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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Meetings With Foreign Leaders
Arkansas
Community in Beebe—118
Community in Little Rock—116
Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida, memorial service—136
Kosovo—143
Millennium Evening at the White House, fifth—123
Pacific coastal salmon, partnership, telephone remarks—134
Radio address—115
Social Security and Medicare, roundtable discussion—127
Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings—141
U.S. Conference of Mayors—143
Virginia, employment initiative in Oakton—137
Welfare to work initiative—119

Communications to Congress

Cyprus, letter transmitting report—141
Terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process, letter transmitting report—135
U.S. Air Force operating location near Groom Lake, Nevada—152

Communications to Federal Agencies

International financial institutions and other international organizations and programs, memorandum on funding—143
Kosovo, memorandum on assistance—125

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in St. Louis, MO—127
Interview with Judith Miller and William J. Broad of the New York Times—109

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Vatican, Pope John Paul II—126, 127

Proclamations

National Consumer Protection Week—151

Statements by the President

BP Amoco's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—122
Colombia, assistance in earthquake aftermath—135
Transportation Department's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program—150

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—155
Checklist of White House press releases—154
Digest of other White House announcements—152
Nominations submitted to the Senate—153

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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Interview With Judith Miller and William J. Broad of the New York Times

January 21, 1999

Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons

The President. Before you ask questions, I just want to say that I really have appreciated the stories you've done, because I think it's so important that—it's sort of a balance thing, but I want to raise public awareness of this and awareness also with people with influence who can influence decision-making without throwing people into an unnecessary panic. And I think these stories have been exceedingly valuable.

Sandy was making fun of me today before you came in. Sandy Berger was—he said, when you started talking about this 6 years ago nobody around here—people just didn't—they hadn't thought about it.

Q. Six years ago.

The President. I've been asking them to think about this for a long, long time. And of course, we had it more or less in the context of terrorism because we had the World Trade Center and all the other things to worry about. But anyway.

Q. But actually, one of my first questions—because we've heard so many rumors about how you got interested and none of what has happened would have happened without your interest. But what was it?

The President. Well, it was—first of all, I spend a lot of time thinking about 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now. I think that's one of the things that Presidents are supposed to do and especially when things are changing so much. But we had—keep in mind, we had the World Trade Center issue; we had the CIA killer; and then later you had the incident in the Tokyo subway and then Oklahoma City. We've had a lot of terrorist incidents, culminating in the bombing of our Embassies in Africa and what happened in Khobar, other things.

One of the things that I have worried about from the beginning with the breakdown of the Soviet Union before my time here was how to help them deal with the aftermath of the massive nuclear system they have, and starting with the Nunn-Lugar funds, going all the way up to our threat reduction proposals in this year's budget, you know, we tried to hire—keep the scientists and the labs working and do joint projects of all kinds that would be constructive.

But it was pretty obvious to me that, given the size of the Soviet biological and chemical programs and the fact that we know a lot of other nations are trying to develop chemical capacity and some biological capacity, that we had not only nuclear problems, but we have a chemical and biological problem. And of course, the Vice President and others sort of sensitized me to this whole computer problem. We had the incident with the defense computers just a few months ago. But before that, I kept reading about all these non—in the line of national security, all these computer hackers. You know, I'm technologically challenged. I can do E-mail and a few other things, you know. But it struck me that we were going to have to find some way to try to deal with that, too, because of the defense implications, as well as the other possibilities.

And I've had all kinds of—I also find that reading novels, futuristic novels—sometimes people with an imagination are not wrong—Preston's novel about biological warfare, which is very much based on——

Q. ''Hot Zone'' or ''Cobra Event''? Which one impressed you?

The President. ''The Cobra Event.''

Q. That's the one.

The President. Well, ''The Hot Zone'' was interesting to me because of the Ebola thing, because that was a fact book. But I thought

"The Cobra Event" was interesting, especially when he said what his sources were, which seemed fairly credible to me. And then I read another book about a group of terrorists shutting down the telephone networks in the Northeast and the Midwest.

Q. What was that? Do you remember?

The President. I can't remember. I read so many things. I can't remember. A couple years ago. But anyway, when I—and a lot of times it's just for thrills, but a lot of times these people are not far off. You know, they sell books by imagining the future, and sometimes they're right; sometimes they're wrong.

So I've gotten—I don't want to sound—I've gotten a lot of sort of solid, scientific input. I've also solicited opinions from people working on the genome project, for example, and about what the implications of that might be for dealing with biological warfare. And last year, we had a whole group of experts come in here and spend an extended amount of time with me and then follow up with the staff on biological issues in particular. So I've had a real interest in this, and I think we're about to get up to speed.

But we just have to be prepared for it. I mean, it's—if you look back through all of human history, people who are interested in gaining control or influence or advantage over others have brought to bear the force of arms. And what normally happens from the beginning of history is the arms work until a defense is erected, and then there's an equilibrium until there is a new offensive system developed, and then a defense comes up, going all the way back to—well, even before it, but castle moats which were overcome by catapults.

And so, basically, I think what has concerned me is that we, because we're moving from one big issue—will there be a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, to now a whole lot of proliferation of issues, dealing with smaller scale nuclear issues, chemical and biological issues, missile technology and, of course, the related computer cyber-crime issue—is that I just don't want the lag time between offense and defense to be any longer than is absolutely necessary.

That, I think, is the challenge for us, is to try to—before anything really tragic happens not only in the United States but anywhere else. We've had enough warning signs out there now, enough concrete evidence, and we need to close the door of the gap between the offense and defense.

Gravity and Timing of the Threat

Q. How worried should we be, and how—we don't want to panic people. And research has seen some of these warning signs, and readers call, and they want to know, is this—how worried should we be? Is this serious today, and is the threat rising? Is it going be more serious in the future?

The President. I would say that if the issue is, how probable is it in the very near-term an American city or community would be affected, I'd say you probably shouldn't be too worried. But if the issue is, is it a near certainty that at some time in the future there will be some group, probably a terrorist group, that attempts to bring to bear either the use or the threat of a chemical or biological operation, I would say that is highly likely to happen sometime in the next few years. And therefore, I would say the appropriate response is not worry or panic but taking this issue very seriously, expecting all elected officials with any responsibility in this area to know everything they can, and to do everything we can both to erect all possible defenses and then to try to make sure we are doing everything we can to stop this.

Now, we know right now—we know that a lot of what we've done already has delayed WMD programs, some of which I can't talk about, but slowed the development of WMD programs of missile technology development that might deliver such weapons and other things. And we're doing everything we can to stop or slow down the ability of others, insofar as we know about it and can do something about it. And meanwhile, we're doing everything we can both to develop defenses and emergency responses. But I think we've got an enormous amount of work out there ahead of us, an enormous amount of work.

And a lot of this has to be done with great cooperation between the Federal Government—we need cooperation of the private sector on the cyber issues, the computer

issues. We need cooperation with local government on public health response issues, exposure—if there appears to be an outbreak. We had all these sort of false alarms of anthrax in California—how many?—more than a dozen, I think, in the last month. So we need to be able to diagnose and to treat and also to manage those things.

Biological Threat and Developing a Response

Q. Does one of these threats worry you more than another, and does any one in particular keep you awake at night?

The President. Well, I have spent some late nights thinking a lot about this and reading a lot about it. I think in terms of offense versus defense, if you go back to where we started, the thing that I'm most interested in—and you will see we've allocated several hundred million dollars basically to research and to applied research—the thing that I'm most interested in is developing the ability to quickly contain biological agents.

A chemical attack would be horrible, but it would be finite. You know, it's just like—for the people who went through Oklahoma City, nothing could be more horrible. But it didn't spread. The thing that bothers people about biological agents is that, unless they're properly diagnosed, contained, and treated, that it could spread.

For example, we know that if all of us went to a rally on The Mall tomorrow with 10,000 people, and somebody flew a low-flying crop duster and sprayed us all with biological agents from, let's say 200 feet, that no matter how toxic it were, half of us would walk away for reasons no one quite understands. You know, either we wouldn't breathe it, or we'd have some miraculous resistance to it. And the other half of us, somebody would have to diagnose in a hurry and then contain and treat. Otherwise, it would be kind of like the gift that keeps on giving, you know. [*Laughter*]

And I don't mean that—I'm not trying to be macabre, but you asked me what keeps me awake at night, and that bothers me. And that's why the thing that I thought was most important about what we did last year, and what we learned a little bit from our defense scare—even though it was on a computer issue, we had this defense issue, plus we were dealing with all this—we'd studied for a year all this—especially this biological issue—is we had this work going on in 12 different places in the Government. So we had to organize our efforts, so that we could be accessible to local governments, so we could work with them, to set up their own preventive mechanisms.

And I have to tell you, it may be—we may have to await—it's a note I made to myself that we may have to have a perfect defense. I mean, instantaneous. We may have to depend upon the genome project, interestingly enough, because once the human genes' secrets are unlocked, then if you and I think we've been infected, they could take a blood sample, and there would be a computer program which would show us if we had, let's say, we had a variant of anthrax. Let's suppose some terrorist hired a genius scientist and a laboratory to take basic anthrax and put some variant in it that would be resistant to all known anthrax antidotes.

Q. Okay. Or a Russian scientist.

The President. Yes. So let's just suppose that happened. And what you would want is to be able to take a blood sample, do an analysis, put it through a software program that had already been developed, and say, "Okay, here is—this is how the genes are different. This is the difference." And then presumably, not too long after we've developed this, they will already know, well, therefore, this is how you should—how you should change the vaccine.

And we know now—I know this is kind of bewildering, but keep in mind this is actually good news because, if there were no genome project, if there were no rapid way to do quick analysis that would go right to the tiniest variant, we would be in trouble. And now these scientists are working on this, and we're actually a little bit ahead of the original predicted timetable on unlocking the secrets of the gene. And when that happens, one of the side benefits, I think, will be to be able to tell these things much more quickly.

But meanwhile, we've got this plan. We're stockpiling the vaccines, and we're doing all this research which the Government has to fund, because obviously there's no market for it, right? It's not like—there's no market for

it, and I hope there never will be any market for it. But we have to pay, the Government has to pay, for this research to develop new vaccines and to manage it along. And I think we will do—I think we've got a very good increase in the budget, and I really think it will have broad bipartisan support.

Human Genome Project

Q. There's a school of worrywarts out there that says this genome stuff is a double-edged sword, and at some point you can envision ethnic weapons, looking at racial differences and try to do selective——

Q. And targeting.

Q. Look at Kosovo. Look at how much of the blood that has spilled is just rooted in this ethnic——

The President. Yes, but I think to be fair, we're a good ways away from that. I think we need to worry far more about the fact that most of these groups—we know, for example—let's take something I can talk about because it's public record. We know Usama bin Ladin's network has made an effort to get chemical weapons.

Q. Biological or just chemical?

The President. Well, we know they've made an effort to get chemical weapons; they may have made an effort to get biological weapons. We do not know that they have them. It is true—if you take this thing out to sort of the science fiction conclusion, obviously the genome project itself carries the seeds of its own misuse. But right now I'm absolutely convinced that the advantages dwarf the disadvantages in this area.

Plus, which all the other advantages of it—I mean, it's going to lead us to—we will save countless lives because we'll know in advance what predisposition people have, what problems they have—the genome project would be the seminal event—you know, when it's done, of the first part of the 21st century, there's no doubt about that.

But to come back to your point, the only point I would make, whenever you ask me a question like that, I think it's best for you to remember the formulation that I started with, and it's interesting to think about the moat and the catapult, the spear and the shield—anything. It's all a question of people who have money, organization, and an interest, whether it's political or financial or religious or whatever in oppressing other people or holding them down will always be looking for new offensive weapons.

Our goal should always be, for the sake of the world as well as the security of the American people, to make sure not only that we can defend ourselves and counter-punch, if you will, but to develop with each new wave of technology to close the gap between offense and defense. And if we do that, I think that's the strategy that I hope will become at least an integral part of our national security strategy in the WMD area.

Anthrax Vaccination

Q. Mr. President, in the interim we have a lot of Americans, more than 2 million Americans in uniform, being vaccinated against anthrax. Are you vaccinated?

The President. The Secret Service told me I couldn't discuss that, and they have good reasons for not wanting me to do it. But let me say, I'm convinced that like any other vaccination, there may be some small rejection, but I think on balance it's a safe procedure. I've looked at the reports, and I think on balance, given the fact that we send so many of our men and women in uniform into places where they could be exposed, I think that they're better off being vaccinated. I do not believe that the threat in the United States is sufficient that I could recommend that to people, to the public at large.

Response to the Terrorist Threat

Q. What about first responders or people in hospitals who might be exposed to smallpox, anthrax, plague, and things like that?

The President. The real answer there is, we haven't reached a conclusion, but we're considering that. Because we have to work with the first responders, we've got the public health people looking into this and other people, and I think that that's a judgment that ought to be made primarily by people who are in the best position to make a professional judgment about it. So that's something that's being considered.

Q. We've heard about something else that's being considered that I think Bill wants to ask you about.

Q. As you may be aware, Secretary Cohen and people at the Pentagon are talking about trying to create a new position of commander-in-chief for the continental United States because of the terror threat. And it's moving through the system, and at some point it's going to come to you, probably sometime this summer. Are you inclined to create that kind of position for the military?

The President. Let me say, I think that we need to have an organized response, if you will, to what you might call "homeland defense" on CBW and cyber or computer terrorism issues. And now we've established a national coordinator on these issues in the White House. We've got this national domestic preparation office at the Justice Department. We've got a National Infrastructure Protection Center. We've got a joint task force on cyber defense already at DOD in response to what they went through before.

So I want them to look at where we are and make some recommendations to me. I'm not sure that that is what they're going to recommend, and I think that I shouldn't give an answer to the question you ask until I see what the range of options are and what the range of recommendations is.

Q. Do you have a leaning one way or another?

The President. No, just except to say that it is very important that we outline every single responsibility that we have as a nation at the national level and that someone be responsible for it. I want to know—as I said, one of the things that we learned last year that I think was a legitimate criticism of what we have done in our administration is that we had 12 different places where these activities were going on, and they weren't being properly coordinated and driven in the proper fashion. And we've tried to resolve this. And this is sort of the last big kind of organizational piece, as far as I know, that is yet to be resolved. So the military is going to make me a recommendation and I will respond accordingly.

Again, the American people, this shouldn't be a cause for alarm; this should be a cause for reassurance. They should want us to be well-organized on these things because—remember for years and years, when I was a boy we used to do all those—they had all these fallout shelters, and every school had its drills and all that. I mean, I'm older than you, so you wouldn't remember this, but——

Q. No, we did it.

The President. But you know, and we—it was a sensible thing to do under the circumstances. Thank God we never experienced it. But it was the sensible thing to do. And so what I want us to do is everything, within reason, we can to minimize our exposure and risks here, and that's how I'm going to evaluate this Pentagon recommendation.

Secretary Cohen, I think, is also real focused on this now. I've been very pleased with the priority he's given it. And I think that all these guys know that after their experience with the computer issue that all this—tomorrow's threats may be very different from yesterday's, and we've got to be ready.

Funding the Response

Q. What do you say to people, to skeptics who say all this is just Pentagon maneuvering, creating new bogeymen to scare us so they can whip up new budget authority? And it's—and that's a large crowd.

The President. Even though we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars and in the aggregate a few billion dollars, it's nowhere near as expensive as maintaining this sort of basic infrastructure of defense, the case of public health, the basic infrastructure of public health.

I say to them, they should understand that we have intelligence—and a lot of it is in the public arena, you all write about it—about all the countries that are trying—the countries and the groups that want chemical weapons, that want biological weapons, that are trying to get agents, precursor agents that you can use to develop chemicals or basic agents you can use to develop biological weapons. And everybody knows now the world is full of hackers that seek to intrude on networks, that seek to insert bogus codes into programs and all this sort of stuff. And it would be completely irresponsible for us not to allocate a substantial investment in trying to protect America from threats that will be, in all probability, as likely or more likely in the future than the threats we think we face today.

That's why we started this conversation by saying, I don't want to say anything that will overly alarm anybody. I'm not trying to stir up a lot of false threats. But if you look at just what the UNSCOM people in Iraq—they say that they don't believe that the reporting in Iraq is consistent with what they believe the chemical capacity there is.

If you look at the fact with regard to chemicals, with the Chemical Weapons Conventions, if we can get it properly implemented, at least we will be able to track probably that plus intelligence, large volumes of chemical stocks. But with biological stocks, a very small laboratory with the right materials to work with, you could develop supplies that could kill a large number of people. It simply is irresponsible for us not to both do the best we can with public health protections, do the best research we can on vaccines, stockpile what we know works, and then get out there and try to build a defense and an ability to interrupt and stop with export controls and any other way we can these developments, and it costs money.

