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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999"

August 5, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999." Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis. This legislative proposal, which would amend the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 (NACARA), is part of my Administration's comprehensive effort to support the process of democratization and stabilization now underway in Central America and Haiti and to ensure equitable treatment for migrants from these countries. The proposed bill would allow qualified nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti an opportunity to become lawful permanent residents of the United States. Consequently, under this bill, eligible nationals of these countries would receive treatment equivalent to that granted to the Nicaraguans and Cubans under NACARA.

Like Nicaraguans and Cubans, many Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians fled human rights abuses or unstable political and economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet these latter groups received lesser treatment than that granted to Nicaraguans and Cubans by NACARA. The United States has a strong foreign policy interest in providing the same treatment to these similarly situated people. Moreover, the countries from which these migrants have come are young and fragile democracies in which the United States has played and will continue to play a very important role. The return of these migrants to these countries would place significant demands on their economic and political systems. By offering legal status to a number of nationals of these countries with long-standing ties in the United States, we can advance our commitment to peace and stability in the region.

Passage of the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999" will evidence our commitment to fair and even-handed treatment of nationals from these countries and to the strengthening of democracy and economic stability among important neighbors. I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this legislative proposal by the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 5, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the Arkansas Broadcasters Association's 50th Anniversary Dinner in Little Rock, Arkansas

August 6, 1999

Thank you very much. Congratulations on your 50th anniversary. And thank you for honoring my friend and my partner James Lee Witt.

You know, Bobby—I was wondering what Bobby would say. I thought he would say, "You know, I knew I could guilt Bill Clinton into coming to this dinner once I found out he was going to be in Arkansas and I reminded him how many early-morning radio interviews I'd given him over the last 20 years." And I want to thank Bobby Caldwell, who is my longtime friend, and all of you for the work that you do, as well as for honoring a wonderful man tonight.

I am honored to be joined by Rodney Slater, and I know there are others here in our administration—Kay Goss, Buddy

Young, and people who were in our administration in Arkansas, like Bill and Judy Gaddy, are here, and many others that I haven't had a chance to see. I thank the members of the legislature who are here—Steve Faris and Don House; and Bud Harper, who has the job that James Lee used to have and, like James Lee, used to be a county judge, and therefore, was prepared for it.

And I want to acknowledge my good friend John Paul Katz, who served as Speaker of the House when I was Governor. And also, James Lee's family—James Lee and Lea Ellen have done a great job, and you know they're building a political dynasty in Yell County. And if your last name is not Witt, you can't be county judge in Yell County anymore. [*Laughter*] Not ever.

Let me say that—I know most of this has been said, but I want to say a few things about James Lee and what he represents in terms of what I've tried to do as your President. This is one of the best times in American history, but when it comes to weather, it's been one of the worst. Since 1993, we've had the worst flood of the century in the Midwest; the worst earthquake in Northridge, California; weather disasters in places they weren't supposed to happen. We've had tornadoes in Minnesota, ice storms in Florida. And now the farm crops are burning up, not in the South, but in the East and the Northeast, where today we acknowledged the worst drought ever for the farmers from Maryland to New Jersey to Rhode Island.

We have had in total more than 250 natural disasters in all 50 States and territories. And many of them have cost a lot of human lives.

Well, the old saying that God doesn't send you anything you can't handle was made true from the point of view of my administration and millions of Americans because James Lee Witt agreed to be head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

I got this idea, I have to tell you, when I went to Florida as a candidate for President and I saw the enormous anxiety that people felt in the aftermath of the terrible hurricane, where their whole lives had been wrecked. And I talked to Senator Pryor about this—I remember this very clearly—that people kept saying the Federal Government is not working; they're not helping; I don't know what they're doing; they're taking too long; they act bureaucratic. You know, just one thing after another.

And I realized what the problem was. And that is that for decades, through Democratic and Republican administrations alike, the Federal Emergency Management Agency was treated like a political appointment. And normally the person who got it was somebody who wanted something else, who was a big supporter of the President, but couldn't quite become an Ambassador to a European country or couldn't quite get a position in the Cabinet. I took care of that by putting FEMA in the Cabinet.

And all these people that had this job were good people. They were not bad people; they were good people. And there were all these dedicated professionals who were working day in and day out. But there was no one at the helm who wanted the job and who had experience in what the job was and who could put every fiber of his being into dealing with people in the most difficult times imaginable.

And, you know, when I was Governor and James Lee was head of the office of emergency services here, we had horrible floods; we had tornadoes that leveled little towns. I remember going over to west Memphis when the whole place was decked and the glass had been shattered at the dog track and glass was flying through the air over there at more than 100 miles an hour. Just a miracle that we didn't have lots of people killed by something that was just like a hail of bullets.

And I knew that he cared what happened to people when they were running tight, and I knew he knew that people were frustrated, they were angry, they were disoriented, when they'd lost everything in the world. And we needed somebody who actually had that kind of experience and that kind of ability doing this job.

You know, when everything is going along all right, most people think of the Cabinet of the President as the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General, and maybe if you're from Arkansas, you think about the Secretary of Agriculture. But

when your house is blown away and when your community is buried in water, the most important person in the Federal Government is the person that heads the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

And because of all the things we've been through as a nation in natural disasters in the last 6 years, James Lee Witt has very often been the most important person in the Federal Government to tens of millions of Americans.

I kid him every time we have a disaster someplace, 3 weeks later there's another State he could be elected to State office in. When we went through all this terrible thing in southern California with that earthquake—they think of themselves as a big, modern place, and a lot of them, actually, are from places like Arkansas, but they forget it from time to time. And he gave them a whole new take on what it was to have a grassroots sense of common sense and compassion.

So I can just tell you that I think we're going to have more of these difficult natural problems, and I think we're going to have a lot of challenges to meet. But it will be a long, long time before any Federal official ever has this position who can remotely equal James Lee for his experience, his knowledge, his ability, and his compassion. He has served America well, and he has done Arkansas proud.

I'd just like to take advantage of the fact that you gave me this podium to give you a brief report on a couple of other things, by using, if I might, James Lee. The way he runs FEMA and the way he conducts his business is the way I believe the Federal Government as a whole should be run, that we should basically put people ahead of politics and power.

Now, all you've got to do is read the paper every day or listen to the news to know that that's not the way Washington works and that's not the way some people who report about Washington want it to work, because they think it would be immensely boring if it did, I think. But James Lee is exhibit A of the kind of Government we've tried to bring to Washington. So is Rodney, I might add.

You have these two Arkansans serving with great distinction, by the way, who are quite popular with both Republicans and Democrats in the United States Congress, both of them, because they treat people decently; they give them a quick answer; they shoot straight. They don't say yes when the answer is no, but they try to say yes whenever they can. And they are very well thought of. And they don't become the kind of lightning rods that normally just titillate the day-to-day coverage of politics in Washington.

I believe, out here in the country there is a national consensus around a vital center for America moving forward. It crosses party lines on nearly everything. I believe it exists nearly everywhere—except in Washington.

I'll just give you one example, this debate we're having over the Patients' Bill of Rights. I have supported health maintenance organizations. I have supported managed care as a way of holding down the costs of health care. Let's not forget, in 1993 when I took office, health care costs for several years had been going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. And they threatened to absolutely engulf the budgets of businesses and of families. But I also believe that you can't manage a system if you forget what the primary mission of the system is. In this case, it is to improve the health care of the American people.

Now, I believe if you went out to anyplace in Arkansas—I think if you took an exhaustive survey, if you polled 20,000 people here in Pulaski County, or in any part of our State, and you divided them properly among the parties, you would find overwhelming support for the idea that every American in an HMO ought to have the right to see a specialist if their doctor tells them they need to see a specialist.

And in a lot of big cities, believe it or not, when people have accidents—when the ambulance picks them up, they have to go by two or three emergency rooms until they get to one in a hospital that's covered. Well, if it's you in the back of that ambulance, you want to go to the first emergency room you come to. You don't want to have to bump two or three until you get to one that just happens to be in a plan.

And a lot of you run small businesses. And small businesses that do provide health insurance for their employees often have to change providers, and they have to look around, from time to time, for the most cost-effective provider. But if there's an employee in that business who's in the sixth month of a difficult pregnancy, or in the middle of a chemotherapy treatment, I think that those people ought to be able to keep their doctors until the treatment is finished. These are just basic, simple things. And I think 70 percent of the American people agree.

Now, there is a glimmer of good news. About 20 Republicans in the House of Representatives—including all of their doctors, about a half dozen of them—have said they want to help us pass this. And I hope we can get it done. But the fact that we've been fighting for it for nearly 2 years is an example—we'd never have a 2-year fight over this in the Arkansas legislature. We just wouldn't do it, because it would be such a clear, human, basic thing that we'd figure out how to get it done without imposing undue burdens on the businesses involved.

And that's what we have to do in Washington. If you take the debate we're having over the surplus today—I know it may just seem like politics to you, but believe me, it is not to me. It's about everything I've tried to stand for and do since I went up there. Just remember, when I went to Washington, we'd been running on a balanced budget down here for 12 years and they had quadrupled the debt in 12 years. And we had—the deficit was $290 billion and projected to be $390 billion this year. And we were able to turn it around by arithmetic, which meant we have to make hard and controversial decisions, and a lot of Members of my party lost their seats in Congress in the '94 election because they voted to reduce the deficit.

But just today, before I came down here, we announced that we have gone over 19 million new jobs since January of 1993—19 million; the longest peacetime expansion in history; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded; a million and a half fewer children in poverty. Record numbers of new small businesses have started in every single year. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; there are fewer toxic waste dumps. We've got 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in the history of the United States.

We've set aside more land to be preserved forever than any administration, except those of the two Roosevelts. We've got 100,000 young people that have served their country in AmeriCorps in their communities, earned money for college. The HOPE scholarship essentially guarantees that everybody can have at least 2 years of college—and already, 15 million people have taken advantage of it; 12.5 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law.

This country is a stronger country because we have looked to the future and tried to put people first, tried to keep thinking about what's best for tomorrow. And that's what this whole debate is about. But I just want to give you my take on it. And it's exactly the same attitude I'd have if I were still Governor sitting here watching it go on.

This country quadrupled our debt in the 12 years before I took office. We have turned that around, but we're looking toward a 21st century in which, among other things, the following will happen. I'll just give you two things. Number one, the number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years when the baby boomers all get into the retirement age. Right now Medicare is supposed to go broke in 15 years; Social Security is supposed to go broke in 33 years, 34 years. We are not prepared for the aging of America.

Number two, we've got the largest number of children in our school system we have ever had—bigger than the baby boom generation, and we have the largest percentage of them who come from all different kinds of backgrounds.

I saw an article in the Christian Science Monitor the other day that said Arkansas was one of the two States in the country with the fastest growing Hispanic populations. And nobody really believes seriously that we're giving every one of our children a world-class education. But our future as a nation, and those of us who are baby boomers, the security of our retirement depends upon our ability to educate all of our children.

Now, here's what I think about this surplus. First of all, it's only going to materialize if we have a good economic policy. And secondly, only if we have a good economic policy will any tax cut be worth a plug nickel to anybody. So what I think we ought to do is meet the big challenges of the country. And I'll just mention three.

Number one, we ought to save Social Security and strengthen Medicare and provide a modest prescription drug benefit to the three-quarters of the seniors in this country that don't have access to it. Two, we ought to decide how much money we have to invest in our future, in everything from education to national defense, the environment, to things that are important in Arkansas—veterans' health care. We have to put some more money into the university teaching hospitals. Everybody agrees with this up there. And we've got to do something about the farm problem. It's about time that we admitted that '95 farm bill, as I said when I signed it, reluctantly, had no safety net and will not work in bad economic times. It doesn't work, and we ought to fix that. But it costs money. So we need to figure out how many other things we have to invest in.

And then the third thing we ought to do, in my opinion, is to save enough of this surplus for Social Security and Medicare that we actually pay this country's debt off. We can be out of debt, in 15 years, for the first time since 1835. And if we do that, that means in every community represented in this room, lower interest rates for businesses, for home mortgages, for college loans, for credit cards, for car payments. It means that the children in this room will grow up into an economy that is much stronger than it otherwise would have been.

Now, can you imagine what people would have said and thought of me if I had gone out in 1992 and said, ''Now, I want you to vote for me, and 7 years later I'll come back and we'll have a little talk about what to do with the surplus and getting America out of debt.'' They would have said, ''You know, that young fellow from Arkansas is a nice young man, but he's deluded and we need to send him home.'' [*Laughter*] But that's where we are today, because people like David Pryor put their political necks on the line and stood up and did the right thing.

And I'm just telling you—I see this now in the broad history of our country. A generation gets a chance like this maybe once in a lifetime. The World War II generation, they did for us by getting us through the Depression and winning the war and saving the world for freedom. And now what we're being asked to do is to look down the road and think of the long-term interest of America, and the strength of our country in good times and bad, and do what's right for our children.

If you save Social Security and Medicare, when those of us in the baby boom retire, we won't have to burden our children with our retirement and undermine their ability to invest in our grandchildren. If you invest in education, we'll have a stronger economy. And if you pay the debt off, we'll sure have a stronger economy, by far, than we otherwise would have.

So here's my simple idea. I know this sounds simple, but why don't we figure out what we've got to do for Social Security and Medicare? Why don't we figure out what—even the Republicans, they're up there spending all the money—what they want to spend on everything from education to agriculture and veterans, and what it takes to pay the debt off? There will be some money left, and give it back to the America people in a tax cut.

But this debate, it's all backwards, you know. They're up there giving the money away—with no Medicare plan, nothing to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, ignoring the commitments that they want to make in everything from defense to veterans to agriculture, with no prospect of paying the debt off.

It is—one of the young men that works for me said this is kind of like a family sitting down at dinner and talking about what they're going to do for the summer and deciding they're going to have the vacation of their lifetimes; they're going to just blow it out. And when they get home from this month-long vacation, they'll see if they can pay the home mortgage and send the kids to college. That's exactly what is going on here.

And it is not partisan, from my point of view. I'm not running for anything. But when I come home here, and we put that library up down on the river, and I'm looking at the next generation of young people and trying to bring people from all over the world here to see our State and to talk about what we did and what we still need to do in our country and in our world—I want to go to bed every night knowing that we did everything we could to give the children in this room the 21st century they deserve.

So I ask all of you, as you watch this debate unfold—we can't even have this argument about how big the tax cut should be until we have met our fundamental obligations to you and to our future. I will work with the Republicans—keep in mind, we passed the Balanced Budget Act in '97; we passed welfare reform in 1996, in the teeth of the election. And I would remind you that we have now cut the welfare rolls in half; they're the lowest they've been in 32 years.

So we are capable of working together up there across party lines. But we can't forget about common sense and basic arithmetic. And we need to maintain the spirit of kindness and concern and humility that James Lee Witt has brought to that FEMA office every day he's been there. And I hope that, in whatever way you can, you will get that message out to the people who listen to you—because a lot of people do, and we've got an awful lot riding on it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 p.m. in the Ambassador's Ballroom at the Embassy Suites Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bobby Caldwell, member, board of directors, Arkansas Broadcasters Association; William Gaddy, former director, Arkansas Employment Security Division, and his wife, Judy Gaddy, former special assistant to the Governor; State Representatives Steve Faris and Don R. House; and W.R. (Bud) Harper, director, Arkansas Office of Emergency Services. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks to the Community in Helena, Arkansas

August 7, 1999

Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you for coming out in the heat. Congressman Berry asked me—we were standing up here—Congressman Berry said, "You smell that cotton dust that's been in here a hundred years?" [*Laughter*]

I am glad to be back. I want to thank Senator Lambert-Lincoln who has done such a wonderful job; my good friend Congressman Berry. I want to thank Mayor Weaver for coming out and Dr. Robert Miller, the mayor of Helena, my longtime friend. And I want to thank our Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, from Lee County.

Let me say to all of you, I'm about to go down to the Cultural Center for a business meeting about the future of the Delta in Arkansas, but I just want to say a word or two. And I'll be brief because it's hot and I want to get out and shake hands, and then I want to go to work.

Yesterday in Washington I was able to announce that our country had produced 19 million jobs, and then some, since I became President. But the unemployment rate in the deep Delta is still twice the national average. The income is less than two-thirds the national average. And a lot of the things that we have tried to do in the last 6½ years have helped some discrete communities, but not the whole region.

In my State of the Union Address this year, in an attempt to build on the work that we've done with the enterprise zones and the empowerment communities, under the leadership of Vice President Gore, I proposed that we look at the Mississippi Delta, at Appalachia, at the Indian reservations, at the small towns and the inner-city communities that have been left behind as a big new market for America; that if we had parts of America where we hadn't had new investment and new jobs and new opportunity, and we were growing like crazy and we had the best economy in a generation, we ought to find a way

to get people to invest in the areas that have been left behind.

And one of the things that I asked the Congress to do is to give people in America with money to invest the same incentives to invest in poor communities in America we give them to invest in poor communities overseas.

Now, I just went on a tour—you probably saw the press when I was Clarksdale, Mississippi, but I was also in Appalachia; I went up to South Dakota to an Indian reservation; I went to Phoenix and East St. Louis and Los Angeles. There is an enormous feeling out there in the country today that we ought to really make an effort—it's the first time I have felt this—there's a great feeling in the Congress, and I think in both parties, that we ought to do something for the areas that have still not felt the economic recovery of the country. And that's what we're here to talk about. That's what I'm going down to the Culture Center to discuss.

So the last thing I want you to know—and I know Secretary Slater would echo this—is that you couldn't have two better people representing you than Blanche Lambert-Lincoln and Marion Berry. They wear us out every single week to do something for you.

And finally, let me just say it's good to be back here. All of you have been very good to me for more than 20 years now. I probably wouldn't be President if it weren't for eastern Arkansas, and I am very grateful. And I want you to know that in the year and a half I have left on my term, I am going to do everything I can to bring more economic opportunity not only to the Delta but to every place in America that is not a part of what our country as a whole is enjoying today.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the West Hangar at West Helena Municipal Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Johnny Weaver of West Helena, AR.

The President's Radio Address

August 7, 1999

Good morning. At the edge of a new century and an increasingly competitive global economy, we know that our children's futures will be determined in large part by the quality of the education they receive. More and more, what you earn depends upon what you learn.

Our administration has made education a high priority, focusing on standards, accountability, and choice in public schools, and on making a college education available to every American—with increased Pell grant scholarships, better student loan and work-study programs, and the HOPE scholarship and other tax credits to help families pay for college tuition. Because of these efforts, more young people have the chance to make the most of their God-given abilities, and take their place in the high-tech world of the 21st century.

Today I want to talk about what we're doing to build on our progress, by reaching out to young people and challenging all of them to reach for their dreams by preparing for college. Because as far as we've come, we know, still, there is much to do; for too many children, especially in economically distressed communities, aren't getting the chance to reach their highest potential.

That's why we've worked hard to expand Head Start; to connect every classroom in America, even in our poorest communities, to the Internet; to launch the America Reads program, which has mobilized tens of thousands of student tutors to help millions of children learn to read; and to expand after-school programs, to keep kids in school and learning, not on the street and losing their way.

But to really make a difference in disadvantaged children's lives, we must instill in them the unshakable belief that if they work hard, they will be able to go on to college. And we must give them the tools to achieve that dream.

