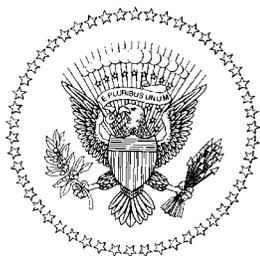


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, April 3, 2000
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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 31, 2000

United States-India Joint Leadership Statement on HIV/AIDS

March 24, 2000

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not only an Indian problem, it is not only an American problem, it is a global crisis, threatening every country. It burdens our health systems, our economies and, most importantly, the lives of too many of our citizens. But the AIDS epidemic can be slowed, and ultimately reversed by raising awareness, changing behavior and developing new technologies including—eventually—a vaccine.

To that end, India and the United States are working closely together, involving our public, academic, business and non-governmental sectors for the benefit of our nations, and the world. India and the United States are home to some of the world's finest scientists and facilities. We intend to expand collaborative research efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention. Together we are applying our nations' substantial public health expertise and scientific capacities to fight the global pandemic.

India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, through the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), which coordinates HIV/AIDS policy formulation and implements prevention and control programs, has recently launched a new phase of its National AIDS Control Program. With a substantial commitment from the Indian Government, bolstered by additional resources from the World Bank, USAID and other donors, NACO is now working with State health authorities and non-governmental organizations to reduce high-risk behaviors and increase awareness in the general population.

USAID is the major supporter of HIV/AIDS prevention programs in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu States. Additionally, the United States (under its "LIFE" initiative) will support Indian efforts to prevent infection, care for the affected, and build capacity.

Planning for these efforts include: establishing an HIV/AIDS resource center; establishing a business coalition for employer-based HIV prevention activities with private and public sector employers; supporting NGO activities for children affected by AIDS; and sensitizing journalists to HIV/AIDS issues.

Science alone will not win the world's struggle against HIV/AIDS. This will require leadership, which India and the United States are determined to provide. We hereby commit our continued, personal involvement to stopping AIDS in India, the United States, and around the world.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Proclamation 7283—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2000

March 24, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Two thousand five hundred years ago, the birth of democracy in Greece ushered in one of the true golden ages of Western civilization. The flowering of political, social, and artistic innovation in Greece served as the source of many of our most treasured gifts—the philosophy of Plato and Socrates, the plays of Sophocles and Aristophanes, the heroic individualism that rings in the epic poetry of Homer.

But Ancient Greece's greatest legacy is the establishment of democratic government. America's founders were deeply influenced by the passion for truth and justice that guided Greek political theory. In ratifying our

Constitution, they forever enshrined these principles in American law and created a system of government based on the Hellenic belief that the authority to govern derives directly from the people.

While our democracy has its roots in Greek thought, the friendship between our two nations flows from our shared values, common goals, and mutual respect. This kinship with the Greek people was reflected in the enthusiasm with which America embraced modern Greece's fight for independence 179 years ago. Many Americans fought alongside the Greeks, while stirring speeches by President James Monroe and Daniel Webster led the Congress to send funds and supplies to aid the Greeks in their struggle for freedom.

Our alliance with Greece has remained strong. Together we have stood up to the forces of oppression in conflicts from World War II to the Persian Gulf, we have joined as strategic partners in NATO, and we have worked to build peace, stability, and prosperity in the Balkans. Through decades of challenge and change, our friendship has endured and deepened, and together we have proved the fundamental truth of the Greek proverb, "The passion for freedom never dies."

That passion for freedom has also beckoned generations of Greek men and women to America's shores, and today we celebrate and give thanks for the myriad contributions Greek Americans have made to our national life. More than a million citizens of Greek descent live in America today, and their devotion to family, faith, community, and country has enriched our society immeasurably.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 2000, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 28, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 29. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on the Effect of Imports of Crude Oil on National Security

March 24, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: The Effect of Imports of Crude Oil on National Security

I have reviewed and approved the findings of your investigative report titled "The Effect on the National Security of Imports of Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum Products" under section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862), that imports of crude oil threaten to impair the national security. Further, I accept your recommendation that trade remedies not be imposed, but that existing policies to enhance conservation and limit the dependence on foreign oil be continued. Indeed, we have already proposed additional tax credits to promote renewable and efficient sources of energy, new tax incentives to support the domestic petroleum industry, and further investments in energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, as this report suggested.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

March 25, 2000

Good morning. As I reach the end of my terrific week in South Asia and prepare to return home, I want to talk to you this morning about the greater challenge we now face to keep our children safe from the dangers

of tobacco. Every single day another 3,000 American children smoke their first cigarette. Most of them will be hooked for life, and a third of them will die earlier as a result.

That's why our administration has worked so hard to highlight the health threat teen smoking poses and to keep tobacco products out of the hands of our children. We supported State and local efforts to stop underage smoking before it starts. And we know these efforts work. Massachusetts has used education programs to reduce high school student smoking by 15 percent. Oregon cut eighth-grader smoking rates by almost a third in just one year.

Five years ago we asked the Food and Drug Administration to start a campaign to slash teen smoking in every State and to treat nicotine like the dangerous drug it is. The FDA wrote strong, effective rules to prevent any child under 18 from buying any tobacco product anywhere in the United States. The FDA was also prepared to end tobacco advertising that is shamelessly aimed at addicting another generation of our young people.

This effort had strong support from public health leaders in both parties in Congress, but it collapsed under the pressure of tobacco companies and the Republican leadership in Congress while the tobacco industry challenged the rules in court.

This week, in a setback for the health of our children, the Supreme Court ruled that the FDA must have explicit authorization from Congress before it can regulate tobacco. However, all nine Justices made it perfectly clear that they believe tobacco is dangerous, especially to young people. The majority opinion called it, quote, "perhaps the most significant threat to health in the United States."

Now, the American people know this. They've known it for a long time. Now the ball is in Congress' court. They should show they also understand the danger to our young people and give the FDA's tobacco regulations the force of law.

This is not a partisan issue. It's a health issue for our Nation and a life-or-death issue for children. In 1998 a bipartisan group of Senators offered legislation that would have let the FDA's campaign move forward. It had the support of 57 Senators from both sides

of the aisle, but the leadership blocked it. And this week similar bipartisan legislation was introduced in the House. I urge both Houses of Congress to pass it promptly.

The Justice Department also has sued the tobacco manufacturers to recover the cost of tobacco-related illnesses and to make sure they're held accountable for actions that they take. I ask Congress to support these efforts, as well, not undermine them, as some have threatened to do.

I also ask Congress to work with me to take action to protect the financial security of tobacco farmers and their communities. And finally, I challenge the States to do their part, as well, by dedicating the money they've collected from tobacco settlements to fund antismoking programs for children and young people.

Preventing our children from smoking is our common responsibility. It's a fight we can win and one we must win, starting now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:05 p.m. on March 24 at the Stock Exchange, Mumbai, India, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Television Address to the People of Pakistan From Islamabad, Pakistan

March 25, 2000

As-salaam aleikum. It is an honor to be the first President of the United States to address all the people of Pakistan, and the first to visit your country in more than 30 years. I'm here as a great admirer of your land's rich history, of its centuries of civilization which stretch as long as the Indus River. I'm here as one whose own Nation has been greatly enriched by the talents of Americans of Pakistani descent. But most of all, I am here as a friend, a grateful friend who values our long partnership, a concerned friend who cares deeply about the future course of your country, a committed friend who will stand with the people of Pakistan as long as you seek the stable, prosperous, democratic nation of your founders' dreams.

More than half a century ago, Mohammed Ali Jinnah shared that vision as he addressed Pakistan's Constituent Assembly. "If you work together," he said, "in the spirit that every one of you is first, second, and last a citizen, with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make." The *Quaid-e Azam* ended that speech by reading a telegram he had just received. The message expressed hope for success in the great work you were about to undertake. That message was from the people of the United States.

Despite setbacks and suffering, the people of Pakistan have built this nation from the ground up, on a foundation of democracy and law. And for more than 50 years now, we have been partners with you. Pakistan helped the United States open a dialog with China. We stood together when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Our partnership helped to end the cold war. In many years since, we have cooperated in the fight against terrorism. Our soldiers have stood together in missions of peace in every part of the world. This is your proud legacy, our proud legacy.

Now we are in the dawn of a new century, and a new and changing world has come into view. All around the globe a revolution is taking hold, a revolution that is tearing down barriers and building up networks among nations and individuals. For millions it has made real the dream of a better life with good schools, good jobs, a good future for their children.

Like all key moments in human history, this one poses some hard choices, for this era does not reward people who struggle in vain to redraw borders with blood. It belongs to those with the vision to look beyond borders for partners and commerce and trade. It does not favor nations where governments claim all the power to solve every problem. Instead, it favors nations where the people have the freedom and responsibility to shape their own destiny.

Pakistan can achieve great things in this new world, but real obstacles stand in the way. The political situation, the economic situation, the tensions in this region, they are holding Pakistan back from achieving its full potential in the global economy.

I know I don't have to tell you all this. This is something you know, something you have seen. But I do have hope. I believe Pakistan can make its way through the trouble, and build a future worthy of the vision of its founders: a stable, prosperous, democratic Pakistan, secure in its borders, friendly with its neighbors, confident in its future. A Pakistan, as Jinnah said, "at peace within and at peace without."

What is in the way of that vision? Well, clearly, the absence of democracy makes it harder, not easier, for people to move ahead. I know democracy isn't easy; it's certainly not perfect. The authors of my own country's Constitution knew that as well. They said that the mission of the United States would always be, and I quote, "to form a more perfect Union." In other words, they knew we would never fully realize our ideals, but that we could keep moving closer to them. That means the question for free people is always how to keep moving forward.

We share your disappointment that previous democratic governments in Pakistan did not do better for their citizens. But one thing is certain: Democracy cannot develop if it is constantly uprooted before it has a chance to firmly take hold. Successful democratic government takes time and patience and hard work. The answer to flawed democracy is not to end democracy but to improve it.

I know General Musharraf has just announced a date for local elections. That is a good step. But the return of civilian democratic rule requires a complete plan, a real roadmap.

Of course, no one from the outside can tell Pakistan how it should be governed. That is for you, the people of Pakistan, to decide, and you should be given the opportunity to do so. I hope and believe you want Pakistan to be a country where the rule of law prevails; a country where officials are accountable; a country where people can express their points of view without fear; a country that wisely forsakes revenge for the wounds of the past, and instead pursues reconciliation for the sake of the future. If you choose this path, your friends in the United States will stand with you.

There are obstacles to your progress, including violence and extremism. We Americans also have felt these evils. Surely we have both suffered enough to know that no grievance, no cause, no system of beliefs can ever justify the deliberate killing of innocents. Those who bomb bus stations, target Embassies, or kill those who uphold the law are not heroes. They are our common enemies, for their aim is to exploit painful problems, not to resolve them.

Just as we have fought together to defeat those who traffic in narcotics, today I ask Pakistan to intensify its efforts to defeat those who inflict terror.

Another obstacle to Pakistan's progress is the tragic squandering of effort, energy, and wealth on policies that make your nation poorer, but not safer. That is one reason we must try to resolve the differences between our two nations on nuclear weapons.

Again, you must make the decision. But my questions to you are no different from those I posed in India. Are you really more secure today than you were before you tested nuclear weapons? Will these weapons make war with India less likely or simply more deadly? Will a costly arms race help you to achieve any economic development? Will it bring you closer to your friends around the world, closer to the partnerships you need to build your dreams?

Today, the United States is dramatically cutting its nuclear arsenal. Around the world nations are renouncing these weapons. I ask Pakistan also to be a leader for nonproliferation. In your own self-interest, to help us to prevent dangerous technologies from spreading to those who might have no reservations at all about using them, take the right steps now to prevent escalation, to avoid miscalculation, to reduce the risk of war.

As leaders in your own country have suggested, one way to strengthen your security would be to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The whole world will rally around you if you do.

I believe it is also in Pakistan's interest to reduce tensions with India. When I was in New Delhi, I urged India to seize the opportunity for dialog. Pakistan also must help create conditions that will allow dialog to succeed. For India and Pakistan this must be

a time of restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, and renewed lines of communication.

I have listened carefully to General Musharraf and others. I understand your concerns about Kashmir. I share your convictions that human rights of all its people must be respected. But a stark truth must also be faced. There is no military solution to Kashmir. International sympathy, support, and intervention cannot be won by provoking a bigger, bloodier conflict. On the contrary, sympathy and support will be lost. And no matter how great the grievance, it is wrong to support attacks against civilians across the Line of Control.

In the meantime, I ask again: Will endless, costly struggle build good schools for your children? Will it make your cities safer? Will it bring clean water and better health care? Will it narrow the gaps between those who have and those who have nothing? Will it hasten the day when Pakistan's energy and wealth are invested in building its future? The answer to all these questions is plainly no.

The American people don't want to see tensions rise and suffering increase. We want to be a force for peace. But we cannot force peace. We can't impose it. We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the dispute in Kashmir. Only you and India can do that, through dialog.

Last year the world watched with hope as the leaders of India and Pakistan met in Lahore on the road to better relations. This is the right road to peace for Pakistan and India, and for the resolution of the problems in Kashmir. Therefore, I will do all I can to help both sides restore the promise and the process of Lahore.

A few months ago we had a ceremony at the White House to mark the end of Ramadan. An imam shared a message from the Koran which tells us that God created nations and tribes that we might know one another, not that we may despise one another. During the years of my Presidency, I have tried to know the Muslim world as part of our common humanity. I have stood with the people of Bosnia and Kosovo, who were brutalized because of their Muslim faith. I have mourned with Jordanians and Moroccans at

the loss of their brave leaders. I have been privileged to speak with Palestinians at their National Council in Gaza. Today I am proud to speak with you because I value our long friendship, and because I believe our friendship can still be a force for tolerance and understanding throughout the world. I hope you will be able to meet the difficult challenges we have discussed today.

If you do not, there is a danger that Pakistan may grow even more isolated, draining even more resources away from the needs of the people, moving even closer to a conflict no one can win. But if you do meet these challenges, our full economic and political partnership can be restored for the benefit of the people of Pakistan.

So let us draw strength from the words of the great Pakistani poet Muhammad Iqbal, who said, "In the midst of today's upheaval, give us a vision of tomorrow." If the people of Pakistan and South Asia are driven by a tolerant, generous vision of tomorrow, your nation and this entire region can be the great success story of the world's next 50 years.

It is all in your hands. I know enough about the ingenuity and enterprise and heart of Pakistani people to know that this is possible. With the right vision, rooted in tomorrow's promise, not yesterday's pain, rooted in dialog, not destruction, Pakistan can fulfill its destiny as a beacon of democracy in the Moslem world, an engine of growth, a model of tolerance, an anchor of stability. Pakistan can have a future worthy of the dreams of the *Quaid-e Azam*.