But to me, it's money well spent. And if there is never an incident, nobody would be happier than me 20 years from now if the same critics would be able to say, "Oh, see, Clinton was a kook; nothing happened." I would be the happiest man on Earth. I would be the happiest man on Earth. If they could say, "He overexaggerated it; nothing happened. All he did was make a bunch of jobs for scientists and build the Pentagon budget," I would be elated 20 years from now to be subject to that criticism because it would mean that nothing happened and in no small measure because of the efforts we've made.

Russia

Q. Since we have so little time left, Mr. President, Russia. How can you be sure—since they violated the treaty that they signed banning biological weapons for 20 years, does it make sense to work with them now on biological projects? Are you certain that they are not doing biological research? And what do you do?

The President. Let me say this. I think that the more we work with them and the more their scientists are working with us and the more successful we are in building a common endeavor, the more it will be in their interest to comply. The real danger in Russia, I think—dangers—are two. One is—I'll take one that is outside the CBW area so it doesn't look like I'm waving the red flag here—when we started the space station—you know, John Glenn went up and then we sent the first two components of the space station up—it had been months since a lot of those Russian scientists had been paid.

That's why it is very, very important, I think, to say we value this enormous infrastructure of scientific expertise they have in the space area, in the CBW area, and we want to work with them. This budget of mine would enable us to do joint work with 8,000 Russian scientists. Now, there are, I think, 40,000 total—we think. But that's important. That bothers me.

The second thing that concerns me is that when Russia shed communism, they adopted a strategy which was widely lauded at the time in the United States and elsewhere, but they were actually—when I went to Russia, and you remember right after my mother died I got on the plane, and I went to the Czech Republic and Russia—that was, what, January of '94. Actually at that time, the Czech Republic was doing very well and was sort of the poster child of the new economy in the former communist countries. But when I was there, Russia had actually privatized more property than the Czech Republic had.

And this relates partly to the economic crisis, but when they did it, they did it without having had the benefit of an effective central bank, a securities and exchange commission, all these other things. So that you had money coming in and money flying out now. And one of the problems they have now is that it's not a totalitarian Government anymore. There are a lot of private companies—all the private companies there by definition used to be part of the state, unless they're new businesses. And so one of the problems we're having is, even when they're trying to help us, is keeping up with what all these companies and their subsidiaries do.

And that's been the tension that you've written a lot about, and there's been a lot

in the press about was there missile cooperation with Iran or not, and does that violate our understanding, and does that call for some action vis-a-vis Russia? And part of the problem is, just keeping up with this proliferation of companies and people that used to have some connection to the Soviet State, some connection to the defense apparatus.

It's not a simple process, and it's not a perfect process, but I am absolutely convinced that this threat reduction initiative we've got can kind of intensify our efforts to work with them, as well as to really implement the Chemical Weapons Treaty, and get some teeth in the Biological Weapons Convention. That's very, very important. I think that is the best strategy. It may not be perfect, but it is better than the alternative.

Response to an Attack

Q. What do you do if the nightmare comes to pass, and some country hits us, hits us hard, with a biological weapon? What kind of response would you do?

The President. Well, first of all, if some country were thinking about doing that, I would certainly hope that they wouldn't have the capacity to do it before we could stop them or interrupt them, if it was a—that is, if you're talking about somebody lobbing a missile over here or something like that.

I think if it happened, it would be an act of war, and there would be a very strong response. But I think we've demonstrated that. But I think the far more likely thing is somebody representing some interest—maybe it could be a rogue state; maybe it could be a terrorist network—walking around a city with a briefcase full of vials or in spray cans, you know.

So what we have to do—any country with any sense, if they wanted to attack us, would try to do it through a terrorist network, because if they did it with a missile we'd know who did it, and then they'd be sunk. It would be—that's a deal where they're bound to lose. Big time.

Q. Would you respond with nuclear weapons to a biological attack?

The President. Well, I never discuss the nuclear issue. I don't think that's appropriate. But I think that we would have at least a proportionate, if not a disproportionate, response if someone committed an act of war against the United States. That's what we would do. And if somebody willfully murdered a lot of our civilians, there would be a very heavy price to pay.

Senator Dale Bumpers' Senate Impeachment Trial Presentation

Q. Mr. President, you have time for one more——

Q. We're about to go. Did you have a chance to watch any of Senator Bumpers' presentation today?

The President. I did. It's the only thing I've watched. I watched that.

Q. He said—he criticized the House managers for lacking compassion for your family. He described your family as a family that has been "about as decimated as a family can get. The relationship between husband and wife, father and child, has been incredibly strained if not destroyed." Is that an accurate representation?

The President. Well, it's been—I would say it has been a strain for my family. But we have worked very hard, and I think we have come through the worst. We love each other very much, and we've worked on it very hard. But I think he was showing—you know, he knows me and Hillary and Chelsea, and we've all been friends, as he said, for 25 years. I think he was just trying to inject a human element into what he was saying.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 6:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on January 21 and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 23. In his remarks, the President referred to Usama bin Ladin, who allegedly sponsored bombing attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. He also referred to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and chemical and biological weapons (CBW). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address

January 23, 1999

Good morning. Last Tuesday night, in my State of the Union Address, I was honored to report to the American people that our families, our communities, and our country are stronger, healthier, and more prosperous

than ever. But I warned that we cannot let the hum of our prosperity lull us into complacency. Instead, we must use this moment of promise to meet the long-term challenges we face as a nation, to meet our historic responsibility to the 21st century.

Over the last 6 years, our hard-won fiscal discipline has given us the chance to meet those long-term challenges. Six years ago our budget deficit was $290 billion. Last year we had a budget surplus of $70 billion. We expect another one a little larger than that this year, and we're on course for budget surpluses for the next 25 years.

So now we face a new choice: what to do with the surplus. I believe we should use it to plan and save for retirement, to strengthen the readiness of our military, to get our children ready for the 21st century. Very simply, I believe we should use the first surplus in three decades and the projected ones in the future to meet America's great challenges. Above all, that means saving Social Security and Medicare.

We all know that the baby boom will soon become a senior boom. The number of seniors will double by 2030; average life expectancy is rising rapidly, and that means rising costs for Social Security and Medicare.

I propose to keep Social Security strong for 55 years by committing 60 percent of the surplus for the next 15 years and investing a small portion in the private sector just as any private or State pension would do. We should make further tough choices to put Social Security on a sound footing for the next 75 years, to lift the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn, and to provide support to reduce the poverty rate among elderly women—which is twice the poverty rate among seniors as a whole. We can do that with a good bipartisan effort.

Once we've accomplished this, I propose we use one of every six dollars of the surplus over the next 15 years to double the life of the Medicare Trust Fund. Then I believe we should dedicate $500 billion of the surplus to give working families tax relief for retirement savings, by creating new Universal Savings Accounts—USA accounts—to help all Americans build a nest egg for their retirement.

Under my plan, families will receive a tax credit to contribute to their USA account and an additional tax credit to match a portion of their savings—with a choice in how they invest the funds—and more help for those who will have the hardest time saving.

Let me give you an example of how USA accounts could work. With the help of USA account tax credits, working people who save and invest wisely from the time they enter the work force until the time they retire could have more than $100,000 in their USA account, and a more secure retirement. That's the kind of tax relief America needs. By providing this new tax credit for retirement savings, we can make it possible for all Americans to have a stake in the remarkable economic growth they have worked so hard to create.

Social Security first, then saving Medicare and giving tax relief to help all Americans save in the new USA accounts, investing in defense and education: that's the right way to use America's surplus. If we squander the surplus, we'll waste a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a stronger nation for our children and our grandchildren. Instead, let's work together to prepare our Nation for the great challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3 p.m. on January 22 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the Community in Little Rock, Arkansas

January 24, 1999

Thank you very much, James Lee. Ladies and gentlemen, let me thank you for coming out today. I want to thank Governor Huckabee for his response to this terrible, terrible tornado—and Mrs. Huckabee—I thank them for joining us on this walking tour today and welcoming me back to the Governor's Mansion. It's still—it's very beautiful inside, and it's had a little radical surgery in

the backyard, as I'm sure that a lot of you have seen.

I thank Secretary Slater, the Secretary of Transportation, also, obviously, our native Arkansan, for coming down here with me. And they will be helping us on the rebuilding. I thank Congressman Snyder and Congressman Marion Berry from east Arkansas, who has had some communities hit, and representatives of our other congressional offices who are here today. And Lt. Governor Rockefeller, Attorney General Pryor, Secretary of State Priest, Treasurer Jimmie Lou Fisher: I thank all of them for being here.

And I want to thank Mayor Pat Hays for coming across the river and lending a friendly, neighborly hand. James Lee Witt's regional director here is Buddy Young, who lives in Texas and who, as many of you know, was in the Arkansas State Police for many years before that.

This is a tragedy we all take very personally. When I was—I got out this morning at 25th and Gaines and sort of wended my way down Arch and Spring toward the Governor's Mansion, and I thought about how many hundreds of times I had run on those streets. And all these folks kept coming out and said, "The last time I saw you, you were running by here. And I had a roof on my house."

And then we went over—we crossed Roosevelt and went down toward Martin Luther King Drive and saw a lot of those homes, large numbers of homes have been completely destroyed there. And I just wanted to say to you because Arkansas always had a lot of tornadoes and two huge floods when I was Governor, I asked James Lee Witt to run the national Federal Emergency Management Agency so that it would not be political and so that it would be competent, professional, and highly personal. And we've dealt with everything from a 500-year flood along the Mississippi River to a massive earthquake in California and all kinds of other natural disasters. This is a trip, I'm sure—I know I, and I'm sure both James Lee and Rodney, never wanted to have to make.

I'd like to give a word of personal encouragement to my former neighbors up here in the Quapaw Quarter not to give up on it. I hope everyone who possibly can will rebuild those homes—will rebuild the homes, fix the roofs, replant the trees, and keep the spirit of the place alive. And I want to say to the folks in all the counties in the State—and I've got a list that includes not only Pulaski but also Independence, St. Francis, Saline, and White counties—we've already declared individual and local governments eligible for assistance there. The State has been declared a disaster area as more counties may become specifically eligible. I want to encourage all of them, as well.

These things happen, as Governor Huckabee reminded me, that Arkansas had the largest number of tornadoes in one day moving through here the other day that have ever been recorded. And we grieve for the loss of life.

I'd like to say, especially, that this is a landmark for me, this store here. And I'm so glad that the people who own it are going to rebuild it, because it used to be our family store. And Hillary and Chelsea and I used to come down here. We think of the fine pharmacist here who lost his life, and the others here in Arkansas. And when we survey the scope of the devastation, I think we can all be grateful to God that the loss has not been greater.

And so this is a day when the Sun is out, and a lot of people have offered their helping hands. I want to thank these young people from the AmeriCorps program, our national service program, for being here. They've come in to help. We're glad to see them.

And so I ask you to redouble your resolve, and help your neighbors. And we'll do everything we can to be good neighbors.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the parking lot of a Harvest Foods store. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee and his wife, Janet, Lt. Gov. Win Rockefeller, Attorney General Winston Bryant, Secretary of State Sharon Priest, and State Treasurer Jimmie Lou Fisher of Arkansas; and Mayor Patrick Henry Hays of North Little Rock.

Remarks to the Community in Beebe, Arkansas

January 24, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon. Thank you for making me feel welcome. Let me say, first of all, that I brought my ''Arkansas Cabinet''—Secretary Slater and Mr. Witt—down here today, along with a number of Arkansans from the White House staff, including Missy Kincaid, who is from this community. I have been here many times. I have a lot of friends here, and I was very sad when I flew over Beebe and McRae today and I saw how much damage had been done. And I saw a lot of pain in a lot of faces up on the road there, but I also saw a lot of determination.

I want to thank your mayor for being—even with his bad foot, walking around with me in some pretty lumpy places. He must think he has impeccable timing. He got himself installed just in time for the tornado. But he's a young man and a teacher, so he ought to be about rebuilding the schools—and that's a good thing.

And I thank your county judge. I thank your superintendent, Mr. Williams. I thank my good friend Senator Beebe and Mrs. Beebe and Representative Hinton. I'd also like to compliment your fire chief, Mr. Kennedy, and the National Guard people. I know they've worked very, very hard the last few days, and I know that we're all appreciative of them.

And you've had some young AmeriCorps volunteers who came down from St. Louis, and that's a program that was started after I became President—I'm proud of these young people; they volunteer a year or 2 years of their lives to work in communities just doing what needs to be done. And I'm very grateful for that.

Let me say on the points that I've heard people talk about, as all of you know, we've got a relationship here with the State emergency folks. We are going to set up programs to provide whatever help we can to this community. I think the most immediate public need, obviously, is for some place for the children to go to school. And we've talked about how quickly we could get some of the portable classrooms in here in large numbers and with the best possible quality. And I assure you that we will—I will personally be involved in that, and so will Mr. Witt and Secretary Slater. We'll get on it, and we'll get the job done as quickly as it can physically be done.

We also want to make sure that both the community and individual families are clear about what the Federal Government can and cannot do and what kind of support is there. We don't want anybody to leave something on the table that we could contribute to rebuilding the lives of the families and the community.

And, again, I just want to encourage you. You probably know, right before I came here I was walking through my old neighborhood in Little Rock, the Quapaw Quarter, where the Governor's Mansion is and where I lived for 12 years. I saw a lot of people whom Hillary and Chelsea and I spent a lot of time with, with their homes down around their ears today, too. They'll have to decide how to go forward, and many of you will. But I just want to encourage you. I want to tell you that as awful as it is, I just thank God there weren't more people killed. And I hope we can all keep the right attitude, and I hope all the neighbors will keep helping their neighbors and, in the end, I think it will come out all right.

And, again, let me thank you, Mayor; thank you, Judge; and I thank all the other local leaders, and thank you for giving a chance to be here—giving us a chance to be with you today.

God bless you. Thank you very much.

I also wanted to say just one other thing. Just because I—there's one part of Arkansas I am not visiting today. In addition to Congressman Snyder, who has Pulaski and White County, Independence and St. Francis County, and I think one other county have been declared disasters. And the east Arkansas counties are in Representative Marion Berry's district, and Congressman Berry is here with us today, too. And so our thoughts are with the people east of here who are suffering as well. And some of those folks lost everything they have, and I just wanted to mention them and say our thoughts and our prayers and our support are with them, too.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:47 p.m. in the Beebe School District Building. In his remarks, he referred to Katherine (Missy) Kincaid, Special Assistant to the First Lady; Mayor Donald Ward of Beebe; Judge Bob Parish of White County; Kieth Williams, Beebe superintendent of schools; State Senator Mark Beebe and State Representative Randy Minton of Arkansas; and Doug Kennedy, chief, Beebe Fire Department.

Remarks on the Welfare to Work Initiative

January 25, 1999

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is a good way to start the day, isn't it? [*Laughter*] We're all going to feel better when we leave here.

Let me thank the previous speakers. First, I want to thank Robert Higgins and his entire organization for setting an example for corporations throughout America. And I thank his employees for coming here today and for being a vivid human illustration of how welfare reform can work at its best.

I thank my good friend of many years Governor Mel Carnahan, and Mrs. Carnahan, who is here with him. We made two of our major welfare reform announcements over the last several years in Missouri because no State has worked harder to do this right, in a both humane and effective way.

I want to thank Carlos—I was looking at him—I don't know how many—how many public speeches do you think Carlos has made in his life? [*Laughter*] Man, he stood up here, he had his head up, his shoulders back—I was thinking as I was watching him that after he does all that computer stuff and makes money for a few years, that we're always looking for a few good candidates in this business, and he looked awfully good. [*Laughter*]

I would like to thank Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman, and Secretary Slater for their work on welfare reform. And there are two Members of the House of Representatives here today who represent very different districts, but who have a passionate interest in this whole subject: Representative Ben Cardin from Maryland and Representative Rubén Hinojosa from south Texas. And I thank them for being here and for what they've done for this cause.

And my good friend Jane Campbell, county commissioner from Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, Ohio. And I'd like to say a special word, if I might, before I get into my remarks about Eli Segal who started our Welfare to Work Partnership.

You know, it takes a special, almost a genius, to start something that didn't exist before. And a couple of years ago, when I announced in the State of the Union we were going to have this Welfare to Work Partnership, we had five companies. A couple of years later, we have 10,000 companies.