I know how important this can be. No one in my family had ever gone to college before me. But I never doubted I was going to college, because everyone in my life guided me to reach that goal. That's what I want for every child in America. For years now, Congressman Chaka Fattah, Eugene Lang—who started the "I Have a Dream" Foundation—and the Ford Foundation have been dedicated to supporting new partnerships to meet that challenge.

Last year, in my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to support our plan to create hundreds of these partnerships between universities, colleges, middle schools, and community and business organizations. These innovative programs start early, reaching out to students no later than seventh grade, staying with them all the way, from providing students with mentors who encourage them to have high hopes and high expectations for themselves, to ensuring that schools teach the classes that prepare young people for college entrance exams, to helping families figure out how to pay for college. These programs can make all the difference in whether a young person goes to college.

Last year, with bipartisan support, Congress passed and I signed, legislation creating the GEAR UP program. With the leadership of Senator Specter of Pennsylvania and Senator Harkin of Iowa, we secured the funds to put this plan into action. Today I am pleased to announce the first $120 million in GEAR UP grants to help States and communities all over the country inspire and guide their children from the playground to the college classroom.

I'm glad to be joined here today by Congressman Fattah, by Senator Specter, and also by Congressman Becerra from California, who supports this program. And I ask Congress to fully fund my request to double our commitment to these programs now, so that we can reach more of our children than ever. GEAR UP is a great example of what we can accomplish when we put progress ahead of partisanship and put our children's future first.

Unfortunately, this is exactly the kind of program that the Republican large tax plan would jeopardize. Families don't take a costly vacation and then say they'll figure out when they get home whether they can make the mortgage payments or pay the college tuition. And I don't think we should decide on this big tax cut and just hope there's enough left over to pay for education and to save Social Security and Medicare and pay off our national debt. We have worked very hard to turn around the deficit. Now is not the time to turn our backs on our children's future.

So today I say again, let's join together across party lines to put first things first and build a stronger America for the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:17 p.m. on August 5 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas

August 7, 1999

The President. Thank you. Well, Myreon, you did a great job. I don't know what you're running for, but you've got a good chance. [*Laughter*] Congratulations.

Let me thank all of you for coming here on this hot summer Saturday afternoon. Especially, I want to thank Congressman Bill Jefferson, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Congressman Bennie Thompson for coming from out of State to join our Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Congressman Marion Berry back there. And I believe Congressman Vic Snyder is here. And also, a former Governor of Tennessee, Ned McWherter, our great friend, thank you for being here, sir.

I thank all the pastors and educators and businesspeople and community activists who are here. Many of you have been my friends for over 20 years, and all of you helped me to be elected President, with my friend and partner Al Gore. And then you helped us to be reelected for the first time a Democrat had done that in 60 years. And we know it could not have happened without your support.

I want to say just a couple of things and turn the microphone over to the Vice President. Oh, let me also thank our Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, who's from the Arkansas Delta. We're glad that he's here.

When we took office—a lot of people have forgotten what it was like when we took office. We had high unemployment, low

growth, increasing social division, and gridlock in Washington. It was not a good time. We had social unrest in Los Angeles. A lot of you remember that. And we decided that we could pull this country together and turn it around if the people would help us.

Now, 7 years later we've got—yesterday we announced over 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the highest homeownership ever recorded, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in the welfare rolls, and a 26-year low in the crime rate. And I think that's a pretty good record.

Now, I want to say two things to you about that. First of all, I could not have accomplished anything I have as President without the absolutely unprecedented role that Vice President Gore played. A year ago—6 years ago the day before yesterday, he cast the deciding vote on our economic plan, which all the Republicans said would ruin the country, and they used their fear tactics to take over the Congress. And that's what has given us the biggest surplus in history and this strong economic recovery. And he did it, and you should know that.

He has supported efforts to help families and communities. A lot of the pastors here appreciate the fact that he helped—he actually was our leading person in developing the television rating system and the Internet—the video game rating system and the V-chip for families. [*Applause*] Thank you.

He has led all our efforts in technology. We passed the Telecommunications Act, which has already produced over 300,000 new jobs for America. And he led the way in saying, we cannot let America get caught on a digital divide. We have to have an E-rate, a special rate, so that the poorest schools and libraries and hospitals in America—like those in the Mississippi Delta—have to be able to get big discounts so poor children can have those computers in schools, too, and have access to everything kids in the richest part of America do. Al Gore did that for America and for its future.

He has managed much of our difficult relationships with Russia, much of our promising future with South Africa. He has been involved in every good thing we have done, from restoring democracy to Haiti to ending ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I know a little bit about American history, and I can tell you that whatever anybody thinks about whether I was right or wrong about a given issue, when the history of the last 6½ years, and the next year and a half, is written, there is one thing that no one will be able to question, and that is that Al Gore was, by far, the most influential and effective and productive Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, here's the second thing I want to say. I think one reason we succeeded in helping the country is that when we asked you to hire us back in 1992, we put out a detailed plan of what we'd do if you gave us the job. An election is a job interview. He wants you to hire him. [*Laughter*]

The Vice President. I do. Absolutely.

The President. Okay? And all these other people that are running are perfectly nice people, but all of them are saying, you know, hire us, too; we want to be President, and sooner or later we'll get around to telling you why. [*Laughter*]

You already know more about him than anybody else running. But in spite of that, he said, here's my economic program; here's my crime program; here's my program to help attack social problems by working with faith-based institutions more in the community; here's my program to conquer cancer and other medical problems by increasing our efforts in medical research. Vote for me, and here's what I'll do.

And the third thing I want to say to you is this: Everybody always says they want change. Change is a good thing. We have been in continuous change. The next 4 years will be different than the last 4. We will have to change. The question is not whether we will change, but how we will change.

Don't listen to those folks who want to change by taking us back to what we tried before that got us in the ditch. What we want to do is to change in a way that goes beyond what we've done. And when 2000 rolls around, I'll be just a voter, like every ordinary citizen. But I want you to know, too, finally, that this man is a good and decent man. He is a good man.

And he has been with me through thick and thin, through light and dark. I've seen him deal with the challenges of raising his children under the scrutiny of the spotlight. I've seen him work with his wonderful wife in helping to make us think about things like mental illness, that we normally never wanted to talk about before. And I am telling you—everybody knows he's got a good mind—I'm telling you he's got a heart of gold, and he deserves your support.

And for a long time now, he's been at my back, and I intend to be with his. Thank you.

The Vice President of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:37 p.m. in Hall One at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to student Myreon Coleman of Marianna, AR, who introduced the President.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception in Little Rock

August 7, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here, and thanks for being in such a good humor. My remarks tonight could be summed up in two phrases—thank you for everything; here's Al. [*Laughter*]

I want to begin by saying to Mark Pryor how much I appreciate his taking on this responsibility for the Vice President. I once did the same thing in the same job for President Carter, and I hope you have the same result.

I want to thank Blanche Lincoln for being here, for her support of our administration and of the Vice President, but most of all, for the people of this wonderful State of ours. It really is true that—you know, when Blanche decides that she wants something for Arkansas, you can let her wear you out, exhaust you, break you down until you're prostrate on the floor and you'll do it, or you just go on and do it anyway. Those are really the only two alternatives.

I want to thank Congressman Berry and Congressman Synder for representing you so well and being such steadfast allies. I thank them. I thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus who have joined us here today from other States in the South. And I thank Senator Bumpers and Senator Pryor for coming. I miss them.

You know, Dale called me last week and told me a joke—[*laughter*]—and it isn't repeatable from this podium. [*Laughter*] But it was just like old times. And I was kind of feeling low when he did it—I worked for another 3 or 4 hours in a fabulous frame of mind after he did that. Now I've got to try to give the rest of this introduction without thinking about the punch line and laughing in the middle. [*Laughter*]

I want to say just about three things tonight. The first thing I want to say is this. Yesterday, before I left Washington, we announced that the country has now produced more than 19 million jobs since I became President, as part of the longest peacetime expansion in history, which has given us the highest homeownership, the lowest minority unemployment in history, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare rolls, a 26-year low in the crime rate.

The air and the water is cleaner; the food is safer; 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time. Because of the HOPE scholarship, virtually every kid in this country can get a $1,500 tax credit to pay for tuition to go to college. A hundred thousand young people have served their country in AmeriCorps in 4 years. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach that milestone. We have been a force for peace from Bosnia and Kosovo to Northern Ireland to the Middle East.

And what I want you to know is I could not have achieved any of those things without the leadership and the support and the aggressive efforts of Vice President Al Gore.

In 1993, when all the Republicans said that the country would go down the drain if Bill Clinton's idea of economics—which was to return to basic arithmetic instead of smoke and mirrors—took off, he cast the deciding vote on the economic plan. And the rest is history. We went from the biggest deficit to the biggest surplus in the history of the country.

We made a decision that we wanted to do something to try to bring economic opportunity to people in places who had been left

behind with the empowerment zone program, the enterprise community program. He personally ran it, and it's been a terrific success. And a lot of you know that I was in the Mississippi Delta region of our State this week, and in the Delta and on Indian reservations and Appalachia a couple of weeks ago, trying to take nationally the approach pioneered by Al Gore, proving that we can bring opportunity to poor people who want jobs in this country.

Everybody in Arkansas ought to be concerned about whether we can get computers into all of our schools and hook them all up by the year 2000. And one of the things that we don't want to do is to go into the 21st century with a big digital divide between the rich and the poor. Al Gore led the fight to make sure that the Federal Government required all the schools in this country to have affordable rates so that every classroom in the poorest schools in America can be hooked up to the Internet. He did that, and he deserves credit for it.

And there are so many more things that I can hardly list them all. But just let me say one thing. The management of our national security and for our foreign relations is very important. He has handled very important, complicated, difficult aspects of our relationships with Russia. He has dealt with any number of other countries. He played a major role in the decisions we made when they were not popular to liberate Bosnia and Kosovo from ethnic cleansing, to free the people of Haiti from a military dictatorship, to push ahead with our support for the peace process in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to stand up to terrorists around the world and organize the world against it. In short, to prepare for the world we are living in.

People can say many things about these last 6½ years. Historians may have their different evaluations. There is one thing, I will make you a prediction, that there will not be a single voice of dissent on: Al Gore has been the single most influential, effective, powerful, important Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, the second thing I want to tell you is this: He understands what the purpose of this election is. He understands it's a job interview. He wants you to hire him, and he's gone to the trouble of telling you what he'll do if you give him the job.

Now, that may sound laughable to you. I think one of the reasons we've enjoyed the success we have is that I was forced to think through in advance what I'd do if I got the job, and I told the American people in greater detail than anyone ever had. Then when I asked Al to join me, we revised—we sat down together, and we went over every plan, and we revised it, and we put it out again.

And now that he's running, he's told you what his economic policy will be, what his anticrime policy will be, how he wants to use faith-based groups in communities to help solve social problems, how he wants to go out and do dramatic new things with medical research, to cure cancer and other things—and exactly how he proposes to do it.

And here's why that's important. Our generation—our generation, the baby boomers—have got an opportunity, because of the work we've done the last 6½ years, to save Social Security, to save Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit, and to do it in a way so that when we retire, our kids don't have to support us and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We have the opportunity to invest in the education of all of our children, so that we'll have world-class opportunities for the poor, the rich, the in-between of all races and backgrounds, so that our country will be strong. And we have the opportunity to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835.

Now, what I want you to understand is, we're living in a dynamic time. We're still embracing change. Our administration is the force for positive change. This is not going to be change versus the status quo election. This election is about what kind of change do you want; and do you want to build on what's worked and go beyond it, or do you want to go back to the ways that got us in the ditch in the first place? That's what the issue is. And you don't have to guess with Al Gore, not only because of his record, but because he's given you a roadmap.

And the third thing I want to tell you is this: I have been with this man in every conceivable kind of circumstance—good and

bad, personal and political. We have talked about our children. We have talked about our parents and their deaths. We have talked about every conceivable subject, personal and political. I know him as few people do. He is a good person. He is a decent person. He is a strong person. If everything was on the line and I had to pick an American to make a decision that I knew would be good for my country when my daughter is my age, I would pick Al Gore, and so should you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in Hall Two at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to State Attorney General Mark L. Pryor; and former Senators Dale Bumpers and David H. Pryor. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri

August 8, 1999

Thank you so much, Governor Carper, Governor Leavitt, and Governor Carnahan; thank you for welcoming me back to Missouri and to St. Louis, a place that has been so good to me and our family and our administration.

I must tell you, this has been a great day for me already. My staff says I'm entitled to a great day once in a while. I got to spend the night in my mother-in-law's house, go to early church in my church, and have breakfast with my friends, and then come to meet with you. Something bad may happen tomorrow, but this has been a good day. [*Laughter*]

When I first spoke to the Governors as President in 1993, I promised that we would build a new partnership, and I said I would try to hold up my end of the deal in three ways: first, by bringing down the Federal budget deficit so we could have lower interest rates and greater investment and a recovering economy. I've been a Governor through one boom and two busts; the booms make the job easier. Second, I promised to work with you to end welfare as we know it, to prove that poor people could succeed at home and at work. And third, I promised to loosen the rules and lift the regulations on Medicaid, that had long stopped Governors from providing more health care for less.

Six and a half years later I think it's clear that this partnership has worked, through the hard work of the American people and the economic plan we put in place in 1993, followed up with the bipartisan Balanced Budget Act of 1997. We've turned record deficits into record surpluses, as Governor Carper said. Most of your budgets also enjoy healthy surpluses.

We have the largest peacetime expansion in history, and on Friday I announced that we've gone over 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, with homeownership the highest in the history and minority unemployment the lowest ever recorded.

You all know, and I think Tom referred to this, that with the welfare waivers that we granted the States, followed by the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, your initiatives have led us to the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years now. Last week in Chicago, I was able to announce that every one of your States is meeting the work requirements in the new welfare law, something that the American people should be very grateful for. And we now have 12,000 businesses in our Welfare to Work Partnership committed to hiring people from the welfare rolls into the work force.

With the bipartisan balanced budget bill of '97, we created the children's health insurance program, $24 billion, the largest expansion of health coverage since the creation of Medicaid. We've waived or eliminated scores of laws and regulations on Medicaid, including one we all wanted to get rid of, the so-called Boren amendment. And last week I signed the federalism Executive order, putting to rest an issue that has divided the administration and the Governors for far too long.

In so many areas we share a common vision. I heard Governor Hunt talking when I walked in today—I thought, I've heard that voice for more than 20 years. It's still singing more or less the same song, and it gets better every time he sings it. I thank you, sir.

So I would say to you that this country is poised to enter a new century and a new

millennium with its best days still ahead. But we have some significant long-term challenges. I think we're in a position to meet those challenges. And I'd like to talk very briefly about the next steps that could affect you on the Federal budget, on welfare, and on health care.

First, let me say that I do see this as a generational challenge—to deal with the aging of America; to deal with the children of America, which are more numerous and more diverse than ever before; to deal with the long-term economic health of America; to bring the light of opportunity to places that have still not felt any of this recovery. Those are just a few, but I think the biggest, of our long-term challenges.

So what I propose to do is to take over three-quarters of this projected surplus and set it aside in ways that would enable us to lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, in ways that would cover the entire life of all those in the baby boom generation—that is, I don't expect to be around in 2053; I'd like it if it turned out that way, but I kind of doubt it will happen—in ways that would lengthen the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, bring the best that we know in terms of competitive technologies and other things to play, have more preventive screenings to try to keep people out of the hospitals, and have a modest prescription drug benefit—something we plainly would provide if we were creating Medicare for the first time today.

If we do that, there will still be enough money to meet our fundamental obligations—in education, national defense, medical research, veterans, agriculture, the environment—and to have a modest tax cut. And we can do it, and pay off all the publicly-held debt in this country for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President. We can do that in 15 years.

Now, I think that's important, because in a global economy where interest rates are set in part by the movement of money at the speed of light across national borders—I'll make you a prediction: In 20 years, people will think all rich countries should not have debt because that will keep interest rates lower, investment higher, more jobs, more incomes, smaller costs for everything from homes to college education. And our trading partners around the world that are struggling to lift themselves up, or countries that get in trouble as the Asian countries did over the last couple of years, will be able to get the money they need at lower interest rates, recover more quickly, and help us to continue to integrate the world into a global market.

Now, as you know, I'm having a big argument about this in Washington. And I know you've already heard the other side of it. [*Laughter*] But let me just say, I think if you hear it at first blush, the plan of the Republican leadership has some appeal. They say, ''Look, we've got this big projected surplus, and we want to let the Government keep two-thirds of it and give the people a third of it. And why is that unreasonable?''

Well, here's the problem. First of all, you all have been there; a projected surplus is not the same as one in the bank. And we don't know that. But secondly, there are—the budget problems, economic problems, and aging realities that I would argue undercut this tax bill that has passed the Congress. Let me just mention them.

First of all, the two-thirds of the surplus that the Republican leadership—and I applaud this—is committed not to spend is that produced by the Social Security taxes. So they say we're not going to spend it at all, which means the only money available for spending over the '97 budget caps is the 100 percent they want to give away in the tax cut. And it is 100 percent, because it's not just the size of the tax cut, but when you cut taxes that much, you reduce debt less, so your interest rates are higher—the interest payments are higher. So you have to add to the tax cut the interest payments that we will have to pay that we would not otherwise have to pay.

So basically, it means that the surplus we project to come from Social Security taxes will be out here, and if it's kept that way it will be used to pay down the debt. And that's good—not as much as my plan, but it does pay some down, and that is good, and I applaud that. But it also means that you and we and the American people are stuck with the '97 budget caps for the next decade.

Now, let me tell you what that means. First of all, it's not real. The same people that

voted for this tax cut are up there spending money to help the farmers, and they ought to be. We've got a terrible crisis on the farm in America, and we need to deal with the present emergency, and we need a long-term modification of the '95 farm bill to reflect the fact that it has no safety net. And we need to do it in a way that doesn't mess up market prices, doesn't go back to the bad old days of overly-managed farm programs by the Federal Government. There are ways to do this, and we have to be careful how we do it. There are a lot of good things in that farm bill, in terms of having the Government get out of telling people what to plant and where; had a good conservation reserve program, had a lot of good things, but it had no safety net.

So the Congress on the one hand is cutting the taxes and on the other hand spending money for farmers. They're putting more money back into the veterans' health budget, which they ought to do; there's some need there. They want a defense increase even bigger than the increase I want, neither of which can be funded under the new balanced budget calculations if you keep the Social Security surplus out of it. And that doesn't count what you will want us to do to help you in education or Medicaid or anything else. And it doesn't count what I hear every place I go, in every State, in communities large and small, which is that we had cuts that were too severe in the Medicare budget in 1997, which has imposed enormous burdens on the teaching hospitals in every State in the country, on the hospitals with large numbers of poor people, and on a lot of therapy services, for example, for home health care, which have been cut back.

So, on the one hand we've got a construct that sounds simple and good—we keep two-thirds of the surplus; we give you a third back, to the people—but it means that we have to stay within the 1997 budget caps, which are already being broken, and which should be exceeded. You've got to do something about agriculture. We've got to do something about these teaching hospitals. We need some relief for the Veterans Administration, and that doesn't deal with all the things that you've been talking about, probably, before I got here. Now, so that's the budget problem.