If you choose that future, the United States will walk with you. I hope you will make that choice. And I pray for our continued friendship, for peace, for Pakistan. *Zindabad*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. from the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12, 1999. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

**Statement on the Election of
Vladimir Putin as President of Russia**
March 27, 2000

In a telephone conversation earlier today, I congratulated President-elect Vladimir Putin on his victory in the Russian Presidential elections.

Sunday's vote was an important milestone in the development of a democratic Russia. The people of Russia demonstrated again their intense commitment to democracy. Roughly 70 percent of eligible Russians voted.

In my conversation with President-elect Putin, I emphasized the importance to Russia and the world of strengthening the foundations of Russia's democracy and deepening its international integration. President-elect Putin has an opportunity to translate his electoral mandate into concrete steps to advance economic reform, to strengthen the rule of law, to intensify the fight against crime and corruption, and to join with us on a broad common agenda of international security, including arms control, nonproliferation, and regional peace and stability.

Finally, I emphasized my concerns about the war in Chechnya. I stressed to President-elect Putin the importance of launching impartial and transparent investigations of reported human rights violations and providing prompt and full access for international organizations and the press.

**Joint Statement by the Depositary
States on the 25th Anniversary of
Entry Into Force of the Biological
and Toxin Weapons Convention**
March 27, 2000

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Convention, the three Depositary States, the Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, reaffirm their belief in the continuing relevance and importance of the

Convention. As we start a new century the principles and objectives of the Convention are an important international norm serving to prevent any country from developing, producing, stockpiling or obtaining the means to employ bacteriological, biological or toxin weapons as a means of warfare. As such the Convention remains one of the key elements of international security and stability.

At its inception the Convention was a watershed international document, the first formal multilateral agreement to forswear an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Twenty five years later 143 States have acceded to it, a remarkable endorsement of the principles which it encompasses, and of the very important role it plays in the web of non-proliferation and arms control treaties. We, as the Depositaries, take this opportunity to call on those states which have not yet ratified or acceded to the BWC to do so without delay, so that the prohibitions on possession and development of biological weapons become even more universal.

The representatives of many States Parties are now engaged in work to strengthen the Convention. The aim is a Protocol that will create a regime to enhance confidence in compliance with the fundamental objectives of the Convention. This effort will bring the Convention into better alignment with the principles of other arms control agreements. As the terms of the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Group make clear the objective is "to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures . . . to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument." Successful achievement of an effective Protocol within the agreed time-frame must be the target of all States Parties. We pledge our own efforts to achieving this goal, and call upon all other States Parties to do likewise, and to accede to the Protocol once it is agreed.

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

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on
Telecommunications
Payments to Cuba**

March 27, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a semiannual report "detailing payments made to Cuba . . . as a result of the provision of telecommunications services" pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 27, 2000.

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

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With
Respect to Angola (UNITA)**

March 27, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that was declared in Executive Order 12865 of September 26, 1993.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 27, 2000.

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

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and an Exchange With Reporters

March 28, 2000

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have President Mubarak back here. We have a lot to discuss today. I want to talk with him about the peace process in the Middle East, about the movement on the Palestinian track, about my meeting with President Asad, and what further steps he thinks we could take on the Israel-Syria track. And we have a lot of other things to discuss as well.

So I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to welcome you here, Mr. President.

President Mubarak. Thank you, sir.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Mubarak, the peace process seems to be faltering again, especially after the failure of the Geneva talks. What is your vision, Mr. President? What can Egypt do in order to break this deadlock?

President Mubarak. First of all, I thank President Clinton just for meeting me today. And we used to exchange views every now and then. We have very good relations with the President since he took office 8 years ago.

Today we are going to discuss so many issues about the Middle East, about even bilateral relations. And concerning the Geneva meeting, I cannot say that's a failure. It's a step forward, although no progress between the Israelis and the Syrians, that doesn't make us pessimistic. We have to make much more effort so as to reach peace and an agreement could be signed, for the welfare of the whole area.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, there's word out of Vienna that OPEC has reached a deal now. Are you now looking forward to a decline in oil?

President Clinton. Have they, in fact, announced that?

Q. The Venezuelan representative has.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think I ought to wait to issue a definitive comment until they actually vote and reach

an agreement. But my concern has always been that the oil price production be increased to a level sufficient to ensure continued growth in the global economy and continued growth here at home. And that, therefore, by definition, to alleviate some of the serious burdens that some of our people have felt, particularly the truckers and the people who commute long distances.

But I want to wait and see. I've heard some encouraging things about what OPEC will do in combination with what some of the non-OPEC members will do. And in the aggregate, it could be sufficient to get production and consumption back into alignment and to rebuild some of these stocks, which are at their lowest point in a decade. And if that happens, then I'll be encouraged, but I want to wait and see.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, how much faith do you have in peace being concluded before you leave your tenure here?

President Clinton. Well, I think we are making and will continue to see good progress between the Israelis and Palestinians. I went to Switzerland to meet President Asad, to clarify to him what I thought the options were and to hear from him what his needs are. I asked him to come back to me with what he thought ought to be done. So the ball is in his court now, and I'm going to look forward to hearing from him, and we're going to talk about what else I can do, what else we can do together.

President Mubarak has been at this longer than I have, and we're going to keep working.

Q. President Clinton, your term ends in a few months now. Do you think the Israelis are ready to go along and finalize the peace process during that period? And what do you think the steps that they are going to take? For President Mubarak, do you foresee a solution in the near future?

President Clinton. Well, I think they are making very serious efforts. And I think Prime Minister Barak would like to do this as quickly as he can. And I can tell you they have made very, very serious efforts on all tracks, and I think you will continue to see progress at least on the Palestinian track and, of course, I hope we'll have some progress

on the Syrian one, as well—as well as in Lebanon.

President Mubarak. This information concerning the Middle East problem cannot stay as it is now. Tremendous efforts are being done by the United States with the cooperation with us. And I hope that we could reach a solution between the two sides, and especially I may meet with Mr. Barak soon after I return back to Cairo, to see what could be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Radio Remarks on Sightseeing Flights Over the Grand Canyon

March 28, 2000

There may be no place on Earth more stunning than the Grand Canyon. It's important to preserve and protect it, so that the millions who visit each year can enjoy the Canyon in all its splendor. Today I am announcing an important new measure to carefully manage sightseeing flights over the Grand Canyon. With this action, we can allow continued access to all, while also helping to restore the natural quiet of this timeless treasure.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 8 p.m. on March 17 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 28. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on the OPEC Production Decision and the Legislative Agenda for Energy Security

March 28, 2000

Today's announcement that OPEC members will increase production is a positive development. These increases will help sustain worldwide economic growth and provide greater balance between oil supply and de-

mand. While oil prices are projected to fall this year, we will continue to closely monitor developments in world oil markets in the coming months.

Congress should waste no more time in getting to work on the critical measures to improve America's energy security that I have proposed. Congress has failed to act on energy security measures, including new tax incentives to support domestic oil producers, tax incentives and investments to promote the use of alternative and more efficient energy technologies, the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve, and reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. These measures should be passed into law without delay.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Debbie Stabenow

March 28, 2000

Thank you. Now, only a politician who is not running for office would take a stand on the Final Four before the results are in. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much. Debbie, I am a huge basketball fan. And I already lost my State school and my daughter's alma mater in the NCAA, so I'm just watching it with great fascination. It's been a good tournament.

I want to thank Senator Torricelli for all that he has done for the Democrats, and the Senate candidates in particular. And I thank Carl Levin for more than I can say. You have no idea all the good things that he does in the Senate, many of which are not vote-getting issues; they'll never make the headlines. But someone needs to be going to work every day who cares about public policy and good Government and the way this country works. And Carl Levin does. You should be really proud of him. He's a really good man.

I want to thank Gary and Bill and Michelle for helping Debbie to raise the money necessary to wage a campaign against an incumbent Senator of the other party. It's a difficult thing to do. And she is in good shape, but she needs your support to do it. And I want to thank John Conyers and Sandy Levin for being here, and so many other of my friends

from Michigan who helped me these last 7 years and a couple of months. I thank you very much.

I was thinking to myself, "What am I doing here? I'm not running for anything." [*Laughter*] I'm trying to get this fine Member of Congress a 6-year term, and I'll never even have the privilege of working with her. Well, one reason is—and on principle this year, I'm very big on women going to the U.S. Senate. I have a passing interest in a lot of these elections. [*Laughter*] But I would like to—I'll be very brief, because she's already told you why she's running.

I think it's important that we remember that things were different in 1992 when I ran for President. We had economic distress. We had social decline. We had political division. And we basically had drift and gridlock in Washington.

And I believed that this country could build a bridge to the new century with an America that offered opportunity for everyone who is responsible enough to work for it, with an increasingly diverse America that cherished that diversity but thought our common humanity was more important, with an America that continued to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And we're in better shape than we were in 1992, and for that I am very grateful. And for the opportunity I've had to serve, I am profoundly grateful.

But the real thing I would like you to think about is: What is it that we propose to do with this prosperity? You know, I've reached an age now when my memory stretches back long enough that I know that nothing lasts forever. And in tough times, that's reassuring. In good times, it should be sobering.

This is a moment of phenomenal opportunity for our country. And a lot of the—I'm glad to see so many young people here, because you've got most of your lives in front of you. And it's very important that we take this moment to deal with the big challenges, the big problems, the big opportunities in the new century, in a world that is coming closer and closer together, in a world where increasingly what matters is whether you believe every person counts and every person is given the ability to develop his or her God-given potential.

You know, I just got back from India and Bangladesh and Pakistan. And I made a stop over in Switzerland to keep working on the Middle East peace process. And I'll tell you an interesting story. I was in this little village in India, one of the hundreds of thousands of little villages in a country with over 900 million people, with a per capita income of \$450 a year, one of the poorest places on Earth.

So I go to this little village, and I meet the local government. And it's required now that all the different tribes and castes have an opportunity to be represented, and 30 percent of all the local governments are women—elected officials. And I meet the women's dairy cooperative, and these women took over the milk business because they got a little machine that tested the fat content of milk. So they weren't cheating anybody out of their money anymore.

And—now keep in mind, I'm in one of hundreds of thousands of villages, right, in a country with a rich and diverse texture but a low per capita income. Every single transaction that the dairy cooperative made was recorded on a computer. Everyone that bought milk in there got a computer printout of what the fat content was, what the price was that day, then got an accounting out of the same computer on who bought the milk and when she got her money.

Then I go into the local government in this tiny village. And I see there the computer in the community center. And every person can come in and get on that computer in English or Hindi. And many of the things you can find—you can get even if you can't read, because of the software, the sophistication of the software. So poor village women can come in and see how they're supposed to care for their newborn babies in their first year of life. They pull it up on the screen, and then they had a printer, and they got it out. And it's just as good information as you can get here or in any other place in America, in the finest doctor's office in the land. This is going to be a very different world in the next 5 or 10 years.

I went to Hyderabad in India, which is sort of their high-tech capital, and the head of the State Government there now offers 18

different government services on the Internet, including getting your driver's license. [Laughter] Nobody ever has to wait in a line in the revenue office. [Laughter] Do not move to India just yet. [Laughter] We will get that done, but you get the picture, right?

Today I met—when President Mubarak from Egypt was here today, and we met with a bunch of Egyptian-Americans. One of them was a Nobel Prize-winner from Caltech. Another was a high official at the World Bank. Another was a big high-tech company executive. Another one ran a big biotech company. We talked a lot about the human genome and the sequencing of it, and how we were going to allow people to patent legitimate discoveries, but how we had to keep the basic information affordable so that the developing countries and poor people around the world and in this country could also benefit from the discoveries.

I mean, we're talking about no more Alzheimer's and cures for Parkinson's and detecting cancers when they're just a few cells. These are amazing things.

And the reason that I'm here tonight, even though I'm not running, is that I don't want our country to blow this opportunity. What's the big problem in all these peace negotiations around the world? People want peace. Young people like you, they're thinking about their future; they want a whole different world. They're not all caught up—it's a question of people's impulses—the basic, good human impulses at war with old ideas cherished by people who can't let go.

We have an American version of that, I think, in this contest here. One of the reasons that I want Al Gore to be elected President is that I know from personal experience he understands the future, and he knows how to take us there.

And you can't—most of what is written is written about politics and politicians acts as if policies are inconsequential and acts as if things that really affect the lives of millions of people don't matter. But I would argue to you that the details of our welfare program mattered; the details of our education program mattered; the details of our environmental program mattered; the details of our anticrime program mattered. It matters what you do. The details of our approach to

science and technology mattered. These things matter.

This is not about a bunch of hot air and slogans and positioning. This is about whether this country, at its moment of maximum prosperity and opportunity and minimum threats from abroad and from within, will take the chance that we have had never before in my lifetime, except maybe in the 1960's, before all the wheels ran off, to write the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this whole thing is about. Don't make any mistake about it. That's what the whole thing's about.

I worked hard to try to help turn this country around and get us moving in the right direction. But the big benefits are still out there to be reaped. Wouldn't you like your country to be the safest big country in the world? Wouldn't you like your country to be a place where every working parent could also succeed at rearing their children because there was adequate child care? Wouldn't you like your country to be a place where every child, no matter how poor, was held to high standards but had high opportunities in education, where there was no digital divide, where there were economic opportunities in the poorest urban and rural neighborhoods and on every Indian reservation in the country? And I could go on and on and on. That's what this whole deal is about.

And I'm telling you, if I can do anything this year, I am going to try to convince the American people only to vote for those people that understand the future and are prepared to do what it takes to get us there. And all of us, together. That's why I'm here.

And I hope tomorrow, if people ask you why you were here, you will tell them that—because Debbie Stabenow is a great human being, a great public servant, and she will take us there.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. in the Columbia B Room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts William and Michelle O'Reilly; Gary Torgow, finance chair, Stabenow for Senate; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. Representative Stabenow is a candidate for U.S. Senate for Michigan. Prior to the President's remarks, Representative Stabenow presented the President with a

Michigan State University T-shirt to honor the school's men's basketball team's appearance in the Final Four of the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

Remarks at a Reception for Governor Frank O'Bannon

March 28, 2000

You know, when Evan was talking about how he's trying to recover from having given a keynote speech—[*laughter*—I bombed; he didn't. [*Laughter*] He was actually very good.

But I am delighted to be here for Frank O'Bannon, and with Judy and Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Kernan. I want to thank Evan Bayh and Susan for being wonderful friends to Hillary and me for many years now. And I want to thank Senator Birch Bayh for his service to America and for also being my friend for 20 years now.

Every now and then, I remind Birch that in 1980 he came to Arkansas; we dedicated an ethanol plant. And you may or may not know that the Agriculture Department is funding research into how to more efficiently convert gasoline to ethanol or, you know, how to do it with less fuel. Now the ratio's about 7 gallons to 8. They tell me within a year or two, we'll be down to 1 gallon to 8. And Birch and I were just 20 years ahead of our time. [*Laughter*] But I'll always be grateful to him for many things in his service, and I'm delighted to be here.