Yesterday, you may have seen in the press, I went home to Arkansas to look at some terrible tornado damage. At each place where I went, both these places, there was a team of our young AmeriCorps volunteers from all over America—and most of them had never been to Arkansas before. And Governor, one of the teams was from St. Louis, working on the tornado damage. These young Americans give a year, sometimes 2 years of their lives; they earn credit for college. In 4 years there have been over 100,000 AmeriCorps volunteers. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to get to 100,000 volunteers. Eli Segal also started AmeriCorps. So for two great contributions to the United States, we thank him for this remarkable, remarkable thing.

One of the reasons that I ran for President in 1992 was to change the welfare system as we then knew it, to move from a system that promoted independence and had no incentives for parents who are not custodial parents to be responsible, and basically gave people a check that was almost always inadequate, in the name of being humane, which assumed, more often than not, that they had no capacity to work and support their children.

All these things were done with the best of intentions. We either assumed people couldn't do the right thing, or we assumed that they wouldn't do the right thing. And so, well, we made the best of an imperfect world by at least cutting a check once a

month and then making sure that—and I approve of this and kept it—there were nutritional and health benefits for the children.

And it seemed to me that we ought to—before we just continue to give up on this—we now had created a couple or three generations, in some places, of people who depended on welfare checks and repeated the pattern of the past—that we ought to try to develop a system that at least would try to create incentives and, where appropriate, requirements that would promote independence, work, and family responsibilities.

Now, everybody liked the idea and wanted to do it, but a lot of people, including a lot of very good people who had labored for years in this system, doubted that it could be done. And so we started working at it. And in the past 6 years, I think it's obvious that the American people have done a lot to change all that.

When I became President, I worked with 43 States—Governor Carnahan mentioned this—before we passed legislation, to just free them of Federal rules which undermined their ability to create a system that would promote work and family. There were many innovative programs that already were beginning to move large numbers of people from welfare to work, even before 1996. It was in that year that I was able to sign the landmark bipartisan welfare reform law. I said then that our Nation's answers to the problems of poverty will no longer be a never-ending cycle of welfare, but instead, the dignity, the power, the ethic of work.

Today, we can actually foresee a time when we can break the cycle of welfare for good—when welfare will literally be a support system given to people in hard economic times, or when personal misfortune occurs, but that it will not be the rule of life for large numbers of our fellow citizens.

Already we now see welfare rolls in America are the lowest they've been in 30 years—for the first time in 30 years, below 8 million people, down by 44 percent since I took office. And the same people—the number of people on welfare who are also working some, taking that first step toward responsibility, has tripled. Every State—every State—is now meeting the work participation standards required under the welfare reform law, something I confess that even I did not believe would happen. None of us believed that they would. Every single one of them so far is meeting the work participation standards of the welfare reform law.

America is working again, and this work is transforming lives and families. The welfare system is no longer holding people back, it is helping them to move ahead.

Since the goal here—and let's not forget what the goal is; it is to empower individuals and strengthen families—we've had to do more than simply put time limits on welfare. As I said a moment ago, those who lose their welfare checks continue to get health and nutritional support for their children—and they should. It was one of the big battles we fought here when we debated this, and it led to two vetoes before we finally got a bill that I felt that I could sign.

We also have increased our support for training, for transportation, for child care for those who move from welfare to work, recognizing that there are barriers, and we shouldn't expect people to actually move from welfare to work and lower their standard of living and lower their ability to support their children. And there is more support for child care, substantially more, in this budget and for other things.

We have given more support for health care and child care for all low income working families. I think that our citizens should never forget that the largest number of poor people in America are the working poor. And we should be sensitive of that. And with the help of Congress, we have doubled the earned-income tax credit for families with children. That is a targeted tax cut that's especially generous to low-income working families. And today it's worth about $1,000 to every family of four with an income of under $30,000; and for families of two and three, lower incomes, it's worth quite a lot of money. So this was a major contribution of the economic plan of 1993, and it alone, along with the increase in the minimum wage, has lifted over 2 million children out of poverty.

And finally, let me say, as all of you know I am trying to raise the minimum wage again because I don't think people should work so poor children can still be in poverty.

I think it is very important, however, that we recognize that much of the success of welfare reform has come because of the growth of the economy at large—nearly 18 million new jobs in the last 6 years. I also think we have to recognize that much of the success of welfare reform has come because of the commitment of people in the private sector to do the right thing. I think that if there were no companies willing to have the example that Fleet has offered us today, this would be much, much harder.

And as we look ahead to the future, we have to assume that reaching the next 8 million people—or just under 8 million people—on welfare will be even more challenging than reaching the 44 percent reduction that we have seen achieved already. Therefore, since it's not fair to require people to work unless they have a chance to work, we have to honor and build up and work with the private sector to make sure they have that chance.

As I said, we started 2 years ago with five companies in the Welfare to Work Partnership. Today there are 10,000. They have hired, retrained, and often promoted literally hundreds of thousands of people. And as you have heard, this is not charity—it's good for families, but it's also good for the bottom line, and good for the communities.

Now, smaller caseloads, bigger paychecks, are important signs of progress. But I think it's also important that we recognize this is about more than economics. And I think you can see that. There's something intangible, even beyond the money, involved here—the sense of security of these newly-working members of our country, the sense of pride at being able to support a child, and being able to be a fully participating member of society.

So we have to do more, and we now know what works. And we've seen examples of it today. We know that long-term welfare recipients can be turned into full-time workers. Now we must ensure that we go to the next step, that we deal with the remaining people on welfare, and that we do it, recognizing that it is a challenge but also a phenomenal opportunity for the United States, and a responsibility for those of us who can do something about it.

In my State of the Union Address last week, I said that we can help another 200,000 Americans move from welfare to work with extra support in the Federal budget. To achieve that, I propose first that we renew the welfare-to-work program, which is set to expire in the year 2000. My balanced budget includes $1 billion to help States and communities build upon their record of success. It also dedicates $150 million of those funds to low-income fathers who fulfill their duty to work, to pay child support, to become part of their children's lives.

And I think all of us were thrilled by Carlos' statement. But I would like to make one point here that he made that I think ought to be made more explicit. There is a reason that welfare reform has worked. There is a reason that programs like this magnificent program in Minnesota, giving fathers the tools they need to support their children, has worked. And that is, most people are basically good people who want to do the right thing.

You know, we have all these programs; we talk about all these policies, and we hardly ever say that. But I think that's worth stating. You saw a good person up here talking about a child he loved. And it's so easy to forget that. The reason all this stuff can be done is that human nature will rise to the level of possibility if given the opportunity and the guidance and the support. That's the reason these rolls have reduced so much.

You know, I hardly ever—when I was Governor for 12 years, I ran a welfare system in a poor State—I don't believe I ever met—and I went to welfare offices, and I sat and talked with caseworkers and welfare recipients, and went through the details of it—and I have never met a person who has said, ''You know, I really love getting this welfare check, and I hope I never have to hit a lick.'' [*Laughter*] I never met a person who said, ''Gosh, I'm proud that I never paid any child support to my child.'' You know, there may be a few, but to pretend that that is anything like more than a small minority is a foolish assumption.

So I say this is very important. And this $150 million to support people, so there can be more stories like Carlos Rosas', is very, very important. Many States are using some

of their welfare-to-work funds, as you heard from Governor Carnahan already, to get fathers to sign personal responsibility contracts, to do the right thing by their children. And now this extra $150 million will help to ensure that every State can have this kind of effort, and that every community that has any substantial number of people who would fall under this category can do the kinds of things we've heard about in this Minnesota program.

But we have more to do. With the longest peacetime expansion in history, with a continually growing economy, businesses have to reach wider to get new talent. They have to bring more welfare recipients into the workplace if we're going to continue to grow.

So we have to see this as an opportunity to make permanent gains in dealing with the welfare challenge. And therefore, I think we have to do more to help those recipients who are still on the rolls. And as I said, they're often the greatest challenges to getting people into the work force.

Example number one—that's why Secretary Slater is here today—two-thirds of the new jobs in America are in the suburbs; three-quarters of the welfare recipients are in the cities or in isolated rural areas. So you've got the jobs in the middle, and the welfare recipients in the cities or in the rural areas.

Our balanced budget will double funding to get workers to the workplace—for transportation support. It also has a 50-percent increase in housing vouchers, to help families find affordable homes closer to the jobs and avoid difficult and, sometimes, actually impossible commutes.

Now, these are the kinds of things that I think we ought to be doing. We don't have any excuse not to do it. We have the example of Fleet. We have the example of Missouri and Governor Carnahan. We have the example of Carlos Rosas. We have the example of these fine women who stood up when they were introduced as employees of Fleet. And we now know that it is not only the right thing to do for our country; it is the right thing to do for our companies.

So I hope that we will have enormous bipartisan support for this new advance in the welfare budget. And I hope all of you will do everything you can to spread the word across the country that it is good for America to do this, and it will work because most people are good people and they want to do the right thing.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Robert J. Higgins, president and chief operating officer, Fleet Financial Group; Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri and his wife, Jean; Carlos Rosas, former welfare recipient who introduced the President; and Eli Segal, president and chief executive officer, Welfare to Work Partnership.

Statement on BP Amoco's Efforts To Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

January 25, 1999

I commend BP Amoco and its chief executive, John Browne, for once again demonstrating the kind of corporate leadership needed to meet two of our most pressing environmental challenges—air pollution and global warming.

Last fall British Petroleum set a new standard in corporate responsibility by voluntarily pledging to reduce dramatically its emissions of greenhouse gases. Today BP Amoco extended this pledge to cover Amoco's production facilities as well. These commitments demonstrate that leading corporations can serve their investors and their customers, even as they join us in the fight against global warming.

Also today, BP Amoco announced plans to market cleaner fuels in 40 cities around the world to help improve local air quality. By using the latest technology to custom tailor fuels to address the unique pollution concerns of these cities, the company will help produce cleaner, healthier air for millions of people worldwide. And it is helping to build the kind of partnership between the fuel and automotive industries that will be needed to deliver clean, efficient transportation for the 21st century.

With today's announcements, BP Amoco offers further proof that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. Working together, we can ensure that future

generations breathe cleaner air, and we can protect them from the grave risks of global warming.

Remarks at the Fifth Millennium Evening at the White House

January 25, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. I would like to take about the last four sentences of Professor Marty's talk and emblazon it in the consciousness of every human being on the face of the Earth.

This is a wonderful night. I'd like to begin by thanking the First Lady for leading our Millennium Project and by bringing these two remarkable people here. I'm terribly impressed with both of them. They took about 40 minutes, by my count, and did the last 1,000 years and the entire future. [*Laughter*] Took me an hour and 17 minutes the other night to talk about one year. [*Laughter*]

I also want to express my gratitude to both of you for not making fun of those of us who insist on ignoring the Gregorian calendar and proclaiming the millennium next New Year's Eve at midnight. [*Laughter*]

I thought Professor Davis did a great service to all of us who are less well-read in what happened 1,000 years ago by debunking some of the popular myths. Clearly, not everyone was giving away all their possessions or cowering in churches waiting for the world to end. Maybe what was said tonight will discourage some of our fellow citizens who seem determined to buy desert land and hoard gold, bullets, and Skoal in their pickup trucks. [*Laughter*] I don't know. You laugh, this is a major source of conversation every morning in the White House, here. [*Laughter*]

I also thank her for reminding us about the bold voyages of discovery, the important advances in human knowledge. I thank her for reminding us that people were, and I quote what she said, "enmeshed in reading texts together." Who would have thought about book clubs 1,000 years ago.

I thank her for telling us about the medieval Peace of God movement, which has a millennial connection to us in what has been going on in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa. I thank her, too, for reminding us that ordinary people, even a long time ago, can make a difference to a good end.

I thank Professor Marty for his fundamental insights, for reminding us to be both hopeful and humble. He asked all these questions. I enjoyed Professor Hawking being here and trying to deal with all these questions of time: how we measure time; why do we care so much about the millennium, or a century, or a year, or our birthdays and anniversaries, for that matter? We have to have some way of organizing our thoughts and our plans against the mysteries of time and timelessness. We have to find some way of explaining our poor efforts to fulfill our own destinies and to live out our small piece of God's design.

Most of us, sooner or later, come to the conclusion that life really is a journey, not a destination, until the end. But we all still need a few benchmarks along the way to get there.

I thank them both for ending on a note of hope and for recognizing that you cannot have hope without faith—for believers, faith in God—and in the end you cannot practice hope without charity or love.

One of the dilemmas I constantly confront as President is the necessity of believing in the idea of progress, with the certainty of man's and woman's constant demonstration of making the same old mistakes over and over again, millennium after millennium, in new and different guises and the certainty that perfection cannot be achieved in this life.

I think there is a way to reconcile the idea of progress with the frailty of humanity. I think that you can make a case that, on balance, the world is a better place today than it was a thousand years ago for people who have had a chance to drink fully of life's possibilities. I think you can make a case that we are obliged, all of us as human beings, to try to extend that opportunity to more and more of our fellow citizens on this small planet. And Mr. Goldin's successors in interest will be taking us into outer space to see if we can find some others, somewhere else, to worry about 1,000 years from now.

We thank Professors Davis and Marty for giving us a chance to make some sense of the millennium and for reminding us, in the end, that the only meaning it will have is the meaning we give it in our own lives.

Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to ask Ellen Lovell to take over the floor and turn over the floor to all of you and to the thousands who are joining us, thanks to technology, for some questions.

Ellen?

[*At this point, Ms. Lovell, Director, White House Millennium Council, and the First Lady led the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The following question from the Internet was directed to the President.*]

The First Lady. This is from Dr. Joseph W. Epstein, from Monroe, New York, and it's for the President: Should the dawning of this new millennium see a greater participation of scientists in studies aimed at preserving our environment and recapturing what has been lost? Government and business incentives would be required to encourage scientists in these areas. Hopefully, a person who recaptures a rain forest could receive as much acclaim as the batter of ever more home runs. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, the short answer to his question is, obviously, yes. If you look at—one of the things I was going to say in my closing remarks I'll just say now to respond to this question, because we don't have enough time for everybody to ask a question for us all to have a conversation. I wish we did.

I think something that would be helpful for all of you is if, when you go home tonight, before you go to bed, if you would take out a piece of paper and a pencil or a pen, and write down the three things that you're most worried about, with the dawn of the new millennium, and the three things that you're most hopeful about. And then ask yourself what, if anything, can you do about either one?

Now, I think, with the growth of the world's population and with the emergence of a new economy based more on ideas and information and technology and less on industrial patterns of production, we still see an enormous destruction of the world's resources. And the most serious problem is the problem of climate change, global warming.

The rain forest is important for a lot of reasons—he mentioned the rain forest—because an enormous percentage of the oxygen generated from non-ocean sources comes from rain forests; because well over half the plant and animal life on the globe lives in the rain forests; and therefore, the answers to some of my most profoundly important medical questions lie in the rain forest, quite apart from our responsibility to preserve it just for what it is.

So we have put a lot of emphasis on trying to create more financial and other incentives for people to deal with climate change and global warming, to try to help to save the rain forests. And I have, for years, kind of brooded about the prospect of having a global alliance between governments, chemical companies, and others that would have an interest in it, in joining together, in effect, to pay to save the rain forests. The Government of Brazil actually has a program there, where they try to invest and set aside large tracts of rain forest land.

But I think one of the things that is going to happen in the next century is that we will move very close to the limits of our body's ability to live. I think you're going to see an exponential increase in life expectancy in the next 30 years or so. And to go back to what you said, I think that it's going to aggravate the underclass problem, because you have, in countries where the health system is breaking down, a decline in life expectancy.

Now, where that's going on, there will be more and more pressure to develop more and more scientific discoveries and also to more democratically spread it and to lift people out of poverty. I think that there has to be an enormous amount of money and incentives and time and thought given to how a lot of countries can skip a stage of economic development that would otherwise require them to destroy what remains of the world's natural resources and put us in a position where we could never solve this global warming problem.

And that's why I signed the Kyoto treaty on climate change, why I have pushed it so

hard. I think it can be the organizing principle to get to the objective that our questioner asks. Unfortunately, my successors will have to do a lot of the work, but I hope we'll at least have laid the foundation for it, because it will be one of the most significant public questions of the next, not just the next century, the next couple of decades. It would be on my list of three.

[*The question-and-answer portion of the evening continued. The President then made closing remarks.*]

The President. Well, I will be very brief. First of all, I think we should thank our speakers again. They were magnificent. [*Applause*]

Secondly, I would like to say that I think we all leave here feeling that we now have more questions than we did when we showed up, which means they succeeded. I would just like to leave you with this one thought. You all know that I am a walking apostle of hope and progress. The question is, how do you pursue it without arrogance, with appropriate humility, and without a definition that is too narrow?