So one of two things will happen. If we had this construct, we either have huge cuts in all these things—huge—or we would have a reversion to past policies. We'd go back to deficit spending. At least we'd be deep into the Social Security portion of the surplus.

Secondly, there are the aging realities. The plan that has passed does not do anything to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, nor does it do anything—even though it holds the taxes back—it doesn't do anything to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Just taking the tax receipts and holding them separate does not extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. To do that, you have to do what I suggested, which is to take the interest savings you get from paying the debt down for 5 years and put them into the Social Security Trust Fund. And I believe we have to find some way of bipartisan agreement to increase the rate of return in the Trust Fund, and the only way to do that is to get out of buying something besides Government securities. And I think there's a way to do that, and I still believe we can get an agreement on that.

So there's—then the third thing is the economic realities. We have been told repeatedly, in a soft and indirect way, from the Federal Reserve Chairman to the pages of all the business articles that you read, that if—with the economy growing like it is, if we have a tax cut of this size, it will lead to larger interest rate increases, and most people will turn right around and pay back, in higher interest costs, what they are going to get in a tax cut.

Now, it is true, as Governor Carper said, that we don't have indexes of inflation here, because America has a relatively open economy and because of the breathtaking increases in productivity, because of technology and other things. We don't. But the Fed took a preventive step, as all of you know, the last time it met. And we have gotten a signal that is loud, clear, and unambiguous, that if you have a tax cut this big, an economy that's doing this well, there will be higher interest rate increases, and the people

will lose what they get in a tax cut in higher interest costs. I personally think that is a mistake.

Now, consider the flip side of this. Here we, the baby boom generation, our generation, has been derided by others and by ourselves for 30 years for being self-indulgent and all that and been poorly compared to the World War II generation. Well, in their youth, they were required to save the world and to get us through the Depression. And we had no such challenge. But in our middle age, we are being given a chance to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We are being given a chance to stabilize Social Security and Medicare, so that when we retire we don't have to have our hands out to our kids to support us and take money away from them that they would otherwise spend on our grandchildren. And I think it's the opportunity of a lifetime.

Now, we can still have—my view is the way to resolve this is to stop putting the cart before the horse. To pass the tax cut before we decide what the Medicare fix is, what are we going to do on that, whether we're going to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, and what we need to spend for these other things is kind of like a family sitting down to dinner and saying, ''Let's take the vacation of a lifetime; when we get home, we'll see if we can't make the mortgage payment and send the kids to college.'' You wouldn't do it. Nobody else would do it, and I think it's a mistake to do it.

Now, if you disagree with all this and you want to go back and spend the Social Security surplus, we can do it. We can do all these things. But you mark my words: Interest rates will be higher; this economy will be weaker than it otherwise would have been; and 30 years from now we will wonder what in the living daylights we did with the opportunity of a lifetime. And I think that's why one of the members of the Republican Party who voted against this was Governor Voinovich, who happens to be a Senator. And another was Senator Snowe, whose spouse was one of our colleagues.

And so I just would ask you to consider this. To me this is not politics, this is arithmetic. We went back to old-fashioned arithmetic in Washington the last 6½ years, and it worked pretty well. We had to get rid of 200 or 300 programs. We've now got the smallest Federal establishment since John Kennedy was President. And everybody had to take a little medicine they didn't like but because the economy has grown so much we've actually had more money to spend than we ever dreamed. And we've begun to lift children out of poverty; we've begun to do some other things.

But if you look at this looming problem of what the aging of America will do—twice as many people over 65 in 30 years—if you look at what you all are facing, with 2 million teachers about to retire, with the largest number of kids in schools ever, with increasing diversity—it just seems to me that—and if you look at the obligations I have and that any President would have of either party to maintain military readiness and deal with the aging of a lot of our systems, and to compete for talented young people to get them into the military when they can get so many good jobs doing other things—if you just look at all of this, and if you look at the fact that the money is not there yet, this is all projected surplus, it seems to me that the better course is to think of the long-term future of our children. And I really do believe this is a generational challenge for the so-called baby boomers, and I don't think we ought to blow it. And if I can stop it, I will.

But let me say something else. This is not—it is literally true that instead of spending more money on the farms, we'd have to cut the farm safety net programs; we'd have to eliminate the crop insurance bill. We'd have to have a $32 billion cut in Medicare, which we're not about to do. We'd have to do all these things.

But let me say that I am also not pessimistic about this. To solve this problem we have to have a majority of both parties and both Houses. And most people say, ''Well, you're already in the political season, all the States''—some of you have done this—''all the States have moved their primaries way up. So everything is now about nothing but politics; we can't get this done.'' I just think that is dead wrong.

We passed a bipartisan balanced budget agreement in 1997, overwhelming majorities of both Houses and both parties. In '96, in

the teeth of the election, we passed that welfare reform bill, overwhelming majorities in both Houses and both parties. And you know, we're all still getting paid; every 2 weeks we're drawing a check up there, and if we just realize what we're supposed to do for our check we'll figure out a way through this.

I am not nearly as pessimistic as a lot of people are about the prospects of our reaching an agreement, and I am determined to try to do it.

Now, let me just talk briefly about two other things that were part of our partnership—one is welfare reform. I know a lot of you have been concerned, probably a lot of you in both parties, about the discussion in Washington where some of you, apparently, have been asked outright, how would you feel if we took some of your welfare reform money back. Now, to be fair, I want to just tell you, they're in a terrible bind, because they're living with the budget caps, and they want a tax cut that will keep them in the budget caps, and they've got to spend—they've got to help the farmers, they've got to do something for the farmers. And we probably have cut the veterans' budget too much, and they want to spend more and more on defense, and there's a general consensus that we need to—not on how we should help you with education, but that we should continue to support that, as you have the largest school populations in history.

Now, I think that it would be wrong to take the money away. But what I want to urge you to do is to make sure that you have made every effort you can to spend the money in the appropriate way. We know, for example, that we're way below—and I'm trying to get this in the tax bill, by the way, because keep in mind, there can be a tax bill, it just can't be as big as the one that's passed. We're way below meeting the national need for child care for low income working people. And if we're going to move more people from welfare to work, we've got to do more on that. So I hope you'll consider that.

There also are some States—I know, you know, Governor Thompson only has 14 people left on public assistance in Wisconsin. [*Laughter*] There are some States where the reduction has been so low that, arguably, it is physically impossible to do. And if you all can come up with a fix for that for, you know, if you get the rates below a certain amount that deals with the education of poor children or something, you know, tries to creatively deal with this, bring it to me. I don't want to put anybody in an impossible situation.

But I think that the problem of giving poor children a step on the ladder to a mainstream American life, beginning with education and health care and good parental support, is a problem that our successors and interests will be facing here 10, 20 years from now. And if we can set up the right framework we'll be doing a very good thing.

So you can do two things. You can just say—they can say, ''Well, can we have some of this money back, because we've got a budget problem.'' And you can say, ''No''—and you can probably win then. And I'd be for it, by the way, I'd be for your position. I'd say no, too. But I recommend—I think the better course is for you to say, ''No, but here's what we're going to try to do to spend this money that you're giving us,'' and if we're in a position like—I don't know how many States are in this position, but Tommy and I talked about this briefly in Chicago the other day—if you're in a position where you just can't, you say, ''Here's how we really ought to make some changes so we can invest this in our kids and their future.'' I think that's important.

There's also some discussion in Washington about whether the Congress should reduce the funding for the CHIP program. And again, I think that's a mistake, because between CHIP and Medicaid, as now funded, the vast majority of children in this country without health insurance could get it. And that would be a good thing. And I want to say that thanks to the efforts that a lot of you have made, and the outreach efforts that have been made, the Kaiser Family Foundation says that there's now 1.3 million kids enrolled in the CHIP program, which is a huge increase in the last 6 months. So it's finally beginning to pick up.

However, we know that there's money out there for 4 to 5 times that many children to get health insurance. And I think that rather than talk about giving the money back to Congress, we should talk about how we're

going to invest it for the purpose for which it was intended. It was one of the signal achievements of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, a completely bipartisan thing, and a really laudatory effort. But all of you had to get out there and design programs and figure out how you're going to interface it with Medicaid and figure out how to tell people about it. It was a complicated thing, but we wanted to do it in a way that this portion of it would be as little hassle for you as possible.

And a lot of things have happened. In Nevada, for example, I know our educator-Governor there says the school principals are getting children signed up for CHIP. In Alabama, the All Kids program is mobilizing coaches to enroll children who want to be in sports. In California, Governor Davis is doing outreach for CHIP in 10 different languages. So a lot of good things are happening.

And I think it's important that we remember that this year, this coming school year, will be the first full year of full opportunity and operation of the CHIP program in all the States. So I think it's too soon to rush to judgment about this. This is the first full year of fully operational CHIP programs in all the States.

I think we need to do more to support the outreach and to take advantage of the children's health initiative. Now, beginning tomorrow, we're going to send every school superintendent in America a letter, and every member of the National Association of Elementary Principals will get letters from that organization, asking them to participate in an outreach effort to inform parents about the value of health insurance and their eligibility.

Next month, when the children get back to school, the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services are going to launch outreach efforts with the United Way. For example, school lunch applications will come with flyers explaining the CHIP program; workers are going to be sent to local McDonald's to sign up families there; Health and Human Services is going to run a radio message campaign to publicize it.

I think there is an enormous amount of promise that is still to be fulfilled here. I need to ask you to do a couple of things. First of all, we need more data to really make the system work. We can't improve the program or know what's wrong with it unless we know how many children have signed up for it. To date, 20 States haven't sent us the information. Some haven't reported on the basic information about children on the Medicaid rolls. And we know that from outside studies that in some States individuals who are Medicaid eligible don't always get the opportunity to enroll without delay, as the present law requires. We need to figure out why this is happening and figure out how to stop it.

So this month, as was reported, I think, already, we will begin working with you in partnership to do some onsite reviews to ensure that there are no roadblocks, intentional or, even more likely, unintentional roadblocks, to those who are eligible for Medicaid. I think that now that we have the funding and the extra flexibility to manage welfare and health care, we've got to make the most of it. Let me just give you some examples.

There is $500 million in the budget to reach out to families who lack health insurance, but are eligible for Medicaid, to simplify procedures for signing them up. We've gotten rid of the census rule that two-earner families that work over 100 hours a week are ineligible for Medicaid, even if their incomes are still low enough to qualify. All of you will get substantial funds on the tobacco settlements. They can be used for preventing youth smoking, but also for expanding health insurance. I hope you will make the most of this.

Let me just make a couple of specific suggestions about CHIP, in addition to what we're trying to do. I think the things that would have the greatest impact are presumptive eligibility for CHIP, as well as Medicaid, and sending eligibility workers into schools, into churches, into health care centers, into day care and preschool centers, places where the children are where their parents will come.

We have—this is an enormous opportunity to shrink the health problem of no insurance for children. We know we have about 10 million kids without health insurance. And the last 6 months of the CHIP program indicate to me that if you just keep working at it, we can get up at least to the 4 to 5 million kids

that we anticipated. But if you look at the combined eligibility and the level of funding of Medicaid and CHIP, there's no question that the vast majority of uninsured children in this country could in fact get coverage. And it would make a demonstrable difference—in their health and in their performance in school over the long run.

Well, let me just finally close by saying that, in some ways, these are all high-class problems. If I had come here in '93 and said, ''Now, I'll be back here in a few years, and we'll talk about how to spend the surplus,'' you would have said, ''You know, I thought that guy had good sense, but he's completely lost it.'' This is a high-class problem. But all high-class problems have accompanying high-class responsibilities. This is the last NGA meeting of the 20th century; the 92d meeting of the Governors, or the 92d year in which you've met. I've been to 19 of them. The first one, in 1908, was called by—that's not the one I went to. [*Laughter*] Although some days I feel like I went to it. [*Laughter*] The first one, in 1908, was called by a former Governor, Theodore Roosevelt. He was a great Governor and a great President and a very farsighted man. And he called the meeting, interestingly enough, about the conservation of our Nation's resources.

Now, I'll make you another prediction. When I look around this room and I see how many of you I've visited in natural disasters over the last few years—you and your successors will spend a lot more time in the next 20 years talking about the conservation of national resources in the context of natural disasters and climate change. And so, it will be deja vu again. And Teddy Roosevelt will look even smarter than he does today.

But I want to close with a quote that he gave to the first Governors' meeting. He said, ''Both the national and the several State governments must each do its part, and each can do a certain amount that the other cannot do, while the only really satisfactory results must be obtained by the representatives of the national and State governments working heartily together.''

I think that if we work heartily together, we will turn these high-class challenges into gold-mine opportunities, and our children will live in America's greatest days.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the St. Louis Ballroom at the Adam's Mark Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, chair, and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, vice chair, National Governors' Association; Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin; Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; and Gov. Gray Davis of California. The President also referred to CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Fort Myer, Virginia

August 9, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Cohen and Janet. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary for his remarks, his devotion, his remarkable leadership, and his willingness to serve in our administration—to prove that when it comes to the national security of the United States, we are beyond party, and all Americans.

General Shelton, thank you for your leadership and for your remarks. And we are delighted to be joined today not only by your wonderful wife, Carolyn, but also by your mother. We're glad she came up to be with us.

Thanks, Secretary Slater, Secretary West, Senator Thurmond, for being here. Senator Thurmond may be the only person here who served in the military before there was a Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was at D-day, and he's here 55 years later, and we're delighted to have him. In both places, he has served our country well. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

I thank the service secretaries, the members of the Joint Chiefs who are here, General Ralston and others, and the former members of the Joint Chiefs, and all the other officers who are here. One in particular I would like to mention, General Wes Clark, because of his extraordinary leadership in our most recent military victory in Kosovo. I thank him and all the men and women of our Armed Forces who have served there. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I especially want to welcome here the former Chairmen and their wives: Admiral and Mrs. Moorer, General and Mrs. Jones, General and Mrs. Vessey, Admiral and Mrs. Crowe, General and Mrs. Shalikashvili, and, of course, Alma Powell. We're glad to have them here.

Fifty years ago—you've heard a lot about already today, but I think it is worth remembering what it was like to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 50 years ago. It was a new job. It was clearly overwhelmingly preoccupied with the onset of the cold war and the need to defend Europe. But soon after General Omar Bradley was summoned to assume the job, war broke out in Korea. So he had not only to defend Europe, but also to defend freedom in South Korea, and fulfill the job description to coordinate the services, and also to coordinate with the State Department and the White House.

We have our White House Chief of Staff, Mr. Podesta, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Berger, and others who are here. I think we can say with some conviction that sometimes the hardest military job of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is his coordination with the White House. And it has been so for 50 years. But General Bradley and then 13 other remarkable leaders have found a way to do that, and at the same time, to provide wise and honest counsel at crucial moments to every President and Secretary of the Defense. And I would like to stop a moment and emphasize that.

There will come a time in the service of every President—in my time it has come, unfortunately, on several occasions—when you have to have the honest advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And very often, it is the last thing in the world you want to hear, because he will either tell you that you really can't achieve the objective you want to achieve for the price you're willing to pay, or that you have to do something that you'd rather to go to the dentist without novocaine than do. And I can tell you that, without exception, every time a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs has had to do that to me, he has done it. He has served our country well; he has served the President well; he has served the military and the men and women in uniform well. This institution has worked because the people who are part of it did what they were required to do in times of crisis. And our country should be very grateful to all of them.

Just think what has happened over the last 50 years. We look back on 50 years of constant vigilance, of two hot wars and a long cold war, of military victories in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans, of difficulties like the Cuban missile crisis and many others too numerous to mention. But through it all, and though new threats emerged continuously, we see the march to freedom and we see the depth of America's security.

We can look forward to the 21st century with genuine confidence, in no small measure because of the 14 leaders we honor today. So again, I say, along with the Secretary of Defense, to those who are here, to the surviving families of those who are not, and to those who could not be with us today, our Nation is grateful. You have served it well.

I was very privileged to work with three Chairs—Colin Powell, John Shalikashvili, and Hugh Shelton; to work very closely with the previous Chairman, Bill Crowe, who has been my Ambassador to Great Britain and has done a lot of important work to alert us to the continuing dangers to our Embassies and their personnel from terrorists. I had the privilege of getting good counsel on the very difficult POW–MIA issue from General Vessey, and on our efforts to save innocent civilians from the dangers of landmines by General Jones. Of course, I still hear from General Powell on a regular basis about his work with America's Promise and our shared interest in it.

The more I know the people who are involved in these endeavors, the more my esteem for them grows. I always have separation anxiety when someone important leaves. When Shali walked out the door and went all the way across the country, I thought Joan would never let him come back. But I've even found something for him to do from time to time that doesn't get him in too much trouble at home.

These people are unique. They have these unique experiences that they blend with their abilities and their patriotism. And I think we should think just a moment about the position beyond the question of advice to the

President. If you think about it, with the world changing as much as it is today, and with the United States occupying the rather unique position we occupy at this moment in history, there are few positions which require the occupant to think harder about the threats the Nation faces and will face. There are few which force a leader to weigh more soberly the costs of action—which in a world where people are comfortable, are very high—against the costs down the road of inaction. There are few which require a person to spend as much time thinking about how to avoid war as how to win one if it should become necessary.

General Bradley said a long time ago that the way to win a nuclear war is to make sure it never starts. I would like to thank the former Chairs of the Joint Chiefs who have endorsed the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to end nuclear testing forever, proposed by President Eisenhower, championed by President Kennedy, signed now by the United States and over 150 other countries—41 of them have ratified it. Four of our former Chairs—General Jones, Admiral Crowe, General Powell, General Shalikashvili—have issued a statement endorsing the treaty, agreeing with the current Chair, General Shelton, that it is in America's interest.

Why? Because we have already stopped testing; our leading experts say we can maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent without further tests; and the only remaining question is, will we join or lose a verifiable treaty that can prevent other countries from testing nuclear weapons. If we don't ratify it, by its terms the treaty can't enter into force. And countries all around the world will feel more pressure to develop and test weapons in ever more destructive varieties and sizes, threatening the security of everyone on Earth.

So today, once again, as we honor the Joint Chiefs, the individuals and the institution, I ask the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings on the treaty this fall, and the full Senate to vote for ratification as soon as possible. This will strengthen national security not only of the United States but of people around the world. This will help the new Chairs of the Joint Chiefs in the future not only to prepare for war but to avoid it.

Let me finally say that as we approach a new century, we can still be proud, indeed, never prouder, of our men and women in uniform. Thanks to their courage and skill in the most recent campaign in Kosovo, a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing has been reversed; our alliance has been preserved and strengthened; there is new hope for a world where people are not murdered or uprooted because of their ethnic heritage or the way they choose to worship God.

Operation Allied Force was a truly remarkable military campaign. Over 30,000 sorties flown; no combat casualties. Still we must not indulge the illusion of a risk-free war. In Kosovo, our pilots risked their lives every day. They took enemy fire, faced enemy aircraft, time and again put themselves in even greater danger just to avoid hitting civilians on the ground. And we know not every conflict will be like Kosovo; not every battle can be won from the air.