Thank you, Mike Sullivan. Thank you, Mark Weiner. Thank you, Robin Winston. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Joe Andrew for working so hard for the national Democratic Party. And I saw three of your House Members here earlier: Pete Visclosky I know is still there, and Baron Hill and Tim Roemer may or may not still be here, but they were here earlier.

I am delighted to be here. You may wonder what I'm doing here; I'm not running for anything this year. [*Laughter*] Take a good look at me; I'm the only politician you'll see this year you don't have to give a contribution to. [*Laughter*]

I was a Governor for 12 years, and they were some of the happiest years of my life.

I would have never tired of doing the job. The voters would have gotten tired of me long before I got tired of the job. [*Laughter*]

And you know, I have worked very hard for the last 7-plus years to try to turn our country around and to try to get governing right. Now, there are not many votes in governing, really, when you talk about it. But if you've got a job and you do it well, there are votes in it. That's why Evan Bayh was elected and overwhelmingly reelected and then sent to the Senate. That's why Frank O'Bannon was elected, and why I think he'll be reelected—because they believe in governing.

After all this time I've been President, I can say there are a lot of things about this job that are much more than just policy, times when a President has to speak to the Nation about a crisis or in the midst of a collective grieving or just speak for the Nation when you have to take a stand. But a lot of what determines the success of our enterprise is whether we show up for work every day and treat our work like your work, like a job.

And the difference in political work and other work is that you have more leeway to define the job. In other words, you have to decide what it is you're going to do if you're Governor or President, except you've got to sign the bills or veto them, as the case may be, and make the appointments. But otherwise, you have to decide.

And I think I know a little bit about that. I served with over 150 Governors. And Frank O'Bannon is a very good Governor. I know.

I would also tell you that the tradition that he and Evan established in Indiana of fiscal responsibility and focusing very sharply on the most important things the government should do, and not defending everything that government ever did in the past, is one I tried to carry on. You know, we now have the smallest Federal Government since 1960, when Dwight Eisenhower was President and John Kennedy was running for the White House. We've gotten rid of hundreds of programs, and I'll give \$5 to anybody here who can name three of them. [*Laughter*] See? [*Laughter*]

I say that because when I became President, we had to do two things at once. We had to get this deficit under control and balance the budget. But we had to keep investing in education. We had to keep investing in health care for children. We had to keep investing in the environment. We had to keep investing in science and technology. We had to keep, in short, preparing for the future. And that's what Governors have to do.

Now, one of the ways that we did that was, for example, in the area of education, we gave the States more funds and set higher goals, but we got rid of about two-thirds of the Federal regulations. And I could give you lots of other examples where, in effect, we did the right thing, but only if the Governor does the right thing.

When we passed the welfare reform bill, we said, "Okay, here's the deal: If you're able bodied, you've got to get some training, and then if you get a job, you've got to take it. But we won't ask you to hurt your children. We'll leave your children with their guaranteed nutrition and health care, and we'll spend more on child care and transportation. We'll invest more in you. But if you can go to work, you've got to do it." Well, all that had to be designed and implemented by the Governors.

When we passed the Balanced Budget Act in 1997, we had the biggest expansion in federally supported health care since Medicaid in 1965, when we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program to allow the children of families that were working families—so their incomes were too high to get Medicaid coverage, but their incomes were too low to afford health insurance, and their employers weren't providing it. So we had the money to provide them health insurance. But the program was to be designed by the Governors.

In other words, a lot of what we have tried to do to have a more vigorous but a more disciplined Government has required us, here in Washington, to make his job even more important. And it's very important that everybody understands that; it really matters who sits in these Governors' chairs today. It matters what their values are. It matters what their vision is. And it also matters a lot whether they show up every day.

This is not a job for someone who is faint-hearted or disinterested. It's a job—particularly if you live in a State like Indiana or Arkansas, where people actually hold you accountable, and you can't get elected on television. [Laughter] You know? It really makes a difference. [Laughter]

I remember when I ran for President in '92, Governor Bush used to—I mean, President Bush used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State, in sort of drippingly negative overtones, you know? [Laughter] And you know, I was so dumb, I thought that was a good thing. [Laughter] You know, I was proud of it. I thought—and I think it's very important. If you care about the education of our children and if you care about whether the poorest of our children have access to health care, if you care about whether we can preserve a clean environment and grow the economy, you have to care about who the Governor is.

And I think most Americans may not fully appreciate the extent to which, over the last 7½ years, the reason this whole deal has worked as well as it has is that we've had good Federal policies, but we have done more and more of it in partnership with the private sector and with State and local government.

And so I wanted to come here because I genuinely like and admire Governor and Mrs. O'Bannon. And I genuinely believe that they should break that record that goes back to the 1830's. And that's the last thing I want to say about all these races in 2000.

I worked as hard as I can to turn this country around and to get us moving in the right direction. But all the really big benefits are still out there.

We've got the longest economic expansion in history. What are we going to do with it? We're going to give all of our kids a world-class education. Are we going to make America the safest big country in the world? We're going to get the country out of debt for the first time since 1835. Are we going to bring economic opportunity to poor areas that haven't felt it yet? I can just go on and on and on.

That's what will be decided in the year 2000. And I hope that the electorate will want to vote for people from top to bottom

like these two men here, who are serious about the work they do and for whom winning an election is just a prelude to the most important thing, which is the job. Because you know, this is a chance in a lifetime we have. And I've lived long enough now to know that these things come, and they go. The good news is bad times don't last forever. But good times don't either. And so when they come along, you have to focus and move, act.

So this is a big deal, this election. One of the reasons, apart from all my personal feelings about him, that I want Al Gore to be elected President so bad is he understands the future, and he knows how to get us there. And that's what we ought to be thinking about. Who understands the future? Who can get us there?

And your presence here says you know that about your Governor. But when you go back to Indiana, I hope you'll give that as a reason for the rest of the folks sticking with him, without regard to party. If you're producing, if you're serious, if you care about the future, stick with him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:52 p.m. in the Columbia A Room at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill. In his remarks, he referred to Judy O'Bannon, wife of Governor O'Bannon; Lt. Gov. Joseph E. Kernan and his wife, Maggie; Senator Evan Bayh, his wife, Susan, and his father, former Senator Birch Bayh; Michael J. Sullivan, general president, Sheet Metal Workers International Association; Mark Weiner, treasurer, Democratic Governors' Association; Robin Winston, chairman, Indiana State Democratic Party; and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee. Incumbent Governor O'Bannon is a candidate for reelection in Indiana. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

The President's News Conference

March 29, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I would like to begin by saying that yesterday's announcement that OPEC members will increase oil production is good news for our economy and for the American consumer. These increases should bring lower

prices, which will help to sustain economic growth here in America and also, and very importantly, throughout the world.

It will also, I hope, bring relief to hard-pressed truckers in this country, who have been especially hard-hit, and others who have high fuel costs, by providing a greater balance between oil production and consumption.

While home heating costs and the price at the pump are both expected to fall in the next few weeks, I urge the oil companies to do everything they can to bring the savings to consumers as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, we will continue to monitor developments in world markets closely.

Since January, our administration has taken significant action to address high oil prices, from helping more low income and elderly citizens to pay their heating bills, to calling for the creation of a regional market reserve in the Northeast, to asking Congress to immediately reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

It is also very, very important for Congress now to act on my proposal to strengthen our long-term energy security, including new tax incentives and investments to support domestic oil producers and to promote the development and use of alternative fuels and more efficient energy technologies. We can become much more energy efficient and support economic development if we do.

Congress also has an opportunity and a responsibility to make progress on a number of other important issues for the American people this year. First, we must work together to reduce the staggering toll of gun violence in America by passing my proposal for more prosecutors and stronger gun enforcement and by finally passing a strong juvenile justice bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for all handguns, and bans the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

For 9 months now, key congressional Republicans, egged on by the NRA, have stood on a bill and stopped it from being considered by keeping it from coming out of conference onto the floor of both Houses for a vote. Fourteen days ago a House resolution passed with bipartisan support, sponsored by Representative Zoe Lofgren of California. It

simply said that House and Senate conferees should meet to settle their differences on the bill that has been languishing in Congress for too long. But after 14 days, the response to Representative Lofgren's resolution has been deafening silence and still no action. It appears the opponents of reform have run out of arguments, so now they're just trying to run out the clock.

This makes no sense. With crime at a 25-year low, and the Brady law keeping guns out of the hands of a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers, the argument is over. Gun safety measures do work and do not interfere with the interests of ordinary hunters and sports people. So it's time to build on our proven success and pass this commonsense legislation.

Three weeks ago I asked Congress to finish the gun bill and send it to me by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, April 20th. That deadline can still be met. So again, for the sake of our children, I ask Congress to stop the delay. This should not be a partisan issue, and it should lead to action, not argument.

There are some other issues I'd like to mention briefly. First, to make sure the benefits of Medicare keep pace with the benefits of modern medicine, we must reform Medicare and add a voluntary prescription drug benefit. Three out of five older Americans lack dependable, affordable drug coverage. Since I first raised the issue last year, virtually every Member of Congress has voiced support for some kind of new prescription drug benefit. I call on Congress to pass a bill that ensures all Medicare beneficiaries the option to choose an affordable, accessible drug benefit. If they do, of course, I will sign it.

Second, to protect the interests of 190 million Americans in health plans, we should pass a strong, enforceable, bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights. This isn't a partisan issue in America. The House has already passed a strong bill, but the insurance lobby continues to oppose it. All we need is for the conference of Senators and Representatives to let every Member in both Houses vote his or her conscience on a real Patients' Bill of Rights. If it passes—and it will—I will certainly sign it.

Third, we should raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years. A bipartisan majority in the House voted to do so earlier this month, but Republican leaders held the pay raise hostage for tax increases for the wealthiest Americans—tax decreases, excuse me—tax breaks that could make it impossible to pay down the debt or strengthen Social Security and Medicare. I ask again to the Congress: Do the right thing. Everyone knows we need to raise the minimum wage. Send me a clean bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years, and I will sign it.

Fourth, we must keep the economy growing, first by opening new markets here at home in our hardest pressed communities, rural and urban, and second, by opening new markets for American products and services around the world. Especially, we need to give our businesses, farmers, and workers access to the world's largest consumer market in China. There is no more important long-term international economic or national security issue facing us today.

Congress should pass permanent normal trade relations with China this spring. I will say again, this requires us to take no further action on our part to lower tariffs or open markets. All the concessions are being made by China in return for entering an open trading system. If we do not do this, then the full benefits of all we negotiated will flow to all the other countries in the WTO but not to the United States. The economic consequences will be bad. The national security consequences will be worse.

Fifth, we must invest more in our public schools and demand more from them. I ask again Congress to endorse the principles in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which call for ending social promotion and funding only those things which work to raise student achievement. And we know that our students can't learn in schools that are falling apart.

Yesterday a bipartisan school construction bill was introduced in the House that would provide \$24.8 billion in tax credit bonds to modernize up to 6,000 of our schools. If the Republican leadership doesn't prevent it, Congress could vote on this proposal tomorrow. I ask the Congress to pass this bipartisan legislation, and I will sign it.

Sixth, to save the lives of thousands of young people who every year get hooked on cigarettes, we must now pass legislation allowing the Food and Drug Administration to require tobacco, like the dangerous substance it is, to be regulated by the FDA. There is strong bipartisan support for this idea, and I hope the Congress will pass it. If they do, I will certainly sign it.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the importance of passing the supplemental budget requests without delay. This is urgent funding for pressing needs at home and abroad: to help the families that were victims of Hurricane Floyd; to provide needed energy assistance for families struggling to cope with rising oil prices; to help keep illegal drugs out of our Nation by supporting the Colombian Government's courageous fight against drug traffickers; to keep the peace, provide for our troops, and build stability in Kosovo; and to provide needed debt relief to the world's poorest nations.

When Congress adjourns this summer, we ought to be able to look back and say we took real steps to make America better. The issues have been decided; they are clearly there. They have also been debated. The American people want action, and they deserve it. The only thing left is for the congressional leadership to reach across party lines and to work with us to break the grip of special interests and do the people's business.

Thank you very much.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, you said that the ball is in Asad's court. Is that because you think that his insistence on the return of all Syrian land under occupation in exchange for peace lacks logic or possibility?

The President. It's because he now knows in great detail what the Israeli proposals were. And I believe, since they have made an effort to be specific and comprehensive, if we're going to make progress, they should now be able to know what his specific and comprehensive response is on all the issues.

There is more than one issue here. And if we're going to have a negotiation, I don't think it's enough to say, "I don't like your

position. Come back and see me when I like your position." And I understand how strongly he feels about it, but if he disagrees with their territorial proposal, which is quite significant, then there should be some other proposal, I think, coming from the Syrians about how their concerns could be handled. And that's what I meant by that. I did my best to try to just present what I thought the options were. And if we're going to have a negotiation, it takes two people coming up with ideas—or three sides, in this case, if we are being asked to mediate it.

He, obviously, has the perfect right to take whatever position he believes is in Syria's interests and whatever he thinks is right. But if there is a genuine desire for peace here on both sides, and I believe there is, and if both sides face certain significant political constraints within their countries, and I believe they do, then they both need to come up with some ideas and start talking.

I mean, the one thing there should be no doubt about is that there is a real effort being made here to resolve this. And I think it is clear that Prime Minister Barak would like to resolve it, and I think President Asad would like to resolve it. So once you know what the other side wants and you don't think you can do it, then you ought to come up with some alternative way of trying to respond to the underlying concerns that are behind the position. That's what I've suggested, and I hope that will happen. And meanwhile, the rest of us will keep working. I had a good talk with President Mubarak yesterday about that, and I hope we can continue to move forward.

Yes.

New York City Police

Q. Mr. President, three unarmed black men have been shot and killed by police in New York City in the past 13 months. Do you believe that the New York Police Department has a racial problem, and does that department require Justice Department oversight?

The President. Well, I believe there is a Justice Department review of the practices in the department, which I think has been a matter of public record for some time. And

in the Diallo case, there was a specific reference to a review of the action there for possible civil rights violations. I think the important thing I'd like to say is, first of all, there's a lot of evidence that in city after city where the crime rate has dropped—and the crime rate's gone down a lot in New York; it's gone down a lot in every major city in America—there is now ample evidence that the crime rate can go down, and the tenor of community police relations can go up. And it's largely a matter of the right sort of training, the right sort of policies, and consistent effort there.

On the specific cases, I think I should say no more, particularly in view of the latest incident, which was tragic. There is a good U.S. Attorney in New York, and I have confidence that whatever decision is appropriate will be made as all the facts come out, and that's what's being done here.

