with this whole idea of what it means to build one America. The White House hate crimes conference could not have come at a better time. And if you look at some of the terrible things that Governor Romer has been going through in Denver, you see that it is a problem in America in more contexts than one. And I think that's very important.

I hope that the appearance I made at the Human Rights Campaign Fund dinner the other night and the continuing strong support by many Members in Congress, some in both parties, for ENDA is again another manifestation of the fact that we are continuing to try to expand the barriers of our American community. I think it's very important that we continue to do that.

If I might just mention three other things that are very much on my mind tonight that you may want to talk about, or not, as we visit—I have done my best to try to put America in a position to continue to lead the world and to deal with the new security threats and seize the new opportunities of the new century. I intend, therefore, to continue to try to get fast-track authority from the Congress because I think that we have to sell more of our products overseas. And I think only by selling more and by becoming more involved with other countries will we have the leverage to try to elevate international economic, labor, and environmental standards, something that I strongly support.

I think we have to do it in a way that our party favors, which is to do more and more quickly for people that are displaced here at home. I think we have to take a very strong position, but a realistic one we can get other countries to sign on to, at the climate change meeting in Kyoto. The Vice President is going over there to present our views. I think this is a huge, huge issue and will be for at least another generation.

This, in some ways, is the most difficult of all problems for a democracy to confront, because except if you live in a place that has had a lot of extreme weather in the last 5 years, you probably don't have any tangible evidence that the climate is warming more rapidly than it has in 10,000 years. But by the time we could all get tangible evidence, it would be too late to do much about it—first problem.

The second problem is this is not like the balanced budget, which will be done in 4 or 5 years or 6 years from the time we started. This is something we'll have to work on for 20 or 30 years, but we have to begin today. Democracies are not very well organized for this sort of challenge. But it is imperative that we do it. And I would implore all of you to do whatever you can to help us build public support for having an aggressive approach to climate change.

One final issue I wanted to mention is this whole matter involving our dispute with Iraq. This is not about the United States and Iraq, per se, nor is it about an attempt to rehash the Gulf war. This is a question of whether we are going to establish in the world a regime that will limit the capacity of rogue nations and illegal groups to manufacture, store, disseminate, sell, or use dangerous biological and chemical weapons or small-scale nuclear weapons. I think it is imperative that we try.

Now, you saw from what happened in the Tokyo subway with the sarin gas that it's hard to envision a totally risk-free world, but believe me, there are substantial things that can be done to minimize the chance that innocent civilians who travel the world and walk the streets of cities all across the world will be subject to that sort of thing.

So when you see all this stuff playing out in the press, let me assure you that what I am thinking about is whether we can, as part of our responsibilities to the future, create a regime in which we will actually be able to say that—not that there may never be an incident of chemical or biological use by a terrorist group or a drug trafficker or something else, but that we have done everything

that is humanly possible to know where the stockpiles are, to limit them, and to minimize the chances that they can ever be brought into play against innocent human beings.

This is a huge issue, and it will require enormous discipline by our country and enormous leadership by our country if we're going to prevail. And this is a case when—you know, I care a lot about economics, and I think that it's easy to demean it. The country is in better shape when everybody has a job who wants one. But this is one issue where economic interest in the short run cannot be allowed to override our solemn obligation to the future to try to minimize the chance that we'll have any of this in your future or our children's future.

Now, having said that, again I say the main point I want you to understand is, there is a direct connection between everything I just mentioned and hundreds of things I didn't and your decision to be here supporting our party. And this is a better country today than it was 5 years ago because of the ideas, the values, and the efforts that you helped to make possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Jeffrey Soref and Andy Tobias, dinner cochairs.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner Honoring Evan Bayh

December 1, 1997

Thank you very much. Governor, Senator Bayh, Lieutenant Governor Kernan, Senator Kerrey, Senator Torricelli. Ladies and gentlemen, first, thank you very much for being here for Evan Bayh tonight. You could probably tell that—you might have told a lot of things looking at that. You could probably tell we were good friends. When you heard him speak, you might have been thinking there is Joe DiMaggio; why is he introducing Lou Gehrig? [*Laughter*] And then he started talking about what was on Jefferson's gravestone; I thought, my God, it's not—bad enough that he's younger and better looking, now he's about to write my epitaph. [*Laughter*] But I was spared.

Evan and Susan Bayh have been very close friends of Hillary's and mine for a long time now. I do remember when he was elected the youngest Governor in America, a position that I once held. And I remember how well he served. I remember when Senator Kerrey and I used to sit in the Governors meetings and think about how crazy things were in Washington, and we couldn't imagine how people lived and worked here, what strange decisions were made.

We don't have any excuse for being here, Senator Kerrey and I. [*Laughter*] Senator Torricelli was always in the Congress; he didn't know any better. [*Laughter*] We were actually out there in the real world with Evan Bayh. And here is he about to jump off the same cliff.

I want to tell you seriously that, you know, you meet a lot of people in this business and most of them are good people, honest people. They work hard; they try to do the right thing. Governor Bayh is one of the most extraordinarily talented and fundamentally decent people I have ever met in more than two decades in public life now.

He also gets things done. He ran a great State, had a good economy, advanced the cause of education, had the biggest drop in welfare rolls of any State in the United States with a compassionate and commonsense welfare reform. And he embodies what I believe our party, and indeed our country, ought to stand for on the edge of a new century.

I have spent a lot of time these last 5 years, with varying degrees of success—I'm grateful for that which we've had—trying to get our Nation to grasp the nettle before us, to do the things which need to be done in this dramatically new time to get us into a new century with the American dream alive for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it, and with our country coming together as one America when so many other people around the world are divided, and to maintain our leadership in the world for peace and prosperity and freedom.

Evan Bayh embodies the kind of America I am trying to move us toward. I believe he will win next November. I believe he will render great service to our country. I believe

you will always be proud that you were here on this night about a year before the election. And I hope that, together, those of us—we four in this room that either are now or I think soon will be serving in the Federal Government—will be able over the next 3 years to continue to move this country forward, based on what we believe in: building up, not tearing down; bringing together, not dividing; embracing the future, not the past.

I've spent a lot of time in the last year going back to read American history. I was glad to—I love to go around with Senator Torricelli, we make a pretty good dog-and-pony show, and I'm always learning something from what he has to say. But I love the reference to the American Revolution and the beginning of our country.

I really think that our country has been blessed by enormous political endurance. No other great democracy is as old as we are now, partly because we've had the good sense to maintain in various guises a two-party system that had consequences because the parties embraced different ideas with different consequences for the American people and partly because one of our parties always, against all the fears and reluctance of the moment, embodied the idea of the Nation and was willing to embrace the logical extension of the plain meaning of the American Constitution in each new time.

In the beginning, it was George Washington and John Marshall and their heirs. In the Civil War, a new party, the Republican Party, was required to stand up for the idea of the Union and the logical extension of the Constitution that slavery could not coexist in a country dedicated to the proposition that all of us were created equal. And that was the position the Republican Party occupied through the Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, during which time they reflected great credit on America and did great things for America.

From the time of Woodrow Wilson to the present day, our party, the Democratic Party, has more clearly, more unambiguously, more consistently embodied the idea of the Nation and extending the Constitution in its logical meaning to the challenges of the moment, from the end of the Progressive Era through the Depression, through World War II, through the beginning of the cold war under Harry Truman, through the New Frontier and the Great Society down to the present day.

I don't think anyone questions the fact that our country is stronger today than it was 5 years ago because we have worked hard, not always succeeding, but succeeding far more often than failing, to bring to the country a new direction consistent with the age-old meaning of our obligation to form a more perfect Union.

I am very proud of that. I am enormously grateful for the chance that I have had to serve. And I am very comforted that someone of Evan Bayh's quality would present himself to serve in the United States Senate, to join Bob Torricelli and Bob Kerrey and our other hardy band, who often stand alone against some honest philosophical differences and some downright political chicanery from time to time, for what I believe is necessary to move us forward.

I wish we had more like him; then I could get Bill Lee confirmed as head of the Civil Rights Division. I wish we had more like him; then you wouldn't see mainstream judges with impeccable credentials held up purely for political reasons. I wish we had more like him; then we could see the right kind of entitlement reform and the right sort of policies to enable our people to balance work and family and the right sort of policies to expand trade but help people who are left behind put their lives together and become a part of the American mainstream again.

But it's a good thing for our country that Evan Bayh is presenting himself for the Senate. I think he'll be elected. And I think he'll do just as good as that as Joe DiMaggio was at baseball. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 p.m. at the Hotel Carlton. In his remarks, he referred to former Indiana Gov. Evan Bayh, candidate for U.S. Senate and his wife, Susan; former Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana; and Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan of Indiana.

Remarks Announcing Togo D. West, Jr., as Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs and an Exchange With Reporters

December 2, 1997

The President. Good morning, everyone. Togo and Gail West, and Hershel Gober and the distinguished representatives of our veterans organizations—we have people here from the American Legion, the VFW, Disabled American Veterans, Am-Vets, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans, Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives, Retired Officers Association, and the G.I. Forum. I thank you all for coming.

Before I begin I think it is important that I say just a few words about the tragic killing of the three high school students in Paducah yesterday. Like all Americans, I was shocked and heartbroken by the terrible news, which I followed very closely when it broke. Of course, we still don't know all the facts surrounding the tragedy or why a 14-year-old boy would take a pistol and open fire on his classmates in a prayer group. We may never know, but we must redouble our efforts to protect all our children from violence and to make sure our schools are free from violence and the means to wreak it.

I believe that I speak for every American in sending our thoughts and prayers to the parents of Kayce Steger, Jessica James, Nicole Hadley, and the wounded children and the entire community of West Paducah.

Today I have the pleasure of appointing Togo West to be Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. When Congress reconvenes, I will nominate him to become Secretary. I know he will bring the same excellence and leadership to the Department we saw under the stewardship of Secretary Jesse Brown and Acting Secretary Hershel Gober. These men are truly dedicated to our Nation's veterans. They help us every day to do right by the men and women who have served the United States.

Togo West's entire life has been dedicated to excellence and commitment. From his experience as an Army officer, to his work in the Ford and Carter administrations, to his outstanding work as Secretary of the Army, he has always understood the special responsibility we owe to our men and women in uniform both during and after their years of service.

Three years ago, Secretary West told the graduating class at West Point, "You teach the life you live." As long as I have known him he has lived this idea, teaching all around him by his example of his devotion to family, church, and country.

I'm grateful for his exceptional service as Secretary of the Army. So are the men and women in the Army. His leadership helped make the Army part of the greatest, best prepared, most modern fighting force in the world. And he's made sure we take good care of our Army families. They, too, serve with our soldiers.

Having supported our men and women in uniform, Togo West will now turn to the equally important task of taking care of the veterans whose deeds ensured the survival of America's ideals. I'm confident he'll bring a strong voice to the Cabinet on these and other matters and that he will ably champion the enduring interests of our veterans.

Would you like to say a word?

[*At this point, Acting Secretary West thanked the President and made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, Togo.

Attorney General Reno's Decision

Q. Mr. President, have you already been informed of Janet Reno's decision on whether to recommend that an independent counsel be named?

The President. No.

Q. Well, could you tell us how you feel in these hours before you're officially informed over this apparent rift between two of your appointees, Janet Reno and the FBI Director, Louis Freeh, who seem to be disagreeing strongly on whether or not there should be an independent counsel?

The President. I don't have any particular feelings about it. All I know about it is what I've seen in the press. I think what I would like to emphasize to you is what I have said all along here: This is a decision of law vested in the Attorney General, which should be made based on the law. I don't believe people outside the Department should attempt to influence the decision, and I have not. And

I think that the Attorney General just has to make the decision, consulting with anyone, including the FBI Director, whom she chooses, and then making the decision she believes is right.

That's what a lot of these jobs involve. I've made a lot of decisions that not everybody who works for me agrees with. That's part of life. And I think we should let her make the decision and then, whatever the decision is, we should get on with the business of America, and the Justice Department should get on with the business of protecting the people of America.

Medicare Commission

Q. Mr. President, how do you view this ''no new tax'' pledge that Speaker Gingrich is demanding of those that he has chosen for the Medicare commission?

The President. Well, I don't know exactly what to make of it and exactly what it covers. In terms of taxes, per se, I personally don't know that we need any taxes to reform the Medicare system. I hate to see the commissioners themselves have their hands tied at the outset, because I think we want them to be free to look at this Medicare system over the long run.

After all, we now have—in the balanced budget agreement and with the savings incurred back in '93, we now have put more than a decade of life on the Medicare system. The Trust Fund is secure now for a decade, and perhaps more, depending on how well the reforms that we enacted this year work. And so what we want this commission to do is take a look at what the impact of the retirement of the baby boomers will be, what the impact of increasing lifespans will be, and the new technologies and all the opportunities also to save money with preventive strategies under Medicare and take a long look at it.

I had not assumed that they would actually recommend any tax increases in Medicare, which, to me, is different from the cost that consumers have when they buy into the program. But I don't want to tie their hands unduly. I want them to look at it and be free to look at it, and I hope that that's what they'll do.

I think we're going to have an interesting commission of a large number of Members of Congress, because both the Republicans and the Democrats appointed significant numbers of Members of Congress but also some from outside as well. And we've all pretty well had our members, I think, for some time. We've been trying—I haven't named mine yet, by and large, because we were trying to reach agreement on exactly how the chairmanship would be handled. We haven't quite got that done yet, but I expect it to be done within the next day or two.

Attorney General Reno's Decision

Q. Mr. President, when you said you didn't think that any outsiders should impact on Attorney General Reno's decision, whom were you referring to? Were you referring to Freeh or to Members of Congress or——

The President. No, no. No, he's an insider. I mean, he—and of course, there is the Justice Department division; there's a whole division of professionals who deal with these kinds of cases all the time. And I'm sure that—at least I assume that they've made recommendations to her as well. They should all make their recommendations, and then she has to decide.

But I believe it should be a decision based strictly on the law and not outside political pressure. And I have scrupulously avoided saying anything one way or the other, publicly or privately, that would be that kind of thing. I just don't think the rest of us should be involved in this. This is a legal question.

Q. Are you still uncertain on whether you made any calls from the White House—fundraising?

The President. I've met with the Justice Department, as you know; I've answered them all. I don't have anything to add to what I've already said on that.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Mr. President, can I just elaborate—despite Mike McCurry's suggestion that I—[*laughter*]—on this relationship that you have with Louis Freeh and with Janet Reno. You've in the past suggested that the strains resulting from all these investigations has hampered your ability as President to deal with the other chief law enforcement authorities in the country. Has this become a

real problem, and how will it play out irrespective of Janet Reno's decision?

The President. Well, after the decision is over, when she makes a decision, whatever the decision is, I would expect that things will return to normal because we'll go back to work. I just want everybody to go back to work here. We've got serious law enforcement challenges both beyond our borders and within our country. And the most important thing is that everybody does the people's work up there, that we get back to the business of protecting the American people and dealing with those challenges.