Reverend Jackson asked a question about Africa, and Dr. Marty gave a great rejoinder about how we had to be more concerned because there were more and more Christians growing in Africa and fewer elsewhere. I would like to ask you to think about another thing.

Our whole sense of time and marking time is so rooted in the development of our various monotheistic philosophies, Christianity for me, and for many of you, or Judaism or Islam. How do you think this whole discussion would sound, tonight, to a serious Buddhist or a serious Confucian? How would we argue with them about the idea of progress. How would they argue with us about the idea of the immutable? How can we reconcile the two? Because in the end, that's what religious faith does. It gives you a sense of the timeless and a sense of what you're supposed to do with your time.

And I just—this has been thrilling for me. But I hope all of you will remember the question I asked you. And if you feel so inclined later, feel free to write to me about the things that you're most worried about and the most hopeful about, and what you think I ought to spend my time between now and the millennium doing for you and the rest of the world.

Thank you. Join us in the dining room for a reception. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Evening program began at 7:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In the President's remarks, he referred to physicist Stephen W. Hawking and civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson. The lecture, "The Meaning of the Millennium," was presented by Natalie Zemon Davis, professor emeritus, Princeton University, and Martin E. Marty, director, the Public Religion Project. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Professor Davis, and Professor Marty, as well as the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The lecture was cybercast on the Internet.

Memorandum on Assistance to Kosovo

January 25, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99–10

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to $25 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to meet the urgent and unexpected needs of refugees and migrants.

These funds may be used to meet the urgent and unexpected needs of refugees, displaced persons, victims of conflict, and other persons at risk due to the Kosovo crisis. These funds may be used, as appropriate, to provide contributions to international and nongovernmental organizations. You are authorized and directed to inform the appropriate committees of the Congress of this determination and the use of funds under this

authority, and to arrange for the publication of this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 26.

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Pope John Paul II in St. Louis, Missouri

January 26, 1999

Your Holiness; Archbishop Rigali; Archbishop Montalvo; Governor Carnahan; Mayor Harmon; County Executive Westfall; Ambassador Boggs; Members of Congress; members of the Cabinet; our visitors from the Vatican; my fellow Americans:

Your Holiness, on behalf of all of us gathered here today, indeed, on behalf of all the people of our beloved Nation, we welcome you back to America. Your return brings joy not only to the Catholic faithful but to every American who has heard your message of peace and charity toward all God's children. And we thank you for first going to Mexico and for reaching out to all the people of the Americas.

We greet you, and we thank you. For 20 years, you have lifted our spirits and touched our hearts. For 20 years, you have challenged us to think of life not in terms of what we acquire for ourselves but in terms of what we give of ourselves.

This is your seventh visit to the United States, your 85th visit abroad as the Bishop of Rome. Through it all, you have given of yourself with a boundless physical energy which can only find its source in limitless faith. You have come in the final year of a century that has seen much suffering but which ends with great hope for freedom and reconciliation. It is a moment anticipated by countless prayers, brought forward by countless hands, and shaped very much by you, Holy Father, and your 20-year pilgrimage.

We honor you for helping to lead a revolution of values and spirit in central Europe and the former Soviet Union, freeing millions to live by conscience, not coercion, and freeing all of us from the constant fear of nuclear war. We honor you for standing for human dignity, human rights, and religious freedom and for helping people to find the courage to stand up for themselves, from Africa to Asia to the Western Hemisphere.

We honor you for your work to bring peace to nations and peoples divided by old hatreds and suspicions, from Bosnia and Kosovo, to central Africa, to Indonesia, to the Middle East, even to our own communities. People still need to hear your message that all are God's children, all have fallen short of His glory, all the injustices of yesterday cannot excuse a single injustice today.

Holy Father, we are moved by your desire to mark the new millennium with a journey to Jerusalem, to bring mercy and reconciliation to all those who believe in one God, in the holy place where all our faiths began.

Your Holiness, we honor you, too, because you have never let those of us who enjoy the blessings of prosperity, freedom, and peace forget our responsibilities. On your last visit to the United States you called on us to build a society truly worthy of the human person, a society in which none are so poor they have nothing to give and none are so rich they have nothing to receive. Today you visit an America that is thriving but also striving, striving to include those who do not yet share in our prosperity at home and striving to put a human face on the global economy by advancing the dignity of work, the rights of women, the well-being of children, and the help of our common environment.

You will see an America that is not simply living for today but working for future generations, an America working harder to be what you have asked us to be, an example of justice and civic virtues, freedom fulfilled, and goodness at home and abroad.

The Catholic Church in America is helping all of us to realize that vision. Here in St. Louis, Catholic charities are helping families conquer violence and drug abuse, helping people in need to find work and to finance their first homes, helping refugees from war-torn lands to build new lives, building housing for the elderly, including the new Pope John Paul II Apartments, and leading countless other efforts that lift our people's lives.

All over our country, the Catholic faithful do this work for the sake of all Americans,

and they are joined in their work by Americans of all faiths.

Your Holiness, every American welcomes you and hopes that you will come to see us again. I am nowhere near as gifted a linguist as you are, Holy Father, but as they say in your native Poland: *Sto lat i wiecej*—may you live 100 years and more. And may you keep working and teaching and lighting the way, for all of us and all the world.

Welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. at the Missouri Air National Guard Hangar. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Justine Rigali of St. Louis; Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo of the Holy See; Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; St. Louis County Executive George Westfall; U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See/Vatican City Corinne Claiborne Boggs. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Pope John Paul II.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Pope John Paul II in St. Louis

January 26, 1999

Q. Mr. President, are there any thoughts you'd care to share with us, now, as you sit down with the Holy Father?

The President. Well, we have a lot of things to discuss, so I'm looking forward to it. We're going to talk about many places in the world, and I'm anxious to hear his thoughts on his recent trip to Mexico. And then I expect we'll go through a lot of other hot spots in the world.

Q. How has his advice affected your decisions so far in your Presidency?

The President. He reminds us to think of the people, not just the governments of other countries but the people of other countries. And that's an important thing for an American President to keep in mind.

Press aide. Thank you, pool. To your left, please. We have another wave.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

The President. I think the Church should buy the company producing the film, and you could fund all the Catholic charities all over the world with it. We could sell all the film the photographers use. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:28 p.m. at the Air National Guard Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Social Security and Medicare

January 27, 1999

The President. Thank you, and good morning. The Vice President and I are delighted to welcome you here. We have an unusually large delegation from the United States Congress here today, and I believe I have all their names, and I would like to acknowledge Senator Thomas and Representatives Becerra, Bliley, Borski, Cardin, Hill, Nadler, Pickering, Portman, Pomeroy, Markey, Smith, and Tauscher. I think I have got them all. And give them a hand. [*Applause*] I think that's amazing that they're here.

I would like to thank Secretary Shalala, Social Security Commissioner Apfel, and Gene Sperling for their work on this meeting today. I'd like to thank our panelists Laura Tyson, Uwe Reinhardt, Martha McSteen, Hans Riemer, and Stuart Altman for their presence. And they will be introduced in a few moments.

In my State of the Union Address last week, I challenged Congress and the American people to meet the long-term challenges our country faces for the 21st century. Today you all know we are here to talk about perhaps the largest of those, the aging of America.

The number of elderly Americans will double by 2030. Thanks to medical advances, by the middle of the next century, the average American will live to be 82—6 years longer than today. These extra years of life are a great gift, but they do present a problem for Social Security, for Medicare, for how we will manage the whole nature of our society.

As I have said repeatedly, this is a high-class problem, and the older I get the better it looks. [*Laughter*] But it is one, nonetheless, that we have to face. Fortunately, we are in a strong position to act because of our prosperity and our budget surplus.

It is well to remember that the current prosperity of this country was created not by rash actions in Washington, but by facing boldly the challenge forced by the budget deficits, by getting the deficit down, getting into balance, bringing the interest rates down, and bringing the economy back. We also should face the challenge of the aging of America in the same way.

In the State of the Union, I laid out a three-part plan and asked Congress to consider it, to invest our surplus in ways that will both strengthen our economy today and in the future, and meet the needs of the aging of America. First, I proposed that we devote 62 percent of the surplus for the next 15 years to saving Social Security, investing a small portion in the private sector, as private, State, and local government pensions do. The average position of the retirement fund in the stock market, of Social Security, would be under 2 percent of the market for the next 15 years, under 3 percent for the next 20 years, and always under 4 for the next 50 years.

Over the course of the last week, I have been gratified to see discussions of this proposal, and obviously differences about the whole market investment issue, but substantial agreement in the idea of dedicating a large portion of the surplus to saving Social Security across partisan lines. And for that I am very grateful. I think we should build on this to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund further. If we do what I suggested, it will add 55—take us to 2055.

I think we should have a 75-year life for the Social Security Trust Fund. We should also make some changes to reduce the poverty rate among elderly women who have a poverty rate at twice—almost twice the general poverty rate among seniors in our country. And I believe we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn.

To make the changes necessary to go to 75 years on the Trust Fund and deal with these other challenges, we will simply have to have a bipartisan process. There is no way to avoid it. But I'm confident that the changes, while somewhat difficult, are fully achievable. And if we work together, we can make them.

To prepare America for the senior boom will require more than saving Social Security. We also have to deal with the challenge to Medicare and our obligation to make sure that our seniors have access to quality health care. I want to say very clearly that we need to set aside enough of the surplus for Medicare and Social Security before we address new initiatives like tax cuts. That's why the second part of our proposal calls for devoting 15 percent of the surplus for 15 years to the Medicare Trust Fund. If we do this and nothing else, we can secure the Trust Fund until after the year 2020.

But I want to make something else clear. I believe that—some have suggested that by dedicating the surplus to Medicare, we won't need to make any decisions to reform the program. I disagree with that. Medicare needs revenues to increase its solvency, but it also needs reform to make sure that it is modern and competitive and to gain additional savings to help finance a long overdue prescription drug benefit. So, for me, reforming Medicare and committing the surplus go hand-in-hand.

I'd also like to say that, for me, there could be no better use of our surplus in assuring a secure retirement and health care to older Americans. And I believe that it is good not only for older Americans but for their children and grandchildren as well, and for the larger economy.

Why is that? Well, first of all, if we dedicate this portion of the surplus to Social Security and Medicare over the next 15 years, obviously, in most of those years that money will not be needed. In all those years we will, in effect, be buying back the national debt. As we do that, we will bring the percent of our debt—I mean, our publicly held debt as a percentage of our economy—down to its lowest point since 1917, since before World War I. What will that do? That will drive interest rates down, and it will free private capital up to invest in the United States, to create jobs, to raise incomes. So I think that it's very important.

If you look around the world today at the troubles these countries are facing, when their budget deficits get out of hand, when their interest rates go through the roof and they can't get any money from anywhere,

when we worry constantly about our trading partners, trying to keep them in good shape and help them to not only preserve our economic markets, to preserve partners for peace and democracy and freedom—if we in the United States could actually be doing something to pay down our debt while saving Social Security and Medicare, we would keep these interest rates down. And it would be an enormous hedge against whatever unforeseen future volatility occurs in the global economy.

So this is a strategy that will actually grow the American economy while preparing for the future. Of course, in an even more direct way it's good for the rest of America because, when the baby boomers retire, as I said in the State of the Union, none of us want our children to be burdened with the costs of our retirement, nor do we want our grandchildren's childhoods to be lessened because our kids are having to pay so much for our retirement or our medical care. So, from my point of view, this is a very good thing for Americans of all ages, without regard to their political party, their income, their section of the country. I think this will benefit the country and help to bring us together and strengthen us over the next several decades.

Let me just say very briefly that the third part of our proposal is to dedicate $500 billion of the surplus to give tax relief to working families through USA accounts, Universal Savings Accounts. Under my plan, working Americans would receive a tax credit to contribute to their own savings account and an additional tax credit to match a portion of their savings, with the choice theirs about how to invest the funds, and more help for those who are working harder on lower incomes and, therefore, would have a harder time saving.

This new tax credit would make it easier for Americans to save for their own retirement and long-term care needs. And obviously, this would be further helped by something that is already in our balanced budget, which is the $1,000 long-term care tax credit.

So these are the things that I think together would not only help us to manage and deal with in a very good way the aging of America, I think it would help us to secure the long-term economic prosperity of the country and help to keep families together across the generations without seeing unbearable strains put on those families, as so many of the baby boomers live longer and inevitably have more medical costs.

So I hope that we will have a good debate in Congress. There will be others with their own ideas. I welcome them. I look forward to it. Today we're going to focus on the programs that I mentioned at the beginning of my talk. And I'd like the Vice President, who has worked very hard on this with me, now to make a few remarks and to introduce our panelists so we can get on with the morning.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point, Vice President Al Gore made brief remarks and introduced the panelists.*]

The President. Well, I would like to begin by asking a question of Laura Tyson, who is, as has been said, on this bipartisan Medicare Commission. One of the things that I have seen—and I alluded to this in my remarks—one of the things that I've seen said in the press in the aftermath of the State of the Union is that by proposing to allocate 15 percent of the surplus for 15 years to the Medicare Trust Fund, I basically was killing any chance to reform the program because we can keep it just like it is until 2020.

I didn't see it that way, for the reasons I said. First of all, I think there are some substantive changes that ought to be made that would enrich the program, like the prescription drug program, and secondly, because I think the demographics and the costs are going to require reform anyway. I mean, if my numbers are right, I think that the Medicare spending would have to grow at like half the rate of economic growth for the next decade just to extend it for another 5 or 6 years.

So what I'd like for you to talk about is—what do you think—it's a good thing to dedicate some of the surplus to Medicare, and whether you think it can be used as an excuse not to make any further changes in the program, or whether it would actually facilitate changes?

I think we need to get this out. And I really don't know what she's going to say, but I've been very concerned about that because when I made this suggestion, I did not intend

to say that, ''Whoop-de-do! Now we don't have to make any changes in the program.'' What I was trying to do was to make it possible for us to change the program without pricing it out of the reach of Americans, millions of Americans.

So, Laura, you want to talk about that?

[*Laura D'Andrea Tyson, member, Commission on Medicare, noted Medicare's complexity and despite efforts to improve it, additional funding would be required. She indicated the President's plan to dedicate a portion of the budget surplus to Medicare would secure the program. Vice President Gore asked Dr. Uwe Reinhardt, commissioner, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, for his observation, and Dr. Reinhardt strongly supported the President's proposal.*]

The President. Let me just say for the record as someone who knows a little about such characterizations, I wouldn't do that, myself. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to ask Stuart Altman a question. Stuart has worked for Republican and for Democratic administrations. He's been through all the various generations of reforms we've had, trying to manage these health programs that we fund. And he's now also on the Medicare Commission. I'd like to just ask him to give us some idea from his point of view about—maybe be a little more specific, and I'm sure the Members of Congress here would like this—what are the type of structural reforms you think we should adopt to improve and modernize Medicare, even as we extend the life of the Trust Fund?

[*Stuart Altman praised the Health Care Finance Administration's work in an increasingly complex situation and indicated Congress had hindered the agency's ability to contract with providers and bill more efficiently. He also advocated restructuring the system to allow competition with the private sector. Finally, he indicated that the benefit package had to be altered to include prescription drugs.*]

The President. I don't want to interrupt the flow of the program; I think they're doing so well. But I just want to comment on one thing that Stuart said, because I think we ought to drive it home. Many of us have actually met people who choose between food and medicine. Nobody made a deeper impression on me when, in 1992, than this elderly couple I met in the Arel Senior Center in Nashua, New Hampshire, when they described this choice they made on a weekly basis.

But the point I want to make is, you know when we have partisan fights in Washington, they always get a lot of publicity. And when we do something together, almost nobody notices. But one of the things that I'd like to compliment all the Members of Congress here for is that there has been an enormous amount of bipartisan consensus to dramatically increase investment in medical research. And the NIH budget, for example, has grown exponentially as a result of that.

Now, what are we trying to do? Among other things, we're trying to find cures for everything from cancer to arthritis to Parkinson's to you name it. And we're also trying to develop preventions. A lot of those cures and preventions will be in the form of medicine, and a lot of what lengthens people's lives is in the form of medicine. We will be spending more and more and more money every year that we don't have to spend on hospital care and doctor care if we don't provide a prescription drug benefit.

And from the point of view of the Congress, I would ask you to think, if we were all serious about all this money we have put into the NIH, then we have to be equally serious about getting the benefits of that investment to all the American people, to the health care system in general, and to the economy in general. And I think it's very important because the problem Stuart mentioned is going to accelerate because of the breakthroughs that will occur as a result of the medical research that all of you have funded.

Go ahead.

