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that the citizens of our State not do what people so often do when times are good, which is just relax and say, ''Just leave everything more or less the way it is,'' because when times are good but changing rapidly, you have to use the good times and the confidence people have to deal with the underlying challenges, and because, as all of us who are older here know, no conditions last forever. If we can't use these good times to deal with our long-term challenges, when will we ever do it?

So I ask you—I'm glad to see you; I've had a good time; I've enjoyed the jibes and the cheering and the yelling. But I want you to keep clearly in mind that we have a future to build for these children. You've got a State to build and a country to build. And the reason we're in the shape we're in today is because we had good ideas that we implemented that had good consequences. And the reason that I will be a member of this party until the day I die is that more often than not, we have been the instrument in this century and in my lifetime in fulfilling the vision that the Founding Fathers gave us to always deepen our freedom and always perfect our Union.

So I want you to help me. I want you to elect these people. I want you to work. And I want you to go out there and literally grab your friends and neighbors by the shoulder and say, ''Let's talk about this. Don't go through this election in a fog. Don't say, 'Oh, everything is fine; let's just keep on going the way we're going.' '' Think about where we are as a State and Nation. And think about where we were in 1992, and I think you'll have quite a good case to make.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the auditorium at the Embassy Suites Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Arkansas gubernatorial candidate Bill Bristow; senatorial candidate Blanche Lambert Lincoln; Judy Smith, candidate for Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District; Kurt Dilday, candidate for Lt. Gov.; Mark Pryor, State attorney general candidate; Jimmie Lou Fisher, State treasurer; Gus Wingfield, State auditor; Charlie Daniels, State land commissioner; Arkansas Supreme Court Associate Justice Donald L. Corbin; Mary Anne Salmon, executive director, Clinton Arkansas Office; and Vaughn McQuary, chair, Democratic Party of Arkansas.

The President's Radio Address

July 18, 1998

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from my home State of Arkansas, a State that, like many across our Nation, depends heavily on agriculture. America's farm communities are more than a critical part of our economy. They are places where American values have deep roots and flourish: faith and family, hard work and respect for neighbors, devotion to community. Every American has a stake in the strength of rural America.

With family incomes rising, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, the highest homeownership rate in history, most Americans today are enjoying the dividends of the strongest American economy in a generation. Unfortunately, life on the farm is not so easy today.

For 5½ years, I have worked to expand opportunity for our farm families. We've strengthened crop insurance, provided critical disaster assistance to ranchers who have lost livestock, doubled our use of export credits from last year, improved our school lunch programs by buying surplus commodities, and worked to diversify the sources of enterprise and income in rural America.

But with the economic crisis in Asia weakening some of our best customers for farm products, and with strong world crop production bringing prices down, and with farmers facing floods and fires and drought and crop disease, our farmers face a difficult and dangerous moment. Many farm families have been pushed off their land, and many more could suffer the same fate unless our Nation revives its commitment to helping farmers weather hard times.

When I signed the 1996 farm bill, at a time when farm prices were very strong, I made clear my concern that there was not an adequate safety net for farmers. The bill had to be signed to avoid putting our farmers in an even more difficult situation under the old 1949 farm bill. But sooner or later, prices were bound to fall so low that we would need that safety net. That day has come. With prices for many farm products plummeting, America's farm families face a crisis, and we have an obligation to help.

At the same time we see a very different crisis in some parts of the world, a crisis of hunger, where too many families face famine and starvation. For decades, American Presidents have addressed such crises. That's what I'm doing today.

Today I am acting within my full authority as President to take immediate steps to help our family farmers and to reduce crop surpluses at home. Within days, the United States Government will begin to purchase more than 80 million bushels of wheat, which could lift prices as much as 13 cents a bushel. With this wheat, I've instructed Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman to launch a new food aid initiative to press the world struggle against hunger.

Secretary Glickman, working with our Agency for International Development, will use the authority granted to him by Congress to oversee substantial donations of U.S. wheat to countries where the need is greatest—places such as Sudan and Indonesia. Donations will also be made to private humanitarian groups. All told, this is in the best humanitarian tradition, an action based on human need to help save lives as it opens new links of trade with these nations. It's good for American farmers, good for our economy, and it's the right thing to do.

This effort will provide a much needed boost to U.S. wheat farmers, but we can and must do more. I'm pleased that this week Congress took prompt bipartisan action to exempt agricultural trade from U.S. sanctions against India and Pakistan in the wake of their nuclear test. But more congressional action must follow. We should expand eligibility for direct and guaranteed loans, extend marketing loans when crop prices are low or transportation problems make marketing difficult, give farmers more flexibility to plant other crops when their primary crops fail. And above all, we must keep the market for our products growing by paying our dues to the International Monetary Fund so that we can stabilize and help to reform Asian economies that are such important customers for America's farmers and for our other exporters who are responsible for 30 percent of the remarkable growth we've enjoyed since 1993.

In my State of the Union Address, I urged Congress to do this for the sake of our own economy. Six months later, the need is greater than ever. We must pay our dues to the International Monetary Fund so that our people can sell their products abroad.

The steps I take today are in the best tradition of America. From our beginnings, we have recognized that the agricultural tradition strengthens the national community. In the depths of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt said, ''No cracked Earth, no blistering Sun, no burning wind are a permanent match for the indomitable American farmers who inspire us with their self-reliance, their tenacity, and their courage.'' Today, at a moment of broad prosperity for our Nation, we have an obligation to expand opportunity for all Americans as we move strongly into the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:58 p.m. on July 17 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 18. This transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at an Arkansas Victory '98 Dinner in Little Rock

July 18, 1998

Well, first of all, like all of you, I want to thank Maurice and Betty for once again being there for all of us and having us in their home, giving us a view of the river. I'm trying to get accustomed to it. In a couple of years, I'm going to have a library about a mile down the road there, and I'm going to be looking up this river, just like all the rest of you. I also want to thank Vaughn for being willing to come in here and go to work for our party and give us some energy and direction.

Today I had a great, great morning with the State Democratic Committee and a number of other people who came, and I tried to get them revved up and also remind them that the stakes in this election are quite high and we need to go to work on it. I feel very good about our candidates; I feel very good about the issues. I think the main thing we have to recognize is that in the non-Presidential years, voter turnout tends to go down,