And I think that that's what we're expected to do, that's what we got hired to do, and we shouldn't let anything interfere with that. And I don't intend to let anything interfere with my efforts there. But I thought it was appropriate to limit any personal contacts I had during this period of time because I didn't even want the appearance to be out there that there would be any attempt to influence a decision. I don't think that's right. This is a legal decision; it ought to be made on the facts.

And a lot of the political rhetoric that's been in the press in the last several months I think is entirely inappropriate because there is a legal—there's a statute here, and we cannot get in the position in this country of basically bringing politics to bear on every legal decision that has to be made. That's not the right way to do this.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kayce Steger, Jessica James, and Nicole Hadley, high school students killed when a classmate opened fire following a prayer meeting in West Paducah, KY.

Statement on Signing the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997

December 2, 1997

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 738, the "Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997." This Act represents the first Amtrak reauthorization since 1992 and the most comprehensive restructuring of Amtrak since the early 1980s. Amtrak is a significant component of our national transportation services in densely populated corridors, such as the northeast; on medium- and short-haul routes; and on transcontinental routes linking cities across the Nation. In many areas of rural America it is the only alternative to the automobile. With the enactment of this legislation, we have the opportunity to set Amtrak on a course to continue these services into the 21st Century.

Amtrak has entered a critical stage in its existence. Over the past several years, Amtrak has restructured its operations and streamlined its approach to inter-city rail passenger service. It has improved its organization and created separate strategic business units that are better able to respond to customer needs. It has also significantly reduced its need for Federal operating subsidies. Today, Amtrak recovers a higher percentage of its operating costs from fares—85.1 percent—than any other passenger or commuter railroad in America, and higher than the rail systems in France and Germany. This Act will allow Amtrak to build upon this progress.

With this Act, Amtrak will now be able to access the $2.3 billion capital account created in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. With these funds, Amtrak will be able to make many needed capital improvements, including replacing its aging car fleet, upgrading its tracks, and rehabilitating stations and maintenance facilities nationwide. With these improvements in place, Amtrak will be able to attract new customers and better serve existing customers. The implementation of new high-speed operations in the northeast corridor between Boston and Washington is a key part of this greatly improved service.

This Act will also free Amtrak to operate in a more businesslike manner by repealing a number of outdated requirements that hampered its ability to operate more like a private entrepreneurial corporation. In particular, S. 738 frees Amtrak to adjust its route structure to meet demand and to respond to competition rather than to congressional directive.

The Act also addresses certain labor relations issues by directing that these issues be negotiated by Amtrak and its unions through

collective bargaining, rather than by statute. In this respect, it carries forward the spirit of the reform-oriented labor agreement recently agreed to by Amtrak and one of its unions.

This Act calls for the creation of an Amtrak Reform Council that will bring together individuals with expertise in the fields of corporate management, finance, rail and other transportation operations, labor, economics, and law to assist Amtrak in identifying how to operate more efficiently and effectively.

As a result of these changes, we can all look forward to better rail service. I recognize that this Act represents a compromise of a number of competing concerns and competing visions for Amtrak and its future. I want to compliment the Senators and Representatives who devoted many hours to developing this needed legislation. I also want to commend the many individuals in the Department of Transportation and other Federal agencies who contributed to the development of this Act.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 2, 1997.

NOTE: S. 738, approved December 2, was assigned Public Law No. 105–134.

Statement on the Attorney General's Decision Not To Call for an Independent Counsel

December 2, 1997

The Attorney General made her decision based on a careful review of the law and the facts, and that's as it should be.

Memorandum on Burma

December 2, 1997

Presidential Determination No. 98–6

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Report to Congress Regarding Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma

Pursuant to the requirements set forth under the heading "Policy Toward Burma" in section 570(d) of the FY 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 104–208), a report is required every 6 months following enactment concerning:

1) progress toward democratization in Burma;
2) progress on improving the quality of life of the Burmese people, including progress on market reforms, living standards, labor standards, use of forced labor in the tourism industry, and environmental quality; and
3) progress made in developing a comprehensive, multilateral strategy to bring democracy to and improve human rights practices and the quality of life in Burma, including the development of a dialogue between the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and democratic opposition groups in Burma.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit the attached report fulfilling this requirement to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to arrange for publication of this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Line Item Veto of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998

December 2, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the Line Item Veto Act, I hereby cancel the dollar amount of discretionary budget authority, as specified in the attached report, contained in the "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998" (H.R. 2267). I have determined that the cancellation of this amount will reduce the Federal budget deficit, will not impair any essential Government functions, and will not harm the national interest. This letter, together with its attachment, constitutes a special message under section 1022 of the

Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, as amended.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The report detailing the cancellation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 3. H.R. 2267, approved November 26, was assigned Public Law No. 105–119.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation

December 2, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required under section 601(a) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–242, 22 U.S.C. 3281(a)), I am transmitting a report on the activities of United States Government departments and agencies relating to the prevention of nuclear proliferation. It covers activities between January 1, 1996, and December 31, 1996.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Opening Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Race in Akron, Ohio

December 3, 1997

Thank you. Thank you very much. Dr. Ruebel, thank you. We're delighted to be here at the University of Akron. I want to thank my good friend Senator John Glenn and your Congressman, Tom Sawyer; Congressman Lou Stokes; Congressman Sherrod Brown for being here. And Mayor Don Plusquellic, thank you so much for making Akron so available and for doing all you have to help us. I thank the county executive, Tim Davis, and all the people here in Akron who have just been wonderful in helping us to put this together.

I also thank the people who are behind me who have agreed to be a part of our panel today and to kind of put themselves on the line on behalf of all the rest of you, and I hope on behalf of all Americans, in launching this important dialog.

There are 96 watch sites that have been set up around the country by our regional administrators, constituency groups, and others who will be kind of doing what we're doing here in their own way after they watch us.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence here today of members of our racial advisory board: Dr. John Hope Franklin, our Chair; Linda Chavez-Thompson; Reverend Suzan Johnson Cook; and Judy Winston, our Executive Director.

Ladies and gentlemen, last June at the University of San Diego I challenged all Americans to join me for at least a year in addressing the enormous challenge of making one America out of all of our racial, ethnic diversity in this country. At the time I did it, a lot of people said, ''Well, why is he doing this? We're not having any riots in the cities. The economy is the best it's been in a generation.'' And my answer was, that's precisely why I'm doing it now, because what I have tried to do as your President is to get all of us to think about and work on things that are going to be critical to our future before the wheel runs off, because if we plan together and work together to make the most of our common future, we can avoid some of the terrible things that have happened in other countries, and we can avoid repeating some of the darker chapters of our own history. And, by the way, we can acknowledge that we still have some problems, and we need to get them out on the table and deal with them.

Now, to me, this is a critical part of the larger challenge of preparing our country to live in the next century. It's not just a new century in a new millennium. There's a whole different world out there in the way we work and learn and live and relate to each other. All of you know that. And I have done my best to pursue a vision that would create opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it and to maintain our country's leadership in the global economy

and for world peace and security and freedom, to give everybody a chance to be a part of the winner's circle in America. But I know it can't be done unless we recognize the fact that we are rapidly becoming the most diverse and integrated democracy in the world.

We have to deal with a lot of the older racial issues that have been with us from the beginning, from the time of Africans coming here on slave ships, between blacks and whites; from the time of our moving Indian tribes off the land, between Native Americans and white Americans; from the time of the war with Mexico, between Americans and Mexican-Americans—now increasingly enriched and diversified by all the immigrants that have come to America in the 20th century.

In the school district that's just across the river from my office in Washington, DC, there are now students from over 180 different national groups, with over 100 different native languages, in one school district. We are becoming a very richly multiracial, multiethnic society at a time when, in the last few years, we've read of ethnic and racial hatred and murders and problems and wars from Bosnia to the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Africa to Russia to India—you name it. And we're beating the odds, so far, with all of our problems.

But I think it is very important that we understand that this is something that we have to keep dealing with honestly and openly. There are many people today with whom I have great sympathy, who say, "Well, the President shouldn't be talking about race out of context. Most of the problems that minorities have today are problems of economic and educational opportunity that they share with people who aren't in their ethnic group, and what we really need is an affirmative opportunity agenda to create more jobs for all the dispossessed, create more educational opportunities for everybody that doesn't have them." I basically agree with that. I agree with that. But you have only to look at the rest of the world and your own experience to know that in addition to that, there is something unique about racial difference that affects the way people relate to each other in every society in the world.

It can be wonderful. It can be truly wonderful. We ought not—I don't like it when people say we ought to tolerate our differences; I don't buy that. I think we ought to respect and celebrate our differences. Tolerance is the wrong word here. But we also ought to struggle constantly to identify what unites us; that's more important than what's different about us. And that's why we're having these townhall meetings.

Now, let me say, I want to now turn to the people who are here. And I want to ask all of you who won't be talking to carry on this conversation in your mind—and all of those at the other sites around the country. And when this is over, I want you to go out and do this all over again at work or in any other groups that you're in, because what we're trying to do here is drop a pebble in the pond and have it reverberate all across America, because I honestly believe that this is a good country full of good people. There's never been a challenge we've ever faced we haven't been able to overcome. And so I ask all of you to join me and to help us in that.

I also would remind you that if we don't speak frankly about what we believe, then when it's over, we won't feel very good. I told our opening speakers, I said, "You've got to imagine that we're at a cafe downtown, sitting around a table drinking coffee together. Forget about the fact that all these people are staring at you, and you're on television." [*Laughter*] "Don't say this in the way you think it's most proper. Say this—whatever you have to say—in the way you think is most honest so that we can move forward together."

Again, let me say that this dialog to me is an important part of where we're going. Now, we have responsibilities in Washington, too. There is an economic responsibility. There is an education responsibility. A few weeks ago I announced that we were going to support scholarships for people who would go out and teach in educationally deprived areas where we needed more teachers. Today we are releasing a proposal to create educational opportunity zones to reward school districts in poor urban and rural areas who undertake the kind of sweeping reform that Chicago has embraced in the last couple

of years, closing down failing schools, promoting public school choice, holding students and teachers accountable, involving parents more, providing opportunities for students who have learning problems to learn but ending automatic social promotion and giving people high school diplomas that don't mean anything.

I think that we should support that sort of thing, and we will do that. We have a policy responsibility. I think we should build on our economic efforts to create an affirmative economic opportunity agenda that crosses racial lines, and the same thing with education, the same thing with health care, the same thing with things like our family and medical leave law that helped people balance the demands of work and family. Yes, there is a public responsibility here. But this country, in the end, rises or falls on the day-to-day activities of its ordinary citizens.

Again, let me say that I thank the racial advisory board for the work they have done here. I said I thought three of them were here, but I see Governor Winter is also here. We have four of the five members who are here today, and I received a letter from Angela Oh, the member who could not be here today—is she here? Oh, hello, how are you? I was told you weren't coming. That makes our board more diverse; that's good.

So we're going to do our part, but I don't want anybody for a moment minimizing the importance of this sort of dialog. The reason we came to Akron, as was said earlier, in part is because of this Coming Together Project you've done here, and I believe if we can find constructive ways for people to work together, learn together, talk together, be together, that's the best shot we've got to avoid some of the horrible problems we see in the rest of the world, to avoid some of the difficult problems we've had in our own history, and to make progress on the problems that we still have here today.

Now, I think it's appropriate that we begin this dialog with young people. After all, they've got more time in front of them than behind them. And it is their lives that will be most directly affected by this incredible explosion of diversity while we become more integrated into a world of global diversity than the rest of us.

So let's begin. Our first student here is McHughson Chambers. And he has an interesting ethnic background himself. I'd like to ask him basically to begin by trying to level with us about what impact, if any, race has on his life and whether he believes it affects any of his relationships with other people and his future prospects in life.

McHughson.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon in the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall at the University of Akron. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Marion Ruebel, president, University of Akron; Summit County Executive Tim Davis; and former Governor of Mississippi William F. Winter, member, President's Advisory Board on Race. The discussion was part of "One America: The President's Initiative on Race."

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Race in Akron

December 3, 1997

[*McHughson Chambers, an engineering major at the University of Akron, stated that he was biracial and described his encounters with discrimination.*]

The President. Our second student, Jonathan Morgan. Jonathan, what do you think about what he said? Do you think there is still discrimination here at this school or in this community or in the country? And do you think that most people want to live in an integrated society?

[*Mr. Morgan responded that there were still a lot of prejudiced people, particularly in the older generations.*]

The President. Maybe we need a panel on ageism instead of racism. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Morgan. I apologize. [*Laughter*]

The President. That makes it worse. Don't do that. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Morgan stated that he believed that his own generation had worked out their prejudices.*]

The President. Do you think it's because of personal experiences, do you think it's because you've had more direct personal experience with people from different age groups? Or do you think it's because you

grew up in a different time where the climate, the legal and the political and the social climate, was different?

Mr. Morgan. I think it was because I grew up in a different time. We grew up watching television. "The Cosby Show" was my favorite show. [*Laughter*]

The President. So, therefore, if you worked at a bank and a black person came in with a check you wouldn't necessarily think it ought to be held because you saw Bill Cosby, and he was a good role model? [*Laughter*] No, this is important. No, no, this is important.

Mr. Morgan. Yes, I don't think I would give him a hard time. But at the same time, I have my own prejudices, whereas if I'm walking downtown on a street and I see a black man walking towards me that's not dressed as well, I might be a little bit scared. So, I mean, at the same time I have those prejudices.

The President. Do you think that's because of television crime shows, or because of your personal experience?

Mr. Morgan. It would have nothing to do with my personal experience. Just from the media, television shows, and things that I have heard.

The President. Christina Ibarra, what do you think about that? Do you believe that attitudes are better among young people? Do you think that there is still discrimination today? Is it worse for African-Americans than it is for other minority groups; is it different? What do you think?

[*Student Christina Ibarra agreed that older people were more prejudiced but said that young people raised in prejudiced environments changed after they interacted with a more diverse group of people at the university.*]

The President. So do you believe—let me ask you this—do you believe that having an integrated educational environment is the primary reason that young people have better attitudes, more open attitudes than older people—because they have been able to go to school with people of different races?

Ms. Ibarra. I feel that that benefits them, but I feel it's all by choice as well. Older people, obviously, interact with other minorities in everyday life as well. It's just a matter of choice whether you're going to love and to accept—whether you're going to allow yourself to accept these people into your lives or whether you're not. I feel it's all choice.

The President. Let me ask you just one other question. Then I want to go on to—back to our moderator who's here to talk about the next group of folks. There's a big difference, even in college campuses, between the racial composition of the student body and the daily lives of the students, at least in a lot of places. That is, there are a lot of places where the student body is integrated but social life is largely segregated.