[*Vice President Gore asked Martha McSteen, president, National Committee To Preserve Social Security and Medicare, about the need to deal with Social Security and Medicare together and the projected doubling of eligible seniors in the year 2030. Ms. McSteen*

noted the two programs were viewed as entwined, particularly with regard to the baby boomers for whom health care advances meant increased longevity and the opportunity for greater post-retirement productivity.]

The President. I'd like to close this section of the panel with Hans Riemer and ask him sort of what this looks like from his perspective. Let me remind you that the people that are now on Social Security don't have to worry about what we're talking about. The people that are now on Medicare, by and large, don't have to worry about what we're talking about, although, there's a more immediate time problem there. What we're trying to do for Social Security is to take it out to the time when it would even cover Hans' retirement, which it ought to as a retirement system that big, and also to try to at least have a framework which will enable us to not only secure Medicare for 2020 but make some changes that will enable us to manage the program far beyond that.

So I'd like for Hans to talk a little about his work and how he sees this and what advice he has.

[*Mr. Riemer, 26-year-old founder and director, 2030 Center, stated the solution would be to maintain fiscal discipline using the budget surplus for the Medicare and Social Security Trust Funds. He stated that because his generation would be living longer, it would need budget flexibility derived from paying down the debt.*]

The President. You know, I doubt, given the global economy, at least in the foreseeable—and I mean probably the next 10 to 20 years—it will ever be possible for a country that wants to have a great economy to run permanent deficits again. Now, we all know, if there's a recession, happens, and you've got fewer taxpayers paying in and more money going out for unemployed people—and we know there will be good times and bad times; that's part of human nature—but the elimination of the structural deficit, I think, is pretty much going to be a requirement for every country that wants to run an advanced economy and have long-term, stable conditions. Because the control of the—the people that can decide where the money goes and why, are going to pretty much demand it. And I think that that's something that we have to be quite careful about, and we need to be very prudent in projecting this.

And everybody understands when we say we're going to have surpluses over 25 years that they will vary in size, depending on the condition of the economy. What we mean by that is that we have a structural surplus and that the projections are pretty good. And I think that we have to—my sense is that that's where Congress is in both parties. There will be people who think that we ought to have a tax cut now instead of the retirement tax cut, so that it ought to be fungible now. There will be arguments about that. But my sense is, there's almost no one willing to do anything that would in any way run the risk of returning to a structural deficit. And I think that's a big step forward for our country.

Well, I thank all of you. We have here, in addition to Members of Congress, we've got a lot of health care providers and people who represent other folks. We've got a little time. I wonder if any Member of Congress who is here would like to ask a question of any member of our panel. This is not prepared. This is all—[*laughter*].

Mr. Nadler? Mr. Pomeroy?

[*Representative Jerrold Nadler noted that the assumptions used by Social Security actuaries were extremely conservative and asked why projections were being made on such conservative estimates of economic growth.*]

The President. Ken, you want to answer that? [*Laughter*] He's just greedy and wants all the money he can get; that's all.

[*Kenneth S. Apfel, Commissioner, Social Security Administration, stated that Office of Management and Budget's prudent assumptions anticipate a smaller work force in the future and, therefore, slower economic growth. More optimistic assumptions would create a bigger problem if the economy did not grow as much as anticipated.*]

The President. Let me say—I'm with you. I think they're wrong, but I don't think we can take the risk. But let me tell you why it looks like they're right. The reason it looks like they're right is that the number of people

taking early retirement, for example—taking the early Social Security option—is going up, still—people checking out at 62. And then they—if they're living to 82, then that's—and by the way, even today people who live to be 62 have a life expectancy of nearly 80; a 76-average-life-expectancy is from birth. So somebody who lives to be 62 years old, unless they have some critical condition, their chances of living to be 80 or more are pretty good. So the assumptions are based on two things. Number one is the slowing of the growth of the work force, and number two is people drawing for a lot longer time.

Now, I'll make you a prediction—that's one of the reasons that I think it's imperative that we make this bipartisan agreement this year—we can make it wrong—because I think you have to consider one thing. Number one, there's a record number of kids in school today. Now, they say they've factored that in, but that means you're going to have more workers in a few years. Number two, we've still got a fairly generous immigration policy, which I think, on balance, has served us well. But the third and the most important thing is, after you get a certain percentage of people who retire at 62, and they're going to live until 82 or 85 or whatever—if we take the earnings limit off, you will have more and more people working. The computer and the Internet are changing the nature of work. When I became President, there were only 3 million people making a living out of their homes. When I ran for reelection, the number was 12 million. I think, today, the number is almost 20 million.

So I think what you are going to have is a dramatic change in the nature of work in the next 20 years, and more people doing work in different places and different ways, especially older people. So my guess is, they are low, but if you look at people drawing Social Security for a longer period of time and the sheer demographics and you were in charge of keeping the thing stable, you'd probably make the same call they did.

[*Ms. Tyson concurred that when doing long term projections, it is good to be cautious and able to assure the public that the predictions are realistic. Vice President Gore pointed out that in 1992, the transition team used the most conservative economic assumptions. He noted the world economy is currently growing at a slower rate than the actuarial projection.*]

The President. Mr. Pomeroy, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Cardin. Go ahead.

[*Representative Earl Pomeroy said the President's plan would significantly advance the prospect of achieving Social Security reform. He also supported the President's debt reduction plan to ensure flexibility when facing future problems. Ms. Tyson noted the 30-year decline in the domestic savings rate and said the President's plan would reduce debt and increase savings.*]

The President. Janet Yellen, our Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, nodded yes when she said it will add 2 points to the savings rates. That's good.

[*Representative Nick Smith asked Ms. Tyson what was being done to ensure the country was on the cutting edge of productivity and competitiveness. Ms. Tyson pointed to the President's investment policies in education, in technology, and trade liberalization.*]

The Vice President. Well, the new Governor of California, Gray Davis, points out that if every retiree 30 years from now is going to have two workers financing his retirement, he says, "I don't want my two to have a C average and inadequate schools today. [*Laughter*] A pretty good way to put it.

The President. You talk about our long-term productivity. Let me just mention one thing that was a part of my State of the Union Address that didn't get a lot of attention, but I hope that it will get more, and I hope that there will be a real bipartisan effort here. And that is that I think we still have a lot of capacity for growth and productivity within the borders of the United States.

When you've got hundreds of thousands of high-tech computer jobs going begging and when you've got neighborhoods in this country where the unemployment rate is still in double digits, mostly in inner cities and rural areas, our trick in the next 10 years, if you want to think about how we can continue to grow this economy with no inflation, will be to try to find the right mix of incentives for private sector investment and then

removing the barriers to employment investment in a lot of places, whether it's education and training or whatever else.

We've had some success with the empowerment zones. I proposed some new initiatives in my State of the Union. But for the last 2 years—Reverend Jackson is here—I've gone to this unusual meeting with Jesse Jackson, Jack Kemp, and Wall Street to talk about how we can get Wall Street to try to invest more in our inner cities and our isolated rural areas. And I think that's something we should not dismiss the potential of.

If you think about it, if you go into a place where there is complete underinvestment and, therefore, underpurchasing of American goods and services, if it works when we invest in Central America or whatever, it would certainly work here. And I'd like to see some more careful attention given to that.

Mr. Cardin and Mr. Markey?

[*Representative Benjamin L. Cardin said he was intrigued by the savings incentives USA accounts would offer to young people and low-wage workers. He asked Mr. Riemer how young people might be encouraged to save for retirement. Mr. Riemer stated that young people were receptive to the message and suggested a campaign to stir up excitement about the accounts.*]

The President. Mr. Markey?

[*Representative Edward J. Markey praised the President's recommendations but noted a concern about Government investment in and interference with the stock market. Ms. Tyson cited State and local retirement plans and the Federal Retirement Investment Board as models, listed elements necessary for success, and stated that investment decisions must be made on the basis of fiduciary responsibility and not political influence or concerns. Vice President Gore added that some investment opportunities could add an additional layer of insulation from political influences and pointed out that returns on equities were significantly higher than other alternatives.*]

The President. I want to call on Mr. Portman, but Gene Sperling, did you want to say anything about the question here?

[*National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling emphasized the importance of competitive bidding to ensure that the actual investments would take place by private managers using broad-based passive indexes. He said that such a system would be insulated from political interference and should get the highest return due to lower administrative costs.*]

The President. Mr. Portman.

[*Representative Rob Portman commended the President for raising this issue in the State of the Union Address and encouraged him to keep the notion of private savings accounts on the table during the discussions with the Congress rather than relying solely on investment in the stock market. Ms. Tyson responded that having private savings accounts as a replacement for Social Security would undermine its social insurance value but that the USA accounts would function as a complement to Social Security.*]

The President. We are getting down to the real details of this debate that will unfold. I wanted to make two points, if I might.

There are some proposals for savings accounts, private savings accounts, that say that they could ensure a floor, which would be a return no less than Social Security would otherwise give. That will all be part of this debate, and I'm looking forward to it. And I appreciate it.

Let me say one other thing to Mr. Portman, if you were to set aside this much money for Social Security and Medicare, then most of the Republican caucus would believe that there is not enough money left for a tax cut of the size you believe should flow. And then we would argue about the form of the tax cut. If you look at that negative savings rate, I think that's partly because people have great confidence—you know, the stock market went up again, and also interest rates are down, home mortgage payments are lower, and a lot of people may feel like they're more comfortable spending more money.

But one of the challenges that we have to face in this coming Congress is not only what the size but what the nature of the tax cut should be. And should it be in the nature of helping people develop a greater private

savings plan, or should it just be a tax cut that people can dispose of?

The argument for the latter, frankly, which doesn't have all that much appeal to the young or to the old but might have a lot of appeal to the parents in the middle is, "Hey, I'm maxed out on my credit cards, and I need some help. You know, there's a negative savings rate, that means I can't go charge anything else."

But the argument for the long-term of the country, it seems to me to be the stronger argument, because that is one way we can have an increase in personal savings as opposed to the aggregate savings rate. When we buy in the debt—which we'll do if we save this money, we'll be buying back the debt—that will increase the national savings rate, and it will free up private money, and it will be invested privately.

But if you want to increase the personal savings rate, it seems to me, we need to really think about not only what the size but what the nature of the tax cut should be.

We've already gone 40 minutes over—that's a good sign—but I'll give Mr. Hill the last word, because he had his hand up, and then we'll go. Go ahead.

[*Representative Rick Hill stated that public institutions investing privately produced substantially lower rates of return than private institutions investing in the market and asked if reasons for that had been identified.*]

The President. Gene? [*Laughter*]

They're more risk-averse, I imagine, is one reason.

[*Mr. Sperling concurred that public investors tend to be more risk-averse but pointed out that investment in the market over a long period of time would provide a higher return than the Government bonds in which Social Security currently invested. He reiterated that using broad-based indexes would help ensure the highest possible return.*]

The President. Thank you very much. This was terrific. And thank the participants, thank you.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 10:40 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson and former Representative Jack Kemp. The President also referred to the Moe Arel Center in Nashua, NH.

Telephone Remarks Announcing a New Partnership To Restore Pacific Coastal Salmon

January 27, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. And I want to say to all of you on the phone and, obviously, our friends from Washington here in the Oval Office, that I am very, very grateful to all of you and to others in your States and in the tribes who have made a priority of preserving the salmon. And I'm grateful to you for making sure that those of us who do not hail from the Pacific Northwest understood the gravity and the urgency of the issue.

We want to help you bring the salmon back. And the Vice President and I today are announcing, as a part of my fiscal year 2000 budget, a new $100 million fund to help States and tribes restore coastal salmon. The funds can be used up and down coastal rivers and streams to rebuild habitat, restore spawning grounds, give salmon a new lease on life. And if we work together, I'm sure that we can succeed in restoring this symbol of your region's heritage and ensure that for all time to come the salmon will still be thriving.

I want to thank again all of you for what you have done. We can't succeed here without your energy, your vision, your determination. And I know how passionate folks out there are about their salmon, and I'm confident we can succeed, and I believe this $100 million will help.

Governor Locke, I'd like to call on you first. And tell Mona I said hello and Hillary and I are thinking about her and you, and we look forward to another beautiful baby. I'd like for you to speak and then maybe Governor Knowles, Chairman Billy Frank, and Governor Kitzhaber.

[*At this point, the teleconference continued.*]

The President. Thank you very much. I know you're all busy and have many other things to do. I just want to thank you for what I said earlier. You brought this to our attention; you asked us to do something.

We're committed to this; we have to pass this now. But this needs to be a long-term commitment to partnership on the part of the Federal Government. And I want you to help us pass it in Congress. I want you to help us work with you to implement it. And I want you to continue to make sure that we are aware of exactly what's happening in your backyard.

I think this is very important to the future of the entire country, that we prove we can do this together. And this is something that every single one of you will always be proud of having taken a leadership role in.

Thank you very much, and goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gary Locke of Washington and his wife, Mona Lee. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore; Governors John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon, Gary Locke of Washington, and Tony Knowles of Alaska; Representative Norman D. Dicks; California State Secretary of Resources Mary D. Nichols; Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman Billy Frank, Jr.; County Executive Ron Sims, of King County, WA; and Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle, WA.

Statement on Assistance to Colombia in the Aftermath of the Earthquake

January 27, 1999

On behalf of all the people of the United States, I want to express our deepest sympathies to the people of Colombia who have lost loved ones or suffered injuries in Monday's devastating earthquake. It appears that more than 1,000 people were killed and more than 3,000 were injured. Entire neighborhoods lie in ruins, leaving many homeless.

I have spoken by telephone to President Pastrana and assured him that the United States will do its part to support relief and recovery. Already, a 62-member U.S. search and rescue team has arrived in Colombia, at the request of the Colombian Government, to help find and assist survivors. Today we are making available through USAID $2 million for immediate disaster relief, including airlifts of blankets and shelter materials and other emergency needs identified by our two Governments. We will deploy a new team of technical advisers to bolster Colombia's rescue efforts. And with the strong support of the United States, the Inter-American Development Bank has already pledged $10 million for rebuilding.

We will stay in close contact with the Colombian Government to determine how else we can help. As with the response to Hurricane Mitch in Central America, I know the people of the United States will want to assist in the wake of this tragedy. I say to Colombians what I said to Central Americans: *Ayudaremos a nuestros hermanos*—we will help our brothers and sisters. It is the right thing to do, and it supports our interest in a stable, democratic, and prosperous hemisphere.

As I said in October when President Pastrana visited the White House, his Presidency represents a new beginning for Colombia, a new opportunity that Monday's tragedy cannot and must not undermine. We will continue to work closely with him as he leads Colombia toward a more peaceful and prosperous future.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 27, 1999

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

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

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

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Governor Lawton Chiles

January 28, 1999

Lawton would get a huge kick out of knowing that I have just been upstaged by his 10-year-old granddaughter. [*Laughter*] When both the grandkids were singing, I was thinking, you know this is what Lawton would liked to have done if he had not been a politician, sort of the wandering minstrel for America. [*Laughter*] And in some ways, he was.

I looked through the Scripture to find something that referenced how he started his political campaign, and there's a verse in Genesis which says, ''Arise, walk through the land and the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it to thee.'' I think in so many ways God gave Florida to Lawton so that he could give himself to the people of his beloved State. And in so many ways, his homespun humor and his common sense became the glue that held Florida together as it exploded and diversified and changed in ways that make it almost unrecognizable to people who were there three decades ago.

Every one of us who knew Lawton Chiles feels blessed. If we knew him very well, we loved him. He gave something to all of us. He gave me a lot when we were serving together as Governors. I mean, I couldn't imagine—I was serving as Governor with someone who had been chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. And he made sure that I was always aware of what I should know before I voted however he wanted me to vote in the Governor's conference on whatever it was. [*Laughter*]

I loved campaigning with him in Florida. I loved—it's almost a sad thing to say, but it was very moving for me—Florida had a lot of natural disasters during the period in which we served together. It was very moving to me to be in these places with Lawton Chiles, to see the pulse of the people beating in him and the feeling he had for them. I loved all the opportunities he gave me to help Florida, with late-night phone calls about every conceivable subject, the recommendations he gave that Carol Browner and Janet Reno ought to be in the Cabinet.

And like everybody else, I loved the humor. I knew Lawton Chiles long before ''he-coon'' became a part of our political lexicon. And one of the most humbling nights of my life was a night at the Governors conference that I spent with Ann Richards and Lawton Chiles. [*Laughter*] I thought I was a good storyteller. I thought I knew every phrase that had ever been coined. I listened to them talk about how a stuck pig squealed, how a cut dog barks, how if you can't run with the big dogs, you ought to just stay on the porch. [*Laughter*] Listen, I lost that night. [*Laughter*] But I never forgot it.

