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our commitment to the Test Ban Treaty, with the work you have done here and at the other labs to assure the safety of the treaty through the stockpile stewardship program, all these things are helping to build a stronger America for the 21st century, a safer world for our children in the 21st century, and a legacy worthy of America's glorious past. For your role in that, I thank you very, very much.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Main Auditorium of the Administration Building. In his remarks, he referred to John C. Browne, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory; New Mexico Attorney General Tom Udall; Jerome D. Block, chair, and Eric P. Serna, member, New Mexico Corporation Commission; Gen. Henry H. Shelton, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Gen. Eugene E. Habiger, USAF, Commander in Chief, U.S. Strategic Command.

Remarks in Albuquerque, New Mexico

February 3, 1998

Thank you. I want to begin by thanking the University of New Mexico Band. They have been wonderful tonight. And I might say, I saw the end of your basketball game the other night; it was pretty impressive, too.

Mr. Mayor, Senator Bingaman, Secretary Peña, Evangeline Trujillo, thank you for your wonderful remarks and your even more important example. Didn't she do a terrific job tonight? [*Applause*]

I'm also delighted that we are joined tonight by Congressman Redmond, Attorney General Udall, Treasurer Montoya, Secretary of State Gonzales, State Auditor Robert Vigil, former Governors King, Anaya, and Apodaca—all friends of mine—thank you for being here. Sam Vigil, Commissioner of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Education, and at least two of our tribal leaders, Governors Pasqual and Tortalita, thank you all for being here tonight.

Let me say there is one person who would love to be here who can't be, and I promised him that I would say hello to you, New Mexico's own and America's very great Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson.

I'd also like to recognize two New Mexicans who work at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, who have not been properly recognized. Chris Cherry and Rod Owenby, in 1996, assisted FBI and ATF agents during the search of Theodore Kazcynski's residence in Montana. They, at considerable risk to themselves, helped lead to the capture and the conviction of Mr. Kazcynski and put an end to his deadly attacks. They live among you. They have never gotten credit for what they did, and I think we ought to express our thanks to them tonight.

Thank you for coming out. I want to especially thank the children for being here tonight. Thank you for coming, and all of you who brought them. I'm glad to be back in New Mexico and on this very spot to talk about how we are going to strengthen our Nation for a new century by balancing the budget while investing in our people and preparing for our future.

I'll never forget back in 1992, on election day, at 3 a.m. in the morning, what Hillary and I saw at the hangar at the Albuquerque International Airport. That hangar was filled with people who were tired and cold but warm with hope. At 3 o'clock in the morning, Bruce King brought me a Mexican breakfast, which I loved. And I was saying to the people there in the early morning hours, before the polls had opened and when the outcome of the election was still uncertain, that America faced a profound choice between hope and fear, between whether we would or would not have the courage to change. In 1992, the people of the United States and the people of New Mexico gave Bill Clinton and Al Gore a chance to chart a new course for America's future. I thank you, and I believe it is working.

We have worked hard to move past the sterile debate between those who say that Government is the enemy and those who claimed it could solve all our problems to build a new kind of Government; to take what some have called a third way; to give you a Government that is smaller, that is more flexible, that is less bureaucratic, that promotes new ideas and, most of all, tries

to give all of you and all your fellow Americans the tools you need to make the most of your own lives in a very new world.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are committed to building a 21st century America with an economy based on opportunity, a society full of responsibility, an America that lives together across racial and religious lines as one American community.

I think that we all know this approach is working. Compared to 5 years ago, our deficit is down by more than 90 percent. We have 14 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history. And yesterday I submitted to Congress the first balanced budget in 30 years.

Not so very long ago our deficit was so large it had 11 zeros. Now it is going to be simply zero. And you should all be proud of that. Balancing the budget can mark the beginning of a new era of opportunity for America, a new era of achievement, a new era of wholeness to our public national life in the 21st century. What are we going to do with this opportunity? That's what I want to say to you again tonight.