Is that always a bad thing? What about that, what about that here, and what do you think about that? Our institutions of worship are largely segregated on Sunday. Is that a bad thing, or not? Is it a good thing? What should be our—in other words, one of the things that I want to try to get America to think about is, how do we define success here? I don't personally think it's a bad thing that there is—that people in many ways like to be with other people of their own racial and ethnic group any more than their own religious group. But on the other hand, it could become a very bad thing if it goes too far, as we've seen in other countries. So how do you know whether the environment is working for you and for other people? How much integration is enough? How much—what kind of segregation is acceptable if it's voluntary? How do you deal with all that? Have you ever thought about it in that way?

Go ahead.

[*At this point, the discussion continued, and moderator Dave Liebarth introduced three authors who were the next participants in the discussion.*]

The President. I'd like to just start very briefly by giving the authors a chance to comment on how what they've heard from these students today meshes with what they heard when they were preparing their recent books.

And David, maybe we ought to start with you.

[*David K. Shipler, a former reporter for the New York Times and author of "A Country of Strangers: Black and White in America,"*

stated that discrimination had become more subtle and gave several examples.]

The President. Let me just briefly—first of all, thank you very much. The reason that I wanted to do this, and a lot of these things, is that I believe there are in any given community literally millions of instances like this where we're not ever fully aware of the motivations behind what we do or where other people will perceive there may be a racial motivation where there isn't one, which is also just as bad because you have the same net bottom-line result, which is the drifting apart of people. And I don't think there is any legal policy answer to this. I think that this is something we've really got to work our way through.

Jonathan, I was really proud of you for saying that if you were walking and spotted Bill Cosby—and all of your classmates—you were walking down the street alone at night and you saw a black man coming at you and you were better dressed than he was, you might be scared, because that's a pretty gutsy thing for you to admit, but that's the kind of stuff we've got to get out on the table. We need to get this out.

But just parenthetically, David, I had a group of African-American journalists in to see me a couple of months ago. Every journalist, all of them with college degrees, all of them quite successful—every single man in the crowd had been stopped by a police officer for no apparent reason, every one of them, 100 percent of them—I asked them. So these are things we have to get out there and discuss.

Abigail. She has a rosier view, and I hope she's got the guts to say it out here now. [*Laughter*] Come on.

[*Abigail Thernstrom, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute who coauthored "America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible" with her husband, Steven, the Winthrop professor of history at Harvard, stated that she disliked racial preferences or racial classifications and said that African-American progress was here to stay and gave examples. She concluded by quoting Coretta Scott King that Martin Luther King's dream of equality had become "deeply imbedded in the fabric of America."*]

The President. Thank you. Let me just say, I believe that it's a lot better. I grew up in the segregated South, so I have personal experience of how it's changed, since I'm one of those older people Jonathan talked about. [*Laughter*] I've actually gotten kind of used to it now.

But to me, that makes this effort all the more important because what I want the American people to do is to have confidence. We know now we can make our economy work. We know now we can have the crime rate go down. We know now we can actually reduce the number of people on welfare and have more people at work. We know things that we didn't know just a few years ago, and we do know we can make progress on this whole complex of issues.

But I think it's also important to point out that there is a lot of residue there, like what McHughson told, the little bank story, and that progress should give us energy for the work ahead, not put us into denial about it. That's the only thing that I want to make sure we don't do.

Go ahead. What would you like to say about this?

[*Beverly Daniel Tatum, a psychologist and professor at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, and author of "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria, and Other Conversations About Race," stated that she teaches a course on the psychology of racism, trying to establish an honest discussion on race, and described the role fear plays in hampering that dialog.*]

The President. Abigail.

[*Ms. Thernstrom stated that people who are opposed to racial preferences are often accused of being too optimistic and believing that all the problems have been resolved. She indicated that, while America still has a long way to go, we should proceed on the basis of optimism.*]

The President. I agree with that. If I could just make one other point. Then I'll call on David.

One reason I think all this talking business is more important than ever before is that if you posit the fact, if you look at the growth in educational attainment, the growth of the

middle class among African-Americans or—you can say, well, things have gotten a lot better. And then if you identify what the continuing problems are, like what McHughson said about—and the examples David cited, you can say, these things require changes in human perception, human heart, you've got to have more talking.

I think the thing that's more profound is, when you look at these communities that have—there are several counties in America with people from more than 100 different racial and ethnic groups now, and they're all different in many ways. They have different perceptions and different cultural patterns.

I know, after the Los Angeles riots, I went out and walked the streets, and I was so stunned by the gulf between Korean grocers and their African-American customers. And I've been in other cities where there were Arab-American merchants and their Hispanic customers or African-American customers—all these things are proliferating. That's the kind of thing that you see eating other countries alive from the inside out.

And that's why we have to begin to deal with this, because a lot of you have got to bring the insights you have from your own not only personal but historic experiences to bear on a whole different America. It's a new thing out there where there's somebody from everyplace out there with a family and a community and a culture and a set of perceptions that they will bring to bear on all their interactions.

Go ahead, David.

[*Mr. Shipler stated that he believed that dichotomy between optimism and pessimism was a false one, indicating that optimism is too close to complacency and pessimism is too close to resignation. Mr. Liebarth then introduced the next participants. Rev. Knute Larson, white pastor of the Chapel in Akron, described growing up in a racist environment and then introduced his friend Rev. Ronald Fowler, black pastor of the Arlington Church of God. Reverend Fowler stated that whites have always had preferential treatment and that the Nation should intentionally provide incentives and opportunities for minorities, as it did for World War II veterans. He concluded that he and Reverend Larson had worked together to foster an environment friendly to the racial dialog.*]

The President. Let me ask you something. What impact has your relationship had on the people in your churches? I mean, it's all very well—preachers are supposed to do the right thing. [*Laughter*] I mean, come on. What impact has it had on people in your churches?

[*Reverend Larson stated that the impact had been good but that the effort had to be intentional, and he urged the President to continue to model that kind of behavior. He concluded that humor helps, joking that his church was teaching Reverend Fowler's how to sing. Reverend Fowler stated that his church had never done very well with country music.*]

The President. You'll probably get a wire from Charley Pride this afternoon. [*Laughter*]

[*Reverend Fowler continued that the pastors' joint efforts had created a climate of acceptance and an inclusive spirit and that now other organizations in Akron were doing the same thing.*]

The President. Let me ask you just one other question and we'll go to the next group. I'll be the cynic now just for purposes of argument. I'll say, okay this is really nice. You've got two churches, and you pray on Sunday and everybody is nice to each other and you make fun about each other's music. And I know which is the real beneficiary here—that's okay. [*Laughter*] We do all that kind of stuff. How is it changing these people's lives? How is it changing the life in Akron? How does it result in less discrimination in the workplace or in the school or people helping each other to succeed in school or at work? Can you give us any examples about what it's done other than make people feel good for an hour on Sunday or some other church event?

[*Reverend Fowler stated that members of both congregations, though initially doubtful, now were able to discuss issues more openly and disagree without attributing each other's views to racism.*]

The President. That's the big issue, by the way—having people feel free to disagree

with people of different races without having somebody draw a racial inference, that's a huge thing. That's one of the benchmarks when you know you're getting where you need to be.

[*Reverend Larson stressed the importance of listening and working at creating relationships. Mr. Liebarth then introduced the topic of interracial relationships and asked Erica Sanders to discuss her experiences. Ms. Sanders described being the only black in her school and the real division she experienced between her all white school and her all black church and neighborhood. Erica Wright then added that she looked to her parents for guidance and stressed the importance of their influence. Mr. Liebarth then introduced D.J. Beatty, who had grown up in a multiracial household, and he described his experiences at home and as a student at the University of Akron. At school, he stated that though he shared certain cultural styles with his white companions, his political views were much more those of the black liberal.*]

The President. Why do you think white people are more conservative than black people?

[*Mr. Beatty stated that when most whites deal with banks and most blacks must deal with public assistance, they have different viewpoints. He stated that without an activist Government and the social movement, blacks would be far behind.*]

The President. I agree with that, but let me say—let me make the more sophisticated argument against affirmative action. Let's deal with that a minute. Hardly anybody thinks that we shouldn't have laws against discrimination on the books, and some people think they should be on the books but not enforced, so I've had a hard time getting Congress to give me the money to clean out the backlog of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. But nonetheless, everybody just about—there is almost—literally over 80 percent of the people in America, if you took a poll, would say, we should enforce the existing civil rights laws against discrimination.

Now, then the question is, what affirmative steps are necessary to really give everybody an equal chance and hopefully to reduce ultimately the racial disparities in income and educational level and all these other things.

The argument against affirmative action is partly that it doesn't even work, that basically the main beneficiaries of it have been middle class minorities who were well educated and could tap into it and that what we really need to do is to go back to Lyndon Johnson's other emphasis and have an economics-based social program that offers better educational opportunity to everybody, offers more job opportunities to everybody, and tries to get rid of the dramatically increasing economic disparity of the last 20 years.

This is a very important point. The difference for all you younger people, my generation, after World War II, until the mid-seventies, all America grew together. And in fact the poorest Americans actually had their income increase by a slightly higher percentage than the wealthiest Americans. Then for about 20 years, because of the globalization of the economy, the loss of manufacturing jobs, the rise of service jobs, the rise in importance of education, what happened was the people in the upper 20 percent, their incomes rose like crazy for 20 years. The people in the bottom 40 percent were stagnant to dropping. More education-related than anything else, but it had something to do with where people lived and what their connections and ties were.

So there is a lot of argument that, basically, that affirmative action has gotten in trouble for two reasons. One is it's not really answering the real problem, which is the economic problem. The other is that people believe that if someone gets something based on their race, then someone is losing something, someone is not—it's a zero-sum game. Someone is losing out who otherwise would have gotten an opportunity to which they're entitled.

Now, I don't subscribe to this. I believe that you can have properly tailored affirmative action programs which can command broad majority support. We'll get back to that if you want. But I just think that—there is no question, however, that the biggest problems that minorities have in this country

today are problems that are shared with disadvantaged white people, too, access to education, access to jobs, and that we've got to find a way somehow to talk to each other and to work on this so that we're coming together.

And I think that's what you were trying to say. But I'd like to hear you talk a little bit about that and the affirmative action thing. And then maybe you want to open it up to some other people.

[*Mr. Beatty stated that there was a rising tide of classism in America, which was linked to the race issue, and that there should be policies to address the class issue as well.*]

The President. Let me just—no, no, I agree with what you said, but let me—[*laughter*]—I don't mean that. I agree with what you said. We have actually seen some evidence in the last 2 years that inequality may be declining again for the first time in 20 years, that incomes are rising—after-tax incomes are rising for the bottom 40 percent and maybe in a way that will not only cause incomes to rise for the first time in 20 years for that group of people, relative to inflation, but to diminish inequality a little.

And we've had a strategy of changing the tax system, changing the investment incentives, increasing educational opportunity, giving more—spending a lot more money to help retrain people who lose their jobs, that I think are contributing to that.

So I think the real issue is—although we haven't done nearly as much as I would like to, and we're going to work on that some more—the real issue is, if you had, to use the modern jargon, a class-based affirmative opportunity agenda, not race-based but class-based, which might disproportionately benefit minorities if they were disproportionately poor, for example, or disproportionately isolated or disproportionately in bad schools—if you had that, would there still be an argument for any kind of affirmative action admissions policies to various colleges and universities or any kind of affirmative action problems when it comes to Government contracting because there are so few African-Americans in certain kinds of businesses? I think that's the question.

I want to let you go on and call on some more people, but I think that's really the nub of the affirmative action debate. If you get rid of the—politically and substantively you'll help more people and build more unity by having an economic basis for social policy now.

[*Mr. Liebarth introduced Anna Arroyo, a pre-med student at the University of Akron, who described her experiences in being perceived as white and then telling people she was Puerto Rican. She concluded by saying that in fact there was a great deal of diversity among Hispanic-Americans.*]

The President. Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that most non-Hispanics understand the real difference between Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans, for example?

[*Ms. Arroyo responded that people believe Latin America to be a single culture, while in fact each country has its own unique culture. Mr. Liebarth introduced Jason Kessler, who stated his belief that some religions teach that poor is bad, placing a stigma on poor people.*]

The President. Let me push this a little more. They don't really do that—and what they really act like is that if you're poor it's your own fault, right?

Mr. Kessler. In a way. And it's like a sign that God is putting something bad on you. At least—maybe this is just an isolated incident, but I have come in contact with this—that this is a sign from God that because you're poor, you are going to hell.

[*Mr. Liebarth introduced Vanesa Cordero, coordinator of the family violence program, who stated that America is no longer just black and white but a cultural mix including Hispanic-Americans. In her work with battered women, she stated that black and Hispanics are treated differently; if they don't speak English, they need to get interpreters.*]

The President. Wait, wait, wait. You mean, if they have an advocate, they do better?

Ms. Cordero. Yes, they do.

The President. But are they treated differently in what the judges do to them by

race, or are they just treated differently in terms of how they're treated in the court setting?

[*Ms. Cordero said that in her experience, the system was often harder on Hispanic juveniles than on whites.*]

The President. But you do think that Hispanic kids have a harder time in the court system.

[*Ms. Cordero affirmed that her son was discriminated against because he was Hispanic and said that she felt discrimination before she worked her way up from welfare to being a professional.*]

The President. Let me just say very briefly, one of the things that I like about the Chicago school experience—you heard me mention the Chicago school experiment—is they used to be known for one thing only: They had a teachers' strike every year whether they needed one or not. At the beginning of every school year, there was always a teachers' strike, and there was a picture of the Governor's school-age child crawling around on the floor, playing games in the Governor's office while the teachers' strike went on.

Now, what they're trying to do is to change—I think maybe the most important thing they're trying to do is to change the expectations, school by school, so that they have the same high expectations of all children without regard to their racial or ethnic group. If they get that done, I predict they'll change the performance results as well. But that's—anyway, I just wanted to support you for what you did.

[*Noting that the last part of the discussion was to focus on looking forward, Mr. Liebarth introduced Samir Gibara, chairman and chief executive officer, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. Mr. Gibara indicated that a diverse population pursuing common business goals and objectives and sharing success or failure would create bonds that went beyond racial tensions. He also stated that a diverse population made expansion to other countries easier, giving specific examples, and concluded by listing his company's values: integrity and honesty; a diverse work force; and training and education.*]

The President. Let me just follow up. I believe myself that what you just said is not only true but is the answer to a lot of the next steps. That is, just as you heard all these young people say they thought that there was less discrimination among young people, partly because they all go to school together, the more people we have working together, succeeding together, doing something constructive together, helping their own families together, the less problems we're going to have. I don't think there is any question about that.

Let me ask you, before we run out of time—and I'll call on you next because you've been having your hand up—but I want you to think about this, and I want you to be blunt and brief—blunt and brief. What do you think is the most important thing we should be doing about this issue today? Whether you think I should do it, or you should do it, or somebody else should do it—I'll try to call on as many people as I can, as quickly as I can. Raise your hand, the most important thing. You go first.