But I think that the focus ought to be everywhere on having the right kind of training and the right kind of policy direction to say that we're going to bring the crime rate down, and we're going to bring the quality of police community relations up. The two things are not inconsistent. In fact, I think, generally, they reinforce one another, and I think that that's what we all ought to be working for in New York and everywhere else in the country.

Randy [Randy Mikkelsen, Reuters].

President-Elect Vladimir Putin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, when you spoke with Russia's President-elect Putin the other day, what did he tell you to indicate how he might run the country, particularly in the areas of the economy and foreign policy? And do you think it would be a good idea for you or your successor to try to build the same sort of personal relationship with Putin that you had with Boris Yeltsin, in view of criticisms that U.S. policy was too focused on one individual?

The President. Well, first, he has expressed a genuine commitment to economic reform—and the Russian economy is growing again—and a desire to put together a first-rate team. And that was encouraging.

In foreign policy, he expressed an interest in working with us to pursue matters of mu-

tual concern, particularly in the area of arms control and in some other areas. And I'm looking forward to working with him on that.

With regard to the personal relations, I think that—President Yeltsin, keep in mind, was the first democratically elected President of Russia. And he had the sort of personality that was difficult not to—it was difficult to remain neutral in dealing with him. And I did like him very much, but I also thought he was committed to democracy, and I think the fact that he stepped down and that we had a genuine democratic transition in Russia is some evidence of that.

So I think that regardless of personal chemistry—and I hope that mine with President Putin will be good, and I hope that my successor's will be good with him—the United States and Russia have vast national interests that require them to work together on the things with which we agree and to manage the difficulties between us where we have honest disagreements. So it is the relationship that is important. And the personal chemistry will come and go, depending on the personalities. But the point is, the fact that I liked Boris Yeltsin didn't stop me from differing with him when we were differing, and it certainly never stopped him from differing with me in his classic style. And I don't expect that to change with President Putin.

But I think the relationship is very important to the United States and to Russia, and it must be worked on constantly. We just have too much in common, and we have to work on it.

Yes, Ellen [Ellen Ratner, Talk Radio News Service].

States and E-Commerce

Q. The Internet commission is meeting on electronic commerce, and they are giving some proposals. What are your thoughts about what proposals you think they should come out with? And also what about the States, as electronic commerce becomes more and more available on the net and may take revenue from the States?

The President. Well, I think—first of all, I supported the moratorium on taxes, and I saw where Mr. Gephardt did as well a couple of days ago, and I think that's good. I think that we should.

I think that the process that has been set up is the right one. I don't know what the solution is, but I think the States are going to have to get together with these companies and figure out—first of all, I don't think there should be any access taxes or new transactional taxes or anything that will overly burden Internet commerce, because it is making a real contribution to our economy.

The real issue is, as a higher and higher percentage of sales are conducted over the Internet, what happens to the sales tax base of the States? Are they going to have to go to a different kind of taxation? Because they don't want to prejudice ordinary retailers. On the other hand, some of the people in the Internet business think that any sales tax will put them at a disadvantage because they have to charge shipping charges.

So I think that is a matter that the States will have to work out. Since they are basically State taxes, I think we ought to leave it to them. But the Governors are highly attuned to economic development. They will not lightly hurt their economies. But they also have responsibilities to fund their schools and other public services. And I just think they are going to have to work through it.

I think over the next year or so, you will begin to see some kind of consensus emerge.

Yes, go ahead.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared to deploy American advisers, monitors, or troops on the Golan Heights to secure an Israeli-Syrian peace accord? Did you discuss that at all with President Assad and, if so, what was his response?

The President. We did not discuss it. So far, all the options being discussed by Syria and Israel do not entail that. The only time I ever even discussed it is as a theoretical possibility was many years ago with the late Prime Minister Rabin. And it was clear to me, even then, that both sides were looking for a way to resolve this that would not require an international force including American troops there, and I think they are still trying to get that done.

Yes, John [John Cochran, ABC News].

Elián Gonzalez

Q. A possible confrontation is looming between the relatives of Elián Gonzalez and Federal authorities. As a last resort, would you permit Federal authorities or some kind of Federal agents to go in there to forcibly take the boy so that he could be sent back to Cuba?

The President. Well, I think, surely, we are some distance from that because they have to—they will, doubtless—if they do not prevail in court, they will clearly appeal. And I would just hope that the law would be followed by everyone, including them. I think that there is a legal process here. I have done my best to avoid politicizing it. And I think that the appropriate authorities, in this case the judges, will make a decision. And when that is done, I think that the people on all sides should accept the rule of the court. And I—

Q. So the relatives realize that is an option?

The President. What do you mean?

Q. That marshals might have to come in there and say, "Release the boy."

The President. Well, that's—it's no more an option there than it is for anyone else who doesn't—who says, "I don't like the way the courts decide." I don't think they should be singled out. I don't think there should be any extra pressure put on them. But on the other hand, I think that they should observe the rule of law; just like if they prevail in court, the others should accept it. I have done my best not to overly politicize this, and I don't think we should. There is a legal process here. We ought to let it play out.

Yes, go ahead, Jim [Jim Angle, FOX News]. I'll take you both. Go ahead.

Federal Reserve Board Nominations

Q. The Senate so far has not acted on two of your nominees to the Federal Reserve Board and shows no inclination to do so. A third slot is open as well. Do you have any realistic expectation of seeing action on that front this year, or will those slots be filled by your successor, whomever he may be?

The President. Well, I don't know. I hope that the Senate will continue to move forward on appointments. We had some success with judicial appointments recently. They are

approving a smaller percentage of nominees than is customary when the President is of one party and the Senate majority is of another, and I think that is regrettable. But I have worked with the Senate, and I have consistently sent the appointments up there, for example, recommended by Republicans for Republican slots on various boards and commissions. And I hope we will have some progress there.

They are also holding up a couple of Ambassadors for reasons that are totally unrelated to the nominees or any objection that they have to their qualifications, and that's not good for America's foreign policy interests. So I hope we will continue to see—we will have some breaking of logjams the way we did on the judges just a few weeks ago.

Go ahead, Jim.

Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade County, Florida

Q. Mr. President, the mayor of Miami—back on the Elian Gonzalez case—the mayor of Miami said today that he would withhold any assistance from the city, including police, if Federal authorities decide to return Elian Gonzalez to Cuba. And if there were any violence in the streets, he would hold you and Attorney General Reno personally responsible for that.

That seems to sound like an invitation for the community to block Federal authorities and an assurance to them that the Miami police will stand aside.

The President. Well, I like the mayor very much, but I still believe in the rule of law here. We all have to—whatever the law is, whatever the decision is ultimately made, the rest of us ought to obey it.

National Rifle Association

Q. Mr. President, Charlton Heston is on the college speaking circuit. And he said last night, “It amazes me that the President is so stubborn when it comes to guns.” And he notes that there are already 22,000 gun laws on the books by his count, which he says that the administration does not enforce.

Could you do more to enforce existing gun laws, and how do you feel about the attack

that the NRA has mounted on you and your administration?

The President. Well, let me answer the question on the merits. Gun prosecutions are up under our administration. And I have asked in this budget for a significant increase to enforce the laws, including more prosecutors, more ATF agents.

But again, I would make the main point: The NRA's position is that if somebody does something wrong, throw the book at them but do not have any preventive measures when it comes to guns. They believe that unlike every other area of our life, there should be no prevention. So they say—they didn't want us to have the Brady bill. They said it was too burdensome on people. But it hasn't been burdensome. They don't want us to close the gun show loophole. They say it's too burdensome. They're not even for the research into smart-gun technology or for banning large ammunition clips.

There's a case where we have a law on the books that can't be effectively enforced. These assault weapons are illegal, but the ammunition clips, the big ammunition clips, can be imported because of a loophole in the law, so the law we have can't be effectively enforced.

And I think that it's just wrong to say that because of the second amendment or because there are a lot of people that like to hunt or sport shoot that prevention plays no role in this.

How would you feel if I said, for example, the following: “You know, all these people that go through airport metal detectors, 99.999 percent of them are law-abiding, good people. And it is really a pain to go through those metal detectors if you've got a money clip in your pocket or a rodeo belt buckle on or something else, and you have to go through two or three times or take your belt off or whatever. It's just too burdensome, and I'm just sick and tired of it, and I'm going to take these metal detectors down in the airports, and the next time a plane blows up, we're going to throw the book at them.”

Now, you're laughing. But what if I said, “You know, most people who drive are good, honest, responsible people, and we should just—we ought to repeal the laws, the drivers license laws, and repeal the speed limits, and

the next time somebody does something wrong and has a 25-car pileup, we'll just throw the book at them."

I mean, a sensible society has a balance between prevention and punishment. And when we put these 100,000 police out, a lot of people said that wouldn't work. But the truth is, the community policing program, I believe, has contributed more to lowering the crime rate by preventing people from committing crimes in the first place than even by catching them more quickly.

So all I can tell you is, I just disagree with that. And in terms of their attacks on me, you know, that's what I get hired to do. That's part of the President's job description, being attacked by people who disagree with him. That doesn't matter. I still think Charlton Heston's a great actor, and I love his movies—[laughter]—and I still watch him every time I get a chance. And I loved having him here at the White House not very long ago, when he got one of the Kennedy Center Awards.

But that's irrelevant to me. The only question is, what is best for the safety of the American people? And guns are no different than any other area of our life. We need a balance between prevention and punishment.

Go ahead. Did you have a question? Go ahead, John [John King, Cable News Network] and then Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Privacy Act and the White House

Q. Mr. President, a Federal judge, with whom you have disagreed in the past, today said it was his opinion that you had committed a criminal violation of the Privacy Act by releasing those Kathleen Willey letters during the Independent Counsel investigation. What do you think of that ruling? And do you agree with the take of one of your legal advisors earlier today, who called this judge "a loose cannon"?

The President. Did one of my legal advisors do that? [Laughter] Well, he does seem to have somehow acquired a significant percentage of the cases involving the White House. That's an interesting story.

But anyway, you know, obviously, we don't agree with the ruling. And I can say that

when the decision was made to release those letters, I didn't even have any conversation with anybody about the Privacy Act. I never thought about it, never thought about whether it applied or not, and decided to do it reluctantly only because it was the only way I knew to refute allegations that were made against me that were untrue. And I think they plainly did that, and I would not have done it otherwise.

But I think in terms of the law, there are other reasons that I disagree with the law, with the idea that the Privacy Act, which was generally designed to protect people who had business with the Federal Government or were complaining about something that the Government was doing or had reasons for confidentiality and having to give the Government records, there were all kinds of reasons for the Privacy Act. And so I just don't believe that it—I think that the opinion of our counsel's office and many other judges who ruled on this is that that act does not apply to this kind of correspondence in the White House. And so we disagree, and we will proceed accordingly.

Yes, go ahead, and then Mark. Go ahead, Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters].

Gas Tax

Q. Mr. President, in light of the fact that OPEC has decided to increase production, do you see it as a mistake for the Senate to proceed with a bill that would suspend the gas tax? And if it reached your desk, would you veto it?

The President. I don't expect it to reach my desk because there seems to be bipartisan opposition to it in the House, including among the leadership. But the problem I have with it, apart from what it might do to the Highway Trust Fund and the spending obligations that have already been incurred by the acts of Congress—the budgets—is that I'm not sure that the savings would be passed along to the consumers, in addition to that.

So I think there are a lot of questions about it, but I don't expect it to pass. I do think, however, we shouldn't minimize the real bind that some Americans have already faced by these high fuel costs. For most of us

who—of course, I don't drive myself anymore—but for most people who don't have to drive a long way to work, it may seem an irritant but not a burden. But there are a lot of Americans who do have to drive a long way to work, who work for not very much money. And there are a lot of Americans who are in the trucking business who have been really, really hurt by this.

So I think we have to just keep our powder dry, keep our options open. But right now I think the prudent thing is to see how quickly these prices can come down with the increase in production, and for the House to reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We've got to have that reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. My authority even to use that, even as a possible option, expires on Friday. And it's very, very important for that to pass.

Go ahead, Mark.

Paternity Leave and Prime Minister Tony Blair

Q. Mr. President, I wonder if you've got any thoughts or advice for your friend, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the dilemma that he faces—[laughter]—on whether he should take parental leave, as his wife has suggested, when their next child is born? And if you don't want to share your advice with us, what would you do in that situation? [Laughter]

The President. I would like to have been a fly on the wall when they first talked about that after it appeared in public. But you know, I feel very close to both Tony and Cherie. I don't want to get in the middle of that. [Laughter] But I think Mrs. Blair said that there must be a "third way" to handle this challenge. [Laughter] That's what she said, although I thought it was a good line.

First of all, I envy him very much. I think it's a great thing for them, and it'll keep them young. And it's a wonderful thing. You know, for me, even though Presidents have a very hard schedule—you know, we keep very long hours—you have some more flexibility with your time because we live above the store, so to speak. So I wouldn't have the same burdens, if we were having a baby. I could spend a lot of time with the baby and still work and work it out.

But I think that that's something they ought to work with. I do think that the Prime Minister's government did a good thing to try to provide fathers as well as mothers family leave, though. [Laughter] I think it's a good policy.

Yes, go ahead. Go ahead, Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

Normal Trade Relations Status for China

Q. Mr. President, you are lobbying Congress to pass permanent trade relations for China. You're having a difficult time getting your own Democrats to vote for it. Vice President Gore has said even though he is for this agreement, if he was President he wouldn't negotiate trade deals like this, he would only negotiate trade deals that included labor and environmental standards. How is that stand of his complicating your efforts to convince Democrats to vote for this?

The President. It isn't, because if we were having a trade agreement with China, instead of an agreement on their accession to the WTO, we could do that. But keep in mind, I favor—I believe I was the first person in a national campaign ever to advocate the inclusion of labor and environmental provisions in trade agreements. And we put some in NAFTA. And we've gotten some good environmental improvements as a result of it. Even though there are still environmental problems along the Rio Grande River, a lot has been done. And there have been some labor standards improvements as a result of it in some places. So I know a lot of the people who wanted it aren't satisfied that we've done as much. But it was a really groundbreaking effort.

I went to the International Labor Organization in Switzerland, and to the WTO, and to Davos, Switzerland, to argue for a different approach to trade. I don't think you can take economics in a global economy that is becoming increasingly globalized and act as if it's totally separate from child labor or other abusive labor practices or what the impact of economic activity on the environment is.

That is not what this agreement is. I still believe if we can just get everybody to read what this agreement does, it will pass handily,

because this agreement will create jobs for America; it will create jobs for labor union members; it will grow the economy. I will say again, in this—I mean, this is an agreement about the conditions under which China enters the WTO. The United States doesn't lower any tariffs. We don't change any trade laws. We do nothing. They have to lower tariffs. They open up telecommunications for investment. They allow us to sell cars made in America in China at much lower tariffs. They allow us to put our own distributorships over there. They allow us to put our own parts over there. We don't have to transfer technology or do joint manufacturing in China anymore. This is a hundred-to-nothing deal for America when it comes to the economic consequences.