We must remember, too, that the rigorous training we require of our men and women in uniform is in itself dangerous. We lost two helicopter pilots training in Kosovo. In every single year, we lose a good number of men and women in uniform just doing their duty.

Our job from the top down is to reduce the risks of their service as much as we can and to send our service men and women into harm's way only when we're certain that the purpose is clear, the mission is achievable, and all peaceful options have been exhausted.

When we do send them, we have to make sure they have the tools to do the job. We must always match their skill and courage with a high level of readiness. And we must always prepare today for tomorrow's threats. All those jobs, in the end, fall on the shoulders of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In his remarkable memoir of World War II, Omar Bradley wrote the following words. He said, "No matter how high an officer's rank, it's important to scoff at the myth of the indispensable man. For we have always maintained that Arlington Cemetery is filled with indispensable men."

Now, that statement is a tribute to his decency and his humility. Nevertheless, for 50

years now, the role of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been indispensable to the preservation of life on this planet from nuclear holocaust, to the security of the United States, and to the march of freedom across the world.

Fourteen Americans of great ability and even more intense patriotism have occupied that office and made it indispensable. So, too all of those who are here, and their families, and those who are not here today, a grateful nation says, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at Summerall Field. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Cohen's wife, Janet Langhart Cohen; General Shelton's mother, Sarah Laughlin Shelton; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe; former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret.), and his wife, Carrie; Gen. David C. Jones, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Lois; Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., USA (Ret.), and his wife, Avis; Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (Ret.), and his wife, Shirley; Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Joan; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Alma.

Remarks at the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps Graduation Ceremony

August 9, 1999

Thank you. When I came up here, Josh said, "I warmed them up for you." [*Laughter*] He certainly did that. Now he's sitting in my seat, which might be—[*laughter*]—might be a good omen. [*Laughter*]

Let me thank all of you for being here today. I want to say a special word of thanks to Harris Wofford, who, as you heard from his own speech, his public service to America goes all the way back to World War II. He was a major player in the civil rights revolution, the establishment of the Peace Corps. He served in the United States Senate. He agreed to come back and run our national service program and to do it in a way that reached out to all Americans from all walks of life and all political backgrounds. And he has done a superb job. I'm very grateful to Senator Harris Wofford for his leadership of AmeriCorps. He's been great in our whole national service program.

I want to thank General Chambers and Kate Becker for their leadership, and welcome all of you here, but especially the AmeriCorps NCCC graduates. Senator Wofford mentioned that on the morning you were sworn in with great symbolism in front of the FDR Memorial, it was quite cold. But within, literally 24 hours, many of you were already off to Texas and Puerto Rico to help the victims of a hurricane and a flood. After a year of such duty—I think you call them spikes, just like these fellows did so many years ago—you have fulfilled your AmeriCorps pledge. You have made a difference; you have gotten things done for America.

So to all the parents and family members and friends here today, let me say that your sons and daughters may look about the same as they did a year ago, but they have grown in remarkable ways. They are now firefighters, homebuilders, relief workers, community organizers, mentors, educators. They are confident. They are leaders; they are also servants as they lead.

Congratulations to Class Five of DC. Like the CCC alumni here today, you have touched lives and changed communities in ways that will be remembered and appreciated for years and years to come.

You know, in so many ways, AmeriCorps is the embodiment of the deal I struck with the American people in 1992. At the time, unemployment was high; the debt had quadrupled in the previous 12 years; social division was increasing; political stagnation was the order of the day in Washington. And I wanted our country to change course and come together. I acknowledged that Government can't solve all the problems, but we can't leave the people that you've been helping out there to sink or swim on their own, either. And so I wanted to create a Government that would give people the tools to solve their own problems and live their own dreams and to basically have a new compact in which we said, we will attempt to create opportunity for all Americans who are, themselves, responsible, and we will attempt to build an American community of all responsible citizens.

AmeriCorps embodies that. You go out there creating opportunity every day. You are

fulfilling your citizen responsibilities. And you have certainly helped us to build one American community.

So far, as Harris said, there have been 100,000 of you. You have built tens of thousands of homes, immunized hundreds of thousands of children, taught millions of students to read, planted millions of trees, and are now in New Jersey enrolling children in the new Children's Health Insurance Program, an initiative I hope to take nationwide, because we have still over 8 million children without any health insurance in American today, and we now have the funds in Washington to cover most of them. We just have to get them enrolled.

Now we're trying to take AmeriCorps up to 100,000 a year. Think what we could do; just think about everything you've done in this last year. Think how we could change the face and future of America if there were 100,000 of you out there every single year from now on doing what you have done. Think how many more young people would also be able to use the AmeriCorps scholarships to go on to college. Think how that would change the face and future of America, the range of opportunities available, the lives that people would live.

I think this is a very important moment for America. We have the strongest economy in a generation, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, highest budget surplus we've ever had, highest homeownership in history. What are we going to do with it?

I think we should use it to meet our big long-term challenges. The baby boomers, people like me, when we retire, if we don't do something now, Social Security and Medicare won't be able to sustain the burden of our numbers. But we now have the ability to fix Social Security and Medicare in a way that enables us to retire without imposing burdens on you, so that you will be able to raise your children without having to spend your hard-earned money to support your parents. I think that is very important.

Because of the surplus, we can get this country out of debt, for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. And if we do that, if we do that, it means that when you go out into the world, interest rates will be lower, businesses will be stronger, jobs will be more plentiful, incomes will be higher, homes will be more affordable, and so will college education. It's important.

It means we can invest in the education of all of our children and meet our other fundamental responsibilities and still afford a modest—not a big, but a modest—tax cut designed to help people deal with the biggest challenges they face.

It means that we can go out into the areas that you know all too well, which, in spite of this fabulous economy, have not yet felt this recovery. I was in Appalachia, in the Mississippi Delta, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, in south Phoenix and East St. Louis and Watts and East L.A. And you know as well as I do that for all the economic progress of the last few years, there are still some people who are living only in the shadows of this prosperity.

All of this we can do now. And I think it is my responsibility—and not just my responsibility as President, but my responsibility as a member of my generation, and that of every other member of my generation—or to leave you an America in the 21st century that is strong and that is worthy of the service you have just rendered. That is really what we're discussing up here.

You heard Josh talking—we don't have to put up with things we don't agree with in America, with conditions and human suffering and problems that we know we can change. It doesn't have to be this way. You have proved that lives can be changed. You have proved that circumstances can be improved. You can prove—have proved that dreams can be realized, not only yours but the people you've tried to help. And this is sort of a magic moment for our country, and if we do the right things now, then the feelings you have from your service as AmeriCorps volunteers are things that you will be able to put into practice, to good effect for your country and for young people that come along behind you for the rest of your lives.

I can tell you now, having lived a good deal longer than you have, there are two

things that I want to tell you about the difference in my age and yours. One is, it doesn't take long to close the gap. [*Laughter*] Right? Is that right? [*Applause*] I mean, when I said that, every person here in this room that's at least 50 years old was thinking the same thing: It seems like yesterday when I was 20. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right? We're all sitting here thinking the same thing. By the way, I'd let you be President for a year and a half if you'd let me be 20. [*Laughter*] I'd take my chances on doing it again. One.

Number two, there are certain chances that come along every day and others that just come along once in a lifetime. For example, my parents' generation won World War II and endured and whipped the Great Depression. The youngest of them are about Senator Wofford's age. He looks a lot younger than he is and acts even younger than that. And they did that, and they were called upon to do that when they were young, to save freedom and to beat a depression.

Then in the intervening generation, they dealt with the civil rights revolution in America and gave us an America that looks more like this AmeriCorps class. And thank God for them, all of them.

Our generation was blessed to be raised with enormous material satisfaction, and when I was young, it was the last time the economy was about as good as it is now. And we have waited a long time for the time when we would be presented with our one great opportunity and responsibility of a lifetime. We have it now in the present economic conditions of America.

I've tried to fulfill our generation's responsibility by giving you the chance to serve and by helping to build one America across all the racial and religious and cultural and other lines that divide us. But we are being tested now, and our values are being defined.

One of the things that is most amazing to me is that there are still some Republicans—and I want to say the word some; we've had good bipartisan support for AmeriCorps—but there are still some who are determined to zero out funding for AmeriCorps, in other words, ideological argument in the face of all the evidence of all the good you've done. Well, if they zero out the funding, their bill has zero chance of becoming law, because I will veto it.

But the AmeriCorps budget is just one example of what will happen, or would happen, if their big tax cut could become law. I mean politicians normally, when they have money, like—you give it back to people in an election season, say, ''This is your money. I'm going to give it back to you. Please vote for me.'' And that's normally a better political position than the one I'm in, which is, ''It's your money, but I don't think we can give it back to you, at least we can't give as much back as they want to give back to you.'' You can readily see which is the more appealing position, can't you?

Remember when you were kids, you used to argue about your parents, you know. You can just hear them arguing up there: ''My tax cut is bigger than your tax cut.'' [*Laughter*] But that's not really the question.

The question is, what does it take to save America's future in the face of the aging crisis? It means you have to lengthen the life of Social Security past the lifespan of the baby boomers. That's what it means. And my plan takes Social Security out to 2053. A lot of you will be around then, but I probably won't. But we owe it to you to lengthen Social Security beyond the lifespan of the baby boomers. It means we should strengthen Medicare and provide for a prescription drug benefit because of medical revolutions which enable people to live longer and better if they can access medicine. It means we should get out of debt, so we can give you the strongest possible economy. It means we should invest in education and the environment and health care and national defense, and saving our farmers that are in so much trouble today, and the care of our veterans. And then we should give what is left in a tax cut.

The reason that you have people up there trying to zero AmeriCorps is they know they can't pay for their tax cut without big cuts. There are special interest tax breaks in this tax bill that I threatened to veto, just special interest provisions, that would fund AmeriCorps 10 times over. And I would urge the American people to look at the fine print of this bill, because it also has big cuts in education, in research and development, in the environment. It could even force closure

of some of the national parks you worked on.

And again I say, this doesn't have to be a partisan issue. This should be a generational issue. And—just like when you go out on a project, you have to do first things first. If you're working on a mountain, you've got to put the right kind of shoes or boots on before you go up there. This debate over this tax cut in Washington has not actually been a very good object lesson for the older generation to you. This debate is like a family getting around the table and saying, ''Hey, let's take the vacation of our lifetime, the vacation of our dreams, and when we get home we'll see if we can't pay the mortgage and send the kids to college.'' That's what's going on.

It is the reverse of what you have done: getting things done for your country, making a difference, thinking about the future.

So I say to all of you, I hope you will always believe you can make a difference. And I hope all of the leaders here in Washington will realize that we have the chance of a lifetime to make a difference.

When you leave this program, I hope you will remember the other thing I said to you, which is that the distance between your age and mine is shorter than you think. It looks like a very long way from where you are, but from where I am, it looks like it happened in the flash of an eye. What you have done for your country and also what you have done for yourselves proves that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive and that in giving you do receive.

All over the world today there is turmoil, from the Balkans, Kosovo, and Bosnia, to Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the tribal conflicts of Africa, where people are fighting and dying because their vision is so limited that they believe their life only counts if they can lift themselves up by putting someone else down, someone of a different race, someone of a different religion, someone with a different slant on life, someone in Africa of a different tribe. All over the world this is happening.

AmeriCorps is living, daily, practical, flesh-and-blood proof that there's a better way to live; and that what we have in common is more important than what divides us; and that if we work together and hold hands and believe we're going into the future together, we can change anything we want to change.

You are the modern manifestation of the dream of America's Founders. And I hope, when you leave here, you will never, ever, ever stop being proud of what you've done. And I hope you will never stop preaching the lessons you have learned. For in the end, if we're all working toward one America, the chances are we'll get where we're going.

Good luck, and God bless you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. in the Sidney Yates Auditorium at the Department of the Interior. In his remarks, he referred to AmeriCorps service corpsman Joshua Watson, who introduced the President; AmeriCorps officer Lt. Gen. Andrew Chambers, USA (Ret.), Director, National Civilian Community Corps; and Kate Becker, Director, National Capital Region Campus.

Remarks to the American Bar Association in Atlanta, Georgia

August 9, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I want to say to all of you how very grateful I am to be here today at the American Bar Association, and especially under the leadership of my long-time friend Phil Anderson. I'm sure you could see there was a sort of an Arkansas tilt to a lot of the people who were introduced here today. [*Laughter*] Bruce Lindsey used to be one of his law partners. He even had his minister here. [*Laughter*]

What you may not know is, the reason I'm here is that I got beat for Governor in 1980, and I was the youngest former Governor in the history of America. I had extremely limited career prospects, and Phil Anderson is the only guy in Arkansas that offered me a job. [*Laughter*] He's either a great prognosticator or a good gambler—[*laughter*]—and he's done a superb job.

Let me say, seriously, how very much I appreciate the remarks that he made on the issue of gun safety at the outset of your convening here. It's a very important issue to the Attorney General and me and, of course,

to Atlanta's wonderful mayor, Bill Campbell, and all of those who have struggled to make our streets safer. We're honored to be here. I think the Lieutenant Governor of Georgia and the secretary of state are here, and I thank them for being here.

I want to join—I know that they've already been introduced, but Congressman John Lewis and Andy Young and Hank Aaron have been all very good friends to me and to Hillary over the years, and I'm profoundly honored by their presence here and their contributions to our country. I thank you all for being here.

I want to thank all the people from the Cabinet: Secretary Slater, who is also a native son of our State; and the Attorney General for coming with us; and Mr. Podesta. But I want to say a special word of appreciation to Chuck Ruff; this, I think, is his last day as the White House Counsel. Actually, I think Friday was his last day, but I made him come with me today. [*Laughter*] He has demonstrated throughout his career, in many positions of public trust and in private practice, with extraordinary power and dignity, a ferocious ability to be a legal advocate and an even deeper devotion to the Constitution and laws of the United States. He is a magnificent human being, and the United States and his President will always be in his debt. Thank you, Mr. Ruff.

Several of you were at the White House last month when we celebrated the 35th anniversary of President Kennedy's historic call to the legal community to advance the cause of civil rights. We talked then about the role our lawyers must play in building one America, renewing our commitment to combat discrimination, to revitalize our poorest communities, to encourage diversity in the legal profession and all its institutions, and to continue the legal community's commitment to pro bono work.

This has been very important to me and to my family. A lot of you know that Hillary was formerly the chair of the ABA's committee on women in the profession and the chair of the Legal Services Corporation. We have lived with these issues for almost 30 years now. And I want to thank the ABA for working with our Initiative for One America, headed by Ben Johnson in the White House, who is also here today, to launch a national drive to increase diversity in all sectors of the legal profession.

I also want to thank your incoming president, William Paul, for his efforts to raise $1 million for aid for the ABA scholarship for minority students and for his very generous contribution to kick off the drive.

I know that you are also committed to ensuring that our legal profession serves all Americans equally. I've asked Congress to fund my request for the Legal Services Corporation. Phil has already given it a good plug, and I can hardly compete with birthday cake. [*Laughter*] But we need your help. I've had to fight for the Legal Services Corporation every year since 1995, and I am happy to fight for it again, but I'll have a lot more success if they know that all of you from all the States, from both political parties, understand the importance of its preservation and its vital role.

I also want to ask you to work with us to make our Federal sentencing guidelines fairer, to correct some of the discrepancies in sentencing for similar crimes. This is an issue that most people in public life are reluctant to discuss, because there is always another election coming up and no one wants to be judged soft on crime and because there are always exceptions which can be made to seem the rule.

But I think every person in our criminal justice system, from the members of the Supreme Court to the Attorney General, right through the ranks, knows that there are certain inequities in these sentencing guidelines that cannot be countenanced when measured against the standards of justice, fairness, or our common interest in having the safest possible society. So I ask you to help. You cannot expect the elected officials to deal with this alone, but if you give them the support they need and the evidence they need and the arguments they need, we may be able to continue to improve this system.

We have the lowest crime rate in this country in 26 years. We should now be focusing on making this the safest big country in the entire world. But we can only do it if we are not only making this country safer but fairer and more decent and more just.

And like most everybody else that's had experience with this, I am absolutely convinced we can continue to remove the inequities from the sentencing guidelines without seeing the crime rate go up or increasing the number of innocent victims. But we need your help to do it.

Finally, I'd like to ask for your support in another goal that is critical to building one America, and that is establishing a judiciary that is both strong and vibrant, that is both fair and diverse. Having a judiciary that reflects both excellence and diversity is critical to equal justice under the law, to safe streets broadly supported by the public, and to building one America. It is also a very important part of America setting an example for the rest of the world.

Your president mentioned that you have representatives here from over 50 countries. And when he said it, it put me to thinking that I have spent an inordinate amount of the time that you gave me to be President in the last 6½ years worrying about wars and rumors of wars and conflicts that spread from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to Africa to Kashmir; all across the world, on every continent, people continue to fight each other. And the roots of their fighting are their racial, their ethnic, and their religious differences; people who can't help looking at other people who are different from them and seeing someone who is alien; people who do not see past the color or the faith to the common humanity, which is far more important than that which divides us.

If the United States is going to be a force for good in the 21st century, we must continue to be better here at home. And we cannot expect everyone else in our society to be better unless those of us in the Government set a good example. Anybody who has ever been in a courtroom, either as an advocate or a client, knows that if you are in court, the judge is the most important person in the world. And to have a judiciary that reflects the diversity of America, as well as its commitment to equal justice under law and to professional excellence, is a profoundly important national goal.

If I might, I'd like to take just a moment to pay tribute to a man whose life and career were a testament to these objectives, Judge Frank Johnson. Few Americans struck so many blows for equal justice. I was honored to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995. We all miss him, but our Nation is better because he lived and served.

When I leave you tonight, I go to honor with another Presidential Medal of Freedom, another American whose commitment to equal justice and to world peace are unequal, President Jimmy Carter. Among President Carter's many and varied contributions to our national life is his record of support for civil rights and for diversity and excellence on the Federal bench. I have worked hard to build on that record.

I'm proud that the judges I have appointed during my tenure are the most diverse group in American history. Nearly half are women and minorities; more than half the current judicial nominees are. But they have shattered the destructive myth that diversity and quality do not go hand in hand. In fact, thanks to your committee, my appointees have garnered the highest percentages of top ABA ratings of any President in nearly 40 years.

It is against this backdrop that I tell you about two historic nominations to the Federal bench. It's difficult to believe that in 1999, despite the fact that more African-Americans live in the Fourth Circuit than any other appellate jurisdiction, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has never had an African-American judge. On Thursday, we took steps to remedy that, when I nominated Judge James Andrew Wynn, a highly respected judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, to serve as the first African-American judge ever on the Fourth Circuit.

I was also proud to announce another first—in some ways, given the history of the last 30 years, even more hard to believe—when I nominated Judge Ann Williams, a Federal trial judge in Chicago, known throughout the bar for her talent and dedication, to become the first African-American judge ever to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Now, both Judge Wynn and Judge Williams will make outstanding contributions to our courts and to our country. But first, they must be confirmed. And recent experience

shows this can be an unnecessarily long and grueling process that I believe serves neither the judiciary nor our Nation.