You know, Lawton may have worn a coonskin cap and coat to his own inaugural ball in 1995, and he did a lot of that ''awe shucks'' stuff with all of us, but we all know that he was really a visionary. He saw the possibilities and the challenges of the future, and he saw his own life as a sort of continuing obligation to push people toward them.

Long before most of the rest of us, as Senator Domenici and others have already said, he knew that we had to put our budgetary house in order if we wanted our children to have a future. And I'm very glad he got to live to see it come to pass—even though Pete's right, he'd want to see all the numbers and all the books and be a little suspicious.

Carol Browner talked about how he saw that in Florida and in the United States we had to reconcile the imperatives of economic growth and preserving our environment. And because of his vision, the forests and the swamps that he loved so much as a boy, and especially the beautiful Florida Everglades, are going to be preserved.

He saw long before the rest of us the promise in every child and the need to give every child decent health care and a world-class education. The fragile cry of his young grandson who sang for us today, born several months premature, inspired him as Senator and Governor to want to give every child a healthy start in life, the chance to make the most of their God-given talent. How proud he would be to see his grandson making the most of those talents today.

I'm told that as he lay in state in Tallahassee a few weeks ago, a woman from Gadsden County, where Rhea and Lawton first began working to improve prenatal care in Florida,

brought her young son to pay his respects. She said that Lawton Chiles had saved her son's life. That boy, and the millions of Florida children growing up healthy and ready, may well be his greatest legacy.

I'd also like to thank him publicly for something else. As Florida explodes and diversifies, he worked so hard to make all his native Floridians—those who were like him—see all the new immigrants as their own, to see those children as a rich resource that would make life more interesting and the future more prosperous.

I thank him for being an early supporter of political and campaign finance reform but in doing it in a way that made sense and didn't raise people's defenses. I don't think he had a sanctimonious bone in his body. He just didn't want everybody to have to spend all their time raising money. He thought it would be better if people talked to one another, face-to-face. He thought it would be better if, on television, people had honest debates and discussions. He didn't go around telling you how much better he was than everybody else because he only took a hundred bucks. And he knew that only one person could have ever made that walk, and then you couldn't just repeat that over and over again. He tried to convince us to relax and think. And he did it in the right way.

Some of you know that, right before he died, I think I had about won a long, intense campaign that I waged to persuade Lawton to become America's Special Envoy to Latin America. He said, "Well, I don't want to spend a lot of time in Washington." I said, "Lawton, it's Latin America, not Washington." [*Laughter*] I said, "You know, you'll have to breeze through every now and then and give me a report. There's a telephone. There are fax machines. You can do this." And he was really getting interested in it.

And I say that not to make anyone sad, but to say that the reason his life was so rich is that he lived to the last hour of the last day thinking about tomorrow, thinking about other people's interest, thinking about other possibilities still to be developed.

So I thank you, Lawton, for teaching us that public service is not a position, it's a mission; that our job is not to posture, but to produce. I thank you for feeling the pulse of the people and making their hopes and dreams your own. I thank you for never losing the light in your eyes, the steel in your spine, the love in your heart.

Young Lawton's song was reminiscent of the wonderful lines from Wordsworth, "We can make our lives sublime, and departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time." What wonderful wide, deep footprints our friend left for us to walk in.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 noon in the Russell Senate Caucus Room, Room 325, at the Russell Senate Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Ann W. Richards of Texas, and Governor Chiles' wife, Rhea, granddaughter, Christin Chiles, and grandson, Lawton Chiles IV.

Remarks at the Employment Initiative in Oakton, Virginia

January 28, 1999

Thank you. I would say this is a fairly high energy crowd here today. [*Laughter*] Thank you for making us all feel so welcome. Thank you, Cheryl Simms. She was nervous as a cat. [*Laughter*] And I said, "Look, Cheryl, that microphone, it will carry your voice. Just pretend you're talking to a friend or two." And I think she did a fine job, don't you? Let's give her a hand. [*Applause*]

I'd like to thank Mirian Graddick and Mary Jane McKeever for making us feel so welcome here today. I thank Secretary Herman and Secretary Riley for their wonderful work on the announcements I am about to make. I want to thank my longtime friend Senator Chuck Robb for being a terrific Senator for the State of Virginia and on education issues for all the United States.

And I'd like to recognize two Members of the House of Representatives who are here, who have been very, very active on these issues: Congressman Tim Roemer from Indiana, and Representative Dennis Kucinich from Cleveland, Ohio. Thank you for being here, both of you.

I also want to thank the Vice President for his interest in this. Not very long ago, just a couple of weeks ago, he convened a national meeting with business, education, labor, and government leaders to come up with proposals that will further our efforts

to promote lifelong learning. I want to say one other thing: There is a member of my staff who worked very hard on this who is leaving the White House, but she had a lot to do with this announcement I'm making today. Her name is Cecilia Rouse, and she's going back to be a professor. But I wish she were staying with us. Thank you very much, Cecilia, for what you've done.

I wanted to come here because this is a picture—a picture I hope will be in newspapers all across America tomorrow. I hope this picture will be on some television stations tonight. I want Americans to be able to visualize the kind of continuing lifelong learning opportunities that you have that I want for all Americans.

I want to compliment AT&T, the CWA, the IBEW, and Lucent Technologies. This workers alliance, I was told, since its inception in the mid-eighties has given way over 100,000 people the chance to come through here and get education and training. That is profoundly important. And it's important not just for people who work for AT&T, who are in the communications business.

I recently learned about a man in my home State who was 50 years old, had an eighth grade education, ran a conveyor belt for a company that converted to a new computerized transport system. Since he only had an eighth grade education, he was computerphobic, to say the least, and he was afraid that he would lose his job. Instead, he enrolled in a training program, learned how to use computers, improved his reading and math skills so that he could master complex, technical manuals. And instead of losing his job, he got a raise.

Now, a lot of you have been through more than one training program since you've been employed. I just met a gentleman who said he spent over 300 hours in this program, in alliance programs. And if you think about how almost every form of work today is different from what it was just a few years ago and how rapidly the nature of work is changing, we are going to be challenged to change our whole conception of what education is.

You know, a lot of you came from families like mine. I mean, my grandfather had a grade-school education; my stepfather, who raised me, didn't finish high school; my mother went to nursing school, never went to college; my father's uncle, who served three terms in the legislature, dropped out of school after the eighth grade to support the family. They all did just fine. Now—and all you have to do is look at the census data; you don't just have to tell family stories—if you look at the census data, high school graduates are likely to get jobs where their incomes drop over time, not go up. People who have the equivalent of at least 2 years of college and can keep on learning for a lifetime are likely to get jobs where their incomes go up and, if they lose their jobs, to find jobs that are as good or better.

So what we have now is a situation in America where the income gap, that we all know widened over the previous 20 years or so, is largely a skills gap and that it applies across all kinds of industries. We have to close that skills gap.

In 1992, when I took office, I said we had two deficits. We had a budget deficit and an investment deficit in our people. Well, thanks to Senator Robb and the Members of the House that are here, we've closed the budget deficit; we've got a surplus. But we still have a deficit in investment in our people. We have got to find a way to create in America, not only world-class public schools and access to college education—and you may have heard me say in the State of the Union Address that, with the tax credits, the Pell grants, and the other things, no one should ever fail to go to college because of the cost, now—but we have to create a situation in America where people can keep on learning for a lifetime, without regard to where they live, what their job is, what their income is.

Why? Well, just a couple of statistics. In manufacturing, 88 percent of the companies—I want to say that again—88 percent of the companies say they're having trouble finding qualified applicants to fill at least one kind of job in their operation. One in five companies says, today, it literally cannot expand its operation, even though the markets are there, because they don't have workers with the right skills.

You heard, I think, the Senator said that there are jobs going begging right here in the DC area. You've got high unemployment

in DC, job vacancies in the communities outside. In America as a whole, there are over a quarter of a million high-tech jobs, computer-related jobs, vacant this day. We may have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, but we've got a quarter of a million high-wage jobs going vacant this day.

And there are places where the economic recovery hasn't hit, because people can't get the investment or because they don't have the skills to do these jobs.

Now, that's really why I wanted to come here. I want America to work like this place does. I want there to be an American alliance. I want workers who aren't lucky enough to be represented by the CWA or the IBEW to have access to lifetime learning. I want employers who may not have the resources of AT&T or Lucent Technologies to know that there is some way they can work with their employees to give them access to these kind of skills.

And in the State of the Union Address I just barely mentioned this, and so I wanted to come here to tell you the things, the specific things that I intend to propose that are in our budget. First, we need a national campaign to dramatically increase our efforts at basic adult education and family literacy, to help the millions and millions of adults who struggle with basic reading or math.

People that cannot fill out a job application cannot be expected to fill a 21st century job. You know, when Alexis told that old Getty joke—I love that—rise early, work hard, strike oil. It's good; it keeps us humble, reminds you there's a little bit of luck in life. [*Laughter*] But the oil today is in your noggin, not in the ground. And everybody can strike oil today. But they have to have the means to do it.

This country has been greatly enriched, particularly by our immigrant populations. But I went to a school not very long ago, Senator, in Virginia, and they asked me in advance if there was any way we had time to have consecutive translation of my remarks, first in Spanish and then in Arabic, so the parents of the children at the school would understand the speech I was giving to their kids.

Now, I can tell you in a global economy this is not a bad deal; this is a good deal. But it is not a good deal when you think about—it's going to be hard enough for us all to understand our different racial and ethnic and cultural and religious traditions and figure out how to get all that together, if we can't even read one another's words or understand each other. And if a certain group of people are locked out of the whole new economy, not because they're not intelligent and not because they don't work like crazy but because they literally can't plug in because their mind doesn't have the connections.

And that is very, very important. So we're going to seek new tax credits for businesses like the two that sponsored the alliance, which provide basic skills to their workers. And we will work to greatly expand the funding for basic adult education and high school completion programs.

You read all these stories about inner cities, where there are all these young single people, unemployed. Nearly all of them dropped out of high school. And it's going to be difficult to get some of them into some of the training programs we want unless we can get them to come back and finish high school, get their GED, and then go forward. And so this is a very, very important thing.

Secondly, I'm going to recommend a large new investment in the worker training system we revolutionized last year. You heard previous speakers mention it. But basically what we did was to take all these Government programs, 40 or 50 of them, collapse them into a single skills grant and one-stop shopping, so that if somebody is eligible right now for Federal help and training, instead of having to go to this program, that program, the other program, they go to one place, get a skills grant, and they can decide how to spend the money, where it is most likely to give them the training that will most likely give them a job.

But the program is underfunded today. It will not cover all the people who need it. So over the next 5 years I've asked for funds sufficient for us to be able to provide appropriate training and reemployment services for all Americans who lose their jobs—all Americans.

Now, next year we will increase the funding for skill grants, high-tech community career centers and rapid response teams by more than $360 million under our budget.

Third, I want to greatly increase our programs and our commitment to helping disadvantaged young people. We'll nearly double the funding for YouthBuild, an innovative program that gives young people a chance to learn construction skills to build homes for low-income families, on the job. We will double the funding for our GEAR UP program, one of my favorite programs; it's a mentoring and tutoring initiative I mentioned earlier, which involves sending college students out into middle schools to mentor students, to get them to both learn their lessons and stay in school but also to raise their sights and believe no matter how poor their circumstances, they can go on to college and do well. And it's a great program.

We are also going to continue our investments in what we call youth-opportunity areas, to try to go into these areas where there are a lot of kids just walking the streets, and there aren't any jobs, to try to get these kids off the streets—either back in the schools, or into jobs. If we cannot deal with the challenges faced by these young people now, with the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the first budget surplus in 30 years and the smallest percentage of the American people on welfare in 29 years, we will never get around to doing this. Now is the time for us to try to bring these young people into the mainstream of American life.

We also are going to try to expand more partnerships. You have proved here that it takes people working together to make something like this go. We have a new initiative called ''Right-Track Partnerships,'' to help schools, businesses, and community organizations work together to reduce teen dropout rates and to help former dropouts come back, building on what we did last year, directed especially toward Hispanic young people, because the dropout there is far higher than for any group in America.

Let me just tell you, though, you all know that we need more than a high school education to do what you guys are doing; so even if you didn't have one once, with all the training programs, you've got to have more. In 1989, 10 years ago this coming fall, I met with all the other Governors and the then-President of the United States, George Bush, to set some national education goals. One of our goals was that we would have an on time high school completion rate of 90 percent. That was one of our goals.

We knew that some people would drop out regardless, you know, that just would happen. In 1989—well, 1998, last year, a wonderful thing happened. For the first time since we've been keeping these statistics, the last 20 or 30 years, the on time African-American high school graduation rate was almost identical to the on time high school graduation rate of white children. It was about—between 83 and 84 percent. That's the good news.

There's two pieces of bad news. Bad news piece number one is it's not 90 percent. And that's 16, 17 percent of the people we have to figure out how to get back to school and how to get education and training. And for Hispanic young people, many of whom have language barriers that cause them after the eighth grade not to be able to keep up, the dropout rate is still over 40 percent. So we must do more here.

And it's something I'd like to ask you all to think about. And here in Virginia, Northern Virginia, you've got a lot of young people from all over the world, as the school districts get increasingly diverse—these kids have fine minds, but it will be harder for them, and the longer they go on in school without a complete mastery of English and access to learning, the more the difficult courses will become more out of reach. And if they get bored, they'll drop out eventually. So I ask for your help and attention.

Finally, let me say that I'm very gratified by the broadbased support that this initiative seems to have attracted among the American people. I think it's because everybody knows that what you're doing is what we all need to do for the future. But I would ask you to remember this day, to talk to your friends and neighbors who you may never have mentioned this to, to find out whether all the people that work in their workplaces have access to these sort of training programs.

But remember, what we're trying to do in this balanced budget now is we've closed the

budget deficit, now we've got to close the skills deficit. We cannot have the earnings gap in America, the income gap bigger because we didn't make the skills gap smaller. Now is the time to do it. We will never have a better time. And we will all—all—be richly rewarded when we have more stories like the ones I heard here from the Alliance today.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the Atrium at the AT&T Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Cheryl E. Simms, worker, who introduced the President, Mirian M. Graddick, senior vice president of human resources, and Mary Jane McKeever, president, government markets, AT&T. The President also referred to the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

January 28, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95–384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1 to November 30, 1998. The previous submission covered events during August and September 1998.

Following United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's September 30 announcement of an initiative to reduce tensions and promote progress towards a just and lasting settlement, the United Nations launched shuttle talks between both communities in October. During the reporting period, U.S. officials urged the leaders of both Cypriot communities to support fully the U.N. initiative. They also underscored my Administration's commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the Cyprus dispute based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Remarks Honoring the 1998 Stanley Cup Champion Detroit Red Wings

January 28, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated, everyone.

Commissioner Bettman, Coach Bowman, Denise Ilitch, General Manager Holland; to the team captain, Steve Yzerman, and all the Red Wings; Congressmen Bonior, Dingell, Knollenberg, Levin, Stupak; Mayor Archer and other mayors from Michigan who are here with us today: Welcome back to the White House.

You know, this is becoming such a regular thing—from time to time, we have State days at the White House. We'll have a Maryland Day, and bring in people from all over Maryland, and let them meet members of the Cabinet and talk about issues affecting the State. This is becoming so regular, we should just have Michigan Day at the White House when the Red Wings come.

Vince Lombardi, who was a pretty good coach himself, once said that ''excellence is not a sometime thing.'' I think it's clear that, with your four-game sweep for a second straight Stanley Cup, that's what the Red Wings are living by.

I've always found the history of the Stanley Cup particularly interesting. It's the oldest trophy competition by professional athletes in North America; the only trophy which bears the names of individual players and coaches. And what I admire most is the tradition of the whole team sharing the Cup, each player getting to take it home to friends and family. I think it's a tradition that other sports ought to follow, because it recognizes that every person on a team makes a unique and enduring contribution.

The Red Wings overcame the Capitals—as I said, our hometown team, but we still are impressed with what you did—[*laughter*]—in four decisive games, with grit, determination and teamwork. The series will be remembered as a defensive triumph that spotlighted your goalie, Chris Osgood, who allowed seven whole goals. Amazing.

And of course, it will be remembered for the performance of your team captain. Steve, your teammates have said you have the heart of a champion and that, when the chips are

down, you always made the plays. That's something that every leader needs to do, and you have certainly done it.

We all know, too, that great hockey teams have to have great coaches. Perhaps the Detroit Red Wings have the greatest coach in the history of hockey. This victory, with his eighth championship as a head coach, Scotty Bowman became the winningest coach in NHL history, maybe an athletic dynasty all to himself.