[*At this point, participants offered their views on how to approach the problem of racism, including confronting family members who make racist comments and making an attempt to deal with the growing Hispanic dropout rate in high schools.*]

The President. We're going to run out of time. We don't have time to talk about this, but I want all of you to think about it, especially the Hispanics here. For the last 30 years, Hispanics had higher work force participation rates than African-Americans, and often left school to go to work to support the family. It was a real cultural thing. Now African-American high school graduation rates are almost equal to whites; they're almost statistically indistinguishable. But the high school dropout rate among Hispanics is still very high. Apparently, for good cultural reasons, they think they've got to get out and help the family and all, but it's a disaster in the modern economy. We need to figure out what to do about it.

But what's the most important thing to do? Go ahead. Let's go back to the main question. Go ahead.

[*Other participants offered their views, including education opportunity zones, opening up the dialog on race, and addressing the needs of the underclass.*]

The President. So what's the most important thing we can do for the underclass?

Audience member. Well, that's what I was hoping to get from you. That was my question I was going to ask. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'll tell you what I think. What we're trying to do is to reestablish vibrant living communities where really poor people live. We're trying to mix housing now between middle class and poor people in the neighborhoods. We're trying to give special tax incentives for people who invest to put jobs back there. We're trying to make bank loans more available, and we're trying to overhaul the schools.

I think you've got to put life back together. This is an economic problem, and it does not exclusively affect minorities, so it is not a race-based problem although minorities are disproportionately affected by the large underclass in America. It's very hard to keep a country together if 20 percent of the people, no matter how hard they work, are still going to fall further and further behind.

Go ahead.

[*A participant stated the need for culturally specific programs to overcome the perceptions of white superiority and black inferiority.*]

The President. Before we run out of time, is there any Asian-American who wants to be heard? Go ahead.

[*David Flores stated his belief that the solution lay in education and the family.*]

The President. Very briefly—since I have been President, my Education Secretary, Secretary Riley, who is here with us today, has done a lot of work to try to support schools that introduce character education programs into the curriculum. Do you think that's a good thing? I gather what you say is you not only think it's a good thing, but you think that the absence of prejudice is one of the virtues we ought to be trying to promote on a uniform basis throughout the country, and it ought to be part of the school curriculum.

Mr. Flores. Yes, exactly.

The President. You agree with that.

[*Mr. Flores agreed but described competition for education funds and an aging educational infrastructure.*]

The President. Briefly—I tried to pass a school construction initiative, and we'll come back to that in some forum. But the other thing I wanted to say is there was money appropriated by the Congress in two different bills this year to give the school districts for after-school programs, partly because the vast majority of juvenile crime is committed between 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 7 o'clock at night. And young people need something positive to do, and this could be a part of what could be done.

So all of you who are here from school districts, look at what the Congress did. I just signed two bills with two different pots of money to help the schools stay open after hours so you could do positive things and get young people involved in constructive activities.

[*An Asian-American student stated that schools should promote cultural diversity, because often families could not, and advocated more roundtable discussions. Mr. Liebarth then asked the President to summarize the discussion.*]

The President. My summary is going to be, I'll hear from two more people. Go ahead. [*Laughter*] And the lady with the gloves, I like your gloves. Go ahead.

[*Other participants suggested fostering leadership among multiracial youth, and multicultural education as part of the history curriculum nationwide. Mayor Donald Plusquellic of Akron thanked the President for holding the meeting and for his example.*]

The President. I believe that education is a big part of this. And I believe that the economics is a big part of this. And I've spent most of my public life—more than 20 years—working on those two things. But let me also tell you, there are a lot of highly intelligent people with a lot of money who still have bigoted hearts or who at least are insensitive to it. This is more than education and economics. That's why we're here. That's

why I asked the two ministers to talk more than once—because I believe that—I agree with you.

You know, it's easy—people get preoccupied with their own problems. But when this is over, you guys got to keep doing this. And the people at these other 100 sites have got to keep doing this. This is not a day's battle. We have to change the way we live in America and the way we relate to each other because of the global economy, because of the workplace, and because of the people that are in our own neighborhoods. We can't possibly answer all this.

This sort of thing needs to become a normal part of daily life in every community in America that crosses political and racial and ethnic and religious and every other lines. The society is too complex, too diverse, and it's changing too fast for anybody to be able to sit off in a corner and give everybody else a bunch of rules about how we're going to do things. This is what we have to do in America. We have to change the way we govern ourselves, literally, at the grassroots level, to do this.

I'm convinced if you have more of this—I'm convinced if we had 4 hours, I could sit here and listen to you all, and I'd never get tired of it, and we would go on and on, and then you'd want to do more. And that ought to tell you something. Everybody has still got their hand up. That ought to tell you something. We should be doing this in America on a systematic, disciplined basis, community by community. That's the way we ought to run our lives.

So, one more. Go ahead. Quick. Everybody's got to be quick. Go ahead.

[*Participants continued to offer their views, including the importance of following the Golden Rule and the need for people to educate someone about their culture and heritage.*]

The President. Our moderator will either have a heart attack or cut me off in a minute here. [*Laughter*] Be quick, everybody.

[*A participant explained that values such as tolerance and respect need to be taught in the home. Another participant stated that the business community is interested in hiring people who have been trained to be reliable and to work as part of a team.*]

The President. I guess what I would—I'd like to go back to what he said, though. I think you've got to help us do that. There is a huge labor shortage today of people in the technical skills. We could do a lot—if you think there's an economic basis to racial differences in America today, there ought to be a national effort to train people who are poor and who are isolated to take these jobs. This is maddening to me. Even though the unemployment rate is 4.7 percent, there are hundreds of thousands of jobs going begging in America today that would immediately make people middle class people.

Go ahead.

[*Fannie Brown, director, Coming Together Project, discussed the importance of people talking about their differences openly and giving each side the opportunity to present their viewpoint. Several participants then explained how their home environment prepared them to be tolerant and understanding adults.*]

The President. Let me say, I'm very sympathetic with what all of you have said about your home environment. It had a big impact on me. So—I mean, I had a grandfather with a sixth-grade education who was a poor white Southerner who believed in integration. I don't know why. But he did, and he had a big impact on me. So I agree with that.

But I want to say again, when you look to the future, you must—and we do all that—you must find a way to organize—that's why I like this Coming Together Project—you must find a way to organize a continuing mechanism where people of goodwill can come together and deal with this.

Let me just give you an example. We talked about old people, young people—Denver is plagued—you've probably seen—with these horrible recent killings by skinheads of people because of their race. Now, Denver is a city that's only 12 percent black, that's got a black mayor. It is not a racist city. It's a remarkable thing. But even there they have this problem. Now, they've got to figure out how they're going to deal with this—and not just go prosecute the people that committed the crime but what's

going on in the community, how are they going to deal with it, and how are they going to come together.

I'm exhilarated by what I see from all of you today, but you have to make a commitment in some form or fashion to continue this in a disciplined way, because something will come up, things will continue to come up, and this is an ongoing effort. It's not just a one-shot deal. Yes.

[*A participant explained the problems of social segregation and stated that people should feel uncomfortable about only associating with members of their own race. Another participant stated that he looks forward to the day when communities are open to all races and the term "hate crime" has no meaning.*]

The President. And what's the most important thing we can do about it?

Audience member. I think that we have to make it possible for all individuals, whatever race, to be part of our neighborhoods and know them as human beings.

[*Marion Ruebel, president, University of Akron, explained that universities have an obligation to teach their students respect, civility, and the tools of teamwork in addition to high-tech skills.*]

Mr. Liebarth. Mr. President, we're being asked for your closing remarks on this program now. [*Laughter*]

The President. I don't have any—my closing remarks are, this is the beginning, not the end. My closing remarks are that—there ought to be a strategy to deal with the economic underclass; there ought to be a middle class strategy, too, that embraces people across different races. We have left open the question of affirmative action.

Just curiously, how many of you believe we should continue some sort of affirmative action policy with regard to admissions to colleges and universities? [*Applause*] Okay, how many of you don't believe we should? What about out here? [*Applause*]

Ms. Thernstrom. Change it to preferences. Racial preferences is different than affirmative action.

The President. That's right—racial preferences are. It's a loaded word.

Ms. Thernstrom. Americans believe in affirmative action. They don't believe in preferences.

The President. Abigail, do you favor the United States Army abolishing the affirmative action program that produced Colin Powell—yes or no? Yes or no? I get asked all these hard questions all the time. I want to do it.

Ms. Thernstrom. I do not think that it is racial preferences that made Colin Powell——

The President. He thinks he was helped by it.

Ms. Thernstrom. ——the overwhelming majority of Americans want American citizens to be treated as individuals. And we've heard the voice here of——

The President. Should we abolish the Army's affirmative action program——yes or no?

Ms. Thernstrom. We should—the Army does one thing very, very right; it prepares kids—it takes kids before the Army, and it prepares them to compete equally. That's what you're talking about when you're talking about American education.

Let us have real equality of education. These preferences disguise the problem. The real problem is the racial skills gap, and we ignore it when we——

The President. Well then the real problem may be the criteria for why we admit people to college, too— how we do it.

One more here and then Congressman Sawyer.

[*A participant explained that there is an opportunity gap not a racial skills gap and encouraged people to be aware of racism in their communities and to offer help when needed.*]

The President. I agree with that, but let me—to be fair to Abigail—now, let me explain. Now, wait a minute. I think it's important—I'm going to call on Congressman Sawyer, but I think you all need to understand about this, because this affirmative action debate, you know, that's all the press wants to write about anyway. They'll probably ignore the fact that we did the rest of this here, which was—and the rest of this is the important part that we did here.

But let me explain what the difference is. The military affirmative action program does try to get results by race. But it simultaneously prepares people. So that if—what they try to do is they have these education and training programs and then they hope when you go from lieutenant to captain that there will be a group of the captain pool, of potential captains, that reflect the racial composition of the lower rank as well. But they do prepare people.

The problem is that you have different schools. When you go from high school to college, the college doesn't have control over the seniors in high school to do that. If they did that, you could have exactly the same program and we wouldn't have this anxiety. Instead we have a system where we assume that the only reliable predictor of success in college is how you did on the SAT or how you did on the grades. So the trick is, since I think our schools would be much poorer if there were no racial diversity—look around here at the schools here—the trick is to find a way of doing this that people believe is merit-based and that—so they don't think someone is getting something they're not entitled to and, not only that, knocking somebody out of a spot to which they are entitled.

But I think it's very important. A lot of people haven't analyzed this—no one criticizes—very few people criticize the Army program. It's given us the highest quality Army in the world. The only real differences between the Army program and college admissions is that you're in continuously in the Army program, whereas you go from a high school that may or may not be adequate into college with the affirmative action program. We need to really think this through as a country. And that's why I dropped the bomb at the end, because we can't possible resolve it today anyway.

Congressman, do you want to go? And then we'll quit.

[*Representative Thomas Sawyer thanked the President for participating in the discussion and stated that the initiative is an important start to the process of improving race relations in the country.*]

The President. Thank you.

I would like to—I'd like to thank our scholars, David and Abigail and Beverly. I would like to thank the students who spoke in the beginning and all the people on the panel.

To me this is a simple issue that has all kinds of complex manifestations. But the simple issue is, we live in a country that is the longest lasting democracy in human history, founded on the elementary proposition that we are created equal by God. That's what the Constitution says. And we have never lived that way perfectly, but the whole history of America is in large measure the story of our attempt to give a more perfect meaning to the thing we started with—the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

And now we have been given this enormous new world to live in with these enormous opportunities and which, as you heard our business executive say, we do not have a person to waste. We're given a world that is much more interesting and exciting if we know and relate to people of different racial and other backgrounds. And it's up to us to decide what to do with it.

Our country has never really dealt with the race issue before except in an atmosphere of crisis and conflict and riots in the cities. So a lot of people, I will say again, think I am nuts to be doing this. You know, what's the end, what's the point? The point is, making a more perfect Union. The point is, proving we can have one America. The point is, it will be a lot more interesting, a lot more fun, and far more noble if we do it right.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:10 p.m. in the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall at the University of Akron.

Remarks to the Community in Akron

December 3, 1997

Thank you very much, Dee Hammonds, for that introduction and for the welcome to the University of Akron. I have enjoyed being here very much, and I'm very grateful to President Ruebel and to all the officials and the students who did such a good job today. Mr. Mayor, County Executive Davis, Senator Glenn, Congressman Sawyer, Congressman Stokes, members of the city council, the

State legislators and other officials, I hope you were proud of your fellow Ohioans today. I thought they were great on the town meeting.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to all the people in Akron who have been a part of the Coming Together Project because it's one of the reasons we came here. We wanted to come to a place in the heartland of America which could embody the best of America's past, present, and potential for the future and where people have been honest in dealing with issues of racial difference, and I compliment you on that.

Let me also say that I really was very moved, as I have frequently been in such settings—but I was so impressed by the people who were part of our town meeting today, by their conviction, by their sincerity, by their passion, by the life they've lived, and by the good things they want for our country. And you must have been proud of them as well. I hope they spoke for all of you.

I want to say again that this dialog, as part of our initiative on race, is something I decided to do because I think that we ought to be thinking about this not only today but what we're going to look like over the next 30 to 40 years. Most Americans have not even come to grips with the fact that we already have 5—next year we'll have 12—school districts with students from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups; that we will soon have our largest State, California, where Americans of European descent are not in the majority; that within 50 years at the outside, there will be no single racial or ethnic group that will be in a majority in the United States. We have always said we were a nation built on the values of the Constitution; we were a nation of ideas, not of race or place. We are about to find out.

And therefore, every effort made in every community across the country, not only to stand up against discrimination but to reach out for understanding, for the resolution of honest differences, even to celebrate honest argument, is a very positive and important thing. And I want to say again, I want to urge you to continue this.

If nothing else comes out of this meeting today we had, this townhall meeting, I hope it will be that other communities will think that they need some sort of permanent process like the Coming Together effort here that will go on and on and on and provide a forum for dialog for people to come in and be a part of, because all of our communities are changing so rapidly and the issues are changing that, in this case, the process really is a part of the solution. There has to be a way that people of good will can be heard on matters pertaining to racial difference and misunderstanding and problems as they come up.

Let me say one other thing to all the students who are here. You heard a lot of people say today that they thought that education was a big part of the answer to this, and you also heard a lot of people say that there were nonracial problems in America that had a disproportionate impact on racial minorities—the lack of educational opportunity, the lack of economic opportunity. One of the things that I'm proudest of, and I wanted to say this while we have Senator Glenn and Congressman Sawyer and Congressman Stokes here—and Congressman Brown may or may not still be here; I don't know if he is—but this last Congress, when they passed the Balanced Budget Act, among other things, passed the biggest increase in support for people to go on to college since the GI bill was passed 50 years ago, the biggest increase in 50 years.