And most of what we have negotiated, we will absolutely lose the benefit of. If they go into the WTO and we don't approve normal permanent trade relations with them, what will happen is, all the work that Charlene Barshefsky and Gene Sperling did to get those concessions will go to Europe and Japan and all the people who didn't negotiate it. They'll get all the benefits, and we won't.

So the consequences, the economic consequences are quite clear and unambiguous for the United States. And so I think, to—and under the rules of the WTO, we couldn't impose different standards on their membership than were imposed on us or anyone else. See, that's the difference in this.

I agree with the Vice President. When he gets to be President—I believe he will be—he should continue to work harder on integrating a whole vision of the global economy that includes labor and environmental standards and the whole idea of what it will mean to be part of a global society in the 21st century. I think that's important.

But if people understand what this is, this is a vote on whether we will support their membership. And the only way we can do it—and that we will benefit from their membership. And the only way we can do it is if they get permanent normal trade relations. It is not like we had a bilateral trade agreement with China; that is not what this is about.

So if we were in bilateral negotiations, we could argue more strongly for certain agree-

ments on, for example, climate change, because we'd be giving them something while they were giving us something. We're not giving up anything here. These are the terms of their membership, and it's a hundred-to-nothing deal for us. All we lose here is if we reject it, we will lose economic opportunities we will regret for 20 years and will hurt our national security interest.

Yes, go ahead, Susan [Susan Feeney, Dallas Morning News].

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Sir, could you comment on the Vice President's plan for a \$7 billion democracy endowment to pay for congressional and perhaps Presidential campaigns?

The President. Yes, I thought it was a good idea. I kind of wish I thought of it myself. And I think—I'll tell you why I think it's a good idea, very briefly. I think you can't ever really solve the problem in campaign finance reform unless you have—because what is the problem? The problem is that it costs so much money to communicate with people over the mass media.

So if you want to solve the problem, you either have to have a different source of funding or there have to be requirements for free or drastically reduced media time. That's the problem. Otherwise, you're just sort of rearranging where the money comes from or how you do it. I don't mean—I think McCain-Feingold is important. And let me reiterate what the Vice President said. His proposal should not be interpreted in any way as a reduction of the administration's support for McCain-Feingold. The Shays-Meehan bill, which is the partner bill, has already passed the House. Again, if we could bring it up to a vote in the Senate, it would pass the Senate. A minority is blocking it in the Senate. We can pass it in the Senate. And we ought to pass it, because it will do some real good.

But the thing I like about it is, the American people have reservations about public financing of campaigns. We even have some trouble with the dollar check-off for the Presidential campaigns. This proposes to give incentives to people to try to raise the money in a more voluntary fashion from non-tax sources. So if it could be done and if the

trust fund could be filled up, I think it is actually quite a good idea.

Go ahead, John [John Harris, Washington Post].

Leadership in China

Q. Mr. President, when you finished your trip to China 2 years ago, you gave a news conference in Hong Kong in which you praised Chinese President Jiang Zemin as a visionary, a man of good will, and someone who was the right leadership at the right time for China. Since then, China's record on abusing human rights and threatening Taiwan has, of course, continued to be quite checkered.

I wonder if today you still think Jiang's leadership still deserves that praise you gave it or if your judgment today would have to be more severe?

The President. Well, I still think, given the alternatives of who could have been the President of China, that I'm aware of, and who could have been the Premier, I think that President Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji are the best team that could have been in their positions at that time.

As you know, I generally strongly disagree with the Chinese view that to preserve stability in their society, they have to repress political and sometimes religious activists to the extent that they do. I think that's wrong. And there have been several cases in the last couple of years that have deeply disappointed me.

I know that China has a historic—almost a phobia of internal disintegration because of the problems that they faced in the last—if you just take the last 100 years, problems that our society has never faced. I know that they say that to some extent their cultural views are not as oriented toward individual rights and liberties as ours are. But I believe that the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is a universal document, and I believe it should be observed, and that's why we voice our disagreements with China every year, and so I don't like that. And I hope that—I will say again, I hope that we will see a lessening of tensions across the Taiwan Straits.

I support the "one China" policy. But part of our "one China" policy is that the dif-

ferences between China and Taiwan must be resolved by dialog, and I feel very strongly about it.

But having said all that, I still believe that, given the available alternatives of which I am aware, these two men have been the best team that was available for China. And I think this decision they've made to join the WTO is a decision basically to modernize China in ways that will go far beyond the economy. I think it will lead—you get all this telecommunications revolution permanently manifest in China, they will not be able to control the Internet; they will not be able to control access to information; they will not be able to control freedom of expression. It will become a more free country and a more open country. And that is a very, very good thing. That's another big reason we ought to sign onto this, because we ought to be a part of their opening.

There will be more openness in the next 5 years, if China enters the WTO and all the telecommunications revolution hits at full force, than there has been in the last 20 years, since Deng Xiaoping started this.

Yes, go ahead.

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to return to campaign finance reform, if I could. Vice President Gore, in announcing his proposal, called himself an imperfect messenger on that subject. Isn't that an acknowledgement, sir, of something you and he have long denied, that there was an attempt to bend, if not break, the spirit, if not the letter, of campaign finance laws during your reelection campaign?

The President. No, I disagree with that. He said—he has never said that he knew that any of the money that he raised was not lawfully raised. And I don't believe he did. And I can certainly tell—you look at the difference in the way we reacted in 1996 and the way the other party reacted to allegations of illegal foreign money, for example.

What did we do? We spent \$4 million, that we had to go out and raise, to put all these records on computer disks, to give it all to the Justice Department, to make sure that everything was there. There was no slow-walking, no stonewalling, no nothing. I was outraged when I found out that the system

for checking the backgrounds of contributors and things like that had been dismantled without my knowledge or approval.

And I did not do all that work. And keep in mind, you mentioned '96—we didn't have—we raised the funds we needed for my Presidential reelection in 7 months. And I believe—you can go check this—but I have been told that ever since the campaign finance laws came in, in the seventies, that we had the smallest number of violations and fines of any Presidential campaign, the Clinton/Gore '96 campaign did.

So—I know those funds were raised through the party, but I was as appalled as the next person when I found out that we had taken funds, that people had given us money that wasn't legal. We didn't need it to win. It was wrong, and we did everything we could to try to correct it and set it right. And we spent a lot of money doing it.

And so I think what he meant is that he had been involved in one incident which he felt was unfortunate, and we raised soft money. And we've done it aggressively because we don't believe in unilateral disarmament.

But I would just point out that 100 percent of our caucus, the Democratic caucus in the Senate and the House, 100 percent of us—and the White House—the whole Democratic Party in Washington, DC, support the McCain-Feingold bill. So if it had been up to us, it would have been law years ago. And I think that's worth something.

So I think he's a good messenger. You know, I think he was showing a little humility, and I think that's always a good thing. We're all flawed in some way or another. But I think that, you know, he passionately believes this. And he worked very hard to come up with not only our support for McCain-Feingold, and his, but some way to build on it to solve the real problem.

The thing that I worry about, for example, in addition to—you know, most of you are concerned about the large contributions and the soft money. But something else, I think, that should concern you—not so much for me, because I have, it's easy for me to get around, and I have great living conditions here, and the Vice President does—but it bothers me that Republicans and Democrats

in the House and the Senate have to spend the time they have to spend raising the funds for their campaign. And the wear and tear on them—getting on those airplanes, you know, once or twice a week, all the time, when frankly, I think, if they were home resting, you know, reading good books, spending time with their families—you're laughing. This is a serious deal.

You think about it. This is a significant cost to our political system, that these people have to spend the time they have to spend to raise the funds required to wage their campaigns. It wears them out, and I worry about them. You know, this is a hard enough job. And I really believe that Congress would function better if they didn't have to spend this much time. So that's another reason that I support not only McCain-Feingold, but I think that this idea of the Vice President's, or something like this that would alleviate the burden of spending so much time, I think the American people would get a lot better Government, and the Members of Congress would get a lot more sleep.

George [George Condon, Copley News Service].

China-U.S. Relations/Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, back on China for a second. This morning the Chinese told Sandy Berger that U.S.-Chinese relations were at a critical juncture. Do you agree that things are critical right now? And also, you mentioned your continued support for a "one China" policy. Do you envision any circumstances in which you could support Taiwanese independence?

The President. Well, first, I think they're at a critical stage primarily because of this—of the China-WTO decision before the Congress. And secondly, I think that they would be at a critical stage if we were to abandon our "one China" policy.

But you know, we made an agreement with the Chinese a long time ago. When we normalized relations under President Carter, after a period of years of developing them, starting with President Nixon's historic trip there, it has been the unanimous bipartisan position of every President and every administration that that was the right decision. It

has also been, to this point, the position of all elected leaders in Taiwan.

I remember, I was there as a Governor in 1986 at their Tientien Day celebration, and they had a map of China which showed Taiwan being a part of China, too, even though they had the political tilt the other way.

And I think that they have so much to gain from each other. I mean, the investment of Taiwanese in China, for example, as you know, is enormous. And if they just keep talking, they'll work this out. They'll find a way to work this out. The Chinese have been quite clear that they were willing to be patient and to negotiate an arrangement which might even be different from that in Hong Kong. And I think that Taiwan's got a lot going for it. And I don't think either one of them needs this crisis right now.

So I just think they need to—and I've been very impressed by the President-elect in Taiwan and the way he's handled this since his election, what he's had to say. And he seems to be quite well aware of the weighty responsibility he now has and the great opportunity he has. And so I just think they need—this is a big issue. They need to get together, start the dialog again, and figure out where to go from here.

But if you look at the future that awaits the Chinese and that is already embracing the Taiwanese, you know, they have huge market percentage globally in a lot of the various components of the computer industry, for example—huge. And I just don't think they want a political problem to take all that away from their people. And they'll find a way to do it. They need to stick with this framework and find a way to get their dialog going again.

Yes, go ahead.

Chelsea Clinton

Q. Although not unprecedented in history, it's unusual for a President's child to have such an important limelight as Chelsea had during your state visit to the Asian subcontinent. With the First Lady fully engaged in New York, will we be seeing more of Chelsea? Did she express an interest to make more state visits with you, sir? How do you think she did?

The President. Well, I think—she's like Hillary and me. All three of us, I think, we want to savor the weeks and months we have ahead in this, our last year. And I told her that if she could take time off from school, I'd like for her to go with me on some of these trips.

I was—I think she was kind of taken aback by the attention she got in India, in particular. And I think it was because she had been there with her mother before, and they had both made a very favorable impression in Bangladesh and India and Pakistan. So—but I think she was quite surprised by it, and I don't think she sought it out in any way. But you know, when your child grows up—I think any parent with a grown child can identify with this—you're always sort of pleasantly surprised when they still want to hang around with you a little. And it's a wonderful thing. So for me, it is just a personal thing. And any time I can be with her, I want to be with her.

Yes, go ahead.

White House E-Mail

Q. Mr. President, it was reported today that the White House had a computer disk with Monica Lewinsky's E-mails. Sir, what do you think about the notion that it wasn't turned over sooner, and how would you assess your administration's overall handling of E-mail problems at the White House?

The President. I don't know it, but I believe that was known years ago. I believe that. I don't—I don't—I don't handle the E-mail things. I can tell you this: my Counsel, Beth Nolan, is going up to the Hill, I think tomorrow, to talk about this. I believe that it is accurate to say that we had turned over everything that had been found, and from what I understand, some things were not found because they were in a different system. So now we're working out how to cooperate with the Congress.

But my Counsel will talk about it tomorrow, and I'm confident that whatever is the right thing to do, we will do.

Yes, go ahead.

"American Beauty"/Youth Violence

Q. It's coming up on the year anniversary of Columbine, and around this time last year,

you had a summit at the White House where you talked not only about the gun aspect of violence but also the cultural aspect in our society of it. And considering that we just had a movie sweep the Academy Awards that had a pretty violent ending, I wondered whether you felt the entertainment industry has made much progress in this area?

The President. Well, first of all, I certainly don't believe that movie glorified violence. I have never suggested that we should have movies that—as long as there is a good ratings system—movies that didn't have violence, which is part of a normal theme.

I thought it was an astonishing movie, actually. And I certainly don't think anyone who watched it and understood it would think of it as glorifying violence. I think it would be—I think a lot of the tragedy and fear that is behind people who misuse guns would be apparent there. And so I think, if anything, it was an antiviolence movie.

I think that some progress is being made. I think that there are still problems with whether the ratings systems make sense and make sense in relations to one another, between the movies, the TV programs, and the ones that are being developed for the Internet—I mean, the video games and I just—I think there are still some improvements that need to be made.

I know that Hillary said that she thought there ought to be a uniform system, and I think that that would—if it could be made more uniform, more simple, more understandable, I think that would make a difference. And I still think there is too much gratuitous violence produced in entertainment. But I don't think that applies—that that is a fair criticism of "American Beauty."

Let me say this. Since the year, though, since you mention that, the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, with our Executive Director, Jeff Bleich, has done a lot of work, and they're doing a lot of work on city-by-city efforts and efforts by specific sectors of the community and dealing with all these aspects. So there's quite a lot of vigorous involvement. We've even got a Youth Advisory Council now, and they're working.

So I've been pleased by what they're doing, and I hope we can get a lot more people involved in it in my last year here. And

then when I leave, I hope that the new administration will take this up and keep it going, obviously with whatever personnel they choose. But I hope this will become a permanent fixture of the National Government's efforts as well as the council we have within the Federal Government to work on this until the youth violence rate goes way down. There's just tons of work to do.

Yes, go ahead.

Situation in Kosovo

Q. A question, please, about Kosovo. A short while ago, a senior Pentagon official was quoted as saying, we're at ground zero in terms of building a better and more secure society over there. And there have been some instances that suggest U.S. troops are coming in to more danger. How does it appear that this situation will be in the future, more dangerous, less dangerous? What are the stakes for us now?

The President. Well, first, I think that there clearly are still deepseated aversions in the Serbian and Kosovar-Albanian communities for each other. There is a lot of fear, a lot of mistrust, a lot of hatred. There is continuing activity of which we do not approve by some radical elements in the Kosovar-Albanian community. There is some evidence that the Serbs may be trying to work a little mischief in the northern part of Kosovo.

But the main problem is, those people were oppressed for a decade, and then they were all run out of their country. And there is still a lot of bad blood, and it's not going to go away in a year or 2. But I think that the international community did a very good job of sending the soldiers in. But we have to do more. And I've been on the phone quite a lot about this, by the way, in the last, oh, month or so, trying to make sure that all of us get our money there on time and that we get more police there. We've offered more police, and many of the European countries have, as well.