First, we must know we can balance the budget and save Social Security in the 21st century. And that is important. Now, all of you here know that when the baby boomers—and I know about this because I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—that when we retire there will be a lot more people retired compared to people working than there ever have been before in American history. And we know that will put new burdens on the Social Security system. But if we begin now to prepare for that, with all we know and all we can find out, and if we don't make this a political thing, if we make it an American crusade across party lines and age lines and income lines, we know that we can save Social Security for the 21st century in such a way that my generation does not expect to bankrupt our children to take care of us and impair our children's ability to take care of our grandchildren. We can do that.

And all I have asked of the Congress is that when we balance the budget—it is then projected that we will begin to run surpluses for the first time in a coon's age, since anybody can remember. Nobody can remember when that happened. It is projected now that we could have surpluses as high as $200 billion over the next 5 years. And what I say to you is, the easy thing is for us to take the money back in tax cuts or spending programs. But I want you to commit to me that you will support the Congress in saying, don't do anything with the money until you fix Social Security first.

We can balance the budget and give Americans the finest education in the world. Perhaps the proudest achievement of the balanced budget agreement last year was that it opened the doors of college to all Americans: over 200,000 new Pell grants in the last 3 years; 300,000 new work-study positions; education IRA's you can save for a college education for yourselves or your children and withdraw from them tax free; a $1,500 tax cut; a HOPE scholarship tax credit for the first 2 years of college; and a lifetime learning tax cut for the third and fourth years for graduate school for adults who have to go back for job training. If you want to go to college, you can go now. Don't let anybody tell you you can't.

But now we have to make sure that the years of education before college are as good as the college education is in America. Everybody knows America has the finest system of higher education in the entire world. I will never be satisfied until we know we have the finest system of elementary and secondary education in the entire world.

We can balance the budget and put 100,000 more teachers in the first three grades to lower average class size to 18, so all our kids have a chance to learn. We can balance the budget and build or repair 5,000 more schools, because if there are more kids and more teachers, you have to have more classrooms. We can balance the budget and help the poorest, most underprivileged communities in rural and urban areas to achieve high standards of excellence, to end social promotion but to get a second chance to really learn what all our children are fully capable of learning.

We can balance the budget and make an unprecedented commitment to improving the quality of Hispanic education and reducing the unacceptably high dropout rate among Hispanic-American students. This

commitment—hundreds of millions of dollars over the next several years—will build on the progress of the President's Advisory Commission on Excellence in Hispanic Education to lower the dropout rate and help young Hispanic-Americans to succeed in school. I want to thank Sam Vigil, who is here with us today, and Senator Bingaman, who has worked so hard on this issue. We cannot have an America where there is a huge racial disparity in the dropout rate. All of our kids need to finish high school, and all of our kids can finish high school.

We can balance the budget and deal with the challenge that Mayor Baca talked about earlier. I am very happy and proud of the work that our administration has done in partnership with local law enforcement and citizen groups to have a big 5-year decline in the crime rate. But if you have been following it closely, you know that the juvenile crime rate has not gone down as much as the adult crime rate has. There's still too many of our kids getting in trouble, and most of that trouble happens between the time school closes, about 3, and the time all the parents get home, about 8, from work. We must give our children something positive to do in those hours, and we can balance the budget and do that and keep our kids out of trouble.

We can balance the budget and help millions of Americans to provide child care to their children that is of good quality, that is affordable, and that helps people to balance the demands of school and work. We can balance the budget and extend health care coverage to more hard-working Americans. I'll bet you anything there are people in this audience tonight, between the ages of 55 and 65, where your spouse has gone on Medicare but you're not old enough for it yet; or you lost a job and you haven't gotten another one, so you don't have health care; or you took early retirement from a company that promised you health insurance coverage and then didn't deliver. I say we should let those people have the opportunity to buy into the Medicare program early. It won't cost Medicare a dime, and it will be worth all the money in the world to them.