I do believe it will make it possible for us to guarantee at least 2 years of college to virtually every American. Here's what they did. First of all, they raised the maximum Pell grant to $3,000 a year and made more people eligible for it, more independent students. Secondly, nationwide, in a 2-year period, we've gone from 700,000 to one million work-study positions, adding 300,000 over 2 years. The third thing we did was to provide for families to invest in their IRA's and make it easier for people to invest in an individual retirement account and then withdraw from it tax-free if the money is being used to pay for education of a child or of the saver himself or herself. And finally, the bill provides for a $1,500 tax credit—not deduction—credit—for the cost of the first 2 years of college and a 20 percent credit for the cost of the third and fourth years of graduate school. Or if working people lose their jobs

and need to come back and get further education and training, they can get tax credits to do it.

So when you look at all this together, I think we can really say now that when you put that with the student loan changes we've made, which make it easier to pay those loans back over a longer period of time, that you can really say now there's no reason that anybody should not at least have 2 years of college in America, between the scholarships, the loans, and the tax credits. And that's an important thing that I want to see sweep the country.

So the last thing I'd like to say is—I think the second speaker in our townhall meeting was a young student who said, ''You know, this racial deal, it's basically a problem for older people, you know, people in their thirties and forties and fifties.'' [*Laughter*] And he got a lot of laughs out of it. But that may well be true. One thing is certainly true: Those of you in this audience who are students in this university, or even younger, will live the vast majority of your lives in a new century. Your children will have no direct experience with the things that have consumed the lives of all of us who are 50 or older. And in a profound way, whether we can come together across all the racial, religious, ethnic, and other lines that divide us, celebrating our diversity, being glad about it, being happy—we're a more interesting country because we are so different from one another—but still saying there are things that bind us together that are more important, that we can preserve our country as one America in the 21st century as a beacon of hope and freedom and opportunity, that will affect your lives far more profoundly than many of the other things that may grab the headlines today or tomorrow or the next day.

So again I say, I hope you will continue the spirit and the dialog manifest in this town meeting today permanently, because we will always benefit from understanding one another, from knowing more about one another, and from feeling like we can be honest with one another when we're mad or if we have an honest disagreement or we don't think we're being treated fairly. And if we do it, then the chances are very high that we will be one America and that we will be a stunning rebuke to all those countries that have tragically taken the lives and the fortunes and the futures away from their children because they could not bridge their racial, their ethnic, their religious divides. That is not our America, and it never will be if people like you will act on what you saw and felt today.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the James A. Rhodes Arena at the University of Akron. In his remarks, he referred to Derwin (Dee) Hammonds, president, associated student government, University of Akron; and Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic of Akron.

Remarks at a Democratic Party Reception in Chicago, Illinois

December 3, 1997

Thank you. Thank you for being here, and thank you for being in such good spirits. I want to begin by saying a very special word of appreciation to Gary LaPaille for 8 years of leadership of the Illinois Democratic Party, during which time, among other things, the State of Illinois voted by large margins, twice, for Bill Clinton and Al Gore. We are very grateful for Gary and for all of you.

I want to thank Senator Dick Durbin for many things, but especially I want to thank him for his leadership in the fight to protect our children from their illegal and often deadly exposure to tobacco. We are going to win that fight next year, thanks to Dick Durbin. And we thank him for that.

And I want to thank Senator Carol Moseley-Braun for many things, but I want you to remember when we approach this election how much difference a vote can make. There were no votes to spare in 1993 when the economic future of our country hung in the balance. Don't forget what it was like when I was elected in 1992 and why I was elected: 20 years of stagnant wages, a long recession, despair that we had any kind of plan for dealing with the global economy. And when I presented my economic plan, I said, ''Look, the first thing we've got to do is get the deficit down. But we can't cut education or health care or investment in the

environment. And by the way, we ought to give a tax cut to the lowest income working people with families.'' And we did. And when I presented my plan, the members of the other party said it would be an end to the world; we'd have a terrible recession; everything was horrible. We passed it by one vote. If Carol Moseley-Braun hadn't been representing Illinois in the Senate, I doubt very seriously that we would be able to say, today, after 5 years, we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, 13.5 million new jobs, and the strongest American economy in a generation. You have a lot of reasons to reelect Carol Moseley-Braun to the United States Senate.

And then, in 1994, I asked repeatedly for 3 years, the police officers of this country and the prosecutors and the community leaders who work with young people, what kind of crime bill do we need to bring the crime rate down in America again? And keep in mind, when I ran for office in '92, if you had told the American people that we'd have 5 years of declining crime, people would have said, ''Yeah, and I'd like to sell you the Brooklyn Bridge.'' No one would have believed it. But we know there were places in America where the crime rate was already going down. And so I presented to the Congress a crime bill to put 100,000 police on the street, the Brady bill to keep guns out of the hands of people with crime or mental health problems that should disqualify them, an assault weapons ban to keep guns that intended to kill people out of the hands of young people and gangs on the streets, and preventive funds to keep our kids out of trouble. And the other side said, oh, this was the end of the world; why, the crime would go up, and we were going to take guns away from law-abiding citizens. It was the awfulest squalling you ever heard. And we barely broke the filibuster in the Senate. And if Carol Moseley-Braun hadn't been representing Illinois in the Senate, we might not have 5 years of declining crime in the United States of America. That's a good reason to reelect her.

And tomorrow, what about tomorrow? All elections are about the future. Arguably, if she did a good job, that's what you paid her to do. What about tomorrow? We have other challenges. Yes, our Democratic Party has led this country in getting the best economy in a generation, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the biggest drop in welfare in history, while protecting the children of people on welfare with health care and nutrition and child care and support for people to go into the workplace. Yes, I'm proud of that. What about tomorrow? Tomorrow we have to give a commitment to educational excellence to every child in this country, and we have to have more cities doing what Chicago has done to overhaul their school system and stand for high standards.

I presented a plan last year in the State of the Union Address to do what Carol Moseley-Braun first asked me to do—to try to provide some national help to the crumbling school buildings of this country. I was in Philadelphia the other day; the average school is 65 years old. I was in Akron today at one of our race townhall meetings; three different people said, please give us some help to make our schools places that our kids can be proud of, where learning can occur. We're going to get that done if Carol Moseley-Braun from Illinois is reelected, so the message is sent to the American Congress that the American people want education to be our top national domestic priority. So I want you to help her.

And finally let me say, I owe a special debt of gratitude to the people of Illinois. When I started running for President, people said to me when I picked Al Gore in the summer of '92—one of my better decisions, I might add—when I picked Al Gore, I remember before—the first time we talked, I was the fifth best-known candidate in New Hampshire. Nobody knew who I was. And he and I met at the Tennessee Governor's mansion once. And this was before—much before I had offered him—nobody thought I was going to be the nominee, so I couldn't ask him to run with me. And he said, ''You know, I ran for President 4 years ago, and I had a problem. I did real well in the South, and I had no place to go. How are you going to be nominated?'' And I said, ''I have a one-word answer: Illinois.'' And he said, ''Why?'' And I said, ''Because Hillary is from Chicago and half the other people who live there were born in Arkansas, and I am going to win Illinois.''

And you heard Gary talking about it—December of '91, or October of '91, I appeared before the Democratic chairs who were here. David Wilhelm from Chicago became my campaign manager, went to become chairman of our party. Many people from Illinois have come in and out of our administration. A lot of them are here today—Minyon Moore from Chicago, here with me today, who set up our race townhall meeting in Akron; and of course, Secretary Daley, our Secretary of Commerce, who is doing a terrific job; and Rahm Emanuel and my old friends Kevin O'Keefe and Avis Lavelle and others who were in the administration who are here. Illinois has been very special to me. What Chicago did for Hillary on her 50th birthday almost made her forget her age. [*Laughter*] It was an act of uncommon kindness and generosity. And I want you to know that we're looking to you; we're looking to you.

Illinois is better than it was 5 years ago. And all the fights we had and all the compromise we made that were principled reflected the values, the ideas, and the future of the Democratic Party. When we passed this balanced budget last year, which party do you think it was that was arguing the hardest to target our tax cuts to education and kids, rather than to those of us who were doing well already? When we passed that balanced budget last year, we guaranteed a $1,500 a year—a year—tax credit for the first 2 years of college, tax deductions for the last 2 years of college for graduate school and for working people that have to go back and further training. We opened the doors of college to all Americans, the biggest increase since the GI bill 50 years ago. Who do you think was doing that? It was the Democrats that were fighting for that, and I'm proud of that. When we agreed over the next few years to add 5 million more children in working families to the ranks of those with health insurance, who was really fighting for that? Our Democratic Party was fighting for that.

So I say to you, you've got most of the Democratic candidates for Governor here. I know there's a lot of them, but you've got to patient with them. I had that job for 12 years; that's a good job. [*Laughter*] I don't blame them for running. It's a good job. And it's more important than ever before for—the Governors shape how we cover children and health insurance; the Governors shape how we implement welfare reform; the Governors shape how we pursue the economic and educational initiatives that I'm trying to lead the country toward. It's a big deal. So I want you to be for whomever you choose, but when it's over, unite behind the one who wins and give Illinois a Democratic Governor in this next election year.

Lastly, let me say, I know that I will not be on the ballot again, but I will be working for our party and our candidates and, more importantly, for our ideas and our values, till the last minute of the last day of my Presidency and beyond. We have done a lot in the last 5 years, but we have 3 years more to go, and I believe we can get more done in the next 3 years than we have in the last 5 if we will stay together, walk hand in hand, remember who sent us there, and keep working to make America what it ought to be—a land of opportunity for every single citizen.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in Festival Hall at Navy Pier at a combined Illinois State Democratic Party and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee reception.

Remarks to the Democratic Business Council in Chicago

December 3, 1997

Thank you very much. Lew, that was so nice I felt almost like it was a eulogy. [*Laughter*] I started to say, I'm not done yet; I'm not done yet.

I want to thank Lew and Susan for their role in this tonight. And, thank you, Phil, and thanks to all of the people here at this table and all the rest of you who helped to put together this wonderfully successful evening for our party.

Lew and Susan, we go back a long time in this, and I can't help but—just listening to them reminisce, I'd like to say something I said when Gary LaPaille and I were down at the other event with Senator Moseley-Braun and Senator Durbin, and I don't know if Congressmen Davis and Rush are here, but they were with us at the other event.

I'll never forget the first conversation I had with Al Gore after I became a candidate for President. Now, this was when I was the fifth-best known candidate in New Hampshire. [*Laughter*] And only my mother really thought I had a chance to win. [*Laughter*] And I was over in Tennessee with my friend the then-Governor of Tennessee, Ned Ray McWherter, who is a marvelous old-fashioned political leader and was a great Governor. And he wanted to get me and Al Gore together. And Al had run for President in '88 and decided not to run in '92. And so we were sitting alone in this room.

And he said, ''You know what happened to me? I did real well in the South on Super Tuesday, but,'' he said, ''I didn't do so well after that.'' He said, ''What's your theory about how you're going to become the nominee of the Democratic Party?'' And I looked at him and I gave him a one-word answer. I said ''Illinois.'' And he said, ''Why?'' And I said, ''Well, because of Hillary, because southern Illinois is south of Richmond and looks just like north Arkansas.'' [*Laughter*] ''And I've been there, and it feels just like north Arkansas.'' [*Laughter*] And I said, ''and besides that, half the people who live in Chicago are from Arkansas''—[*laughter*]—''Danne Davis, John Stroger, John Johnson—need I go on—Scottie Pippen, yeah.'' [*Laughter*] I'm not sure he was in the picture in the same way there as he is now. [*Laughter*]

But anyway—and, you know, I came here in October of '91, and spoke. Gary hosted the chairs of the Democratic Party, and I spoke. And then we went to Navy Pier and announced that David Wilhelm was going to be my campaign manager. And then I just kept getting people from Chicago in my operation—Kevin O'Keefe, Rahm Emanuel, Laura and Bridgette Hardigan, Minyon Moore—there's a lot of other people—Avis Lavelle, Dave and Deegee both worked for me—Bill Daley's now the Secretary of Commerce.

And of course, when Chicago turned out for Hillary's 50th birthday the other day, it almost made it bearable for her. [*Laughter*] No one here will every know what it meant to her, what was done.

But I want to say, before I get into anything substantive at all, you will never know, none of you can every know, what knowing that Illinois would always be there for us has meant to us—to Al Gore and to Hillary and to me, in two Presidential campaigns and the administrations and the times when we were down as well as when we were up, and how it changed the entire landscape of electoral politics of the last several years, knowing that it would always be there. I cannot thank you enough.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Gary LaPaille as he ends 8 years as head of the Democratic Party here. That's a hard job. I can't imagine anybody doing that job for 8 years; that's what people say to me. [*Laughter*] If I weren't term-limited, I'd probably run again. [*Laughter*] But Gary's done a great job, and I thank him for what he's done and also for his leadership as the head of all the State party chairs in the country.

I want to thank Steve Grossman, who spoke so beautifully here earlier, for his leadership. This was—he was not exactly buying high when he agreed to become chairman of the Democratic Party in America. And he's done a superb job. And his friend and our good friend, Alan Solomont, for being our finance director. And I want to thank Senator Durbin for many things, but especially—all of you know this, but I want to reiterate it—I hope and believe that next year, even though it's an election year, we will pass legislation which will embody the best parts of that settlement in the tobacco case and do some other things which will go beyond what the settlement does to dramatically reduce the exposure of young children to tobacco, which is still our number one public health problem. And if we are successful in that, it will be in no small measure due to the year-in and year-out, dogged determination of Dick Durbin. And I really appreciate that.

I'd also like to say a special word, put in a special plug for Carol Moseley-Bruan. I expect to be back here campaigning for her on several occasions in this next year. But I could say many things, but I'd like to ask you to think of three things when you think of this election—two in the past and one in the future—that are very important.

One is, all the good fortune that has come to our administration because the American

people are better off than they were 5 years ago had at its root the announcement we made after the election and before I took office that we were going to dramatically reduce the deficit. We were not going—America had quadrupled the debt in 12 years. We were choking on debt. Interest rates were too high. Investment was to low. The economy was stagnant. And we were going to turn it around.

And when we presented a plan to do it, we could not get a single person from the other party to vote for it. They said it was going to be a terrible thing for the economy; it would bring on a recession. We passed the bill by one vote in both Houses. If it hadn't been for Carol Moseley-Bruan's vote, I don't think we'd have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years and 13½ million new jobs. And I hope you'll all remember that.

Lew mentioned the crime issue. Maybe it was because I was out there living in the country and not in Washington; I never knew crime was a Republican issue. [*Laughter*] I never knew a policeman who asked a victim of a crime for their party I.D. before they filled out a report. I was unaware of this until I got to Washington, and I realized that talk too often supplemented for action, and if you talk long enough, you got credit for something whether you did anything or not.

What we did was to try to give the American people a crime bill that was written, in effect, by police officers, prosecutors, and community leaders that worked with kids to try to keep them out of trouble in the first place and that was based on the experiences that I'd seen in places that, even before I became President, where the crime rate was already going down because of community policing and a better distribution in the number of police officers and more work at prevention.