But teams win, whole teams, in the arena and on the sidelines, and we're glad to see the whole team here, including Vladimir, Sergei. Thank you all for coming. We're glad you're here. Thank you.

Last year when you were here, and this year again when you were going through the line, I sensed a real genuine spirit of not only championship but camaraderie. A sense of family, of caring for one another and supporting one another. In the end, that's even more important than winning the game.

So congratulations. I'm delighted to have you here. And I'd like to have Commissioner Gary Bettman come up and say a few words. Thank you.

[*At this point, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, Denise Ilitch-Lites, daughter of Red Wings owners Mike and Marian Ilitch, and Coach Scotty Bowman made brief remarks. Red Wings team captain Steve Yzerman made brief remarks and presented the President with a Red Wings jersey.*]

The President. Thank you. When you gave me the last one, I started wearing it around the house, and Hillary pointed out I wasn't as broad-shouldered as she thought I was. [*Laughter*] One wag in my office today said, "You know, they'll probably give you a jersey, but I wish they'd give you one of those sticks, you could really put it to good use around here." [*Applause*] Thank you.

Let me just say in closing, to the coach, to Steve, to all the team, it is an honor to have you here. It's wonderful to have all your friends from Michigan and all your fans who live in Washington now but have their hearts in Michigan.

This house is truly the people's house. Every President is a temporary tenant. And I think, to me, the greatest joy of living here is seeing other people come in and share in the history. Every President since John Adams has lived in this house. George Washington conceived it, really, but never got a chance to live here. The whole history of our country is embodied within these walls.

This house has been burned down; in 1814 the British troops came in here—we were having a banquet, and everybody had to run. And Dolley Madison—whose husband, James Madison, was the last active Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, was out with our Army—and she cut that magnificent picture of George Washington down, which was purchased in 1797 for $500. It has no price today. The British came in and ate our food—[*laughter*]—and then burned the house down. [*Laughter*] But the walls hung on, and it's been rebuilt, that time and one other time since. After all these years, whenever I land the helicopter on the back lawn and come in this house, I still get a thrill, because everything that our country has tried to be is embodied in this house.

So, for your excellence, for your spirit of teamwork, we're honored to have you here, with all of your family and friends. And I only hope that it is as enjoyable to you as it is to me every day. Welcome, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Red Wings General Manager Ken Holland; Red Wings defenseman Vladimir Konstantinov and team masseur Sergei Mnatsakanov, both of whom were seriously injured in an automobile accident a few days after the team's previous Stanley Cup championship in June 1997; and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI.

Memorandum on Funding for International Financial Institutions and Other International Organizations and Programs

January 28, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99–11

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 523 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Public Law 105–277)

Pursuant to section 523 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Public Law 105–277), I hereby certify that withholding from international financial institutions and other international organizations and programs funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to that Act is contrary to the national interest.

You are authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 29.

Remarks to the United States Conference of Mayors

January 29, 1999

Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome. I want to say I'm just as glad to see you as you apparently are to be here. [*Laughter*] Just looking at you reminds me of why we do what we do. And I thank you so much for your work.

I'd like to thank Secretary Cuomo for his fine remarks, and Secretary Herman, who will have remarks in a moment; and Mayor Corradini for your leadership.

Because this is my only opportunity, I believe, today to see the press and to speak with them and with the American people, I hope you will forgive me because I need to make a couple of remarks about some developments in Kosovo at the beginning.

Kosovo

You remember that 2 weeks ago there was a massacre in the village of Racak. After that, we insisted that the Serbian authorities stop their repression and meet their commitments. Today Secretary Albright forged an agreement with our Contact Group allies, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia, on a common diplomatic strategy to achieve compliance with the rules of the international community. With our allies in NATO, we stand ready to back that strategy with the threat of force.

Our goal is not merely to respond to the recent atrocities in Kosovo but to help resolve the conflict so that the violence can end for good. The Contact Group has now approved the terms of an interim agreement that would do just that, by protecting the rights of all the people of Kosovo and giving them the self-government they clearly deserve.

Both sides now have an opportunity to stop a war that neither side can win and to start building a better future for all the people by peaceful means. To that end, the international community has sent a clear message to the authorities in Belgrade: The time for denial and delay is past. NATO is united and ready to act if you don't.

I want to thank, again, Mayor Corradini, Mayor Webb, Mayor Coles for greeting me. Like Deedee, I want to say how much I appreciate the work that Mickey Ibarra and Lynn Cutler do to bring the mayors and the White House together to give us, I think, a virtually unprecedented working relationship. And I intend to keep it going.

Domestic Agenda

I want to thank all the members of the Cabinet and the administration who are here. There is a stunning array—the whole Government is here on the front row. I hope there is no emergency in any department today while we are all here. [*Laughter*] I feel rather badly about this; they've probably heard this speech a hundred times before. But I thank them. I think their presence here

is evidence of the seriousness with which we take our responsibilities to work with you.

I also want to thank Mayor Corradini for her leadership on the census. I know we may have some questions about that later, but just let me say the Supreme Court struck down the use of sampling for congressional apportionment among the States. It reaffirmed our use of these scientific methods for other purposes. We remain committed to making the 2000 census both accurate and fair, and we are working very hard, as—Secretary Daley is working very hard to try to determine how we can best do that and have the most useful and accurate census we can.

You know, one of the reasons I ran for President 7 years ago is to do something about the then condition of our cities. I also was encouraged by what I saw as I visited cities in 1991 and 1992, and I saw, even with the country in pretty bad shape, there were places where people were actually solving problems, where hope had returned because change was occurring. And I believed then, as I said in my first inaugural, that there is nothing wrong with this country that can't be fixed by what is right with our country. I have always believed that, and you have proved that that is right.

Now, since 1993 we have worked together, as I have said thousands of times, to create an America in which there is opportunity for all of our citizens, responsibility from all our citizens, and a community that includes all our citizens. No group of Americans is more committed to that than our mayors.

We've had a strategy for the new economy: to balance the budget, to invest in our people, to sell more of our goods and services around the world. We balanced the budget for the first time in nearly 30 years and still almost doubled our investment in education and training. The strategy has helped to steer our Nation through some tough global currents. And as you know, our economy is doing very well.

This morning we received more good news about the American economy. I can now report that in the fourth quarter of 1998, our economy grew at 5.6 percent. For the entire year, the growth rate was 3.9 percent, giving us the longest peacetime expansion in the history of the United States with the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957.

I remember after I was elected, we were sitting around the table at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock arguing about our economic strategy. And I had all these folks come in from around the country, and they said, "Now, Mr. President, you just cannot grow the economy at more than 2½ percent for more than a year or two without having uncontrollable inflation." And I said, "Well, I'm not an economist, but I know what technology is doing, and I don't believe that." And at least for 6 years, it hasn't been so. The American people have proved that through productivity and hard work, we can grow the economy, reduce unemployment, and if we do the right things, by the way, we can also improve the environment, not destroy it.

So this is an encouraging thing. Today we're releasing an interim state of the cities report that tells the story of economic growth in the cities. Unemployment in our central cities has fallen by 40 percent since 1992; 4 of our largest 10 cities have cut their unemployment rates in half. We have the highest real wage growth in two decades; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates since such things were first measured in 1972; average family income up by $3,500; the lowest crime rate in, now, about 26 years, and a drop in our cities that averages 27 percent.

All of you in this room should be proud of what you have done, and I'm proud of what we've been able to do together. But I would like to reiterate today, in terms specific to the cities and our urban agenda, the general point that I made at the State of the Union Address. The present prosperity is an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that opportunity and prosperity reaches every person in every corner of this country, into every neighborhood in every city of this country.

If we cannot do this now, with what some people believe is the strongest overall economy in our history, believe me, we will never get around to doing the job. And so I think we should all be very up front and say: This is a dynamic economy; you don't ever stand

still in it; if you don't keep going in one direction, before you know it you'll be going in the other. And so what is our clear responsibility is also in the self-interest of all our citizens.

And I hope you can talk to people about that in all your communities. This is not a time to say, isn't this wonderful, and let's take another vacation. This is a time to say all these things that I bet you everybody in this room has talked about and worried about, wrung your hands about, probably for decades before you ever showed up in city government. It's finally a time that we can deal with these challenges. And that's what I have tried to construct a budget to help you do.

Secretary Cuomo sort of brushed by the remarkable role that HUD has played in the last 6 years, not only in helping you to grow the American dream in our cities but also to reinvent the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to make it smaller and able to invest more and have a bigger impact out there where people live.

David Osborne, the intellectual godfather of this whole REGO movement, said that HUD is a model of reinvention in the nineties. The balanced budget that I will submit to Congress will increase the overall HUD budget by $2½ billion, to $28 billion. It will support HUD's community empowerment fund: 100,000 new vouchers to make housing more affordable; dozens of other innovative steps. I want you to support this in the Congress. We have to have votes from Members on both sides of the aisle in both Houses to pass the HUD budget.

But if we're going to reach every person in every corner of every city, we have to do more, and Mayor Corradini mentioned some of the things, but I'd like to run over them with you.

First, we have to create more economic opportunity. The best poverty program, the best anticrime program, the best urban program is still a job for every person who will work. We've created now 31 empowerment zones to bring the spark of private enterprise to inner cities. The Vice President announced the 20 newest zones earlier this month. I will ask Congress to fully fund this round to help support another 90,000 jobs.

We created a network of community development financial institutions, and we now propose increasing the investment in that. We strengthened and streamlined the Community Reinvestment Act, encouraging banks—just since we've been here—to make over $1 trillion in financial commitments. Since the CRA became law in 1975, 95 percent of all the commitments made under it have been made since 1993.

And I hope you noticed that during this period our banks have not gone broke. [*Laughter*] I bet the town banker is doing pretty well where you live in a big city or a small town. And yet, unbelievably enough, when we are proving it is working, the Community Reinvestment Act is under fire again.

Again, this ought not be a political deal. Every American has an interest in seeing that every economic opportunity in every community is seized. And if it is a good investment, it's a good investment. The banks are not going broke; they're doing well. The Community Reinvestment Act is a good thing. I hope you will help us protect it and support it. Now, even so, capital still bypasses a lot of areas where it's most needed.

I said in the State of the Union, I'd like to say again, today the largest pool of ready untapped investment opportunity and new customers is not overseas; it's in our backyard, in Harlem or Watts or Appalachia, even our Native American reservations. According to a recent Harvard Business School study, underdeveloped communities in America still control more than $85 billion a year in purchasing power. That's more than the entire retail market of Mexico, our second largest trading partner.

So I have proposed an initiative to bring jobs and opportunity to the new markets here at home. We should write into law a new markets tax credit: $1 billion of tax credits over 5 years, worth 25 percent of the amount of equity placed in investment funds, community development banks, and other investment vehicles targeted for these untapped markets.

We should create ''American Private Investment Companies,'' modeled on the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, that would provide for guarantees of a portion of

private equity investment of up to $1½ billion a year over the next 5 years. We should create new market venture capital firms to bring capital and technical assistance to small businesses in distressed areas.

Thousands—literally thousands and thousands of opportunities of entrepreneurs in this country just need a little capital and a little guidance to expand their businesses and to create new jobs. All told, this new markets initiative will bring $15 billion in new private sector investment, our most significant opportunity in years to break the cycle of poverty and joblessness in the neighborhoods where unemployment is still too high, and that 5.6 percent does not mean anything. I ask you to help me make sure it means something from now on to every American in every community.

We have to do more. I announced in the State of the Union that welfare is at its lowest level in three decades. Caseloads have been cut nearly in half. That's the good news. The bad news is that the remaining number of people on welfare who are able-bodied and who are required under the law to seek work will very often be harder to place, at least in terms of either their educational level, their skills level, or their difficulty in getting transportation to work, or perhaps they have more children, and therefore it's more difficult to support child care.

And yet we have seen evidence—I think either Secretary Shalala or Janet Yellen in one of the weekly economic reports quoted a report to me recently which said that we had some evidence now that even hard-to-place—people that you would type as hard-to-place welfare recipients—are actually being placed, being trained, and doing quite well, thank you, where the unemployment rate is low and the markets are so tight that employers had to be out and train them and provide the kinds of tools necessary to give them a chance to go to work.

So again I say, I think it is very important that no public official get up here and disempower hundreds of thousands of Americans by saying, ''Well, now we have creamed everybody off the top, and these other folks, we'll just have to give up on them.'' If we had time, I'd have my mayor here, my new mayor, come up here and tell you his life story. Thank God nobody gave up on him.

So I ask you to help me pass this provision of my budget, which would help us to give another 200,000 people the dignity of work, and reinforce the new markets initiative by making sure people are actually able to work if we can get the investment opportunities to them.

We have to do more to clean up abandoned industrial sites and redevelop them. My balanced budget proposes an abandoned buildings initiative that will help you accelerate your efforts to clean up brownfields and deal with sites with old and unused buildings and turn them into places of opportunity.

Now, every one of these initiatives will require Democrats and Republicans to work together to get through Congress. And every one requires Congress to act; I do not write the checks in America. [*Laughter*] So I need your help, across party lines. These things should be American initiatives. They relate to human potential and private initiative and private sector investment.

Second, we have to do more to keep our cities safer. I thank the mayor for what she said about your position on drug testing. I don't think people ought to be paroled in the first place unless they've been tested, and they're drug-free. And I believe when they're on parole, if they had a drug problem in the first place, they should be tested and should have to stay drug-free to stay out of prison, because I think it will keep your cities safer.

You look at the numbers that the Attorney General gives me all the time, just look at the Federal prison system and the way that it's grown and the number of people there who are there because of drug-related offenses, and the numbers are bigger and the percentages are worse in State facilities. And I despaired for a long time—I ran a big prison system when I was a Governor for 12 years, and I dramatically increased the size of it. And every year I got sicker and sicker to see great world-class facilities being built according to Federal court guidelines for my prisoners, while my kids were going to school in second-class facilities, many of which were too old even to be hooked up to the Internet.

But the point I want to make is this: I don't favor putting people in inhumane conditions,

but I think we're wasting our time if we think we can keep jailing our way out of this situation in the same old way. That's the point I'm trying to make. And we'll have more to say about that later. But let's begin with first things first, with this drug testing initiative.

Secondly, with, I think, the superb partnership between the Justice Department and the local communities, we're going to achieve our goal this year of those 100,000 community police, under budget and ahead of schedule. I wish I had a list of everything everybody who ever voted against that bill in 1994 said. ''Oh, this will never work.'' ''Oh, what will happen?'' ''Oh, the mayors will hate you for doing this.'' ''Oh, how can you do this?'' I wish I had a list of all that stuff. [*Laughter*] The people that were opposed to that, they practically swole up and died when it was passed. You would have thought it was the worst thing that ever happened. [*Laughter*]

And I am so grateful to you for what you have done with the police program. We worked with you all the way, you and your law enforcement officials. I'm going to give a 21st century crime bill to Congress that will focus on, now, how we can make our communities even safer.

It's fine to say that crime is at a 30-year low. If you're a victim, it's still too high. And no one really believes that the United States, compared to other countries, is a safe country yet. We still have more to do. And no one seriously believes that we can really get private investment into all those places that have been left behind until we get the crime rate down. So part of it involves the drug strategy. Part of it involves, I believe, more police resources deployed in the toughest areas. And the budget we have will help our communities to hire or redeploy somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000 police.

And we had the 100,000 number down quite good, we thought, and we were being conservative, and now we know we're going to get there ahead of schedule and under budget. The reason I give you this rather flexible number—and I said up to 50,000 in the State of the Union—is, obviously, it depends upon where those toughest neighborhoods are, and what the cost per police will be in the neighborhoods where they're deployed. Obviously, you know from the other program, we'll do our best to create the largest number of police possible as quickly as possible to do this.

We also want to enlist probation and parole officers, school officials, faith-based organizations in active attempts to prevent crime in the first place. We want to give your police more high-tech tools to fight crime, from digital mug shots to crime-mapping computers in squad cars. For years, we have seen—you can see in any movie, drug dealers using pagers, scam artists using the Internet, gangs with high-tech weapons. I think the police ought to have access to the same technology that their adversaries do.

I also thank you for what you're doing to take guns out of the hands of criminals, and I ask you not to relent. There is still almost—and it's still bewildering to me, but there is almost a culture war still going on out their over all these issues. I ask for your support as we seek to restore the 5-day waiting period for buying a handgun, to extend the Brady bill to violent juveniles, to pass legislation to require child safety trigger locks. These are three things we can do to save lives. No one is trying to stop anybody from their legitimate right to hunt or have weapons, but we need to pass these bills. And I ask for your support.

