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Security beneficiaries are not retirees, and we must never forget that.

And fifth, any proposal must maintain our hard-won fiscal discipline. It has helped to fuel the prosperity Americans enjoy today. That is, after all, what gives us the chance to do this in at least a less painful manner.

I look forward to transforming these ideas into action. Let us begin firm in our faith that Social Security can bind our people not only across generational divides but across party lines.

Let me say, too, in that regard, I am grateful for the presence here of Senator Santorum and Congressman Shaw from the Republican majority, and the minority leaders, Senator Daschle, and Congressman Gephardt. I thank you very much for your presence here. And now I'd like to turn it over to them to make some opening remarks so we can get on with the work of this conference.

Let me say this before I sit down. You have to decide that we are going to do this. You have to tell these Members of Congress that you will support them if they act. If you come here representing a particular point of view and you know these Members of Congress agree with you, you should ask them to defend your point of view, but to be willing in the end to make a decision that will deal with the problem. This will only get harder, every single year we avoid resolving this, it will get harder and harder and harder. And everybody's favorite idea will have a less beneficial impact the longer we wait. Now is the time to do this.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 a.m. in the Cotillion Ballroom at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

Memorandum on Assistance for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union

December 8, 1998

Presidential Determination No. 99–8

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Assistance Program for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union

Pursuant to Section 517(b) in Title V of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105–277), I hereby determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States to make available funds appropriated under the heading "Assistance for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union" in Title II of that Act without regard to the restriction in that section.

You are authorized and directed to notify the Congress of this determination and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at a Gala Honoring Dale and Betty Bumpers

December 8, 1998

Ladies and gentlemen, Hillary began by saying this was a bittersweet moment for us, and indeed, it is. Nonetheless, I do want to thank all of you for making it possible. I thank Joan Baker, Deba Leach, and all the Peace Link folks. I thank our good friend Reverend Wogaman for praying over us. God knows we need it. I thank my friend Peter Duchin for being here and for playing.

And I thank Alan Simpson for destroying all the stereotypes that we Democrats like to have about Republicans. [*Laughter*] He's tall and funny. [*Laughter*] And you know, in his new career, he has finally destroyed the myth that Harvard is an elitist institution.