So we came up with this crime bill. We were afraid we couldn't pass it because there was a bitter Republican filibuster in the Senate, and we didn't have a vote to spare. When the Republicans filibuster, you have to get 60 votes. And thank goodness there were enough brave Republican Senators to give us one more vote than we needed. But if we hadn't had the Democrats we had, including Carol Moseley-Braun, I don't think we'd have the lowest crime rate this country has had in 24 years. And that's something that I think is worth remembering.

At some point, you know, we all have to take responsibility when we're wrong. And I've made some mistakes, and I've tried to assume responsibility for them—you take the consequences. But when someone is right, it ought to be noticed. On those two great issues, which had a great deal to do with shaping where America is today, Carol Moseley-Braun was not only right, her vote was decisive. And the people of Illinois should remember and reward, I believe, at election time.

The third thing I'd like to say is about the future. Carol was the first Member of Congress who came to me and said that she thought we ought to reconsider the historic reluctance of the Federal Government to support any sort of capital expenditures for our public schools, any kind of fiscal expenditures. There is a good reason for that. We only provide about 7 percent of the total funding for our schools in America. Most of it comes from State and local level, and so most of the building has been done from local funds. Most States don't contribute to school buildings either. Most States just do it locally.

But she made a case, and I looked into it. And I discovered, for example, in the city of Philadelphia the average school building is 65 years old. And in many of our cities the percentage of people living in the city and paying taxes in the school district, with children, has gone down dramatically so that the tax base, the effective tax base for maintaining these physical facilities has shrunk.

I was in a little town called Jupiter, Florida, the other day where I counted—I believe there were 12—12 trailers full of kids in classrooms, supplemental classrooms on the outside of the school building because of the growth of the student population.

Now, I want to say a little more about Chicago's reforms in a moment, but it was because of that that I made a proposal to Congress, which did not pass last time, but I think we still have to keep working on this, because if you want these schools to work right, they don't have to be modern. They can be old buildings, but the windows don't need to be

broken, and the kids don't need to be in danger. And they at least need to be clean and fixed up and shiny and adequate so that you send a message to our children that they matter, that they're important, that they're not some second-rate ancillary concern to us. So I think there's quite a good chance that we'll be able to do something to support local efforts on school construction in a way that also furthers school reform. And I want to say a little more about that in a minute.

But you just remember, when that comes up on the national screen—today, I was in Akron, as Steve Grossman said, at our first big national townhall meeting on race relations and building one America for the 21st century. Three of the people of the 65 people in the audience brought it up to me and said, ''I wish you would do something to help get our broken-down or overcrowded schools in a position where they can do the job for the kids without regard to their race.'' Carol Moseley-Braun made that a national issue for the first time in the history of the Republic. And she deserves a lot of credit for it, and we ought to keep fighting to make our schools better. And I hope the people of Illinois will back her up in this coming year on that issue, because it's very important. And I thank her for it.

Now, let me go back to the beginning of this. Six years ago, when I came to Illinois for the first time, I was convinced that our country had its best days in front of it if, but only if, we actually tried to prepare for the future. I did not think we could simply stumble into the 21st century. Nor did I think we could get very far by denying the significant challenges we faced.

By 1992, it had been nearly 20 years since the bottom 60 percent of the work force had had an increase in their real wages, because of global competition and because of the premium that had been put on higher skills in the global economy and the growth of technology. Unemployment was high, growth was low, interest rates were high. And like I said, we had quadrupled the debt. Crime was going up every year. The welfare roles were rising. And most people didn't think that this country worked very well anymore.

I believed very strongly that if we had new ideas and we implemented them with discipline, we could turn the country around, not because I would be President—because the President is only one actor in a very big system—but because this country has enormous capacity to solve any problem before it if the people make up their mind to go in the right direction and actually do it.

So I took to the people a new direction. And we said it was a new Democratic approach not because we were running from the Democratic Party's values in history but because at every time when there's change you have to change your approach to be relevant to the times. You can't stick with an approach that no longer works. So what we said was we want new ideas and old-fashioned values, opportunity for everybody, responsibility from everybody, a community that includes everybody in America. We want a different kind of Government. We don't pretend that the Government can solve all the problems, but we don't think it should sit on the sidelines. We think we ought to have a Government that's primary focus is to create the conditions and give people the tools to solve their own problems and build strong careers, strong families, and strong communities. And that's what we've done.

Five years later there are 300,000 people fewer working for the Federal Government. It's the smallest it was—your Federal Government today is the same size it was when John Kennedy was President. And this is a much bigger country.

The percentage of the economy being taken by the Federal Government is smaller than it was 5 years ago. Of all the advanced economies in the world, the percentage of our wealth that goes to taxes at the State, national, and local level is lower than every other one except Japan; we're about even with Japan. And yet, we have still been able to invest more in things that are critical to our future, like education and environmental technology and cleanup and medical research and the expansion of health care coverage, things that bring us together and make us all stronger.

And the consequence of that is that we've not only reduced the debt by 92 percent—the deficit—by 92 percent, before the balanced budget law triggered in, because of

the 1993 vote, but we're now going to balance the budget, and at the same time, have the biggest increased investment in health care for kids since '65, in public schools since '65, and in helping people go to college since 1945, since the GI bill.

We are seeing the crime rate drop to a 24-year low, and the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history—3.8 million fewer people on welfare than when I took office—with a program that is tough in the sense that it requires able-bodied people to go to work but compassionate for children because it guarantees medical care and nutrition for the kids and child care for the mothers if they go to work. So you don't ask people to choose between their children and their jobs.

And if I might say, I think that's one of the largest questions still facing the United States. Even upper income people I know who have school-aged kids, almost every one of them can cite one example in the last few weeks when they felt torn between their obligations to their children and their obligations at work. And I think one of the single achievements the Democratic Party should make to 21st century America is helping to reconcile the conflict between work and family so that people who do work do not feel that they have to sacrifice being good parents to do it.

What does that mean? That's what the family and medical leave law was about. When we doubled the earned-income tax credit—I'll tell you what that means; nobody knows what this is, the earned-income tax credit—it means that if you make less than $30,000 a year and you have one or two children, you get a lower income tax as a result. It's worth about $1,000 a family, over and above the children's tax credit and the other cuts that we've done in taxes.

We raised the minimum wage because of it. We increased child support collection by 50 percent. We reformed the adoption laws and gave a tax credit for people who would adopt children, all trying to strengthen families and help people balance the demands of work and family. And then Hillary and I sponsored the first White House conference ever on child care, and we're looking at what our options are within the budget limitations to try to expand the availability of affordable, quality, safe child care to working families—because I think that the most important job any of us will ever have—and I guess I'm more mindful of that now because our daughter just went off to college, and I don't sense it every day like I used to—but raising kids is the most important work of any society, ever, in all history, it's always the same. There is nothing more important.

So we cannot ask our people to choose between success in the emerging economy and success at home. What we have to do is to find a way for us to achieve both. And that's something that we have to keep working on, but I'm proud of the progress we've made.

I'm proud of the fact that the environment is cleaner than it was; the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; there are fewer toxic waste dumps; and the food supply is safer than it was 5 years ago. Do we still have new challenges? We do. But we proved that those who said we should break down environmental regulations and weaken our commitment to a clean environment so we could grow the economy—I think we have proved conclusively that they were wrong and that our idea is right, that you can protect the environment and grow the economy, and we need to keep on doing it.

And as you look to the future, that means, among other things, taking on the challenge of global warming and climate change. The Vice President is going to Kyoto, Japan, to present our position there, and it's somewhat controversial now because a lot of people believe that there is no way to reduce our amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused primarily from burning coal and oil without hurting the economy. I do not believe that. I think the evidence is all to the contrary. And we're determined to find a way to continue to clean the environment while growing the economy.

Let me just remind you that in the last few years we have taken the chlorofluorocarbons out of the air—the spray, the stuff that's in the spray cans—to stop the thinning of the ozone layer. Everybody said it was going to be a big problem for our economy. It all happened while we were having this unprecedented boom. We have dramatically reduced sulphur dioxide emissions primarily from powerplants. We were told it was going

to cost a fortune and take forever. We're now running 40 percent ahead of schedule at less than half the predicted cost, in the midst of this economic boom, cleaning up our air, because we did it in a way that supported business, supported free markets, gave people the incentives to do the right thing, but said, in the end we've got to give our children a cleaner environment.

We still have—there are lots of cities in this country where asthma is the number one public health problem for young children because of air pollution. So we're doing the right things, and we need to keep on doing it.

In health care, we need to find ways to continue to expand health coverage and without sacrificing quality in the name of controlling costs. Our side has embraced a health care bill of rights that has been endorsed by health care providers, by medical professionals not in the business end of it, by significant portions of the business and labor community. We may have a big argument about it between the parties next year, but I think the Democratic Party should be on the side of quality health care as well as affordable health care. And I think that's what people want us to do. I know that's what Susan wants me to do. She was almost clapping there. [*Laughter*]

So these are things that I want you to think about. There are honest differences. I regret sometimes that all the political stories seem to be about, you know—Lew made some remark about the fundraising—you have to understand, when you contribute to a party, if that party advances things that you believe in and there is a difference, especially if there is a difference between your party's position and the other one, you are doing something that is not only all right, it is a good thing because if you don't, then your side won't be heard.

And there is a direct line that will run from this dinner tonight to the actions that we will take and the fights we will be able to make to defend what we do when we try to raise school standards in every city in the country, like you're trying to do here in Chicago, when we try to get every school system to do what you say here—more homework, more parental involvement, more responsibility, more accountability, no more social promotion—the kinds of things you're doing here ought to be done everywhere in America. We believe that. That's part of our policy. We've got to have somebody sticking up for us and giving us the wherewithal to get that message out there. That's what you're doing. And you ought to be proud of that and feel good about it.

Today at this townhall meeting on race, the one substantive announcement I made was that we were going to create 25 to 30 education opportunity zones to give 25 to 30 other communities—to give a chance to do what Chicago's trying to do, to put accountability and high standards and high expectations and real, effective commitment to excellence into the schools. This is important.

And the last thing I'll say is this. One of the reasons that I'm very proud to be a Democrat is we still believe that we don't have a person to waste; we believe that people that don't have as many material resources as we do are as good as we are in the eyes of God and that we need them to develop to the fullest of their abilities. And we want everybody to be part of our American future. That's what we want, and that's what that townhall meeting in Akron was all about.

I'll just leave you with that thought. A lot of Americans have thought about what the 21st century will be like in terms of, oh, biomedical research in 30 years. A lot of Americans have thought about what's going to happen in terms of the communications technology in 30 years. A lot of Americans have thought about will there be relatively more people riding on airplanes or more people doing video conferences transatlantic when all the telephones have video screens. But what we have not thought enough about is what's it going to be like when there's no majority race in America in 50 years? It will happen within the decade in California, our biggest State, where 13 percent of the people live. How are we going to continue to prove that, no matter what happens in Bosnia or Northern Ireland or the Middle East or all these places where we're trying to help them make progress toward peace, that we're going to stay on the side of reconciling ourselves to one another across our racial and

religious and ethnic differences so that we will be richer by it?

How are we going to prove that we understand that the ethnic diversity that you see in Cook County is our meal ticket to the 21st century, and we are not going to let old-fashioned hatreds and newfound fears get in the way of that? I want our party—I want this to be a nonpartisan issue, but I want our party to be in the forefront of getting the American people to solve this problem community by community as well as the national level.

So these are the things that we have stood for. I don't think there's any question that America is better off than it was 5 years ago. I don't think there's any question that I could not have done this if it hadn't been for the Democratic Members of the Congress and the voices in the mayors' offices and the Governorships around the country who stuck up for what we were trying to do. I could not have done this alone. We did this together. It is an achievement of our party.

Do we have some differences of opinion? We sure do. We still have a big difference over trade, and I think I'm right, and I think that the people that think that we don't have to expand trade are not right. On the other hand, I believe that one of the things that all Democrats believe that is right is that no country has yet solved the problem—no rich country—of how do you get the benefits of the global economy, trade, technology, and investment, and still help the people that will get displaced from the global economy in an adequate and rapid way, so that they can immediately return to the winner's circle? No country has solved that problem.

And I think you should see the debate within our party on trade in those terms. That is the positive way to see it, because all of us care about that. And I believe we'll get it worked out in a way that will enable us to continue to expand the frontiers of trade and prove that we can do a better job of returning hardworking Americans to the winner's circle.

Apart from that, I think we're completely at one on things that really have made a difference to America. So you go home tonight, and you think about that. You think about that. The lowest unemployment rate in 24 years; the lowest crime rate in 24 years; the biggest drop in welfare in history; the family leave law; dramatic overhaul of the adoption laws; a dramatic overhaul of the food and drug law so we can move drugs into the workplace more quickly and people can get cures for terrible problems.

The kinds of things we're doing will change the future of America for the better. And I want you to stay with us. I want you to stay with Carol Moseley-Braun. I want you to stay with your other candidates here in Illinois. But most of all, I want you to stay with the notion that you have the right and the responsibility to support those things that reflect what you believe are right for America. And because you and people like you all over this country have done it, we're in better shape than we were 5 years ago. And when we go into the 21st century and I ride off into the sunset, we'll be in better shape still.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at Lino's Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Lewis Manilow, who introduced the President, and his wife, Susan, cochairs of the dinner; Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; John Stroger, president, Cook County board of commissioners; NBA Chicago Bulls forward Scottie Pippen; and David Wilhelm, former chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Deegee.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

December 3, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On May 30, 1992, by Executive Order 12808, President Bush declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Governments of Serbia and

Montenegro, blocking all property and interests in property of those Governments. President Bush took additional measures to prohibit trade and other transactions with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) by Executive Orders 12810 and 12831, issued on June 5, 1992, and January 15, 1993, respectively.

On April 25, 1993, I issued Executive Order 12846, blocking the property and interests in property of all commercial, industrial, or public utility undertakings or entities organized or located in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (the ''FRY (S&M)''), and prohibiting trade-related transactions by United States persons involving those areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by the Bosnian Serb forces and the United Nations Protected Areas in the Republic of Croatia. On October 25, 1994, because of the actions and policies of the Bosnian Serbs, I expanded the scope of the national emergency by issuance of Executive Order 12934 to block the property of the Bosnian Serb forces and the authorities in the territory that they controlled within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the property of any entity organized or located in, or controlled by any person in, or resident in, those areas.