We can balance the budget and continue to clean our environment. Compared to 5 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer in America; there are fewer toxic waste dumps. But we have more to do. We have got to deal with the crisis of climate change, do something about global warming, and bring our people the benefits of a growing economy and a cleaner environment. In New Mexico you know we can do that; help us lead the way in America.

And we can balance the budget and invest in the science and technology that can revolutionize our way of life; whether it is in cleaning the environment, finding cures for diseases, solving practical problems in America, we can do it. I announced today at Los Alamos that our balanced budget will put over $500 million into developing the fastest supercomputers in human history, 1,000 times faster than the fastest one when I took office 5 years ago. We are going to develop a computer that will do more calculations in a second than you can with your hand-held computer in 30 million years. That is on the verge of reality.

But the last thing I want to say to you is, we can balance the budget, and we can do all that, but we have to remember we're living in a smaller and smaller world where we're more interconnected, whether we like it or not, with people all around the world, not just economically but also in terms of the spread of disease or our vulnerability to terrorism or drug traffickers or our vulnerability to common, shared environmental problems. And yet we can do so much more when we work together.

In a world like this, there is no nation better suited to do well in the 21st century than our United States. Why? Because here the price of citizenship is believing in America. It is not a function of your race; it is not a function of your religion; it is not a function of where you were born; it is not a function of how much money you have; all you have to do is to be willing to work hard, obey the law, and say you believe in the things that have made our country great.

And I'm telling you, folks, you just look around this crowd today and you think about what it means to be in a global society. I tell you, we can build one America. We can balance the budget. We can invest in our future. And if we do, all these little children

today, they will be living in the greatest days the United States has ever know. Help us do that.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. at the Civic Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Evangeline Sandoval Trujillo, director, Mathematics, Engineering, Science Association, who introduced the President; Arizona State Treasurer Michael Montoya; Arizona Secretary of State Stephanie Gonzales; former Arizona Governors Bruce King, Toney Anaya, and Jerry Apodaca; Acama Pueblo Governor Reginald Pasqual; Santodomingo Pueblo Governor Tony Tortalita; and Mayor Jim Baca.

Statement on Federal Election Commission Action on Campaign Finance Reform

February 3, 1998

I strongly support action to end the soft money raised by both political parties. That is why last year I asked the Federal Election Commission to ban soft money, under its current legal authority. I am very pleased that the agency's General Counsel has proposed a new rule prohibiting national parties from raising soft money. Now I ask the members of the Commission to step up to their responsibility and act, within their legal authority, to end the soft money system.

Statement on the Accident Involving United States Aircraft in Italy

February 3, 1998

I was deeply saddened to learn a short while ago that a U.S. military jet aircraft was involved in an accident in Italy that resulted in the deaths of several Italian citizens.

The plane is part of the U.S. force stationed at Aviano Air Base in Italy that is supporting the NATO SFOR mission in Bosnia. U.S. military authorities in Aviano have launched an investigation into this accident. I have expressed my condolences to Prime Minister Prodi and assured him that we will cooperate fully with the Italian Government and do everything we can to find out what happened and prevent an accident like this from happening again.

On behalf of the American people I offer my heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of those killed and injured in this accident.

NOTE: In the statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy.

Statement on the Death of Roger Stevens

February 3, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of our dear friend Roger Stevens. He will long be remembered as a defining force in America's cultural life.

As founding chairman of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Roger can be credited with spotlighting our Nation's Capital as a haven for the performing arts. The Kennedy Center, one of America's finest cultural showcases, might never have been built if it weren't for Roger's dedication and energy. His love of the arts led him to produce more than 200 plays, including "West Side Story," "Bus Stop," and "Deathtrap." Roger served as the first Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and won numerous awards for his dedication to highlighting the performing arts, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1988), the National Medal of Arts (1988), the Kennedy Center Honors (1988), and the National Artists' Medal (1983).

Our Nation is mourning the loss of this important cultural figure. Our thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family in this sad time.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Railroad Retirement Board

February 3, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Railroad Retirement Board for Fiscal Year 1996, pursuant to the provisions of section 7(b)(6) of the Railroad Retirement Act