We need more civilian police there, and then we need to make sure that the money flowing to Mr. Kouchner at the U.N. Mission flows in a timely fashion so that people can be paid and that the civil institutions can get up and going. But you know, this takes time.

I remember, when we started in Bosnia, people thought it would never get any better, and it's better. And there's still problems, but it's better. This is not going to be done shortly.

But I would say this: I would urge the Congress to pass both the military and the non-military components of the Kosovo supplemental request, because if we want the Europeans to do their part, and they are—I must say, in the last month or so, they have really geared up the speed with which they are moving their investments into Kosovo—then we're going to have to do our part.

But you know, we have to find ways to get people, first of all, to accept living normal lives, to provide basic protections, and then to get used to, in halting steps, living and working together. And this is not easy, but it can be done. And when I think of the other peace processes in which I have been involved, most of them really take hold after people have lived with the insanity of their previous position so long that they are tired of it; they are bored with it; and they are willing to lay down their hatred and hurt.

And we're still at a point where, in Kosovo, a lot of people are carrying their hatred and hurt around, and a lot of others seek political advantage over it. All I can tell you is I think we did the right thing to go in there and let those people go back home. I think it's better than it would have been if we hadn't gone in there, and I think we are just going to have to work like crazy to try to make it work. I never thought it would be easy, but I do think it's possible.

Yes. Go ahead.

Energy Policy

Q. Mr. President, tomorrow on the Hill, Republicans will accuse you of a failed energy policy when we look at America's continued dependence on foreign oil. Even a Member of the Democratic Senate says that not enough has been done, that we have grown complacent.

And when you look at the popularity of sport utility vehicles in this country, sir, have you done enough, both practically and psychologically, to promote the idea of weaning this country off of fossil fuels?

The President. Well, maybe not. But I've done a lot more than the Congress has. And I think it is ironic that they would say that since, for years now, I have been pleading with them to give us some more tools to promote the development of alternative fuels and to promote both the manufacture and the purchase of energy-saving technologies.

You know, I have talked until I was blue in the face about this for years, and a lot of times it's like you're alone in the forest and no one hears you. I felt like the tree falling in the forest. If no one hears it, did it fall and make a sound? You know, I—maybe we should do more, but maybe now people will be listening more.

Of course, different Members have different takes on it. Some Members think we ought to have more oil production at home, and for some Members, that means we ought to have oil production offshore in places we don't have it now. But if you look at all of our proven reserves, I don't think anyone really believes that we can become more energy independent unless we become more energy efficient and develop more alternative fuels. That is the long-term answer here. And believe me, if the Congress—if any Member of Congress of either party wants to do more on that and is ready to do more than I have done in the past and ready to advocate something beyond what I've advocated in the past, I will be the first person to applaud that person, and I will work with them in any way, shape, or form I can.

I hope very much that this is a little bit of a wakeup call for all of us and that we can put this on the front burner and get some action. And I think—I am like everyone else—after you say something several times and you look like you're not going to make any progress on it, you tend to go on to something where you can make progress. And it was hard to get people interested in it, especially when oil prices dropped to \$12 a barrel. And I think—I hope this has been a sobering experience for the American people and for all of us and that we can now do more. And I'm certainly prepared to do more and prepared to give others the credit for taking the lead. I don't care about that. And what we should—we can do a lot, a lot.

Again, let me just review one or two of the things that I said in the State of the Union, just very briefly. We are reasonably close, I believe—most of the scientists I've talked to think that we're reasonably close to cracking what I would call the fuel-to-biofuel conversion problem. If you, for example, if you want to produce ethanol today, it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make about 8 gallons of ethanol. You wind up a little ahead, but not much.

Scientists believe that if we can unlock the chemical problem that is analogous to cracking the crude oil molecule that made gasoline possible, we can get down to a conversion ratio of 1 gallon of gasoline for 8 gallons of ethanol. If you do that and then we get 80-mile-a-gallon cars, you're looking at 500 miles to the gallon, in effect. So that's important.

I have done everything I can, and the Vice President has taken the lead on this partnership for new generation vehicles, where we've worked quietly, now, for over 7 years to work with the auto companies to develop high mileage vehicles—vehicles that run on electricity that have self-regenerating batteries, so you don't have to pull in every 80 or 90 or 100 miles to recharge them, or dual-fuel-use vehicles that are beginning to come on the market.

Now, on the sports utility vehicles, I think, you know, the American people, they want to drive those vehicles. They like those big vehicles. But if they're going to drive them, we're either going to have to find a way for them to get better mileage or run on alternative fuels over the long run. And I think we will be able to do that.

In the—and let me just give you one other example. I don't want to beat a dead horse, but one of my proposals was to give tax incentives for the manufacturers and to purchasers—for consumers—to buy certain energy-efficient materials. The National Home Builders has worked with HUD and the Energy Department to build lower cost housing for working people on modest incomes in various places that cut the fuel bills by 40 to 60 percent, just by using better insulation, new solar panels that look just like ordinary shingles on roofs, and glass that lets in more light and keeps out more heat and cold.

These things are out there now, and we just need to increase the percentage of people that are using them. If you can afford the right kind of light bulb, which may cost you 2½ times as much, it'll burn 4 or 5 times longer and can save a ton of greenhouse gas emissions just over the life of a big light bulb.

So there are lots of things we can do, but we need to create some markets for doing this. And there hasn't been a lot of interest in it, I think, probably since the high prices of the seventies. But even at modest oil prices, the profits are there if we can just highlight this. So I hope—I will say this: I think I should do more. I hope I can do more. But I'd like their help to do more, as well.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 189th news conference began at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; former President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo Bernard Kouchner; and Representative Richard Gephardt. A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Memorandum on the Continued Commitment to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program

March 29, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Continued Commitment to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program, named for its legislative sponsors, is a Federal initiative that generates employment and training for more than 34,000 people who are blind or who have other significant disabilities. These individuals, working in more than 600 nonprofit agencies associated with the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) or with NISH (a national nonprofit agency that serves persons with a wide

range of disabilities), furnish supplies and services to the Federal Government under the JWOD Program.

In recent years, the JWOD Program has faced numerous challenges as the Federal acquisition system has evolved in ways not envisioned even a decade ago. Today, for example, hundreds of thousands of Federal employees buy goods with purchase cards. Electronic commerce is expanding rapidly and commercial firms deliver goods previously stocked and distributed by Federal agencies. These and other procurement reforms have created a more direct relationship between commercial vendors and their Federal customers. Participants in the JWOD Program are taking steps to adjust to these and other changes in the Federal procurement environment, but the transition is a dynamic and far-reaching process that requires strong support from Government customers.

As I have stated on numerous occasions, the unemployment rate for adults with disabilities is unacceptably high. We cannot afford to lose any opportunities for this segment of our population. I call upon you to recognize the contributions made to the Federal Government by individuals with disabilities under the JWOD Program and to take steps to ensure that your agencies' procurement executives, and other employees who acquire supplies for your agency, purchase JWOD products and services, consistent with existing law. Their support for the JWOD Program will help people with significant disabilities become and remain more independent and productive members of society. It is particularly important to encourage those entrusted with Federal purchase cards to be vigilant in continuing to purchase the reasonably priced products and services (including SKILCRAFT items) supplied through the JWOD Program.

The JWOD Program also provides many recycled content, environmentally preferable, and energy efficient products. The purchase of these items would enable the Federal Government to continue its leadership of the "greening of the government" initiative while invigorating the JWOD Program.

Representatives of the Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Se-

verely Disabled (the Federal entity responsible for the JWOD Program), NIB, or NISH will contact your procurement staff in the near future to explore steps that your agency can take to increase support for the JWOD Program at this critical juncture.

William J. Clinton

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

**Remarks at a Reception for
Representative James E. Clyburn
in Columbia, South Carolina**

March 29, 2000

Well, it's certainly a relief, after this long trip I just took from Washington to India and Bangladesh and Pakistan and Switzerland, to be with such a laid-back crowd tonight. [Laughter] I'll tell you, I don't know how many people said to me tonight, "You must be so tired." If I had been tired, I'd be so pumped after this, I may not sleep for 3 more days. [Laughter] I want to thank you all for the wonderful welcome. I want to thank the young people who performed for us tonight, and I want to thank all of you who brought your children tonight, to remind us of why we're really all here.

I want to say to you, Bishop, Mrs. Adams, I am honored to be here with you. We've been friends a long time, since before I was President, and I've heard you give a lot of talks, and you get better every time you do it. [Laughter] I want to thank the first AME bishop I ever knew, Bishop Fred James, who is out here, my longtime friend. Thank you very much, my good friend.

Dr. Waddell, thank you for having us here at Allen University. I want to say a special word of appreciation to Dick Harpootlian, who—he and Pam, they did have me down here 8 years ago, and I had a wonderful time, and he's been a great chairman of this party. I want to thank Don Fowler for his leadership of the Democratic National Committee, for being here with me tonight.

I thank Bob and Beth Coble. And I'm glad to see that Mayor Riley made it upstate a little tonight. We're glad to see you, too. Thank you. And thank you, Bob, for coming

out to the airport to meet me and always making me feel so welcome in Columbia.

I want to thank some of my old friends who are here: Dwight Drake, whom I've known now more than 20 years; and thank you, McKinley Washington, for being one of my cochairs in 1992 when even my mother wasn't sure I could be elected President.

I want to thank Inez Tenenbaum and Jim Lander for being here, and I want to thank Governor Bob McNair. Thank you for being here. And Governor John West, also my friend of more than 20 years, thank you for being here.

I want to say, I might have been the happiest non-South Carolinian in the entire United States of America when Jim Hodges was elected Governor in 1998. When he filed, Erskine Bowles and his wife, Crandal, told me that he would be elected. And I got so used to Republicans winning down here, I have to admit I was a Doubting Thomas. But they turned out to be right, and it's been good for South Carolina. And he and Rachel have really brought dignity and direction to the Governor's office.

And let me say that I am so delighted to be here for Jim Clyburn. You know, when the Governor was building Jim up, I was sitting there talking to Emily, and she said, "You know, I'm going to have to talk to Jim after this introduction. He might get to believing all that stuff." [Laughter]

I have to tell you that even though he told that golf joke, I still like Jim Clyburn. [Laughter] And I respect him. And I wish all of you could see him operate in Washington, and I say that in a complimentary way. But he has such a good, reassuring way of doing his business.

When the freshman class in 1992—you know, he was elected when I was, so we went there together, but unlike me, he's not term-limited, so he can stay—he goes in 1992, and the freshman class of that year elected him the class president. First thing he did was to propose sharing his term with Representative Eva Clayton from North Carolina, to pay homage to the fact that it was the year of the woman. That's the kind of thing that he does that is genuine and generous and also smart. [Laughter] This guy didn't fall off the truck yesterday. [Laughter].

He's got a way of standing up for what he believes in and still working to build consensus. That's how he became the unanimous choice to head the Congressional Black Caucus. And he's even trying to use his ability to build consensus to resolve this bitter debate over the Confederate flag.

You know, I know everybody expects me to say something about that. I just want to say this: I was, a couple of Sundays ago, I went to Selma, Alabama, for the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. And my mother-in-law said it was the best talk I ever gave. And I told her, it's because I'd been waiting all my life to give it. I was there with John Lewis and Hosea Williams and Mrs. King and Reverend Jackson, and Dick Gregory came back. Hosea Williams got up out of his wheelchair; we walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge together. And I said then all I have to say about this: that as long as the waving symbol of one American's pride is the shameful symbol of another American's pain, we still have bridges to cross in our country, and we'd better go on and get across them.

I very much agree with what Governor Hodges said when he said there is a new South Carolina. And I began to see it when I came here in 1991 and 1992 and in all the times since. I saw it when Jim Clyburn was elected. I saw it when Jim Hodges was elected. I saw it in the dialog you've had on issues of racial and religious tolerance. I see it in the commitment you're made to education. I see it in the ratification of the leadership Jim has given on everything from supporting the vital mission of Historically Black Colleges and Universities to maintaining affirmative action to promoting economic development for all his constituents.

He is one of the sponsors, as he said, of my new markets initiative. It's a simple little idea, really. We've been sitting around thinking about, for months, how can we keep this economic growth going without inflation, number one; and number two, how can we do something to get the benefits of this economic recovery to the people and places that have been left behind?

We may have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, but there's still some people left behind. In my State, and I'll bet you in this State, there are still some counties with

unemployment rates that are twice the national average. In the Mississippi Delta, where I come from, or in the Rio Grande Valley or in some of the inner-city neighborhoods from New York to Los Angeles, there are still people and places that have been left behind.

Jim and I were talking tonight coming in here about the trip we took and how he went with me and we both saw Mount Rushmore for the first time at night when they turn the lights on. It was one of the most breathtaking experiences I think either one of us have ever had. And almost in the shadow of Mount Rushmore, there is the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the home of the Lakota Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent.

So we were thinking, well, guess what? It would be not only good to give people who are dying to work and aren't part of this deal yet a chance to do it, it would not only be the morally right thing to do, it would be good economics, because if you make new businesses and new employees and new taxpayers, at the same time you're making new consumers, it's by definition noninflationary growth.

So our idea with this new markets initiative is pretty simple. It is that we ought to give American investors with money the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia or any other place around the world. So I thank Jim for his leadership there, for the work he's done for the South Carolina Heritage Corridor or the—something that he really believes in that I thought was great.

I signed the bill that he sponsored to protect the airline whistle-blowers. If you ride the airplanes a lot, you'll appreciate that. [Laughter] And he said that Vice President Gore signed the bill—I mean, voted for the bill, cast the tie-breaking vote that passed the '93 Budget Act, which began all this marvelous expansion. That's true. But so did he, because we didn't have a vote to spare in either place, because we couldn't get any Republicans to help us. So thank you, Jim Clyburn, for bringing the America economy back and for sticking with us.

I would like to say a word of greeting to you from three people who aren't here. The first is the best Secretary of Education this country ever had, Dick Riley, who is in China tonight.

The second is Vice President Gore. We were together yesterday when we hosted the President of Egypt. And I used to complain, because he'd get to do things like this. When I was—before, whenever I was running or being President, they've never let me come to State party events. They'd always say, "Well, you know, Al gets to do that." And it really used to steam me. [Laughter] So I told him yesterday, I said, "You know where I'm going tomorrow night? I'm going to South Carolina. Eat your heart out." [Laughter] And he said, "Well, tell them not to forget me." So I did. And you shouldn't. You shouldn't.

And I thank you for the wonderful round of applause you gave to Hillary when the Bishop mentioned that I'm trying to get into the Senate spouses' club. [Laughter] She's in California tonight, and I'm flying back, and we're going to spend tomorrow in New York together. But I'm very proud of her for what she's done as First Lady and for doing what she's doing now, and I thank you for that.