On November 22, 1995, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1022 (UNSCR or ''Resolution 1022''), immediately and indefinitely suspending economic sanctions against the FRY (S&M). Sanctions were subsequently lifted by the United Nations Security Council pursuant to Resolution 1074 on October 1, 1996. Resolution 1022, however, continues to provide for the release of funds and assets previously blocked pursuant to sanctions against the FRY (S&M), provided that such funds and assets that are subject to claims and encumbrances, or that are the property of persons deemed insolvent, remain blocked until ''released in accordance with applicable law.'' This provision was implemented in the United States on December 27, 1995, by Presidential Determination No. 96–7. The Determination, in conformity with Resolution 1022, directed the Secretary of the Treasury, *inter alia*, to suspend the application of sanctions imposed on the FRY (S&M) pursuant to the above-referenced Executive orders and to continue to block property previously blocked until provision is made to address claims or encumbrances, including the claims of the other successor states of the former Yugoslavia. This sanctions relief was an essential factor motivating Serbia and Montenegro's acceptance of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina initialed by the parties in Dayton on November 21, 1995 (the ''Peace Agreement'') and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995. The sanctions imposed on the FRY (S&M) and on the United Nations Protected Areas in the Republic of Croatia were accordingly suspended prospectively, effective January 16, 1996. Sanctions imposed on the Bosnian Serb forces and authorities and on the territory that they controlled within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina were subsequently suspended prospectively, effective May 10, 1996, in conformity with UNSCR 1022. On October 1, 1996, the United Nations passed UNSCR 1074, terminating U.N. sanctions against the FRY (S&M) and the Bosnian Serbs in light of the elections that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina on September 14, 1996. UNSCR 1074, however, reaffirms the provisions of UNSCR 1022 with respect to the release of blocked assets, as set forth above.

The present report is submitted pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and 1703(c) and covers the period from May 30 through November 29, 1997. It discusses Administration actions and expenses directly related to the exercise of powers and authorities conferred by the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 12808 as expanded with respect to the Bosnian Serbs in Executive Order 12934, and against the FRY (S&M) contained in Executive Orders 12810, 12831, and 12846.

1. The declaration of the national emergency on May 30, 1992, was made pursuant to the authority vested in the President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code. The emergency declaration was reported to the Congress on

May 30, 1992, pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(b)) and the expansion of that national emergency under the same authorities was reported to the Congress on October 25, 1994. The additional sanctions set forth in related Executive orders were imposed pursuant to the authority vested in the President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including the statutes cited above, section 1114 of the Federal Aviation Act (49 U.S.C. App. 1514), and section 5 of the United Nations Participation Act (22 U.S.C. 287c).

2. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), acting under authority delegated by the Secretary of the Treasury, implemented the sanctions imposed under the foregoing statutes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Bosnian Serb-Controlled Areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 585 (the ''Regulations''). To implement Presidential Determination No. 96–7, the Regulations were amended to authorize prospectively all transactions with respect to the FRY (S&M) otherwise prohibited (61 *FR* 1282, January 19, 1996). Property and interests in property of the FRY (S&M) previously blocked within the jurisdiction of the United States remain blocked, in conformity with the Peace Agreement and UNSCR 1022, until provision is made to address claims or encumbrances, including the claims of the other successor states of the former Yugoslavia.

On May 10, 1996, OFAC amended the Regulations to authorize prospectively all transactions with respect to the Bosnian Serbs otherwise prohibited, except with respect to property previously blocked (61 *FR* 24696, May 16, 1996). On December 4, 1996, OFAC amended Appendices A and B to 31 C.F.R. chapter V, containing the names of entities and individuals in alphabetical order and by location that are subject to the various economic sanctions programs administered by OFAC, to remove the entries for individuals and entities that were determined to be acting for or on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). These assets were blocked on the basis of these persons' activities in support of the FRY (S&M)—activities no longer prohibited—not because the Government of the FRY (S&M) or entities located in or controlled from the FRY (S&M) had any interest in those assets (61 *FR* 64289, December 4, 1996).

On April 18, 1997, the Regulations were amended by adding new section 585.528, authorizing all transactions after 30 days with respect to the following vessels that remained blocked pursuant to the Regulations, effective at 10:00 a.m. local time in the location of the vessel on May 19, 1997: the M/V MOSLAVINA, M/V ZETA, M/V LOVCEN, M/V DURMITOR and M/V BAR (a/k/a M/V INVIKEN) (62 *FR* 19672, April 23, 1997). During the 30-day period, United States persons were authorized to negotiate settlements of their outstanding claims with respect to the vessels with the vessels' owners or agents and were generally licensed to seek and obtain judicial warrants of maritime arrest. If claims remained unresolved 10 days prior to the vessels' unblocking (May 8, 1997), service of the warrants could be effected at that time through the U.S. Marshal's Office in the district where the vessel was located to ensure that U.S. creditors of a vessel had the opportunity to assert their claims. Appendix C to 31 CFR, chapter V, containing the names of vessels blocked pursuant to the various economic sanctions programs administered by OFAC (61 *FR* 32936, June 26, 1996), was also amended to remove these vessels from the list effective May 19, 1997.

There has been one amendment to the Regulations since my report of May 30, 1997. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Bosnian Serb-Controlled Areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 585, were amended on August 25, 1997. General reporting, recordkeeping, licensing, and other procedural regulations were moved from the Regulations to a separate part (31 CFR Part 501) dealing solely with such procedural matters. (62 *FR* 45098, August 25, 1997). No substantive changes to the Regulations were made. A copy of the amendment is attached to this report.

3. Over the past year and a half, the Departments of State and the Treasury have

worked closely with European Union member states and other U.N. member nations to implement the provisions of UNSCR 1022. In the United States, retention of blocking authority pursuant to the extension of a national emergency provides a framework for administration of an orderly claims settlement. This accords with past policy and practice with respect to the suspension of sanctions regimes.

4. During this reporting period, OFAC issued six specific licenses regarding transactions pertaining to the FRY (S&M) or property in which it has an interest. Specific licenses were issued (1) to authorize the unblocking of certain funds and other administrative transactions involving assets previously blocked; (2) to authorize the transfer of presanctions ownership interests in certain blocked property from one U.S. person to another; and (3) to authorize litigation against the Government of the FRY (S&M) by a United States person for recovery of presanctions obligations.

During the past 6 months, OFAC has continued to oversee the maintenance of blocked FRY (S&M) accounts; and records with respect to: (1) liquidated tangible assets and personalty of the 15 blocked U.S. subsidiaries of entities organized in the FRY (S&M); (2) the blocked personalty, files, and records of the two Serbian banking institutions in New York previously placed in secure storage; (3) remaining blocked FRY (S&M) tangible property, including real estate; and (4) the five Yugoslav-owned vessels recently unblocked in the United States.

On September 29, 1997, the United States filed Statements of Interest in cases being litigated in the Southern District of New York: *Beogradska Banka A.D. Belgrade v. Interenergo, Inc.,* 97 Civ. 2065 (JGK) and *Jugobanka A.D. Belgrade v. U.C.F. International Trading, Inc. et al.,* 97 Civ. 3912, 3913 and 6748 (LAK). These cases involve actions by blocked New York Serbian bank agencies and their parent offices in Belgrade, Serbia, to collect on defaulted loans made prior to the imposition of economic sanctions and dispensed, in one case, to the U.S. subsidiary of a Bosnian firm and, in the other cases, to various foreign subsidiaries of a Slovenian firm. Because these loan receivables are a form of property that was blocked prior to December 27, 1995, any funds collected as a consequence of these actions would remain blocked and subject to United States jurisdiction. Defendants asserted that the loans had been made from the currency reserves of the central bank of the former Yugoslavia to which all successor states had contributed, and that the loan funds represent assets of the former Yugoslavia and are therefore subject to claims by all five successor states. The Department of State, in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, concluded that the collection of blocked receivables through the actions by the bank and the placement of those collected funds into a blocked account did not prejudice the claims of successor states nor compromise outstanding claims on the part of any creditor of the bank, since any monies collected would remain in a blocked status and available to satisfy obligations to United States and foreign creditors and other claimants—including possible distribution to successor states under a settlement arising from the negotiations on the division of assets and liabilities of the former Yugoslavia.

5. Despite the prospective authorization of transactions with the FRY (S&M), OFAC has continued to work closely with the U.S. Customs Service and other cooperating agencies to investigate alleged violations that occurred while sanctions were in force. On February 13, 1997, a Federal grand jury in the Southern District of Florida, Miami, returned a 13-count indictment against one U.S. citizen and two nationals of the FRY (S&M). The indictment charges that the subjects participated and conspired to purchase three Cessna propeller aircraft, a Cessna jet aircraft, and various aircraft parts in the United States and to export them to the FRY (S&M) in violation of U.S. sanctions and the Regulations. Timely interdiction action prevented the aircraft from being exported from the United States. A trial date has not yet been scheduled but is anticipated in late October.

Since my last report, OFAC has collected four civil monetary penalties totaling nearly $176,000 for violations of the sanctions. These violations involved prohibited exports of goods and services, contract dealings, and payments either to the Government of the

FRY (S&M), persons in the FRY (S&M), or to blocked entities owned or controlled by the FRY (S&M). The violators include two U.S. companies, one law firm, and a U.S. financial institution.

6. The expenses incurred by the Federal Government in the 6-month period from May 30 through November 29, 1997, that are directly attributable to the declaration of a national emergency with respect to the FRY (S&M) and the Bosnian Serb forces and authorities are estimated at approximately $400,000, most of which represents wage and salary costs for Federal personnel. Personnel costs were largely centered in the Department of the Treasury (particularly in OFAC and its Chief Counsel's Office, and the U.S. Customs Service), the Department of State, the National Security Council, and the Department of Commerce.

7. In the last 2 years, substantial progress has been achieved to bring about a settlement of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia acceptable to the parties. UNSCR 1074 terminates sanctions in view of the first free and fair elections to occur in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as provided for in the Peace Agreement. In reaffirming Resolution 1022, however, UNSCR 1074 contemplates the continued blocking of assets potentially subject to conflicting claims and encumbrances until provision is made to address them under applicable law, including claims of the other successor states of the former Yugoslavia.

The resolution of the crisis and conflict in the former Yugoslavia that has resulted from the actions and policies of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and of the Bosnian Serb forces and the authorities in the territory that they controlled, will not be complete until such time as the Peace Agreement is implemented and the terms of UNSCR 1022 have been met. Therefore, I have continued for another year the national emergency declared on May 30, 1992, as expanded in scope on October 25, 1994, and will continue to enforce the measures adopted pursuant thereto.

I shall continue to exercise the powers at my disposal with respect to the measures against the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and the Bosnian Serb forces, civil authorities, and entities, as long as these measures are appropriate, and will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 4.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 4, 1997

Thank you very much. I think in the spirit of Christmas, the best gift I could give is a very brief Christmas message. [*Laughter*] Let me say to all of you, we've been doing this now for 85 years; for Hillary and me, Christmas begins with this wonderful ceremony. I want to thank all those responsible, and a special word of thanks to those who made it possible for the last 3 years for this beautiful Colorado spruce to be lit by solar energy.

Now I want to call up Whitney and Joseph, and ask them to stand with me, and put their hands on the switch. And I'm going to count down three, two, one, and they'll flip the switch, and the Christmas tree will come on.

Merry Christmas to all of you. Three, two, one—light the tree.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Campfire Girl Whitney Symone Powell and Campfire Boy Joseph Sherren, who helped the President light the National Christmas Tree.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Operation of the Andean Trade Preference Act

December 4, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby submit the second report on the Operation of the Andean Trade Preference Act. This report is prepared pursuant to the requirements of section 203 of the Andean Trade Preference Act of 1991. The report concludes that the Andean Trade Preference Act continues to advance U.S. counternarcotics goals in the Andean region.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With European Union Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

December 5, 1997

The President. Let me say very briefly that we are delighted to have another one of our EU summits, and it's particularly interesting because we now have two Luxembourgers here instead of one, which gives them I think the highest percentage of world leadership compared to population of any country in the world by a good long ways. [*Laughter*] And we have a lot to discuss, but I just want to thank President Santer and Prime Minister Juncker for the work that we have done together with the EU in the last 6 months under the presidency of Luxembourg, and I look forward to the discussions today.

International Agreement on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Q. Are you changing your position, softening on global warming?

The President. Softening or toughening?

Q. Whichever. You tell us.

The President. Well, we're working in Kyoto to try to get an agreement, and we'll see if we can. We hope we can.

Q. Is a compromise impossible considering the distance between the two positions, the EU on one side, the U.S. on the other side?

The President. Not if everybody wants an agreement. Our position is that it's a global issue, we want to get global involvement, and we want this to be the beginning of a process which eventually will have everyone in the world involved in dealing with this issue. And I think that the chances that we can get an agreement are reasonably good if everybody there really wants an agreement and we want to see countries bound to targets which will lead us to reduced greenhouse gas emissions. That's the real test.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Did you give Secretary Albright any new marching orders on the Middle East?

The President. Well, we had a good meeting on things that we think will move the ball forward. And she's going with the instructions that I gave her to talk to Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat, and I'm very hopeful. I think it's in the nature of this process that the less I say, the better chance we have of making progress, so I don't think I want to talk about it too much.

Q. But these are new ideas?

The President. Oh, yes, we have some new ideas at least about the process, about where to go from here, or at least the different approaches. And we hope that it will move the ball forward. I think that they both understand that this is a time when something needs to be done to show concrete progress. I'm encouraged by that. We'll just have to see what happens.

Assistant Attorney General Nominee

Q. Are you planning to make a recess appointment of Bill Lee?

The President. I don't have anything to say about that now.

Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt

Q. How about your conversation with Gephardt? Did you fight?

The President. I had a good talk with him, and we had a good visit. We agreed that we needed to focus on 1998, not only in terms of the politics of '98, but also in terms of

the substance of what we can do to serve the people here. It was a very satisfactory talk.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The President met with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg in his capacity as President of the European Council and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Announcing Appointments to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare and an Exchange With Reporters

December 5, 1997

The President. Today I want to discuss our continued economic progress and important steps we must take to continue it. For the last 5 years we have pursued a comprehensive economic strategy to spur growth, to increase income, to create jobs and keep the American dream alive and well in a new century. Today we see the latest evidence that our economy is growing steady and strong, that the American dream is, in fact, alive and well.

Last month the economy created 400,000 new jobs. Unemployment is now 4.6 percent, the lowest in a quarter century. There were more new manufacturing jobs in the past year than in any year in three decades. Inflation remains low and appears to be poised to continue at its low rate. And after lagging for years, wages finally are rising again. Our economy is the strongest in a generation.

This continuing prosperity is due to the ingenuity and the enterprise and the hard work of the American people who are creating the economy of the future. It is also the result of our economic strategy of cutting the deficit, investing in education and our future, and expanding our exports through trade agreements. This year's balanced budget law both honors our values and continues that progress. It extends opportunity to our children with the most significant new investment in health care in a generation and in education in a generation. It offers tax cuts for college and provides for health insurance for up to 5 million children. It honors our duty to our parents by extending the lifetime of the Medicare Trust Fund until 2010.

Now we have more to do to strengthen Medicare while preserving its commitment to older Americans. Medicare is at the core of our historic social compact, our recognition of the duty we owe to one another. It has been one of the great achievements of this century, and now we have an obligation to strengthen it for the next century, to ensure that it is as strong for our children as it has been for our parents, and to ensure that the baby boomers have access to quality affordable health care when we retire.