The third thing we need to do is keep working on these schools. Now, as all of you know, we not only have the most diverse student population in history, with one in five of our children with—I'll say it again—one in five of our children in school from immigrant families. We have 53 million kids in school, the largest number ever. Secretary Riley loves to say that number and then to look at me and say, ''Well, you baby boomers are not the largest generation.'' [*Laughter*] And I think that's good because when all those kids get out of school, there will be more of them than us and they'll be able to support me in my old age better. [*Laughter*] I hope. [*Laughter*]

Now, there are a lot of good things going on in our schools. I've been in the schools in some of the communities here present. Test scores are up across the Nation. But I'll just—I'll give you one—I don't want to bore you with statistics, because I could talk about

education all day long, but I just want you to think about one thing. What does it say to you that on these international tests, comparing the performance of our children in math and science, our kids—a representative sample of our kids, by race, by income, by region—a representative sample rank at the top of the world on the fourth grade test, drop to the middle in the eighth grade, and are near the bottom in the twelfth grade?

These children are not dumb. The system is failing them, not the other way around. And I think it's important for us to recognize that. Although you've got all of these dedicated teachers out there, you've got schools where everyone is succeeding, where they're all doing well on these exams, where they're all going to college.

Dick Riley and I have been working for more than 20 years together on education now, and I always told him—I always considered—to me the most frustrating thing to me about working in education is that every single problem has been solved by somebody somewhere. And we have simply got to do a better job of replicating success.

We need to finish the job of hiring 100,000 teachers to have class size smaller in the early grades, or we'll start losing the ground we've gained, with all these kids coming into school and all the teachers retiring. So we made a big downpayment on 100,000 teachers last year. We need to continue that. We ought to pass the bill that would enable you to build or modernize 5,000 schools. That's very important.

Again, I say we should—we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year. And I'm going to propose a dramatic change, and it will be very controversial, maybe right across the political spectrum, because I think that we now know what works; we know that there are great schools in every State in this country; we know—I've been in city after city, including this one, where I have been blown away by the performance of some schools, even as I get dismayed by the overall numbers. It is time the United States Government started investing in what is working and stopped investing in what is not.

I am quite sure I'll hear the same thing I heard when we passed the crime bill: You know, you're trying to decide what they do at the local level. That is not true. The crime bill, as all of you know, was, in effect, written by your local police chiefs and prosecutors and mayors. They came to us, and they said, this is what works. And Senator Biden and others put together a bill that reflected what you were telling us.

There is nothing in this ''Educational Accountability Act'' that we have not been told at high decibel levels by local educational leaders over and over and over again. And I ask you, if you know—and every one of you know this is true—if you know that every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere, and you know there are certain common elements to the solution, just as there have to be—and you when you run your cities—a tailor-made construction of it, depending on the facts—but if you know there are common elements, how in the world can you keep giving people a check whether those elements are there or not? If you know that we're not spending as much money as we should in education, how in the world can you justify not spending the money we are spending as well as possible?

This is very serious. Now, you can help us to pass this. But I think it is absolutely imperative that we say: no social promotion; quick action to turn around failing schools; qualified teachers; report cards on schools; discipline codes; don't say that kids are failures; fix the system. That's why—Deedee mentioned this—we want to triple the funds that you get for the after-school programs, more investment for the summer school programs.

We know these things work. We know they work. We know they work in the poorest neighborhoods. We know they work in circumstances where people say that you can never turn these schools around. We know they work. We have no conceivable excuse for continuing to invest in what doesn't work and for not investing in what does. I implore you to help me pass a different way of sending Federal funds to invest in our children's future that will work.

I also ask you to help me pass the rest of the budget so we can hook up every classroom and library to the Internet. We're going

to start getting the e-rate that we fought so hard for, so our classrooms, even in the poor neighborhoods, and libraries can afford to hook up to the Internet; to support the America Reads program—we now have 1,000 colleges with young people out in our grade schools helping kids learn to read; to support our Gear Up program—we've got mentors now going into middle schools not only to tutor and mentor our children but to get them to start thinking about going to college and to start telling them when they're in middle school, ''Look, here's what the law is. Here's what aid you can get. Here's what the scholarships are. Here's what the Pell grants are. You've got to start thinking about going to college.''

I see Mayor Rendell back there; this whole thing was the brainchild of Congressman Chaka Fattah from Philadelphia. And he and I were together with Chaka and a bunch of young kids from the inner city not very long ago, just sitting around drinking a Coke with them. Every single one of these kids wanted to go to college, every one of them, and intended to go and believe they could go. And we need to do that everywhere in America.

Fourth, I'd like to talk just briefly about the preservation challenge you all face. I talked about this at some length in the State of the Union, but we're losing 7,000 acres of green space and farmland every single day. So I have proposed this billion-dollar livability agenda to help you save open space, ease traffic congestion, grow in ways that enhance the quality of lives of your citizens, including the Better America bonds. Carol Browner was telling me yesterday, you kind of like those Better America bonds—it's a tax cut to leverage $9½ billion in private investment to clean up brownfields, to have clean air, and to do some other things that I think you know will be very important. So I hope you'll help us to pass it.

I hope you'll support our billion-dollar lands legacy initiative, to preserve places of natural beauty all across this country from the most remote wilderness to the nearest city park.

Now, if we can continue in this direction, in expanding economic opportunity and improving education and fighting crime, in making our communities more livable, we can do better. Even though times are good, we can do better. We can do much better. And we can reach all those neighborhoods and all those people to whom these statistics don't mean a thing because they haven't felt them. And it's in everyone else's interest because that's how we'll keep the overall American economy growing.

Let me just say, parenthetically, I hope you will all support my proposal to set aside the surplus till we fix Social Security and Medicare at the same time, not all of it but most of it—and to do something that we never think about in America, which is paying down some of the debt. The reason I want to do that, especially now, is, you know about all this turmoil overseas; you know how a lot of countries are being punished for having big deficits; you know what will happen if we have to have—either they start having terrible inflation problems or have to have astronomical interest rates. They won't be able to buy as many of our products, and we'll have to develop more within our country.

If we fix Social Security and Medicare and do it by actually saving money until we need it, so while we're saving it, we're paying down the debt, that will keep our interest rates low, and it will free up money that people in the private sector would otherwise spend buying Government debt, to invest in your cities and in your neighborhoods.

So this is a very important part of this whole economic strategy. If the world economy resumes growing, we'll grow even faster. If the world economy—and about half the world is in a recession now—if the world economy stays in trouble, we have to find ways to keep growing, and one of the ways we can do it is to free up more private sector money for private sector investment to create jobs. So I hope you will support that as well. It will have a direct impact on your economic well-being, as well as, obviously, it is of concern because you want your seniors to do well and to be—this generation of seniors is fine, but you want them to do well in the future also.

Let me just make one last point. I know the First Lady is coming over here to talk later today about the millennium. We established this White House Millennium Council

as an inspiration for communities and individuals. We've done a lot of things here. We've helped to save the Star-Spangled Banner and Thomas Edison's home and other things around the country. We've had these White House Millennium Evenings; they've been utterly fascinating. The famous physicist, Stephen Hawking, came over from England and talked to us about the nature of time and black holes in the universe, and all these things we'd find out in the 21st century that I could barely understand. It was fascinating.

We had, early this week, we had two historians of religion come and talk about what the millennium meant to people, from a philosophical and religious sense a thousand years ago, and what it might mean today. Wynton Marsalis came and conducted a seminar on the history of jazz, and how it embodied this last century and what it might mean for the next century. These things have been fascinating. But the millennium will never have its full meaning to us unless it is played out in every single community.

Now, I know most of you are planning to do something, but I would urge you to plan more than a celebration on New Year's Eve. You will all be invited by her to receive national designation as millennium communities by launching projects to save your history, honor your arts and humanities, prepare your children for the new century. I hope you will do that.

Often, when a century turns, it marks a turning point in how people see themselves in the world. Maybe all we do is catch up to what's already going on, but it gives us a chance to sort of stop and think and try to see patterns in our existence. If you look at the turn of the last century, we now see that it was a time of enormous creation and identification by cities: the world's first Columbian Exposition in Chicago; the unification of the five boroughs of New York; the rebuilding of San Francisco after the earthquake. In the early years of the 20th century, America really became a melting pot.

I heard a fascinating story with a friend of mine the other day. Both his sets of grandparents were Italian immigrants, and his grandfather died right after he came over here, leaving his grandmother homeless with five children, including his mother, the youngest of the children. And we were talking about this incredible dilemma his mother faced because there were homes for orphans, but no places for five kids with a single mother, and how, at the last moment, when they were destitute, she was rescued by this community church in Philadelphia. It was a very moving story.

But we now have this in our consciousness, and we know that the 20th century, basically, was the urbanizing, the industrializing of America, a new wave of immigrants coming in, and how we had to meet those challenges. And this time gives us a time to think again. We can create the community of our dreams in this country at the turn of this century. And the magnitude of the moment is heightened by the fact that it is also the turn of a millennium.

But we must not see our present prosperity from the perspective of self-satisfaction. We should say, thank goodness we happen to be in positions of responsibility, when we have an opportunity the people who came before us never had.

Do you know how many people were mayors of your cities or who held the office of President, in this century, who would have given anything—anything—to have had the chance to do what is right before our eyes? I think we ought to do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE. The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT; Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Brent Coles of Boise, ID; Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, PA; and author and public management consultant David Osborne.

Statement on the Transportation Department's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program

January 29, 1999

For 6 years, our administration has worked hard to give more Americans the tools to make the most of their lives. Today I am pleased to announce that the Department of

Transportation is reforming and strengthening a program designed to open the doors of economic opportunity for those who have too often been shut out.

The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program gives thousands of minority-owned and women-owned business an opportunity to compete for State and local contracts to maintain our roads, construct new highways, and improve public transportation, among many other projects.

After carefully considering hundreds of comments and suggestions from local leaders, business owners, and citizens from across the country, the Transportation Department has amended the DBE rules to ensure that this vitally important program works more fairly, more efficiently, and meets all constitutional requirements. The new rule is an excellent example of our efforts to mend, not end, affirmative action. I applaud the hard work and dedication of Secretary Slater and his staff to make sure that all Americans can share in this time of prosperity.

Proclamation 7164—National Consumer Protection Week, 1999

January 29, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Consumers are too often the target of unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices. Modern advances in telecommunications and marketing technology have dramatically increased both the sophistication and the potential threat of such practices. Perpetrators of fraud can reach consumers across the country through the Internet, on television, the telephone, or by direct mail, misrepresenting themselves as legitimate business people. Because their proposals appear legitimate, these unscrupulous operators frequently succeed in cheating vulnerable consumers out of hard-earned dollars.

One of the most damaging fraudulent practices is credit fraud. Credit fraud—stealing credit cards or credit identities and cheating consumers through deceptive or abusive lending practices—can be difficult to recognize. Fraudulent credit transactions are often complicated and can occur when perpetrators hide or fail to disclose essential information to consumers. By stealing consumers' credit identities, criminals can run up huge debts and ruin their victims' credit records. And credit fraud costs all of us in higher interest rates and fees.

The best defense we have against credit fraud is education. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Consumers League, the Consumer Federation of America, and the National Association of Attorneys General are working in partnership to inform Americans about the dangers of credit fraud. As part of this effort, the FTC and its partners offer information on-line, by telephone, and in writing to alert consumers about the warning signs of credit fraud and how to protect themselves against it. The FTC, in cooperation with State Attorneys General and the Internal Revenue Service, is also actively prosecuting credit fraud cases that target some of our most vulnerable citizens.

I encourage all Americans to learn more about credit fraud, to read their credit reports carefully, to protect such personal information as their bank account, credit card, and Social Security numbers, and to know how to recognize the characteristics of fraudulent proposals. By using credit wisely and remaining alert to the possibility of credit fraud, we can better protect the well-being of our families and preserve our financial health and security.

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 the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 31 through February 6, 1999, as National Consumer Protection Week. I call upon government officials, industry leaders, consumer advocates, and the American people to participate in programs that foster credit literacy and raise public awareness about the dangers of credit fraud and other deceptive and fraudulent practices.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of January,

in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 2, 1999]

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

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the United States Air Force Operating Location Near Groom Lake, Nevada

January 29, 1999

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

Consistent with section 6001(a) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) (the "Act"), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6961(a), notification is hereby given that on September 25, 1998, I issued Presidential Determination No. 98–36 (copy attached) and thereby exercised the authority to grant certain exemptions under section 6001(a) of the Act.

Presidential Determination No. 98–36 exempted the United States Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake, Nevada, from any Federal, State, interstate, or local hazardous or solid waste laws that might require the disclosure of classified information concerning that operating location to unauthorized persons. Information concerning activities at the operating location near Groom Lake has been properly determined to be classified, and its disclosure would be harmful to national security. Continued protection of this information is, therefore, in the paramount interest of the United States.

The determination was not intended to imply that in the absence of a Presidential exemption, RCRA or any other provision of law permits or requires the disclosure of classified information to unauthorized persons. The determination also was not intended to limit the applicability or enforcement of any requirement of law applicable to the Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake except those provisions, if any, that would require the disclosure of classified information.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

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

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.

January 23

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and high winds on January 21 and continuing.

January 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Little Rock, AR, to inspect tornado damage in the surrounding areas. In the afternoon, he traveled to Beebe, AR, where he inspected tornado damage there.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

January 25

The President declared a major disaster in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms, ice, and freezing rain on December 22–26, 1998.

January 26

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to St. Louis, MO. In the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rudy de Leon as a member of the National Partnership Council.

January 27

In the afternoon, the President met with President-elect Hugo Chavez of Venezuela

in National Security Adviser Samuel R. Berger's office.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a dinner for the Nation's military leaders in the State Dining Room.

The White House announced that the President invited President Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana for a state visit on February 24.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Manchester, NH on February 18.

The President announced his intention to appoint John C. Pierce and Joyce Van Schaack as members of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joseph (Jody) Trapasso as a member of the Community Adjustment and Investment Program Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint Edward F. Hartfield and Mary E. Jacksteit as members of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

The President announced his intention to appoint W. Peter Conroy to serve as the Alternate Federal Commissioner to the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin Compact Commission and to the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin Compact Commission.

The President declared an emergency in Michigan and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by near-record snow on January 2 and continuing.

January 28

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oakton, VA, and later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert W. Gee to be Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Steven W. Percy as a member of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

The White House announced that the President invited Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy, President of the Council of Ministers, for an official working visit on March 5.

January 29

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India concerning India-U.S. relations and nonproliferation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Evelyne R. Villines as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Boston, MA, and New York City on February 2.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 26

Marsha L. Berzon,
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice John T. Noonan, Jr., retired.

Legrome D. Davis,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Edmund V. Ludwig, retired.

Barbara Durham,
of Washington, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Betty Binns Fletcher, retired.

Timothy B. Dyk,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit, vice Glenn L. Archer, Jr., retired.

Keith P. Ellison,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Norman W. Black, retired.

Gary Allen Feess,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice James M. Ideman, retired.

Barry P. Goode,
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Charles E. Wiggins, retired.

Ronald M. Gould,
of Washington, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Robert R. Beezer, retired.

William J. Hibbler,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice James H. Alesia, retired.

Matthew F. Kennelly,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Paul E. Plunkett, retired.

Lynette Norton,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, vice Maurice B. Cohill, Jr., retired.

Richard A. Paez,
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Cecil F. Poole, resigned.

Virginia A. Phillips,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice William M. Byrne, Jr., retired.

Stefan R. Underhill,
of Connecticut, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Connecticut, vice Peter C. Dorsey, retired.

T. John Ward,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, vice William Wayne Justice, retired.

Helene N. White,
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice Damon J. Keith, retired.

Ronnie L. White,
of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, vice George F. Gunn, Jr., retired.

Submitted January 29

Robert Wayne Gee,
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Fossil Energy), vice Patricia Fry Godley, resigned.

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 January 23

Statement by the Press Secretary: Situation in Romania

Released January 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed on welfare-to-work funding in the budget

Released January 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley on the President's meeting with Pope John Paul II

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Meeting With His Holiness Pope John Paul II

Announcement of renomination for six U.S. Court of Appeals Judges and six U.S. District Judges, and nomination of two U.S. Court of Appeals Judges and four U.S. District Judges

Released January 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs Jim Dobbins on the visit of President-elect Chavez of Venezuela

Statement by the Press Secretary: State Visit by President Rawlings of Ghana

Released January 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy

Released January 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of remarks by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo on the President's meeting with the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Advance text of remarks by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling to the National Press Club

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.