Judge Johnson once said, the hallmark of any civilized society lies precisely in its ability to do justice. But we cannot expect our society to do justice without enough judges to handle the rising number of cases in our courts. Despite the high qualifications of my nominees, there is a mounting vacancy crisis in the courts.

During the first 3 years of our administration, we made tremendous progress in reducing the number of judicial vacancies. But the progress came to a screeching halt in 1996, a presidential election year, when judges became grist for the mill of partisan politics. In that year, only 17 judges were confirmed, and for the very first time in 40 years, not a single circuit court judge was confirmed by the Senate.

The result was a crisis so severe that last year, Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist warned that vacancies in our court could actually undermine our legal system's ability to fairly administer justice. In response to this alarm, the Senate worked with us last year, and under the leadership of Senator Orrin Hatch, in a bipartisan fashion, we were able to fill 65 vacancies in our Federal courts. But no sooner had we begun to remedy the rising emergency then, once again, the politics of the Senate began to stop the confirmation process in its track.

Consider: this year alone I have nominated 61 judicial candidates; 16 of the 61 are due to fill vacancies in jurisdiction among the 21 that have been declared judicial emergencies because of the caseload backlog and the length of vacancy. I will nominate candidates for the other five positions this fall, when the Senate comes back.

Now, during this period in which I have nominated 61 candidates, the Senate has confirmed only 11, and only 13 more have been reported out of committee; 37 are still stuck there. There are only 16 vacancies on the Federal bench for which I have made no nominations, and I believe that is an historic low, because of the time it takes to do the FBI checks, the background checks, and run all the traps that modern life seems to require. Nine of the 13 candidates currently voted out of committee, but not voted on in the Senate, are women or minorities.

This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of President Truman's appointment of the first African-American to the Court of Appeals, the highly respected William H. Hasty; and the 65th anniversary of President Roosevelt's appointment of Florence Allen to be the first woman to serve on an appellate court. We should commemorate these occasions by building on them with qualified people. We should honor the tradition of service. We should not—not—I repeat, not—have another replay of 1996. The worst effects of the slowdown are making themselves felt across our country. Exploding civil and criminal court dockets affect the lives of tens of thousands of Americans. They strain our justice system to the breaking point.

For civil litigants, we know that justice delayed can be justice denied. For criminal cases, we clearly need the most rapid possible action. The Attorney General was talking to me on the way in about how we had succeeded in getting the crime rate down. But we had to have enough judges on the bench to take time in each of these cases to make the right kind of sentencing decisions if we want the criminal justice system to continue to work in a way that is both fair and effective.

We simply cannot afford to allow political considerations to keep our courts vacant and to keep justice waiting. All of you know, I think, that I have worked very hard to avoid having major ideological fights of the kind we saw in previous years over judicial nominees. I have sought to find good people who believe in the Constitution and the law and equal justice, who reflected the diversity of America, but who were completely qualified, so that I could bring them to the Senate and get them through in an expeditious way.

So, again, I say, I'm going to go back after the August recess and try to do this. I'm also going to ask the Senate to do the right thing and confirm Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Bill Lann Lee, who also deserves to be confirmed.

I want to thank you for using the power of your voice to encourage the Senate to address the mounting crisis in our courts by moving forward on the nominees as soon as

possible. I want to thank the ABA's standing committee on Federal judiciary, especially the chairs, for the excellent job you've done evaluating my nominees for 6½ years.

I want to ask you, again, to reaffirm your conviction on this issue and think about it in the larger context of both our eternal quest for individual justice and our eternal quest to build one America and in terms of our obligations around the world. If we want to go from Northern Ireland to the Middle East, to Kosovo and Bosnia, to Central Africa and ask people to lay down their hatreds, to no longer fear the other, to see diversity as a source of interest and joy that makes life more exciting but in no way undermines our common humanity—if we want to be a force for good around the world, we must do good at home and always become better.

The ABA has been a force for that, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. in the Sydney J. Marcus Auditorium at the Georgia World Congress Center. In his remarks, he referred to Philip S. Anderson, outgoing president, and William G. Paul, president-elect, American Bar Association; Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor and Secretary of State Cathy Cox of Georgia; former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young; and member of the Baseball Hall of Fame Hank Aaron.

Memorandum on the Interagency Group on Insular Areas

August 9, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Interagency Group on Insular Areas

Issues relating to American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands sometimes vary from those relating to the States. Such issues frequently cut across agency lines. Since the insular jurisdictions lack the representation that a State has in the Federal process, the Federal Government has a special responsibility to consider their issues.

Except for matters that are specifically within the responsibility of another department or agency, generally, the Secretary of the Interior has responsibility for the matters concerning these territorial jurisdictions. With the continued development of the insular areas and the extension of most Federal programs to them, the need to improve the coordination of Federal programs and policies as they relate to these jurisdictions has increased. I, therefore, direct as follows:

1. There shall be established the "Interagency Group on Insular Areas" (IGIA) to give guidance on policy concerning these insular jurisdictions. The IGIA membership shall consist of senior officials selected by the heads of executive departments, agencies, and offices that receive a request for representation from the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary). The Secretary and the Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (Director) shall select the Co-Chairs of the IGIA.

2. The IGIA shall work on a continuing basis with the Secretary to identify issues concerning these insular jurisdictions and make recommendations to the President or other officials as appropriate concerning Federal Government policies and programs that raise those issues.

3. The IGIA shall consult with the Governors, Delegates to the U.S. House of Representatives, other elected representatives of the insular areas, and other Members of Congress as appropriate, on issues of concern. In this regard, the Co-Chairs shall schedule a meeting at least annually in Washington, D.C., with insular officials and shall schedule other meetings in response to requests of the officials.

4. Executive departments and agencies should coordinate significant decisions or activities relating to the insular areas with the IGIA. This shall not, however, limit the responsibility of departments and agencies to directly fulfill their responsibilities in the insular jurisdictions, including their responsibility to respond directly to the insular jurisdictions and their representatives.

5. The Secretary shall periodically, but no less than annually, report to the President through the Director on the progress made in addressing insular area issues.

6. The Secretary shall provide administrative support for the IGIA.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter in Atlanta

August 9, 1999

President and Mrs. Carter, members of the Carter family, including grandchild number 10, Hugo, who's right outside—[*laughter*]—members of the Cabinet who are here, friends of the Carters, Mr. Mayor. Let me say to all of you what a great pleasure it is for me to be here today. I flew down on Air Force One today with a number of former Carter administration members who, many of them, are in our administration, many others are mutual friends; and we relived old stories.

I remember in 1974, Governor Jimmy Carter had a role in the Democratic Party, and he was trying to help us all win elections. And I was running for Congress, and he sent Jody Powell to northwest Arkansas to help me. I should have known something was up. [*Laughter*] Thank goodness he failed, and I lost that election. [*Laughter*]

In 1975, Jimmy Carter came to Arkansas to give a speech, met with me and my wife and others, and we signed on. In 1976, my home State was the only State besides Georgia where President Carter got more than 65 percent of the vote. So it's a great personal honor for me to be here today.

Over the past several years, the President and Mrs. Carter have received many awards, all of them well-deserved. Rosalynn has received more than a dozen just from children's organizations alone. President Carter has been knighted in Mali, made an honorary tribal chief in Nigeria and Ghana. There are at least three families in Africa he's met who have named their newborn child Jimmy Carter. [*Laughter*]

Now these are hard acts to follow. [*Laughter*] But today, it is my privilege, on behalf of a grateful nation, to confer America's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, on Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

Twenty-two years ago, when presenting this same award posthumously to Dr. Martin Luther King, President Carter said, ''There are many Americans who do great things, who make us proud of them and their achievements, and who inspire us to do better ourselves. But there are some among those noble achievers who are exemplary in every way, who reach a higher plateau of achievement.''

It is in that spirit that we look back on two extraordinary lives today. In the past, this award has been presented to people who have helped America promote freedom by fighting for human rights or righting social wrongs or empowering others to achieve or extending peace around the world. But rarely do we honor two people who have devoted themselves so effectively to advancing freedom in all those ways. Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have done more good things for more people in more places than any other couple on the face of the Earth.

To be sure, there have been other Presidents who have continued to contribute to the public good once they left office: Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia; John Quincy Adams returned to Congress for eight terms and fought slavery; William Howard Taft became Chief Justice.

But the work President Carter has done through this extraordinary Carter Center to improve our Nation and our world is truly unparalleled in our Nation's history. We've all gotten used to seeing pictures of President Carter building homes for people through Habitat for Humanity. But the full story lies in pictures we don't see, of the 115 countries he's visited since leaving office, to end hunger and disease and to spread the cause of peace; by the more than 20 elections he's helped to monitor, where democracy is taking root, thanks in part to his efforts; of the millions in Africa who are living better lives thanks to his work to eradicate diseases like Guinea worm and river blindness; of the dozens of political prisoners who have been released, thanks in part to letters he has written away from the public spotlight.

I was proud to have his support when we worked together to bring democracy back to Haiti and to preserve stability on the Korean

Peninsula. I am grateful for the many detailed, incisive reports he has sent to me from his trips to troubled nations all across the globe, always urging understanding of their problems and their points of view, always outlining practical steps to progress.

To call Jimmy Carter the greatest former President in history, as many have, however, does not do justice either to him or to his work. For, in a real sense, this Carter Center is not a new beginning, but a continuation of the Carter Presidency.

The work President Carter did in those 4 years not only broke important new ground, it is still playing a large role in shaping the world we live in today. One of the proudest moments of my life was the day in 1993 when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands on the South Lawn of the White House. That day was made possible by the courage of the people of the Middle East and their leaders, but also by another handshake 20 years before and the persistence of President Carter as he brokered the Camp David Accords. I know it is a great source of pride for him that, 21 years later, not a word of that agreement has been violated.

If you talk to any elected leader in Latin America today, they will tell you that the stand President Carter took for democracy and human rights put America on the right side of history in our hemisphere. He was the first President to put America's commitment to human rights squarely at the heart of our foreign policy. Today, more than half the world's people live in freedom, not least because he had the faith to lend America's support to brave dissidents like Sakharov, Havel, and Mandela. And there were thousands of less well-known political prisoners languishing in jails in the 1970's who were sustained by a smuggled news clipping of President Carter championing their cause. His role in saving the life of the present President of South Korea, President Kim, is well known.

His resolve on SALT II, even though it was never ratified, helped to constrain the arms race for a full decade and laid the groundwork for the dramatic reductions in nuclear weaponry we have seen today. By normalizing relations with China, he began a dialog which holds the promise of avoiding a new era of conflict and containment and, instead, building a future of cooperation with the world's most populous nation.

Here at home, his work on deregulation helped free up competitive forces that continue to strengthen our economy today. His work on conservation, particularly the Alaska Lands Act, accelerated a process that has created the cleanest air and water in a generation. His advocacy of energy conservation and clean energy will loom even larger in the years ahead as our Nation and our world finally come to grips with the challenge of climate change. And by hiring and appointing more women and more minorities than any other administration to that point, he set a shining example of the one America we all long to live in.

During the Carter years, Rosalynn Carter also brought vision, compassion, tireless energy, and commitment to the causes she advanced. Just as Eleanor Roosevelt will be remembered for her work on human rights, Rosalynn Carter will always be remembered as a pioneer on mental health and a champion of our children.

For more than 30 years, she has made it her mission to erase the stigma surrounding mental health. As First Lady of Georgia, she used to travel dusty backroads to meet with people and volunteered her time at a State hospital. She took what she learned to the White House, where she chaired the President's Commission on Mental Health with style and grace. Afterwards, she initiated the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy and has worked to promote action on mental health worldwide.

We have made some progress in the last few years in extending health coverage and health insurance policies to mental health conditions, thanks in large measure to Tipper Gore's efforts, and in broadening public understanding and support for further action. It would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't done what she did first. Thanks to her work, I believe we will see the day not too long away when mental illnesses are treated just like any other illnesses and covered just like any other illnesses.

We also owe her our gratitude for her efforts to ensure that all our children are immunized. Two decades ago, she helped

America see that while many vaccines were being discovered, too few children were being vaccinated. She traveled across our country and became so recognized as a leader on immunization that people used to joke that every time she showed up, the kids would start to cry, because they knew somebody was going to get a shot. [*Laughter*]

Her work inspired President Carter to launch a nationwide campaign to immunize all children by the time they enter school, an effort we have built on. I can tell you that in the last 2 years, we can say for the first time in history, 90 percent of America's children have been immunized against serious childhood diseases. That would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't started this crusade more than two decades ago. We have seen this kind of commitment in all of her endeavors, from her work to organize relief for Cambodian refugees to her constant efforts to ensure that women get equal pay for equal work.

The extraordinary partnership between these two remarkable Americans has remained strong for more than 50 years now. To see it merely as a political journey tells only part of the story. At its heart, those of us who admire them see their journey as one of love and faith. In many ways, this Center has been their ministry.

In his book ''Living Faith,'' President Carter recalls a sermon that says, when we die, the marker on our grave has two dates: the day we're born and the day we die—and a little dash in between, representing our whole life on Earth, the little dash. To God, the tiny dash is everything.

What a dash they have already made.

By doing justice, by loving mercy, by walking humbly with their God, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are still living their faith, still making the most of the dash in between the numbers.

It will be hard for any future historian to chronicle all the good work they have done. It will be quite impossible for anyone to chronicle all the good works they have inspired in the hearts and lives of others throughout the world. Today, we do all we can; a grateful nation says thank you.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*At this point, Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. in the chapel at the Carter Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta; former Presidential Press Secretary Jody Powell; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President and Mrs. Carter.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on BusinessLINC

August 10, 1999

The President. Well, hello, everyone. I have a few remarks, but I want to be brief so we can get on to the business at hand. But first, I'd like to thank James Powell for making us feel welcome in his place of business, and his family and his co-workers and the instruction that he gave me on making a mop. I'm always looking for new skills since I have to acquire some pretty soon. [*Laughter*]

And the Vice President appreciates the fact that he buys the cord from Tennessee.

The Vice President. Humboldt, Tennessee.

The President. And I want to thank the Mayor and the two councilpersons, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, for making us feel welcome up here. We're always glad to be out in DC, but this is a special opportunity. And I know that the Mayor and Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis and Kevin Chavous—Councilman Chavous—are excited about what's going on here.

I want to thank Dana Mead, the president and CEO of Tenneco; the gentleman to my right who is the chair of the Business Roundtable; and Peter Bijur, the president and CEO of Texaco, who is going to chair our BusinessLINC National Coalition, for their willingness to undertake this project with gusto; and all the others around here who are proving that this kind of thing works and who will be introduced as we go through,

including the members of the administration who are here: Secretary Summers; Gene Sperling, my National Economic Counselor, who has done so much to develop the new markets initiative; Aida Alvarez of the SBA; and Jack Lew, Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

We all know why we're here. We have a record expansion in America, the longest peacetime expansion in history. It has finally, in the last 3 years, given us substantial increases in wages for ordinary workers, after 20 years of stagnation, and the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. Yet we know that there are still people in places that have not been touched by this recovery.

And it's very interesting to me that what many of us in the business community, as well as in the public sector, believe is a moral obligation we have to try to give all our people a chance to participate in this great economy is also an economic opportunity and perhaps an economic imperative. Every day, I promise you, the people here who run these big companies have got people scouring the press every day trying to divine the intention of the markets—have we reached the limits of this expansion; can we continue to grow the economy without inflation; how can we do it?

Well, obviously, if we expand economic opportunity and create businesses, employees, and consumers in areas where they didn't exist before, that is an inflation-free way to expand the economy. So we have reached a point in our country's economic development where I think we finally have a chance to do something for the places that have been left behind, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Native American reservations to the inner-city neighborhoods, in ways that will benefit all Americans. That's the idea behind the new markets initiative and the tour I took of areas that have been left behind, a few weeks ago with a lot of CEO's and other people.

And the idea is simple, that we want a partnership between business and Government to make investments more attractive in areas where they haven't been made in the past but only on the basis of profit—that this has to be a profitable decision. This is not a social program. This is free enterprise economics. We are trying to create the conditions in which the economic expansion, which has so benefited so many millions of Americans, can reach people who have been left behind for decades.

Mr. Powell's exhibit A. He introduced me to someone who moved from welfare to work in his company. He introduced me to a man who has eight children that he feels he can now support. He introduced me to a man who immigrated to this country 10 years ago from Central America, who's proud to be working here.

And this is a very, very important moment for our country, because for at least 30 years, Americans have wanted to do this, not just politicians; people in business have wished there was some way to bring free enterprise to the people and the places that have been left behind. And we believe we have found some ways to do it.

Now, I said, we have to do this in partnership. And just this last week, legislation based on our new markets initiative was introduced in both the House and Senate. It's pretty simple. It's basically designed to give American investors like those around this table, the same incentive to invest in developing markets in America that we give you to invest in developing markets in Central America or the Caribbean or Asia or Africa. I support those incentives for those countries, but they ought to exist in this country as well.

It builds on the successful approach that the Vice President and I have developed over the last 6½ years, and that he has so very ably headed, of our empowerment zones, our enterprise communities, a stronger Community Reinvestment Act, community financial institutions. This approach is working where we have applied it. What we want is a nationwide framework.

What we're here today to talk about is what I think is perhaps the single most important thing the business community can do to make this work: BusinessLINC. Let me tell you how BusinessLINC got started.

Nearly 2 years ago, Vice President Gore met Tom Lazo down there in Dallas, in south Dallas. He had a small company that built telecommunications equipment. It was doing well, but he told the Vice President that his company couldn't grow and thrive without

technical assistance and better training, without tools and skills his larger competitors already had. He needed a corporate mentor. That's why we launched BusinessLINC last summer, under the leadership of the Vice President and with the support of Secretary Summers, Administrator Alvarez, and former Secretary Rubin.

Tom Lazo's idea has a lot of power: large companies helping small companies get access to capital, learn the best technology and the best management techniques. As many of you can attest and will attest this morning, partnerships like this are good for investment, good for consumers, good for the bottom line. You see that at businesses like Powell's. And Mr. Powell and his big supporter will have a chance to talk here in just a moment.

Today I am very pleased that the Business Roundtable, a coalition of Fortune 500 companies, is stepping up to lead BusinessLINC. This means that we'll be able to go national with this idea. This means we'll be able to do it in a big way. And this means people who know what they're doing will have a stake and a commitment to its success. I cannot thank Dana enough. I cannot thank Peter enough. This is a very, very impressive commitment, and I'm very grateful to both of you.

Especially, I want to thank Texaco's Peter Bijur, because since he's going to lead the effort, Dana can look at him and ask for results. [*Laughter*] I've been on both ends of that; I'd rather be asking than answering. [*Laughter*] But this will help the corporate community to meet the challenge the Vice President issued a year ago to mentor more businesses, especially in the distressed communities.

Now, I know the Vice President has more to say about BusinessLINC, so I'd like to ask him to say a few things, and then we'll just start calling on the people around the table. And I think the press and those who read about this or see about it on the media will quickly understand the great power of this idea.

Mr. Vice President.