The Medicare reforms I signed into law this year were the product of strong cooperation among Democrats and Republicans, the President and the Congress. The balanced budget law establishes also a commission to continue this bipartisan progress and draft comprehensive reform.

Today I am pleased to announce my appointees to the commission. They include Stuart Altman, a highly respected health care expert who has worked for Presidents of both parties; Dr. Laura Tyson, who served our Nation well as Chair of the National Economic Council and Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers in our administration; Bruce Vladic, who directed the Medicare program for 4 years as Administrator of the Health Care Financing Agency; and, Anthony Watson, the CEO of a major progressive managed care plan in New York that has pioneered support for fair treatment of patients while providing quality care.

These are distinguished, respected, highly skilled experts. They understand health care and share our unshakable commitment to the values represented by Medicare. I expect them to work as strong partners with the other commissioners, and I look forward to their proposals to keep Medicare at the core of the American dream in the new century.

Thank you.

Q. Will you recess-appoint Bill Lann Lee next week?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—economy is so great——

The President. One at a time.

Taxes

Q. Are you really thinking of a tax cut?

The President. No, I don't believe that's a fair interpretation of what I said yesterday in my comments. What I said was—I was asked about proposals for tax reform, and what I said was that I thought any tax reform that was adopted had to be fair, good for the economy, not burden the deficit, and make the system simpler. That was the context in which that discussion occurred.

Then there was a separate discussion about the discussion that is going around town here about what ought to be done with the surplus. Some people say we should have a tax cut with a surplus; some people say we should spend more money with the surplus; some people say we should apply it to the debt. What I tried to point out yesterday is there is not a surplus. The people who say there is a surplus are talking about the difference in the projected line of deficit to 2002 when we adopted the balanced budget law and I signed it and the projected line now.

Now, no doubt this news today is good news. It augers for stronger growth in this quarter, and it may well mean that we will have a better prediction in terms of the size of the deficit and eliminating it altogether now than we did at the time the balanced budget law was passed, at the time of the mid-session review last August. The only point I tried to make is all those are still estimates. And it's good to have a good estimate, but we don't want to spend money we don't yet have.

The thing that has driven this economic recovery is getting interest rates down, getting investment up, creating a framework in which the American economy could grow, and bringing down the deficit from $300 billion a year to $23 billion a year is a big part of that. So before we make any unduly rash decisions about the future, let's make sure that we're taking care of the economy because that's—the best thing you can do for Americans' incomes is to give them a strong economy.

Assistant Attorney General Nominee

Q. Will you recess-appoint Bill Lann Lee next week?

Q. Are you looking at a flat tax, Mr. President?

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned——

The President. I can't hear all of you.

Q. Will you recess-appoint Bill Lann Lee next week?

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned that the Southeast Asia financial crisis will affect the U.S. economy?

The President. I'll answer this, but let me answer this one first. What I would like to say today, and all I am going to say today, is Bill Lann Lee's personal story, his work experience, his integrity, and his fitness for this job are absolutely beyond question. He should not be denied the job because he disagrees with the Republicans in the Senate on whether affirmative action is or is not good policy. The only thing he's required to do is to enforce the law as the Supreme Court hands it down or as the Congress passes it, and to recuse in the case of any kind of personal conflict, which he said he would do in the case of the California law, which is now moot.

So I believe—I will say again—he is entitled to a vote. The Senators ought to vote on him. No one has put forward a credible reason for why this man should not be appointed. Surely the fact that he agrees with the President who wishes to appoint him on the question of what kind of affirmative action programs we should or shouldn't have, surely that should not disqualify him for this position. That is the point I have made. I still think that he ought to be able to serve.

Yes, now go ahead.

Asian Economies

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned that the Southeast Asia financial blowout, which seems to be ongoing still, is going to eat into these economic growth figures that you revealed today?

The President. Well, first of all, I think we all have to acknowledge that our economies are interrelated. About a third of our growth over the last 5 years has been due to our ability to sell more American products around the world—about a third. And anything which undermines our ability to continue to sell more American products around the world—any action taken abroad or at

home is not good for our future growth prospects.

Now, that's one of the reasons that I have moved so aggressively to work with our allies in Asia and in Europe and with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to try to stabilize the situation.

On the other hand, let me remind you that there is enormous productive power in these Asian economies. They have some financial difficulties now, which have to be addressed in a disciplined way. If you see the rapid recovery that Mexico had within the space of 2 years, you see that these strong Asian economies can do exactly the same thing in perhaps less time if they face their challenges directly. So I think that the appropriate response is to do what was done in Indonesia, to do what was done in South Korea.

The Japanese statements of the last few days are heartening about what they intend to do with their own financial institutions and protecting the depositors. All this is basically good news. So they've hit a rough patch in their financial institutions and markets, but underlying productivity and potential in Asia is enormous. Yes, I'm concerned about its impact on Americans, and that's one of the reasons I've been so actively involved in trying to deal with it, but I don't think we should become pessimistic. I think we should just be determined to work through these things as quickly as possible.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. One at a time, one at a time. Go ahead.

Larry Lawrence

Q. Mr. President, should Larry Lawrence have been buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

The President. Well, that depends on what the facts are. The questions which have been raised are serious, and I have asked the State Department to conduct an inquiry to find out whether, in fact, the basis of his eligibility is true or not. That's a fact question. And let's wait until we see what the facts are, and then we can all draw our conclusions from that. But the questions themselves are serious. I think the other question you might ask is, were the people involved in the decision in any way at fault? I don't think they were. They acted on the facts as they knew them. The original inquiry into the background check was done—for the Ambassador—was done by the State Department. I've asked them, therefore, to follow up, try to find out the facts. When we get the facts, then I think we can make our judgments on it.

Haiti

Q. Have you made an indefinite commitment to keep American troops in Haiti?

The President. Have I made an indefinite commitment? No. But I have made a deficit commitment to continue to be involved there in ways that I think are appropriate. Keep in mind, we have a very modest troop presence there now, and we are participating as a minority partner, if you will, in the civilian police. With the withdrawal of the United Nations forces, the primary work of maintaining security has shifted to the international police force working with the Haitian police. Our military presence there—it largely involves a lot of public works. We are doing some public works projects there which we've been asked to continue and to finish, try to accelerate. And of course, I think it does contribute to the stability of the area. But our presence there cannot be indefinite, and it will not be indefinite. But I think that we should have these withdrawals in a staged fashion, and we should know what the next stage is before we take any precipitous action. The American people should know it's not a military operation.

Go ahead.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, Saddam Hussein seems not to be satisfied with the way—this arrangement of the U.N. Security Council. What do you feel and what do you think can be done about it?

The President. Well, I certainly think he's exposed his motives and his real concerns to the entire world today. You know, it wasn't very long ago—how many days ago was it that he had this symbolic funeral for children, blaming the world community in general and the United States in particular for the death of Iraqi children.

Let me remind you, when we got the United Nations resolution passed, we and the others who supported it—986—to allow him to sell oil to get food and medicine for his people, even while he was continuing to resist getting rid of his entire chemical and biological weapons arsenal, he delayed the full implementation of that for a year and a half. He is in no position to point the finger at anyone else in the world for the suffering of his own people. And once again today, he has proved that he is responsible for the suffering of his own people.

The rest of us are more than happy to let him sell oil in amounts necessary to generate the cash to alleviate the human suffering of the people of Iraq. That's what 986 was all about. This is not about 986. This is about some other way that he can manipulate the feelings of people beyond the borders of Iraq, even if he has to let innocent children die to do it, so he can continue to pursue a weapons of mass destruction program. And it's wrong, and the world community should not let him get away with it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Lann Lee, nominee for Assistant Attorney General; the late U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, M. Larry Lawrence; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on the National Economy

December 5, 1997

The November employment report shows the economy is the strongest it has been in a generation, with the lowest unemployment rate in a quarter century, nearly 14 million new jobs in the last 5 years, and real wages rising again. Today's good news—strong job creation and higher incomes—shows that the American economy continues to work for working families. It is clear that our three-part economic strategy—reducing the deficit, investing in people, and opening foreign markets to American goods—is the right strategy for America.

Most importantly, this economic prosperity is helping all Americans; for example, the unemployment rate among Hispanics fell to one of its lowest levels ever recorded. And over the past year we had more new manufacturing jobs than during any other year in nearly three decades. While the economy is growing steady and strong, we still have more to do to keep our Nation on the right track and ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from this growth.

Proclamation 7058—National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1997

December 5, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

December 7, 1941, marked a turning point in the history of our Nation, a defining moment that would alter the lives of millions of Americans and change forever America's destiny. On that quiet Sunday morning, the forces of Imperial Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, killing or injuring more than 3,000 Americans, crippling our Pacific Fleet, and critically damaging our airpower. In that moment of supreme crisis, the essential greatness at the core of the American spirit was revealed. Our response was not despair, but determination. Inspired by the leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt and buoyed by his faith that we ultimately would prevail, America went to war.

Looking back across the years, we rightly are still awed by what the American people accomplished during World War II. United in spirit and purpose after the attack on Pearl Harbor, millions of men and women joined the Armed Forces; by war's end, some 15 million had served. They fought fiercely and with uncommon courage in battlefields across the globe. In the Pacific, step by bloody and painstaking step, they took back the islands captured by Imperial Japanese forces in the days after Pearl Harbor. The names of those battles still resonate through the years: Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima. On the western front, facing the daunting power of the Nazi war machine, Americans and our Allies struggled and died to liberate Europe, fighting in the stormy North Atlantic, in the searing heat of North

Africa, and in the flak-filled skies over France and Germany.

Americans on the home front responded with equal gallantry and strength. Stepping forward to close the gap left by departing servicemen, the very young, the elderly, minority workers, and women filled America's factories and shipyards. Working around the clock, they built the ships, planes, tanks, and guns that armed the forces of freedom and made our Nation the "Arsenal of Democracy." In fields, on farms, and in neighborhood Victory Gardens, they produced the food to sustain our Nation, our troops, and our Allies. Millions left their homes to do their part, and few American families were untouched by the hardships and sacrifices demanded by this unprecedented effort.

While more than half a century separates us from the attack on Pearl Harbor, we still can learn much from the example, achievements, and heroic deeds of those Americans who preserved the flame of liberty and passed it around the world. They taught us that America is the world's best hope for freedom and democracy and that we must never shrink from the responsibilities of that leadership. They taught us the need for constant vigilance, a powerful military, and strength of character. They showed us that, when Americans are united in heart and mind, there is nothing we cannot accomplish together.

As we remember Pearl Harbor, let us also remember and give thanks for that great and gallant leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose memorial we dedicated earlier this year in our Nation's Capital. In December of 1941, in one of our Nation's darkest hours, he proclaimed his faith in the ultimate victory of freedom over tyranny that, sadly, he did not live to see:

> With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God.

The Congress, by Public Law 103–308, has designated December 7, 1997, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1997, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in honor of the Americans who served at Pearl Harbor. I also ask all Federal departments and agencies, organizations, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff on this day in honor of those Americans who died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of December, 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-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:10 p.m., December 8, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 9.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 1

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to the White House from Camp David, MD.

December 2

In the evening, the President attended a professional basketball game at the grand opening of the MCI Center. Prior to the game, he toured the new facility and visited with members of the Washington Wizards and the Seattle SuperSonics. During the game, the President was interviewed on cable television's ESPN and TNT.

The White House announced that the President named former Representative Howard Wolpe as Special Envoy of the President and Secretary of State to Africa's Great Lakes region.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York and Florida on December 10–11.

December 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Akron, OH, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Chicago, IL. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

December 4

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a screening of the film ''Amistad'' at the Warner Theater.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jose Luis Ruiz as a member of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters.

December 5

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a holiday reception in the Diplomatic Reception Room.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released November 29

Statement by the Press Secretary: Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations Resolution on Partition

Released December 1

Transcripts of press briefings by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released December 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Director of Communications Ann Lewis on the President's initiative on race

Statement by the Press Secretary on appointment of the Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes region

Announcement of appointment of Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Released December 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released December 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Council on Environmental Quality Chair Kathleen McGinty, and the Vice President's National Security Adviser Leon Fuerth on the Vice President's visit to Kyoto, Japan, for the conference on the international agreement on greenhouse gas emissions

Released December 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Canada Tony Wayne and NSC Senior Director for European Affairs Donald K. Bandler on the European Union-United States summit

Fact sheet: The New Transatlantic Agenda

Fact sheet: U.S.-European Union Relations

Announcement of appointment of four members of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare

Acts Approved by the President

Approved December 1

S. 819 / Public Law 105–122
To designate the United States courthouse at 200 South Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia, as the ''Martin V. B. Bostetter, Jr. United States Courthouse''

S. 833 / Public Law 105–123
To designate the Federal building courthouse at Public Square and Superior Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio, as the ''Howard M. Metzenbaum United States Courthouse''

S. 1228 / Public Law 105–124
50 States Commemorative Coin Program Act

S. 1354 / Public Law 105–125
To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for the designation of common carriers not subject to the jurisdiction of a State commission as eligible telecommunications carriers

S. 1378 / Public Law 105–126
To extend the authorization of use of official mail in the location and recovery of missing children, and for other purposes

S. 1417 / Public Law 105–127
Hispanic Cultural Center Act of 1997

S. 1505 / Public Law 105–128
Museum and Library Services Technical and Conforming Amendments of 1997

S. 1507 / Public Law 105–129
To amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 to make certain technical corrections

S. 1519 / Public Law 105–130
Surface Transportation Extension Act of 1997

Approved December 2

H.R. 1254 / Public Law 105–131
To designate the United States Post Office building located at 1919 West Bennett Street in Springfield, Missouri, as the ''John N. Griesemer Post Office Building''

S. 156 / Public Law 105–132
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Infrastructure Development Trust Fund Act

S. 476 / Public Law 105–133
To provide for the establishment of not less than 2,500 Boys and Girls Clubs of America facilities by the year 2000

S. 738 / Public Law 105–134
Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997

S. 1139 / Public Law 105–135
Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997

S. 1161 / Public Law 105–136
To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize appropriations for refugee and entrant assistance for fiscal years 1998 and 1999

S. 1193 / Public Law 105–137
Aviation Insurance Reauthorization Act of 1997

S. 1559 / Public Law 105–138
To provide for the design, construction, furnishing, and equipping of a Center for Historically Black Heritage within Florida A&M University

S. 1565 / Public Law 105–139
To make technical corrections to the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act

S.J. Res. 39 / Public Law 105–140
To provide for the convening of the Second Session of the One Hundred Fifth Congress

Approved December 5

H.R. 1493 / Public Law 105–141
To require the Attorney General to establish a program in local prisons to identify, prior to arraignment, criminal aliens and aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States, and for other purposes

H.R. 2626 / Public Law 105–142
To make clarifications to the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996, and for other purposes

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