I want to say just a couple of words seriously, and then I'll let you go. You've been patient, and I know you're probably tired. But I don't get to come here very much, and Jim said, "Just give them a whole dose tonight, will you?" I got tickled, you know, when the bishop said—he talked about how mad the Republicans got at me all the time. I was glad he told me why. [Laughter] You know, I always thought I was a pretty nice fellow. I've been sitting around here for 7½ years trying to figure out—he reminded me of the story—you know about the story about this guy's walking along the edge of the Grand Canyon, just an ordinary guy, a good guy, and he—looking over the side, and he slips off. And he's hurtling down to his certain demise. And he looks out on the edge of the Canyon, and he sees this little plant, and he grabs onto it, and it breaks his fall. And he just sighs relief. Then, all of a sudden, the roots of the plant start slowly coming out of the side of the cavern. He looks up in the sky, and he says, "God, why me? I am

a good man. I work hard. I pay my taxes. I take care of my kids. I contribute to my community. I have done everything in the world I'm supposed to do. Why me?" And this thunderous voice comes out of the sky and says, "Son, just something about you I don't like." [Laughter] Well, I've had a few days like that in Washington. [Laughter] But now that the bishop explained it to me, you know, I feel better about it.

And I thank you for what you said about my knowing the lyrics to "Lift Every Voice and Sing." A couple years ago when I was in a—Toni Morrison, the Nobel Prize-winning author, said that I had become America's first black President. [Laughter] And you know, Chris Tucker is making a movie in which he plays the first black President. So he came to the White House, and I sat him down at my desk, and he was feeling pretty good. And I said, "Eat your heart out. You're second." [Laughter] "Toni Morrison told me so."

Then the next week, a man named Miguel Loisel, who is a great friend of mine from Puerto Rico, introduced me, and he said I had a Latino soul. And then I went to Turkey, and I went to see all these earthquake victims, and I picked up this little baby. And the baby squeezed me on my nose real hard, and it was in every newspaper in Turkey—this kid squeezing my nose. And so the headline said that "He's a Turk." [Laughter] And I thought to myself, I'll never be able to go home to Ireland if this keeps up. What am I going to do? [Laughter]

But I want to say a couple of things seriously about that. I think it is so interesting that at this time of unparalleled prosperity and at a time when, because of the nature of the economy we're living in, we can, if we're smart, bring technology and science and wealth to people and places that have never had it before. I was in a little village in India a week ago, a little village in a country where the per capita income is \$450 a year. And in this little village, I met with the city government, representing all the different tribes and castes, women as well as men, in a society that never had such a thing before, people elected governing together.

And then I met with this women's dairy cooperative, and I watched these women,

poor village women in India, every transaction they have now recorded in a computer that they get a receipt from and they can operate. And then I went into the little municipal building in this remote village in India, and I saw they had a computer there with a screen that you could work if you could speak English or Hindi or if you were virtually illiterate because of the way the software was constructed. And I saw a woman come in there who just had a baby. And on this computer, she was able to get all of the kinds of instructions of what she should do with her child the first few months of life, and then she printed it out and took it home with her, stuff that would be unheard of in a society like that just a few years ago.

And all these things that are out there. In the next few years, you'll be able to drive a car that gets 80 miles a gallon. And if we can crack the chemical barrier to converting agricultural products, not just corn, maybe rice hulls, other kinds of waste products, into fuel, you may be able to get the equivalent of 500 miles per gallon of gasoline in no time at all.

We're going to release in the next several weeks the whole sequencing of the human genome, 3 billion elements, 80,000 segments. And within a few years, they will figure out how to prevent older people from getting Alzheimer's, how to cure cancer, how to find it when it's just a few cells, no metastasis.

They'll be able to give young mothers sort of a roadmap of their baby's lives when they leave from the hospital. So if the little baby girl has one of the genes that's a high predictor of breast cancer, they'll be able to say, "Well, if you do these 10 things, you can reduce the risk by two-thirds or more." All these things are going to happen in this very modern world.

When I became President, there were 50 sites—50—on the World Wide Web. Today, there are 50 million—7 years. I've got a cousin in Arkansas that plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia—amazing. And don't you think it's interesting that all over the world, in the face of all this opportunity and all these modern things, that the biggest problems of the world are the oldest problems of human nature? Man, this flag controversy here, you shouldn't be surprised by

how tough this has been. Why are the Catholics and Protestants still fussing in Northern Ireland? Why did the Orthodox Christians run the Albanian Muslims out of Kosovo—a million of them? Why did 800,000 people in Rwanda get killed in a tribal war in 100 days with no guns, practically? They were almost all hacked to death. And I could go on and on and on. Why can't we make peace in the Middle East? Obviously, if they would all quit fighting and figure out how to divide up the land and go to work on economics and education—both the Jews and the Arabs of the Middle East have a history of success in areas that are most rewarded in this economy.

I just came from the Indian subcontinent where India and Pakistan are two of the poorest countries in the world, but they've got to have nuclear weapons and increase their defense budgets by 20 percent so they can argue about Kashmir. And you come to America, we've got 200 ethnic groups in this country and the Indians and the Pakistanis in this country—of the 200 ethnic groups in this country, rank in the top five in education and per capita income. If they could just let it go, there's nothing they couldn't do.

Now, I think the South has got something to teach the rest of the country and to help our country teach the rest of the world. We've got to let this go. And if we can—and I know, you know, you say, "Well, it's easy for you to say, but look, everybody's got a beef in life."

I'll tell you, one of the most meaningful conversations I ever had in my life was with Nelson Mandela, who has been a wonderful friend to me and to Hillary and especially to our daughter. And I remember one time, you know, after I got to know him, I said, "You know, Mr. President, you're a very great man with a great spirit and all that, but you're also a shrewd politician," kind of like what I was saying about Jim. You know, he is a good guy, but the stuff he does makes sense, too. And I said, "That was pretty smart of you to have your jailers come to the Inauguration and all of that, but let me ask you something." I said, "Didn't you really hate them for what they did?" He said, "Oh, yeah, I hated them for a long time." He said, "I stayed alive on hate for 12 years. I broke

rocks every day, and I stayed alive on hate." And he said, "They took a lot away from me. They took me away from my wife, and it subsequently destroyed my marriage. They took me away from seeing my children grow up. They abused me mentally and physically. And one day," he said, "I realized they could take it all except my mind and my heart." He said, "Those things I would have to give to them, and I simply decided not to give them away."

And so—so I said to him, I said, "Well, what about when you were getting out of prison?" I said, "The day you got out of prison in 1990, it was Sunday morning, and I got my daughter up early in the morning, and I took her down to the kitchen, and I turned on the television, and she was just a little girl then, and I sat her up on the kitchen counter. And I said, 'Chelsea, I want you to watch this. This is one of the most important things you'll ever see in your life.'"

And I said, "I watched you walk down that dirt road to freedom." I said, "Now, when you were walking down there, and you realized how long you had been in their prison, didn't you hate them then? Didn't you feel some hatred?" He said, "Yes, I did a little bit." He said, "I felt that." And he said, "Frankly, I was kind of afraid, too, because I hadn't been free in so long."

But he said, "As I felt the anger rising up, I thought to myself, 'They have already had you for 27 years. And if you keep hating them, they'll have you again.' And I said, 'I want to be free. And so I let it go. I let it go.'"

And you know, that's what I tried to tell the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs and the other minorities that I met with in Kosovo recently. I said, "Look, you know, I brought you guys home, but I can't make you behave now that you're here. And you do have a gripe. You've seen murder and slaughter, and you were all uprooted. And then the others, they have their gripes because, in retaliation, things have been done to them." I said, "What you've got to understand is that everybody in life has got a beef, a real one. Some of them are truly horrible, but you've just got to let it go."

Now, what's the point of all this? If God came to me tonight and he said, "I'm not

going to give you 8 years. You've just got one more day and then you've got to check out. And I'm no genie. I'm not giving you three wishes. I'll just give you one." I would not wish for all these programs that I talked about in the State of the Union. I would just wish simply for us to be one America, because if we could work together, the rest of it would take care of itself. It would take care of itself.

And I'll leave you with this thought. When we celebrated, last month, America being in the longest economic expansion in history, I felt very humble. I felt so grateful that what we had done had made a contribution, and it had worked, and that it had been my great good fortune to be President at this time—see 21 million people get jobs and all of that.

And so I got interested in when the last longest expansion in American history was. Do you know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, here's the point I want to make. All the southerners of a certain age can identify with this. Every veteran from the Vietnam war can identify with this. Everybody who opposed the Vietnam war can identify with this.

Nineteen sixty-four, up until that time the most prosperous year in American history, I graduated from high school. My President was Lyndon Johnson. I was heartbroken when President Kennedy was killed, like most Americans were. But Johnson had taken over this country and pulled us together. He was a southerner with a passionate commitment to civil rights. And in 1964, this country had low inflation, high growth, low unemployment.

And everybody thought it was going to go on forever, I'm telling you. We thought, moreover, that the civil rights problems would be solved in the Congress and in the courts, not in the streets. We thought we would win the cold war as a matter of course. And if anybody told you that we would become mired in Vietnam and divided, no one would have believed it—1964—and we were just all kind of relaxed about it.

Two years later, we had riots in the streets. Two years later, I was graduating from college. The day I graduated from college was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed,

and 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for President anymore because this country was split right down the middle over the war in Vietnam. And then our cities started burning after Dr. King was killed. And we had a Presidential election based on what the winner, Mr. Nixon, called the Silent Majority.

Now, that was one of those "us" versus "them" elections. The kind of stuff I saw in the Republican primary down here. You know what the—the Silent Majority means if you're not with them, you're in the loud minority. That's what I was, I was in the loud minority. But it was "us" versus "them."

Now, we southerners are well-schooled in this sort of politics, aren't we? We were raised with it. But the point I want to make to you is, people thought they could just indulge themselves in those few good years in the 1960's. It was going to go on forever. And within 2, 3, 4 years, it was gone. Poof.

So we had our "us" versus "them" election in 1968. Within a few months, the economic recovery was over. And the country went through all those divisive elections, all of that economic turmoil, all that social division.

And look, I want you to listen to this. I'm not going to be President anymore, after this election. I'm telling you this as an American citizen and as a southerner. I have waited 35 years for my country to again be in the position to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we dare not blow this opportunity. We will never have it again.

So I tell you, yes, I want Vice President Gore to be elected, not just for personal reasons but because I know that he backed me on every tough, controversial, momentarily unpopular decision I had to make, because he understands the future and he can lead us there. And we need somebody who understands the future and can lead us there.

This is not a sloganeering election. We can't let people be casual with their votes. We need people who care, who work, who have the kind of intensity about what they do that Jim Clyburn does. I'm telling you, we cannot afford to be relaxed just because times are good. I came of age when times were good, and I saw it go away in the flash of an eye.

I want you all to think about that. I don't want you to be down. I want you to be up. I don't want you to be sober about it. But every grownup in this audience has lived long enough to be able to remember some time in your life when you got in trouble, not because times were tough but because they were going along so well you thought you didn't really have to concentrate or be responsible.

And this country has got the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for the kids in this audience. We need to support people like the people that are bringing the Democratic Party back in South Carolina.

And we need, most important of all, to keep centered and keep in our heart a burning sense of humility and gratitude that America is so blessed at this moment in history that we can rear back and do what we always wanted to do.

This is a moment for making tomorrows, not for just thinking about today. You go out, stick with these folks, and help them make tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. in the John Hurst Gymnasium at the Allen University. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop John Hurst Adams, Seventh Episcopal District, and his wife, Dolly Dresselle Adams, and Bishop Frederick Calhoun James, member, Council of Bishops, African Methodist Episcopal Church; James K. Waddell, president, Allen University; Dick Harpootlian, chair, South Carolina State Democratic Party, and his wife, Pamela; Donald L. Fowler, former national chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Robert D. Coble of Columbia, SC, and his wife, Beth; Mayor Joseph P. Riley of Charleston, SC; Dwight Drake, partner, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, L.L.P. law firm; State Senator McKinley Washington, Jr.; State Superintendent of Education Inez Moore Tenenbaum; State Comptroller General James A. Lander; former Gov. John West, and current Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina and his wife, Rachel; former Chief of Staff to the President Erskine B. Bowles and his wife, Crandal; Emily Clyburn, Representative Clyburn's wife; the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil rights activists Hosea Williams, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and Dick Gregory; President Hosni Mubarak of

Egypt; actor Chris Tucker; and former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in New York City

March 30, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, thank you, Denise. If I come here one more time—[*laughter*—we should allocate part of the property tax assessment to me. I love coming here to this beautiful, beautiful place. I want to thank you, and I want to thank all the people who served us today and provided this wonderful meal. I want to thank the WLF, Laura, Betsy, Sharon, Susan, and Agnes, particularly. I want to thank Judith Hope, who has proved that someone from Arkansas can make it in New York—[*laughter*—which is becoming an increasingly important precedent in my mind. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Mayor Rendell, and thank you Carol Pensky. I was trying to think of what I could possibly say, since most of you have heard me give this speech 100 times. And I was remembering, oh, 12–13 years ago, maybe a little longer—Tina Turner came to Little Rock when she—you know, she went away for a long time, and she was abused in her marriage, and she had a lot of really tough times. And then she made an album after many years of being silent, called “Private Dancer,” which made her a big international star again. So she was taking and making her tours around, and so she came to Arkansas, to this place where we always had concerts. And the guy who ran the place knew that I just loved her. So Hillary was out of town, I remember, and he gave me like eight tickets on the front row, and I took all my pals and sat on the front row.

So she sings all her new songs; everybody goes nuts. At the end, she starts to—the band starts to play “Proud Mary,” which was her first hit. So she comes up to the microphone, and everybody cheers—she backs away. And she comes up again, everybody cheers again, and she said, “You know, I’ve been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it.” [*Laughter*] Anyway—I’ve got to do it. Very instructive, I’ll never forget it.

I want to tell you, we're in this beautiful surrounding—I want you to know where I was last night. Last night, I was in the Bishop John Adams Hall of Allen University, an African Methodist Episcopal college, an AME college in Columbia, South Carolina. That's where I was last night—at a dinner, sponsored by the State Democratic Party, with the new Democratic Governor there; Inez Tenenbaum—some of you may know her; she's the Commissioner of Education now for South Carolina—longtime active in American Jewish colleges, a friend of mine for many, many years, and many others, in honor of the African-American Congressman Jim Clyburn from that district. It was a real picture of a new South, a different place than we have been treated to for the last several years in national politics. It was fascinating.

And I was talking to them about going to Selma a few weeks ago for the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and walking over the Edmund Pettus Bridge with John Lewis and Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory and Coretta Scott King and Jesse Jackson, all the people that were in Selma 35 years ago. And this whole issue of the Confederate flag being on a flagpole in South Carolina was there. And I said, "I can't say anything better to you than when the waving symbol of one American's pride is the shameful symbol of another American's pain, we still have another bridge to cross." And the crowd exploded, and said, "We're going to take that flag off the flagpole." And it really made me feel proud to be an American, proud to be a Democrat, and proud to be a Southerner.