[*At this point, Vice President Gore made brief remarks, and the roundtable discussion began.*]

The President. I just want to make one very brief point here, because the last two presentations illustrate something that we really believe and that basically is the whole reason for the existence of the Small Business Administration, which is that, even in the best of times there are almost artificial barriers to the success of free markets. We are not trying to supplant them; we're trying to take away the barriers to them. That's what you're doing, and in so doing you're creating more. And this is very impressive to me.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I think this has been wonderful. And let me say we are—I think we have a reasonably good chance to get a bipartisan big vote for the legislation that would provide some greater tax incentives and some eligibility for lower interest loans to go with the equity in some of these really distressed areas this year. But none of this is going to happen without the kind of partnerships that we've celebrated today. This is clearly something that is better done and can only be done, really, in the private sector with the Government sort of cheering on and then trying to provide the resources that SBA and others have.

So, again I want to thank Dana and Peter and all the rest of you, and those of you who are living and doing this every day, and I just can't thank you enough. I also would like to say that it means a lot to me personally, having been a resident of Washington, DC, the last 6½ years, that we could do this in Washington, highlight this project, and remind people that there is another Washington where not everybody does have a good job or a good opportunity, and that we believe our Nation's Capital is small enough that the economies of scale work in a way that with sustained vigorous leadership, we can actually bring economic opportunity to all the neighborhoods here.

So, Mr. Mayor and Congresswoman, and to all the rest of you, I want to thank you. And if you'd like to say anything in closing, we'd be glad to hear from you.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 12:45 p.m. in the workroom at Powell's Manufacturing Industries, Inc. In his remarks, the President referred to James Powell, president, Powell's Manufacturing

Industries, Inc.; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; and Tom Lazo, president and chief executive officer, Custom Programming Services, Inc. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks on the Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

August 10, 1999

Before I leave tonight, I wanted to say just a word about the shootings at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles.

Once again our Nation has been shaken and our hearts torn by an act of gun violence. To the victims and their families, like all Americans, I offer our thoughts and prayers.

I have been briefed on the situation on the ground. The Federal Government has offered all appropriate assistance to the local law enforcement officials who are working on this case. I wish I could say more conclusive now; we don't know much more than has been reported. I want you to know that I intend to continue to monitor the situation very closely tonight and tomorrow. But again, I say this is another senseless act of gun violence; a lot of shells were found on the scene. It calls on all of us not only to give our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families but to intensify our resolve to make America a safer place.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:14 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception

August 10, 1999

The President. I was back there deep in conversation. [*Laughter*] Let me, first of all, say to all of you how glad I am to see you, how pleased I am that you're here, and how much I appreciate your support for the Vice President. I will be very brief.

When it was apparent that I was going to become the nominee for the Democratic Party in 1992, I had Warren Christopher, the person I probably trusted most in the world, organize a Vice Presidential search for me. And we went through all the candidates, and I said, ''Well, what do you think?'' He said, ''I don't think you have a choice.'' He said, ''I think Al Gore is much better than all the others.'' And I said, ''I agree.'' And I said, ''You realize they'll all say we're crazy. I mean, we're the same age; we're from the same part of the country; we're more or less from the same wing of the Democratic Party.''

The Vice President. Not quite the same wing. [*Laughter*]

The President. Not quite the same wing of the party, not quite the same. Yes, and I can't climb Mt. Rainier. [*Laughter*] And if I could, I wouldn't. [*Laughter*]

So, anyway, we did it. It violated all the sort of conventional wisdom. And I made a lot of decisions in the last 8 years, some of them were good and some of them weren't, but none were better than that one.

And I just want to say—basically say three things about it. Number one, in all the success this administration has had, from the economic renewal to the decline in welfare rolls, to the decline in crime, to the efforts to make our air and water cleaner and our food safer, to our search for peace around the world, and managing our big, difficult relations with Russia and China, reaching out to Africa in a comprehensive way, really, for the first time for any administration, right across the board, every single success we've had is a success that belongs not just to me but to the Vice President. If he hadn't cast the deciding vote on the economic plan, I'm not sure any of us would be here tonight having this conversation. So the first thing I want to say is, the record of this administration is his record.

The second point I want to make is that he has made it clear what he would do if he got the job to a greater degree and in greater detail than anyone else running. Even though, arguably, he should have to do less since people know more about him; that's not what he did.

The issue in this election will not be whether we should vote for change or not. The issue is what kind of change we'll vote for. We're living in an inherently dynamic time. You know, each year, as all of you know who follow this, I try to lay out an agenda

to the Congress and the American people in the State of the Union Address that continues to push the envelope, that continues to push the boundaries of change, that continues to challenge the people and public servants to do what needs to be done.

The first 4 years of this new millennium will be dramatically different from 5, 10 years ago. The way we work and live and relate to each other 20 years from now will be almost unrecognizable from what we were doing on the day I first took the oath of office. So the issue is not whether we will change, it is what kind of change. Are we going to build on what we've done that works? Are we going to take the evidence of success and then build on that and go beyond it? Are we going to revert to policies that we know don't work from hard experience?

I think one of the reasons that we've had some success in this last 6½ years is because I took the time to think through what I would do if I got the job, and I told the American people in greater detail than any American candidate had up to that point what I would do if I were hired. Then when Al joined the ticket, we sat down together and reissued our economic program and thought it all through again in great detail.

And a lot of people said, ''These guys are crazy. They're being so specific. Why are they doing this? It violates all conventional wisdom.'' But you'd be amazed how much it helps when you get a job if you've actually told people what you'd do if you got it. So I think the fact that he's laid out a program is profoundly important.

The third thing I want to tell you is that we have been together under all kinds of circumstances. You know some of them. Some of them were highly public and political. There were times of great elation, times of great triumph, times of defeat, times of frustration, times of intense difficulty. But we've also been together in personal ways. I've talked to him about everything. Both of us have lost a parent since we've been here in the White House. We've been through a lot of challenges. We've talked about our children and our hopes for them. And I can tell you that he is a good human being. He is a profoundly good man.

So if you've got a person with a stunning record, a great program, who's a good person, a proven leader, I think that's a pretty good decision. That's a decision that I hope for my daughter's sake and the next generation's sake, the American people will make this year. And you're helping them to make it, and I thank you very much.

The Vice President of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:57 p.m. at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher.

Notice—Continuation of Emergency Regarding Export Control Regulations

August 10, 1999

On August 19, 1994, consistent with the authority provided me under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), I issued Executive Order 12924. In that order, I declared a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 2401 *et seq.*). Because the Export Administration Act has not been renewed by the Congress, the national emergency declared on August 19, 1994, must continue in effect beyond August 19, 1999. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12924.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 10, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 12, 1999]

NOTE: This notice was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on August 13.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

August 10, 1999

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

On August 19, 1994, in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 2401 *et seq.*), I issued Executive Order 12924, declaring a national emergency and continuing the system of export regulation under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*). Under section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), the national emergency terminates on the anniversary date of its declaration unless the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice of its continuation.

I am hereby advising the Congress that I have extended the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12924. Enclosed is a copy of the notice of extension.

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. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

August 11, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the White House. A special welcome to Senator Robb, Congressman Scott, Congressman Sisisky, Secretary/Senator Bentsen's old colleagues in the Cabinet, and Mr. Rubin, welcome home. Secretary Kissinger, thank you for coming. Governor Rosselló, thank you for coming. Mrs. Ford, we're honored to have you here.

Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

Let me just say, before I begin the ceremony, Hillary has already said that like all Americans, we have prayed for the welfare of the children and their families and the entire community affected by the shootings in Los Angeles yesterday. Most of you probably know by now that the FBI received the gunman, who turned himself in, earlier today. I want to congratulate the law enforcement officials at all levels of government who quickly responded to the crime, identified the suspect, and kept the pressure on.

We are a long way from knowing all the facts about this case, and therefore, I think all of us have to be somewhat careful about commenting. But what we have heard about the suspect and his motives is deeply disturbing. Nothing could be further from the values we honor here today. Therefore, I would just say, again, I can only hope that this latest incident will intensify our resolve to make America a safer place and a place of healing across the lines that divide us.

Presidential Medal of Freedom

President Kennedy once said that a nation reveals itself not only by the people it produces but by the people it honors. Today we honor men and women who represent the best of America with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Our Nation's Founders believed, as do we, that freedom is a gift of God, not only to be defended but to be used to improve the human condition, to deepen the reach of freedom, to widen the circle of opportunity, to strengthen the bonds of our national community.

By words and deeds, the Americans we honor today have done just that. And in honoring them, we honor also the values and principles of our Nation's founding and our Nation's future. Today I am proud to begin with a man who once held the office I am now privileged to occupy and one who has more than earned this honor.

From his earliest days as a student and athlete, President Gerald Ford was destined for leadership. He was an outstanding player on the Michigan football team in a segregated era. And his horror at the discrimination to which one of his teammates was subjected spawned in him a lifelong commitment to equal rights for all people, regardless of race.

He served with distinction on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific in World War II. Thirty

years later, as Republican leader of the House, and with the strong support of his colleagues in Congress in both parties, he was chosen to fill the vacancy in the Vice Presidency, which imposed on him subsequently the awesome responsibility of piloting our Nation through the stormy seas of Watergate.

Steady, trustworthy, Gerald Ford ended a long, national nightmare. He also ended a long and bitter war. And he signed the Helsinki Treaty on Human Rights that sent a signal of hope to people throughout the world and hastened the fall of communism.

When he left the White House after 895 days, America was stronger, calmer, and more self-confident. America was, in other words, more like President Ford himself.

During 25 years in the House of Representatives, and as House Republican leader, he won respect from both sides of the aisle. It is not just his penchant for hard work or his acknowledged mastery of everything from budgets to foreign policy to defense, but the way he conducted himself, arguing his position forcefully on the House floor but, at the end of the debate, always reaching over to shake the hand of his opponents. Gerald Ford knew when to put politics aside and when to put the interests of our Nation first.

The respect he commands has grown in the years since he left office, whether advising Presidents in the Oval Office or defending affirmative action or making the case for free trade on the editorial pages of our leading newspapers. His opinions are still very much sought after. I am immensely grateful for the wise counsel he has given me over the years.

And I think I can speak for Hillary and for all Americans when I also express my appreciation and thanks to Betty Ford, a tremendous First Lady who has demonstrated dignity, strength, and resolve, and inspired those qualities in millions of others in the way she has shared her life with us.

President Ford represents what is best in public service and what is best about America. Colonel, please read the citation.

[*Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. A Texas farmhand by the age of 6, a bomber pilot by 21, a Congressman by 27, an immensely successful businessman by 35, Lloyd Bentsen saw and did more in his youth than most see and do in an entire lifetime.

During his second 35 years, he managed another whole lifetime of achievement and service as a distinguished United States Senator from Texas. He rose to become chairman of the Finance Committee, where he demonstrated his lifetime concern for the interest of business and labor and the poor and his conviction that America should advance all these together.

Then, at the tender age of 71, when he had every right to settle back and enjoy the comforts of retirement, Lloyd Bentsen answered my call to take on perhaps the toughest challenge of his public life, to become Secretary of the Treasury at a time of grave economic difficulty for our Nation.

He accepted that challenge with characteristic gusto. He became one of the strongest voices in America and in our administration for fiscal discipline and expanded international trade. He became an acknowledged world leader in financial and economic affairs. His work with Chairman Greenspan and Mr. Rubin and others on our economic team earned respect around the world. Under his leadership in 1993, when some of the rest of us had our doubts, we passed the economic plan that paved the way for what is now the longest peacetime expansion in our history.

For a lifetime of exceptional service to his country, I am proud to bestow the Medal of Freedom on Lloyd Bentsen.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. Edgar Bronfman once said that, in forcing the world to face up to an ugly past, we help shape a more honorable future. That fairly describes his own personal mission over these last 20 years. As chairman of Seagram's, he's helped to build on his father's legacy and take the company to new heights. As President of the World Jewish Congress, he's traveled the world to expose

the legacy of oppression of the Jewish people and to spur action on their behalf, winning freedom for Soviet Jews in the 1980's, demanding justice from financial institutions on behalf of Holocaust survivors in the 1990's, and, in between, supporting philanthropies that work to break down barriers between nations and lift the lives of disadvantaged young people. A life of remarkable citizen service.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. Evy Dubrow came to Washington more than 40 years ago, ready to do battle for America's garment workers, and do battle she did. When it came to the well-being of workers and their families, this tiny woman was larger than life. The Halls of Congress still echo with the sound of her voice, advocating a higher minimum wage, safer workplaces, better education for the children of working families. And in opposition to President Ford and me, she also was against NAFTA. [*Laughter*]

No matter how divisive the issue, however, Evy always seemed to find a way to bring people together, to find a solution. As she put it, there are good people on both sides of each issue, and she had a knack for finding those people.

By the time she retired 2 years ago, at the age of 80, she had won a special chair in the House Chamber, a special spot at the poker table in the Filibuster Room—[*laughter*]—and a special place in the hearts of even the most hard-bitten politicians in Washington; even more important, for decades and decades, she won victory after victory for social justice.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. Sister Isolina Ferre. For more than 20 years, in a poverty-stricken barrio in Puerto Rico, Sister Isolina Ferre started passing out cameras to children. She told them to photograph whatever they saw. The point of the project she later recalled, was not just to teach young people to take pictures but to teach them to take pride in themselves. That is what Sister Isolina does best, teaching people to see the best in themselves and in their communities and making sure they had the tools to make the most of the gifts God has given them.

Armed only with her faith, she taught warring gangs in New York City to solve their differences without violence. In Puerto Rico, her network of community service centers, the Centro Sor Isolina Ferre, have transformed ravaged neighborhoods by helping residents to advocate for themselves. Her passionate fight against poverty, violence, and despair have earned her many awards and countless tributes from all around the world. Sister Isolina once said that a community grows only when it rediscovers itself. On behalf of the many communities you have helped to make that wonderful discovery, a grateful nation says thank you to you today.

Colonel, please read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. I wonder whether any of the assembled parents, family, and friends in the audience at the law school graduation at Howard University in 1933 knew that they were watching history in the making?

Among the many talented people who graduated that day, two men stood side by side, one the valedictorian, the other salutatorian. Separated in class rank by a mere point or two, they were united in their determination to hasten our Nation to a day when equal opportunity was the birthright of every American.

One of these men was the late Thurgood Marshall. We're honored to have his wife here with us today. The other was the man it is our privilege to honor today, Oliver White Hill. Together, these two struck a fatal blow against the injustice embedded in our Nation's law, the disgraceful doctrine of separate but equal, that kept Americans apart and held too many Americans back for far too long.

In the 45 years since the Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, which both Thurgood

Marshall and Oliver Hill were active in, Oliver Hill has barely had time to catch his breath. Throughout his long and rich life, he has challenged the laws of our land and the conscience of our country. He has stood up for equal pay, better schools, fair housing, for everything that is necessary to make America, truly, one, indivisible, and equal.

The presence in this audience today of so many people who have devoted their lives to the cause of civil rights is ample evidence to the absolutely irreplaceable role he has played over these many decades. Our Nation is in his debt.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. Max Kampelman was probably not the first young man to work his way through college who made ends meet by skipping meals. But surely he is one of the few people who ever served his country in World War II by agreeing to stop eating altogether. [*Laughter*] He volunteered to participate in a military experiment on the effects of starvation, hoping to help doctors find new ways to treat returning POW's and concentration camp survivors, bespeaking a lifelong passion to alleviate the suffering of the victims of human rights abuses.

Forty years later, after a career spent advising public officials at the highest level, he would again help his country to fight oppression in Europe. As head of the United States delegation overseeing the Helsinki Act, his unflinching words kept human rights at the center of East-West relations. An uncommonly gifted negotiator, he won crucial arms control agreements.

Together, these efforts helped to set in motion the collapse of communism and the beginning of a new era of democracy. He has excelled as a diplomat, a philanthropist, a humanitarian. He has served both Republican and Democratic Presidents well. In so doing, he has been a quintessential American citizen.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First lady presented the medal.*]

The President. I wish we all had been there with Edgar Wayburn when he first laid eyes on the spectacular vistas of the land north of San Francisco, for then we could have experienced the wilderness from his unique and wonderful perspective. As it is, millions of Americans and visitors from other lands have been able to experience our great American wilderness because of Edgar Wayburn.

From the broad shores of Point Reyes, where we spent our second anniversary, to the sharp peaks of the Alaska range, to the majestic heights of the California redwoods, Edgar Wayburn has helped to preserve the most breathtaking examples of the American landscape. In fact, over the course of the more than half a century, both as president of the Sierra Club and as a private citizen, he has saved more of our wilderness than any other person alive. And I might add, his wife, who is here with us today, has been his colleague every step of the way in that endeavor. Those who have been involved in these struggles with him credit his success to his persistence and to his profound conviction as a physician and a conservationist that our physical health depends upon the health of our environment.

As we look toward a 21st century in which the world and the United States must combat new challenges to our environment, and especially the challenge of climate change, we will need Edgar Wayburn as a model and a guide. And we should be very grateful that we have him.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.*]

The President. The ancient Greeks used to bestow various honors upon citizens who performed outstanding service—everything from laurel crowns, the equivalent of our Medal of Freedom, to a lifetime of free dinners at state expense. [*Laughter*] I have not yet won bipartisan agreement in the Congress for that to be attached to the Medal of Freedom, but I can invite you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception.

Ladies and gentlemen, if hearing these life stories doesn't make us all prouder to be

Americans, I don't know what would. I thank these people for the lives they have lived and the light they have shined.

Again, we welcome them and all of you to the White House and ask you to join us in the State Dining Room.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger; Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico; former First Lady Betty Ford; alleged gunman Buford O. Furrow; Cecilia A. Suyat, widow of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood A. Marshall; and Mr. Wayburn's wife, Peggy. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Tornado Damage in Salt Lake City, Utah

August 11, 1999

I want to express my concern for the people of Salt Lake City, who are suffering the effects of a devastating tornado that tore through their city this afternoon. I was particularly saddened to learn that the tornado left at least one person dead and dozens injured. Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are already on the ground; more officials are en route; and FEMA Director James Lee Witt has talked by phone with Governor Leavitt. The burden of recovery will be heavy, but it is a burden that the people of Salt Lake City need not carry alone. As they begin the difficult process of mourning, healing, and rebuilding, our Nation stands steadfastly behind them.

Interview With Susie Gharib of the "Nightly Business Report"

August 11, 1999

Wages and Inflation

Ms. Gharib. It looks like wages are really starting to pick up now, and this is benefiting even people on the bottom rung of the economic ladder. But this is something that's worrying Wall Street because you saw the reaction to the employment report that the worry is that as wages rise, that this could create inflation. Do you think that wages are rising so fast that you could create an inflation problem?

The President. I don't think there's any evidence of that now for a couple of reasons. One is, you know, we had about 20 years when, in effect, there was no real rise in wages for people in the middle and the lower income groups, and they have had a good rise. It's been going on for about 3 years now. But we have seen enough experience, at least so far, that we don't see the signs of inflation.

I also believe the fact that we have open markets and, therefore, lots of competition and a lot of productivity increases fueled by technology should give us some encouragement there. It's something obviously we have to be vigilant about. But based on the present evidence, I think people are—they're earning their pay increases, and they've worked hard for them and, so far, I don't think there is evidence of inflation.

Stock Market

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, on Wall Street, they say that the direction of the stock market is a good predictor of where the economy is headed 6 to 9 months into the future. We've seen some rallies recently, but still stocks are down 10 percent or more from their recent highs. Do you think that the stock market is telling us that rough times are ahead?

The President. Not necessarily. No, I don't, because, keep in mind, the stock market was 3,200 when I took office. It was 6,500 in 1996, late in '96. So it's still perking along pretty well. And I think it's unrealistic to think that it's going to more than triple every 5 years. You're just not going to have that every 5 years. But I think that the most important thing I can say is that from my point of view, is that, as Secretary Rubin used to say, "Markets go up. Markets go down."

What the Government should focus on is keeping the fundamentals right. And it seems to me that if we can keep paying down the debt, practice fiscal responsibility, keep pushing to open markets, and keep making the kind of long-term investments that we know are good for the American economy, then the people in the private sector will take care of the rest.

I think you really get in trouble trying to predict what's going to happen in the global economy where already we've defied all the predictions. You know, when I became President, the consensus was that if we had two or more quarters of unemployment below 6 percent, we'd have inflation. And we know that the rules are being rewritten.

Now, that doesn't mean that the laws of economics have been repealed; it must mean that our ability to predict is not as great as it would have been in a more stable time. So I'm basically quite optimistic about the American economy as long as we keep the fundamentals right.

Monetary Policy

Ms. Gharib. You mentioned Robert Rubin, and there are some people who believe that since Robert Rubin left his post as Treasury Secretary, that the administration has modified its policy on the dollar. Can you clarify this for us? And we have seen the dollar under pressure recently. Do you no longer support a strong dollar policy?

The President. No, we haven't modified our policy. I think that what you've seen with the dollar is partly a function of an expected recovery in Asia, and I think that on balance, that's good. And the European economy may be growing a little more; on balance, that's good. And so I think that that is a predictable thing.

Plus, you know, to try to help our friends in Asia and Russia get through this crisis—and the Chinese particularly have had—even they've had a little bit of problems—we've run quite a large trade deficit here because we haven't wanted to close our markets since they were in trouble. Those things happen—that tends to weaken the currency too, after a certain amount of time.

So I haven't been particularly alarmed by it, but neither am I for a weak dollar. I think the United States has to be for a strong dollar. And again, I say the way for us to do that is to not abandon our budgetary discipline and our long-term policies on expanded trade and investments and technology.

Tax Cuts and Federal Spending

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, let's talk a little bit about taxes. You have been quite adamant, and so has your administration, that any kind of tax cut above $300 billion is no deal. And yet now we're hearing that you may be open to discussion and some negotiation on this. Are you signaling that you're more flexible?

The President. No. What I'm flexible about is what is in the tax cut. It's interesting—if you look at my tax bill of $250 billion and the Republicans with $800 billion, we have almost exactly the same benefits for middle class people, they're just differently configured. But the size of the middle class tax cut in both packages is about the same.

What I have said—I don't even think they ought to adopt my tax cut first. I would be opposed if they said—if they call me tomorrow and they said, ''You know, we slept on it last night, and we decided you were right, and we like not only the size of your tax cut, but what's in it, and we'd like to send it to you next week.'' I would say don't do that, for the following reason: I think it is wrong, on principle, to pass a tax cut before you figure out what your obligations are.

And Senator Breaux and Mr. Thomas had this Medicare condition. I thought there were some good things in it; there were some things I didn't agree with. So I gave Congress a Medicare plan that would lengthen the life of the Trust Fund and pay for a modest prescription drug benefit. I also gave them a budget which would, over time, not only save the Social Security surplus taxes for Social Security but would lengthen the life of the Trust Fund. And I gave them a budget which said, here's what I would spend for defense, for education, for other things, and here's what I would spend for a tax cut.

What I think they ought to do is give me a Medicare proposal. Then let's get together and work out what we're going to do with that. Then let's figure out what we have to spend. Already this Congress, even under the Republican leadership, has decided to spend more for veterans, for agriculture, and for defense. And they say they want to spend more for education. But their tax cut makes it clear, specifically in the tax bill, that they

had to cut all these things drastically that they're voting to spend more money on.

So my position is, send me a Medicare proposal; let's figure out what we have to spend on other things and what we've got to do to pay the debt down, and let's give the rest back to the taxpayers. And I will be very flexible about how we do it.

Ms. Gharib. All right. Let's talk about where you might be flexible. We had Pete Domenici, chairman of the Budget Committee, on our program recently, and he was saying that when you look at the whole surplus, only a quarter of it would be devoted to these tax cut proposals, things like an income tax cut, estate tax cut, cut in the marriage penalty tax. And even your Vice President, Mr. Gore, was on our program recently—he said he would support a cut in the marriage penalty tax. Is there anything here among these tax cuts that you might support?

The President. Sure. But the question is—let me just say, in all respect to Senator Domenici, they say it that way because it sounds so reasonable, but that's not quite right, and here's why. The Republicans have agreed with me—and I applaud them for this—they've agreed that we should take that portion of the surplus—projected surplus—it's not here yet—that portion of projected surplus attributable to Social Security taxes and not spend it. Okay? That leaves a third left.

When you take their tax cut, plus the extra interest payments we have to make—because when you cut taxes, you don't pay the debt off as fast—it takes up everything that's left, which means that they have no money to spend whatever on defense, on education, on lengthening the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, and yet they're voting to do these things.

So they either want to get into the Social Security surplus, at which case we're not going to pay the debt down and we're going to make a big mistake, I think, or they're pursuing the course which will require drastic cuts in the very things they say they're trying to increase. So, on any specific, I'm happy to talk to them. I think it would be great to get rid of the marriage penalty. There are a lot of things that they proposed that—in the Senate bill, in the original Senate bill, had a lot of great policy in it. We can't afford to do that and take care of the American economy.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Ms. Gharib. Sir, we're running out of time, so I want to ask you a few more quick questions, okay? Mr. President, I wouldn't be a good business reporter unless I asked you a question about Alan Greenspan. The last time this came up you said you don't even know if Mr. Greenspan would be interested in another term as Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Now, I'm sure you have a lot of contact with Mr. Greenspan, and your Treasury Secretary meets with him from time to time. Do you now know if Mr. Greenspan would be interested?

The President. Well, I saw him just today, actually, when we gave President Ford the Medal of Freedom, but I didn't have a chance to talk to him about it. You know, I think he's done a great job. I did reappoint him once. And I think that we've had an appropriate relationship. I don't comment on the Fed's actions, but I think we've both pursued complementary policies, and I think he's done a good job. But I think it is not useful for me to feed speculation one way or the other until I've at least had a chance to talk to him. I have no earthly idea what his intentions are, and we haven't had a chance to talk.

Ms. Gharib. Well, obviously, you've put some focus on the Federal Reserve recently, you recently named Carol Parry to fill one of the boards—he's on the Fed. You've named Roger Ferguson to fill the Vice Chair post. And you've told us that you will deal with the whole Fed Chairman job in a timely manner. Are we getting close to that time?

The President. Well, his time, term runs out at some point, and at some point it will be appropriate for the two of us to talk. But I think until the two of us talk, it would be just foolish for me to say anything. It would only cause—whatever I say might be rendered moot by the conversation we have. So I just don't think I should.

But I think the important thing is for the American people to know that I support the direction he's taken, and I think he's done

a good job. And I've tried not to meddle, and I'm not supposed to.

Since you brought him up, though, I think I ought to mention that he, along with others, have pointed out that if we don't pay the debt down and we still have a tax cut that's too big, it will increase the chances of inflation, which will increase the likelihood of interest rate increases. And all the benefits the American people could get in a tax cut, including upper income people, could be taken away by higher interest rates, which not only take more money out of people's pockets directly but will slow economic growth.

So I think that that's another thing that ought to be hammered home about this tax cut. Why should we do something on the one hand if we're going to lose the benefit of it from higher interest rates and lower growth?

New Markets Initiative

Ms. Gharib. I don't want to tackle with you on that, but I do want to talk to you more about economic growth. I'd like to talk to you about your new markets initiatives. The economy has had this wonderful run and it's been growing for so long, and it's even benefited a lot of the people who are living in economically distressed areas.

The President. It has.

Ms. Gharib. Is the goal of your new markets plan to speed up this process?

The President. Well, to speed it up where it's underway and to kick it off where it's not. We still have, believe it or not, we still have got a lot of counties in this country where the unemployment rate is over 10 percent, and a lot more where the unemployment rate is over 7.5 percent. So what I try to do, first of all, is to vigorously support the Community Investment Act, setting up more community financial institutions, expanding enterprise zones, which the Vice President has run for us so well over the last 6 years.

But what I want to do now is try to mobilize the business community and set up a legal framework that would give an incentive in every area of the country which has not felt the prosperity to grow more quickly. So I've sent this legislation up last week which would essentially give business people the same incentives to invest in developing communities in America that they get to invest in developing communities in Central America or the Caribbean or Africa or Asia. I don't want to take those away; I just want to have the same incentives in America in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in the Indian reservations, the inner cities.

And we have this terrific interest in the business community now, I think partly because they feel they're prosperous and they can do it and they ought to do it. But I want to emphasize, this is not a social program. This is a conviction of mine that there is profit to be made in these areas where unemployment is too high and underemployment is too high, and there is too little investment.

Ms. Gharib. But I'm sure you've heard this before, where people will say, ''Look, we've tried this before. We've tried tax credits. It's difficult.''

The President. But it's never been tried. First of all, it's never been tried in the comprehensive way we're doing it, where we're going to work with these communities and help them. Secondly, it has never been tried when the economy was this prosperous and when everybody is asking the very question that we've been talking about—all the business community, you ask them—we started with the stock market, how long can the stock market stay; is inflation—if we have inflation, will that bring the stock market down? Everybody is worried—we've already got the longest peacetime expansion in history; how much longer can it go on without inflation?

Now, my argument is that every American ought to be interested in this new markets initiative because one sure way to grow the economy without inflation is to invest in a place where you have both more businesses and more consumers—more business, more employees, more consumers. There is no inflationary impact to that growth. And it's right there at our feet.

And every American who believes in free trade ought to believe in the new markets initiative because it's closer to home with the same direct benefits and no inflation. And so there is—if I can use a little jargon, there is a macroeconomic benefit as well as the human benefit of doing this. I think we've got the best chance in my lifetime to get this done, the best chance since the early sixties. We lost control of the economy in the late

sixties. We had inflation with guns and butter, and we've never had a chance since then to do this. We've got it now.

Ms. Gharib. I'm getting notices that my time is up. But would you give me permission to ask you one last question?

The President. Sure.

Ms. Gharib. I think it's a good question, and I think you'd like to answer it.

The President. Sure.

Future of the National Economy

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, your term is drawing to a close and you have presided over one of the most fruitful economic times in this century, but let's fast-forward to the next generation, Chelsea's generation. What do we have to do to guarantee in the future this kind of prosperity and more?

The President. We have to make the most of this prosperity if we want to guarantee the next generation. We can't guarantee our children anything. We can't perceive the challenges they'll face. Their lives will have its own rhythm. But we do know this—what do we know about our kids' generation? We know they're going to have to deal with the aging of the baby boomers. We're going to get old, and there are more of us than any other generation before to reach this age.

We know they're going to live in a world that is increasingly more competitive, where financial markets are global and interest rates are set in that environment. We know that the children who are in the schools now are the most diverse group in history, and they are the first generation larger than the baby boom, and they will grow up in an era where education is more important than ever before.

We know those three things. Therefore, what should we do? We should make sure that our kids don't have to pay for us in our retirement by taking care of Social Security and Medicare now, so that when we're 75 and 80 years old, our children won't have to take care of us, and they can take care of our grandchildren.

Second, we should make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, so we keep interest rates down and more money can be borrowed by people in their private lives and business and personal lives. And when our trading partners get in trouble, like Asia has in the last 2 years, they can get the money they need at lower cost because we won't be taking it out of the system.

And the third thing we ought to do is give every kid in this country a world-class education. Now, if we can do those three things, we can maximize the chances that our children's generation will have greater prosperity than we do.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:04 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House and was videotaped for later broadcast. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 12. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy

August 12, 1999

Thank you. Well, if Amal Mansour gets tired of alternative energy, she might consider politics for a career. [*Laughter*] She gave quite a speech, and I thank her.

Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

Let me just say, before I begin, I would like to say just a few words about the latest developments in the shootings in Los Angeles. It now appears that they were motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. If so, that's the second such incident we've had in the last couple of weeks, along with the killings that occurred in the Midwest, which you all remember very well, and another compelling argument, in my judgment, for this country to renew its commitment to our common community, our common humanity; and another compelling argument for the passage of the hate crimes legislation and the commonsense gun legislation we have recommended.

I know the Attorney General spoke about this earlier today, but I wanted to strongly support and associate myself with her comments on this.

Biobased Products and Bioenergy

Now, let me tell you, I may be the happiest person here today because I have been a supporter of bioenergy for more than 20 years now. When I was Governor, I tried to promote the use of wood waste. We opened a little ethanol factory in my home State. We worked on whether rice hulls could be used as energy. I've sort of been tapping my foot, waiting for 20 years for the moment to come when both the technology and the economics and the social awareness, all this stuff would kind of fit together.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman, Secretary Richardson, Administrator Browner for their support of this. I want to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Dick Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. He wrote a brilliant article with Jim Woolsey in the January–February edition of Foreign Affairs, called ''The New Petroleum.'' And I see some of you nodding your heads, and if you had read it, you had all read it, you would all be nodding your heads. It's not only brilliant, but a guy who is scientifically challenged like me can understand it, which is very important.

I want to thank Senator Tom Harkin, who is not here today, couldn't be here today, but who has worked passionately on this issue. We have been talking about it for more than a decade now. And I want to thank Dr. Dale for your work and Amal Mansour for your work and your success, and all of the panelists who are here.

This is one of those speeches that Presidents have to give, you know, where you're preaching to the choir, because you all agree with this. And you see this fine family over here, they were introduced earlier in a way that is bittersweet. The present, terrible crisis we have on our farms heightens all of our awareness that we can do this. And as many have said, as Senator Lugar and Mr. Woolsey argued in their piece, even in good agricultural times, when farm prices are high and the land is in use, there is more than enough land available at sound conservation practices for us to develop this if we can develop the biocatalyst and the advance processing technologies necessary to make bioenergy work.

So I am very, very pleased about this. I think we have to see this in a context of where we've come from and where we're going. One of the most important technological advances of this century came 90 years ago in a old farmhouse overlooking Lake Michigan, where William Meriam Burton, who was a chemist for Standard Oil, figured out how to launch the modern petrochemical industry. He understood that this new contraption called the automobile was about to create this huge demand for petroleum products, and he understood that he had to squeeze more power from every molecule of petroleum. And because he did that, we had the prosperity we enjoyed, and we have many of the challenges we face today, because of what he did in that small place, so long ago.

This paved the way for the automobile era. It showed us the power of science to change the paradigms which govern our world. And on the verge of the 21st century, we may be nearing a similar breakthrough, a technological fix that can help us to meet our economic challenges, maintain our security, sustain our prosperity, and ease the threat of global warming. Science will be the key to our progress.

If we can make the raw material of tomorrow's economy living, renewable resources, instead of fossil fuels, which pollute the atmosphere and warm the planet, the future of our children and our grandchildren, the likelihood that there will be more prosperity and peace, the likelihood that all these sort of sci-fi, ''Road Warrior'' movies about the 21st century will be nothing more than a figment of someone's imagination—all that will be far greater.

One hundred years from now people will look back on this time and compare it to the time when Mr. Burton figured out how to get more out of every petroleum molecule, if we do our jobs.

Now, if you look at what's going on with trees and plants today, it's very impressive. And it's already been discussed here at the podium, but once we used only a seed or a kernel, tossed away the rest. Now we're learning how to use entire plants. Microscopic cells are being put to work as tiny factories. They convert crops and even waste into a vast array of fuel and material, everything from paints to pharmaceuticals to new

fibers. And our ability to use waste in these ways will also be critical to our future.

We are best served by new technology when we ask what we hope to achieve. And again, at the risk of preaching to the choir, because this is an important—there's not a lot of controversy here; I don't know, therefore, if we can generate any news. [*Laughter*] But I can tell you, 20, 30, 40 years from now people will look back on this meeting as an historic meeting if we do our job. Why? There are four reasons.

First, the potential economic benefits are staggering, not only for farmers—they are obvious, because they can raise raw material—but for the timber industry, chemical manufacturers, power companies, and small entrepreneurs like Amal. And the Vice President is in Iowa today discussing how these technologies can help close the opportunity gap between urban and suburban and rural America by bringing new high-tech jobs to rural areas which have not yet participated fully in our prosperity.

Second, by substituting domestic renewable resources for fossil fuels we ease our growing dependence on foreign oil, and because inflation has been low and growth has been high, no one is paying attention to this. But we are going to have—with the growth of population here and growth of population around the world, the increasing economic activity around the the world—you're going to have enormous competition for oil which will make its supply more problematical and its price much higher within a relatively short time unless we do something to ease our dependence. It's important for our economy, for our security, for our environment.

Third, as the Council of Advisers on Science and Technology concluded in a recent report, we can help developing countries meet their own soaring needs for energy in ways that, again, improve the global environment and stabilize economies and societies.

And fourth, as I've already said, this will help us to meet the challenge of climate change, which I am convinced will be the most formidable environmental challenge the world faces over the next 20 to 30 years.

Scientists tell us this decade is probably the warmest in a thousand years, but the heat and drought of this summer, the natural disasters of the last few years are probably only a taste of what is to come, unless we act now to deal with this challenge. Bioenergy is a means to achieve all of these objectives, to heat our homes, to fuel our vehicles, to power our factories, while producing virtually no greenhouse gas pollution.

To make the most of these opportunities, Government and industry must work together, as partners. In "industry" I include agriculture and small and big business, government and everyone in the private sector who is involved in this. The Government provided critical leadership in developing the semiconductor and the Internet. And we must also nurture these fledgling bio-industries in the same way.

In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order to accelerate development of these 21st century technologies, to strengthen our economy, and protect our environment. I'm establishing a Cabinet-level council to develop strategic plans to help to bring biobased technologies from farms, forests, and labs to the marketplace.

In addition, I am setting a goal of tripling America's use of bioenergy and biobased products by 2010. That would generate as much as $20 billion a year in new income for farmers and rural communities, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 100 million tons a year, the equivalent of taking more than 70 million cars off the road. And believe me, if the technology develops fast enough, it would be easy to beat this goal. In this way, we plant the seeds of a new technology for a new century, to sustain both our prosperity and our environment.

In addition to exploring the further use of bioenergy, I just want to say there are other things we need to do as well. I'm sure you all would agree. We need to do more to accelerate the development of flexible-fuel vehicles. If we develop these energy sources, there must be something to receive them. So we need to do more of that, and we've got a couple of them outside that everybody ought to see.

We also must recognize that there are available today, at prices which are attractive

today and will grow increasingly attractive tomorrow as oil prices go up, elemental technologies that promote conservation and cut costs—so you save energy and money, in homes, in farms, in factories today—elemental technologies that are still not being maximized.

We just had a big announcement a couple days ago on a new light bulb that I believe will be much more attractive than the lighting systems, the conservation lighting systems that have been developed so far, and will save people millions and millions of dollars and an awful lot of energy. So we have to be sensitive to all these things if we expect to have the world we want for our children.

Last year—I am very grateful that the Congress voted for another billion dollars to research and develop clean, energy-efficient technologies, including bioenergy. In my present balanced budget, I have proposed further investments in these technologies, as well as tax credits for businesses and consumers who choose energy-efficient cars, homes, and appliances. I know that Senator Lugar has a specific piece of legislation which would dramatically increase our investment in bioenergy research.

Anything we can do in this area, in my judgment, will have huge paybacks. And so, to all of you, I ask that you do what you can during this August period and when the Congress comes back to put this issue beyond partisan politics, to put it beyond the debate. We're talking about a tiny fraction of the budget for the combined recommendations we have made that can change the whole future of this country and this world, in the way that the automobile and the perfection of the petroleum processing did at the beginning of this century.

I can hardly tell you how strongly I believe that this can happen. And when it does happen, we will look back and be amazed, number one, that we took as long as we did to do it and, number two, how cheap it was to do it for the benefits we got out of it. We will all be amazed.

So anything any of you can do to make sure that 100 years from now somebody can talk about people like these two fine people who just spoke in the same way we talk about the people that perfected petroleum and developed the automobile: to ensure that more of our farm families get to stay on the farm and people can make a decent living in rural America in an environmentally sustainable way; to liberate America and other countries from their dependence on unstable sources of petroleum; to break the mindset that exists among too many both here and around the world that you cannot have economic development without burning more fossil fuel and, therefore, burning up the planet is just the inevitable consequence of getting ahead; anything you can do to roll back those problems and to create opportunities will be profoundly important to the kind of world our children live in and what people say about you and our generation 100 years from now. It's hard to think of a greater gift we could give at the turn of the century or a new millennium than a clean energy future.

Thank you all, and God bless you for your work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:26 p.m. on the Whitten Patio at the Department of Agriculture. In his remarks, he referred to Amal Mansour, chair of the board of directors and chief executive officer, Manufacturing and Technology Conversion International, Inc.; R. James Woolsey, former Director, Central Intelligence Agency; and Professor Bruce E. Dale, chair, Department of Chemical Engineering, Michigan State University.

Executive Order 13134—Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy

August 12, 1999

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), and in order to stimulate the creation and early adoption of technologies needed to make biobased products and bioenergy cost-competitive in large national and international markets, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Policy.* Current biobased product and bioenergy technology has the potential to make renewable farm and forestry resources major sources of affordable electricity, fuel, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and

other materials. Technical advances in these areas can create an expanding array of exciting new business and employment opportunities for farmers, foresters, ranchers, and other businesses in rural America. These technologies can create new markets for farm and forest waste products, new economic opportunities for underused land, and new value-added business opportunities. They also have the potential to reduce our Nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, water quality, and flood control, decrease erosion, and help minimize net production of greenhouse gases. It is the policy of this Administration, therefore, to develop a comprehensive national strategy, including research, development, and private sector incentives, to stimulate the creation and early adoption of technologies needed to make biobased products and bioenergy cost-competitive in large national and international markets.

Sec. 2. *Establishment of the Interagency Council on Biobased Products and Bioenergy*. (a) There is established the Interagency Council on Biobased Products and Bioenergy (the ''Council''). The Council shall be composed of the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, and the Interior, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Federal Environmental Executive, and the heads of other relevant agencies as may be determined by the Co-Chairs of the Council. Members may serve on the Council through designees. Designees shall be senior officials who report directly to the agency head (Assistant Secretary or equivalent).

(b) The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Energy shall serve as Co-Chairs of the Council.

(c) The Council shall prepare annually a strategic plan for the President outlining overall national goals in the development and use of biobased products and bioenergy in an environmentally sound manner and how these goals can best be achieved through Federal programs and integrated planning. The goals shall include promoting national economic growth with specific attention to rural economic interests, energy security, and environmental sustainability and protection. These strategic plans shall be compatible with the national goal of producing safe and affordable supplies of food, feed, and fiber in a way that is sustainable and protects the environment, and shall include measurable objectives. Specifically, these strategic plans shall cover the following areas:

(1) biobased products, including commercial and industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, products with large carbon sequestering capacity, and other materials; and

(2) biomass used in the production of energy (electricity; liquid, solid, and gaseous fuels; and heat).

(d) To ensure that the United States takes full advantage of the potential economic and environmental benefits of bioenergy, these strategic plans shall be based on analyses of: (1) the economic impacts of expanded biomass production and use; and (2) the impacts on national environmental objectives, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, these plans shall include:

(1) a description of priorities for research, development, demonstration, and other investments in biobased products and bioenergy;

(2) a coordinated Federal program of research, building on the research budgets of each participating agency; and

(3) proposals for using existing agency authorities to encourage the adoption and use of biobased products and bioenergy and recommended legislation for modifying these authorities or creating new authorities if needed.

(e) The first annual strategic plan shall be submitted to the President within 8 months from the date of this order.

(f) The Council shall coordinate its activities with actions called for in all relevant Executive orders and shall not be in conflict with proposals advocated by other Executive orders.

Sec. 3. *Establishment of Advisory Committee on Biobased Products and Bioenergy*. (a) The Secretary of Energy shall establish an ''Advisory Committee on Biobased Products and Bioenergy'' (''Committee''), under

the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), to provide information and advice for consideration by the Council. The Secretary of Energy shall, in consultation with other members of the Council, appoint up to 20 members of the advisory committee representing stakeholders including representatives from the farm, forestry, chemical manufacturing and other businesses, energy companies, electric utilities, environmental organizations, conservation organizations, the university research community, and other critical sectors. The Secretary of Energy shall designate Co-Chairs from among the members of the Committee.

(b) Among other things, the Committee shall provide the Council with an independent assessment of:

(1) the goals established by the Federal agencies for developing and promoting biobased products and bioenergy;

(2) the balance of proposed research and development activities;

(3) the effectiveness of programs designed to encourage adoption and use of biobased products and bioenergy; and

(4) the environmental and economic consequences of biobased products and bioenergy use.

Sec. 4. *Administration of the Advisory Committee.* (a) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Energy shall serve as the secretariat for, and provide the financial and administrative support to, the Committee.

(b) The heads of agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide to the Committee such information as it may reasonably require for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

(c) The Committee Co-Chairs may, from time to time, invite experts to submit information to the Committee and may form subcommittees or working groups within the Committee to review specific issues.

Sec. 5. *Duties of the Departments of Agriculture and Energy.* The Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Energy, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, shall each establish a working group on biobased products and biobased activities in their respective Departments. Consistent with the Federal biobased products and bioenergy strategic plans described in sections 2(c) and (d) of this order, the working groups shall:

(1) provide strategic planning and policy advice on the Department's research, development, and commercialization of biobased products and bioenergy; and

(2) identify research activities and demonstration projects to address new opportunities in the areas of biomass production, biobased product and bioenergy production, and related fundamental research.

The chair of each Department's working group shall be a senior official who reports directly to the agency head. If the Secretary of Agriculture or Energy serves on the Interagency Council on Biobased Products and Bioenergy through a designee, the designee should be the chair of the Department's working group.

Sec. 6. *Establishment of a National Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordination Office.* Within 120 days of this order, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy shall establish a joint National Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordination Office (''Office'') to ensure effective day-to-day coordination of actions designed to implement the strategic plans and guidance provided by the Council and respond to recommendations made by the Committee. All agencies represented on the Council, or that have capabilities and missions related to the work of the Council, shall be invited to participate in the operation of the Office. The Office shall:

(a) serve as an executive secretariat and support the work of the Council, as determined by the council, including the coordination of multi-agency, integrated research, development, and demonstration (''RD&D'') activities;

(b) use advanced communication and computational tools to facilitate research coordination and collaborative research by participating Federal and nonfederal research facilities and to perform activities in support of RD&D on biobased product and bioenergy development, including strategic planning, program analysis and evaluation,

communications networking, information and data dissemination and technology transfer, and collaborative team building for RD&D projects; and

(c) facilitate use of new information technologies for rapid dissemination of information on biobased products and bioenergy to and among farm operators; agribusiness, chemical, forest products, energy, and other business sectors; the university community; and public interest groups that could benefit from timely and reliable information.

Sec. 7. *Definitions.* For the purposes of this order:

(a) The term ''biomass'' means any organic matter that is available on a renewable or recurring basis (excluding old-growth timber), including dedicated energy crops and trees, agricultural food and feed crop residues, aquatic plants, wood and wood residues, animal wastes, and other waste materials.

(b) The term ''biobased product,'' as defined in Executive Order 13101, means a commercial or industrial product (other than food or feed) that utilizes biological products or renewable domestic agricultural (plant, animal, and marine) or forestry materials.

(c) The term ''bioenergy'' means biomass used in the production of energy (electricity; liquid, solid, and gaseous fuels; and heat).

(d) The term ''old growth timber'' means timber of a forest from the late successional stage of forest development. The forest contains live and dead trees of various sizes, species, composition, and age class structure. The age and structure of old growth varies significantly by forest type and from one biogeoclimatic zone to another.

Sec. 8. *Judicial Review.* This order does not create any enforceable rights against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 12, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:04 a.m., August 13, 1999]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on August 16.

Memorandum on Biobased Products and Bioenergy

August 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

Subject: Biobased Products and Bioenergy

Today I issued an Executive Order, ''Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy,'' to further the development of a comprehensive national strategy that includes research, development, and private sector incentives to stimulate the creation and early adoption of technologies needed to make biobased products and bioenergy cost-competitive in national and international markets.

Consistent with the objectives and activities in that order and to ensure that the Nation moves efficiently to exploit the benefits of expanded use of biobased products and bioenergy, I hereby direct as follows:

(1) The Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy, in consultation with other appropriate agencies, shall, within 120 days of this memorandum, prepare a report outlining and assessing options for modifying existing respective agency programs in fiscal year 2001 to promote biobased products and bioenergy with a goal of tripling U.S. use of biobased products and bioenergy by 2010. Programs include, among others, conservation and utility programs within the Department of Agriculture (including the Conservation Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program); technology assistance and other small business programs; and education and extension programs. The report also shall include an assessment of: (a) the evidence to determine whether modifications to the tax code are a cost-effective policy option for review by the Department of the Treasury; and (b) the potential to expand use of biobased products and bioenergy by Federal agencies including co-firing with biomass at Federal

facilities, use of biofuels in Federal vehicles, and Federal procurement of biobased products and bioenergy. Such expanded use shall be consistent with agency opportunities and the President's budget.

(2) In preparing this report, the agencies shall:

(a) work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that actions recommended reflect a careful review of the environmental benefits, concerns, and net environmental consequences created by expanded use of biobased products and bioenergy. The factors considered should include:

(i) impact on net emissions of greenhouse gases including carbon sequestered by biomass crops, and substituting low net-carbon, biobased products, and bioenergy for products manufactured from fossil fuels; and

(ii) emissions of criteria pollutants and air toxics and other environmental consequences of production of biobased products and bioenergy; and

(iii) changes in water quality, soil erosion, pesticide and fertilizer use, and wildlife habitat as a consequence of changes in land use associated with biomass production; and,

(b) consider the findings and recommendations of the recently released National Academy of Sciences report "Biobased Industrial Products;" the recommendations contained in "Technology Vision 2020: The U.S. Chemical Industry" by the American Chemical Society, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Chemical Manufacturers Association, Council for Chemical Research, and the Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturers Association; the recommendations by the U.S. agricultural, forestry, and chemical communities from the "Plant/Crop-based Renewable Resources 2020: A Vision to Enhance U.S. Economic Security Through Renewable Plant/Crop-Based Resource Use;" and, "Agenda 2020" by the U.S. Forest Products Industry; and (c) consider input from other sources, including public-private strategic plans developed by the Departments of Agriculture and Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, Department of the Interior, and other agencies bioenergy (power, fuels, and heat), commercial and industrial chemicals, and other products and materials.

(3) The Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy shall, within 120 days of this memorandum, report on outreach efforts to raise the Nation's awareness of the useful applications, benefits, and costs of producing biobased products and bioenergy and adopting biobased technologies including workshops on new biomass crops and technologies for producing and marketing biobased products and bioenergy.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Videotape Remarks to the "Safe Schools, Safe Students: What Parents Can Do" Teleconference

August 12, 1999

Hello and welcome to the many parents, students, educators, and community leaders meeting in schools all across our Nation tonight. I want to thank you for taking part in this vital discussion about safe schools and safe students.

Several months ago, after the tragedy in Littleton, I called on the American people to wage a national campaign to keep our schools and our children safe. I am pleased that you and so many other Americans in so many communities are doing just that, stepping up to your responsibility, joining hands in the search for common ground and concrete solutions.

The tragic incidents of gun violence in recent months underscore the importance of your efforts. The shooting just this week at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles,

like the recent shootings in Illinois and Indiana, appears to have been motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. If so, it's just another reason for us to rededicate ourselves to our common community and our common humanity and another compelling argument for the passage of hate crimes legislation and commonsense gun laws.

Acts of hate against individuals are acts of hate against our values and our entire Nation. So let us all speak clearly and with one voice: Our Nation will not stand for such acts. Acts of hate must strengthen our resolve and deepen our determination that Americans will come together and stand together and work together against violence, intolerance, and hatred.

In all these efforts, we must all first assume responsibility: at home and at school, in Hollywood and the heartland, and here in Washington. Parents play an especially crucial role, for no influence on a child is more important. I am very pleased that Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno will focus this national conversation on the concerns and responsibilities of parents. You'll hear from experts who have some good and helpful ideas. But I know they, like the rest of us, are eager to hear from all of you who already are making a difference in young lives every day.

In spite of the tragedies of the last few weeks, the crime rate in America is at a 26-year low. Though it's still far too high, this shows that we can make progress. With your ideas and your hard work, America can meet this challenge. Together, we can make America the safest big nation in the world; we can put an end to the culture of violence and build in its place a culture of values we'll all be proud to pass along to our children.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 3:35 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later transmission to the teleconference, which was sponsored by the Department of Education. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Memorandum on FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

August 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), you are authorized to consult with the appropriate committees of the Congress concerning refugee admissions as follows:

1. The authorization of 90,000 refugee admissions during FY 2000, which would be allocated by specific region as follows: 18,000 for Africa; 8,000 for East Asia (including Amerasians); 3,000 for Latin America and the Caribbean; 8,000 for the Near East and South Asia; 47,000 for Europe; (including 27,000 for the former Yugoslavia and 20,000 for the Newly Independent and Baltic states); and 6,000 for the Unallocated Reserve. The recommended level of funded admissions is equal to the level assumed in the FY 2000 budget request (80,000) plus those covered by the Kosovo supplemental (10,000).

2. The authorization of an additional 10,000 refugee admission numbers to be made available for the adjustment to permanent resident status of persons who have been granted asylum in the United States.

3. The designation, pursuant to section 101(a)(42)(B) of the INA, of persons in Cuba, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, who, if they otherwise qualify for admission as refugees, may be considered refugees under the INA even though they are still within their country of nationality or habitual residence.

William J. Clinton

cc: The Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

August 12, 1999

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

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

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. ×

Statement on Funding for Reading Programs

August 13, 1999

Today I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education is awarding $231 million in grants to help States, school districts, and communities help all of our children learn to read well. Reading is the building block for all learning. Nearly 40 percent of America's fourth graders, however, cannot read on their own. That is why my administration is working to ensure that every child can read independently by the end of the third grade—from working to reduce class size in the early grades to launching our American Reads program. This is an investment in our children and our future. Unfortunately, the Republican tax plan could force us to slash funding for this important initiative by as much as half in the years to come. Every one of us should do our part to help our children learn to read—and I call on Congress to put politics aside and put our children's future first.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Death of Representative Mickey Leland

August 13, 1999

Hillary and I would like to mark a sad occasion in our Nation's history, the death of Representative Mickey Leland (D–TX). Ten years ago this week, while on a hunger mission to Gambela, Ethiopia, Representative Leland died in a plane crash. A six-term Member of Congress, former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and cofounder and chair of the House Select Committee on Hunger, he was instrumental in bringing the issues of poverty and hunger to our Nation's consciousness. Because of his work, the plight of poverty was eased around the world—in Africa, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and within the United States.

Representative Leland's hallmark legislation, the Africa Famine Relief and Recovery Act of 1985, provided $800 million in food aid and humanitarian relief supplies to the poverty-stricken continent. One of his quotes effectively illustrates the human rights and moral aspects of the hunger fight: "I cannot get used to hunger and desperate poverty in our plentiful land. There is no reason for it. There is no excuse for it, and it is time that we as a nation put an end to it." This struggle to make economic prosperity inclusive of more of our population has become a focus of the work of my administration. In another example of his foresight, Leland was an outspoken critic of violence on television long before it became the national issue that it is today.

The work of Mickey Leland must go on, and I would like to thank those individuals and organizations working to carry out his legacy. We must never forget Mickey Leland, the pressing issues for which he worked, the voiceless poor for whom he spoke, and the global principles for which he lived.

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.

August 7

In the morning, the President traveled from Little Rock, AR, to Helena, AR. In the afternoon, he returned to Little Rock.

August 8

In the afternoon, the President traveled to St. Louis, MO. In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

August 9

In the morning, the President went to Ft. Myer, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joshua Gotbaum to be Controller at the Office of Management and Budget.

The White House announced that the President named J. Terry Edmonds as Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting.

August 10

In an early evening ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Richard Sezibera of Rwanda, Hugo Noe Pino of Honduras, Joao Alberto Bacelar da Rocha Paris of Portugal, Rubens Antonio Barbosa of Brazil, Ahmed Ould Khalifa Ould Jiddou of Mauritania, George Saliba of Malta, Ernesto Maceda of the Philippines, Alfonso Rivero Monsalve of Peru, and Juan Esteban Aguirre Martinez of Paraguay.

August 11

The White House announced that the President accepted an invitation from Prime Minister Jean Chretien for a working visit in Canada on October 8.

August 12

In the evening, the President met with Jewish leaders in the Cabinet Room.

August 13

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Camp David, MD.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

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

Checklist of White House Press Releases

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

Released August 9

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of J. Terry Edmonds as Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting

Released August 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Statement by the Press Secretary: Designation of Ariana Afghan Airlines Under the Taliban Sanctions

Released August 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Transcript of a press briefing by Agriculture Secretary Daniel Glickman, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley, and Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste on the White House Drought Relief Task Force

Statement by the Press Secretary presenting the text of the Presidential Medal of Freedom citations

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Visit to Canada

Fact sheet: White House Drought Relief Task Force

Released August 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner, Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Renewable and Energy Efficiency Dan Reicher, Department of Agriculture Deputy Chief Economist Joseph Glauber, and Deputy Assistant to the President for Environmental Issues Roger Ballentine on Executive Order 13134—Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the creation of an interagency Manufacturing Task Force

Released August 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of NSC Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, Defense Policy and Arms Control

Acts Approved by the President

Approved August 10

H.R. 66 / Public Law 106–45
To preserve the cultural resources of the Route 66 corridor and to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance

Approved August 11

H.R. 2565 / Public Law 106–46
To clarify the quorum requirement for the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States

Approved August 13

S. 1543 / Public Law 106–47
To amend the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 to release and protect the release of tobacco production and marketing information