And to see that the old—what we know now about South Carolina, most Americans who aren't from there, is that President Bush went to Bob Jones—I mean, Governor Bush went to Bob Jones University. President Bush went there, too. And President Reagan went there, too. Bob Dole went there, too—and I let him get away with it because I didn't know it. [Laughter] If I had known it, I wouldn't have.

You can't imagine what a big deal this was to a Southerner. Anybody that went through the civil rights revolution was more offended by that, I think, than anything else—because—it's okay. I'm sure there are a lot of—you know, there are good people everywhere.

But if you're going to go there, you should say, "I don't agree with your racial and religious policies."

But what I want you to know is, there's a whole other group of people down there. And they're involved in a struggle, *mano a mano*, with the Republicans for defining the future of that State, and how they define it might have a lot to do with what America looks like in the future. And this is the struggle that's going on throughout the country.

I would also tell you that the second-biggest hand that anything got in the evening was when the Congressman said that he certainly hoped Hillary would be elected to the Senate from New York. And that South Carolina crowd erupted.

I say that to tell you that the reason I love being a member of this party and the reason that I am so grateful that I have had this chance to serve our country, is that we really are, now, the only available national vehicle for the common aspirations of all Americans, people who can come to a wonderful lunch like this; people who serve the lunch that could never afford to come to one, all kinds of people in-between.

And I just want to say, tell you very briefly—because I'm not on the ballot. I'm not running for anything. Most days I'm okay with it. [Laughter] Some days I'm not so sure. [Laughter] But what I thought I would do today is to try to just give you a little ammunition in an organized fashion, based on what's now going on in Washington right now and what certainly will be at issue in this election, about what the differences are, the practical differences and what the evidence is in terms of what works. And I'll start with an interesting thing, particularly—it always amazes me at these events. You could all be at one of their events and get a bigger tax cut. So let's start with their tax policy.

What's our tax policy? Our tax policy is: We've got a surplus; we can afford a modest tax cut as long as it doesn't interfere with our ability to balance the budget, keep paying down the debt, and save Social Security and Medicare, and have enough money to invest in education, health care, and the environment, science and technology, and medical research. And if we've got any—but we can

have one. But we think it ought to be concentrated on increasing the earned-income tax credit, which is what low income working families get so they can support their kids. We think we need a much bigger child care tax credit, and it ought to be refundable, because paying child care costs is still one of the biggest challenges that working families face.

With more and more people living longer, the number of people over 65 slated to double in the next 30 years, and I hope to be one of them—[laughter]—more and more families making the loving but expensive choice to care for their relatives, we want a \$3,000 a year tax credit for long-term care.

We want a tax deduction that will extend all the way to upper middle class people for up to \$10,000 for the costs of college tuition. We have made with our tax credits, effectively, we've made 2 years of college, at least at the community college level, universal in America, one of the major achievements of the Clinton-Gore administration. If this passes, we'll make 4 years of college access universal. It's very important.

So those are the kinds of tax cuts we want. We want to give people who have money big tax breaks if they will invest in the poor areas in America that are not part of our prosperity yet. I believe that you ought to have the same tax incentive to invest in inner-city neighborhoods in New York or Chicago or the Mississippi Delta or Appalachia or the Rio Grande Valley or the Native American reservations where unemployment rates still run as high as 70 percent on some of them—you ought to have the same tax incentives to invest in those areas that we will give you today to invest in Latin America or Africa or Asia—not that I want to take the others away. I just want the same incentives here in our country.

Their tax program, under the guise of marriage penalty relief, is to get rid of the estate tax entirely and have other things that are concentrated overwhelmingly toward upper income people. There's a difference, a real difference. And it says a lot about most of you that you're here, because most of you would benefit more in the short run if you were there with them.

So what does that tell you about the Democrats? When I ran in '92, I said that I had a vision of 21st century America in which every responsible citizen had an opportunity, in which we would be a community of all people and in which we would continue to lead the world for peace and freedom. And I think that we think that way because, basically, we believe everybody counts, that everybody should have a chance, that everybody should have a role to play, and we all do better when we work together. That's what we really believe.

And it matters. You should know, there's a huge, gaping difference on tax policy. Now, am I right or are they right? We've had a lot of tax cuts since I've been President: HOPE scholarship tax credit; we've doubled the earned-income tax credit; we gave a \$500-per-child tax credit; and there was a survey that came out the last day of my trip when I was gone that said that on ordinary Americans, the income tax burden in America, the percentage of income going to income tax—now, that's not Social Security or Medicare, but just income tax—is the lowest it's been in 40 years.

So I think we're right. And I'm not running—I can't make that case. But you can and you must. What about the budget? What's our budget policy? I want us to pay down the debt for the first time since 1835. and I think it's a liberal thing to do, not a conservative thing to do. Why? Because if we do that in a global economy, interest rates will stay down and ordinary people will be able to make their money go further. They'll be able to buy cars. They'll be able to take college loans. They'll be able to buy homes. And we'll have more money available for businesses to borrow at lower interest rates, because the Government won't be doing it, which means more jobs will be created. I think it's the right thing to do.

And I want to also save enough money so that when the baby boomers all retire, we'll be able to preserve Social Security and Medicare, and we'll have enough money to invest in education. We've got—this administration has done more work in more areas in education, I think, than anyone in history. And I've got a big program up there now, designed to help school districts turn around

failing schools or shut them down, to provide after-school programs and other remediation programs to every kid in every troubled school in America, to finish our work of hooking all the schools up to the Internet, to repair 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years, and to build 6,000 new ones. And this is important.

Now, what's their program? Their program is—their nominee, just as recently as last week, has reaffirmed that he supports a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed last year. And I can tell you what will happen if it passed. Here's what will happen. If it passes, we will go back to either running Government deficits, or there will be vast cuts in education, where Governor Bush says a lot of things, virtually endorsed our program in education, to only give out Federal money to the schools if they support what works. The problem is, he can't keep his commitments, because he's for a tax cut that will mean they'll have to cut education. And not just a little bit; I'm talking a lot. They won't have any money to help Social Security and Medicare when the baby boomers retire, but that's okay with them, because they want to privatize both of them. And I think it's a mistake.

They can't support our plan to provide a prescription drug benefit with Medicare, which 60 percent of the people on Medicare need, by the way, not just poor people on Medicare. There are a lot of people who have middle class incomes, who have huge medical bills, that are severely distressed by them. And they cannot get affordable coverage for medicine when they get older.

They can't support our program to let the parents of poor children that are in our children's health program buy into health insurance because they don't have the money, because they're going to give it all away in a tax cut. And we'll still have a deficit. Now, there's a big difference there.

And it's not like we don't have any evidence here. Our economic policies—we have doubled our investment in education; we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And I think the economic performance speaks for itself, the longest expansion in history and 21 million new jobs. So why are

we even having this argument? Because we really have honest differences here.

If you look at other issues—I could just mention two or three more. Our view of the world—I got tickled the other day. I just got back from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh, and I stopped in Switzerland to try to make another effort on the Middle East peace. And I noticed a member of the other party in the Senate was criticizing me for going to India and Pakistan, because I didn't, quote, "get anything for it." That is, they didn't agree to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or to the other efforts that I'm making to try to stop them from building up nuclear weapons.

Well, they didn't. What he didn't point out is that I lost all the leverage I had when the Republican Senate defeated the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I thought, that is real gall. Man, for a guy—*[laughter]*—to stand up and say that, that requires a lot of moxie, you know. *[Laughter]* One of their great strengths is, by the way, they have no guilt and no shame. I mean, they'll say anything. *[Laughter]* You know, you'll never see them blink about it.

But I want to say, there are differences in that. And we do have some things in common. I compliment the Republicans that are trying to help me help Colombia to reduce the drug flow into America and to shore up a brave democratic government's fight there. And the people who are criticizing this, saying it's another Vietnam, are just wrong. We're not sending soldiers there. All we're doing is supporting the police and other efforts to build a civil society and give those farmers some reason to stop growing coca and grow something else. I support—I thank the Republicans who have helped me with the China agreement, because I think it's very important to bring China into the World Trade Organization.

But we have big differences. You know, I want to support the U.N. more; most of them want to support it less. I think we were right to go into Kosovo and save the lives and the livelihoods of a million Muslims. Most of them thought it wasn't worth the trouble, not all of them but most of them.

And so there are real differences here. And the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is the

most stunning one. I mean, I cannot imagine a reason for the United States not to sign on to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty unless you believe that we will be more secure because you think we can always win any arms race, so it's okay if everybody else starts to get in the nuclear business as well. These are differences.

I'll just give you two or three others of these things we're fighting: The Patients' Bill of Rights, about 190 million Americans in these managed care plans. I believe they ought to have access to a Patients' Bill of Rights that's really strong and enforceable. And we're still fighting that. We may get it, but we're not there yet.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage a buck over 2 years. You know, the last time I did it, they said it would wreck the economy. Since then, the economy's grown even faster than it did before we raised the minimum wage. [Laughter] It's not like there's an argument here that has any evidence behind it.

The gun safety legislation—you all know about that. I mean, they asked me in my press conference yesterday what I thought about all these terrible things Charlton Heston is saying about me, and I said, "I still like his movies, and I watch them every chance I get." [Laughter]

But if you look at it—forget about the NRA, here. If you look at this view—should we close the gun show loophole and doing background checks. Well, when I signed the Brady Bill, they all said, "Oh, it was the end of the world as we knew it. The hunters would be bereft, because they would be—their lives would be messed up." Nobody's missed an hour in the deer woods yet, and a half a million people who were felons, fugitives, or stalkers haven't gotten handguns. And gun crime is at a 30-year low in America because of that.

But a lot of them still pick up these guns at urban flea markets and at these gun shows. And the technology is there to do the background check. You know, people thought the assault weapons ban was terrible. But frankly, it's not as effective as it ought to be, because you can still import large capacity ammunition clips and then adapt the guns. And we ought to ban them.

We ought to have child trigger locks. We ought to be investing in safe gun technology so if somebody buys a handgun, you can equip it in a way that you have to show your fingerprints on the gun before it will fire. These things are worth doing. And the difference I have—and the Republicans say, "Well, but you just ought to enforce the existing laws more."

And a lot of you have heard me say this, but I want to hammer this home. It's a big issue. We have enforced the gun laws more than they were before. Prosecutions are up. I've asked for another 1,000 prosecutors and more investigators to enforce the existing gun laws, to get—the surprising number of guns used in crimes come out of just a few dealers. There's something to that. But their position is that guns are the only area of our national life where there should be no prevention.

I said this in the press conference the other day, but I want to say it again: If I gave you the following speech, you would think I was crazy. If I said, "You know, I've been flying on airplanes all my life, and most people who fly on airplanes are really good people. And it's a real pain, especially when you're late and airports are crowded, to have to go through these airport metal detectors. And if you've got a big old buckle or a highly metallic money clip, you may have to go through two or three times. You empty your pockets and everything. And 99.99 percent of the people in those airports are good, honest people. Let's just rip those metal detectors out there, and the next time somebody blows up an airplane, we'll throw the book at them." Now, you think about that. That's the argument, right? But most people believe that you should prevent as many bad things from happening as possible in life. And it's far better to prevent bad things from happening, and then if something does happen bad, then you do what's appropriate.

But these are huge differences. The choice issue is going to be huge. The next President will appoint somewhere between two and four justices in the Supreme Court. And their nominees have said repeatedly that *Roe v. Wade* was a bad decision; he'd like to see it repealed; he'd like to see it changed. And I can tell you, I've seen those guys work up

there. This is—I'll put in a little plug for Hillary—[*laughter*—no matter whether a Republican Senator says he's pro-choice or not, they will make their lives miserable, should they win the White House if they don't back the White House.

And if you can't imagine—I have seen them dance—

[*At this point, a luncheon participant excused herself and said good-bye to the President.*]

The President. Good-bye.

I have seen these things happen where I've had these Republicans come up to me in virtual tears and apologize for the way they were voting on first one thing and then another and just say they had to do it because they didn't want to lose their committee position or they didn't want to lose this, that, or the other thing that was being done.

Now, I don't think we're going to have a Republican President. I think Al Gore's going to be elected. But if you care about this issue, you should work harder for Al Gore and for people in the Senate that would support that position.

Now—and I'll just give you one other example—Ed Rendell was talking about the log cabin Republicans. I know that there have been a lot of people in America who won't support me because of the position I have taken on gay rights. But I have to tell you, I just don't see how you can run a democracy if you say that certain people, no matter how law-abiding they are, no matter how honorable they are, no matter how talented they are, ought to be discriminated against. I just think it's wrong.

I don't think it's really complicated, and I think we ought to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" and the hate crimes bill. And I stood on the tarmac—let me just say this—I stood on the tarmac in Austin, Texas, at the airport and embraced the weeping daughter of James Byrd—who was dragged to death in Texas—who came all the way back from Hawaii to lobby for the hate crimes bill, pleading with the Governor to meet with her. He refused. Finally, he did, because it was a pretty hard case to make, why he wouldn't meet with her. And all he had to do was lift his hand, and they would have had a hate crimes bill. And it

did not pass because they did not want it to pass, because they did not believe that gays and lesbians should be protected by hate crimes legislation.

Now these are facts. And the American people can simply make up their own mind. But what you need to know is: When it comes to taxes, when it comes to the budget, when it comes to these other specific issues, there are huge differences.

And I don't have to condemn them and engage in the kind of politics of personal destruction that others find so helpful. I think most of them are good people who really just disagree with us. I don't think that somebody with a different political view is an evil person. I think our country's really been hurt by all this sort of attempt to believe if you don't destroy your opponent, there's something wrong with you.

I don't believe, by the way, that John McCain is against breast cancer research, either, which was the main thing I heard about in the New York primary. And I might tell you, that program was supported by me. It was in the defense budget. But that was a total misrepresentation of what was going on. It was completely unfair. And that's the most charitable word I can think of to characterize it.

But you need to understand here, I'm not running for anything, but I care a lot about what happens to my country. Yes, I want Al Gore to be President, because he's been the best Vice President in history and because I love him but also, more important, because he understands the future, and he's strong enough and experienced enough and smart enough, and he cares enough about the policy issues, to lead us there.

I'll just leave you with this thought: when we celebrated in February the longest economic expansion in American history, and all my economic advisers came in and said that, and they were all jumping up and down. I said, "Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?" For a long time, it had been the longest peacetime expansion in history. I said, "When was the longest expansion of any kind in American history?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Now, here's what I want to tell you about this. A few of you are around my age, anyway. I graduated from high school in 1964. John Kennedy had just been assassinated. But the country had united behind President Johnson, and I was very proud of him. You know, he was from my neighboring State, passionately committed to civil rights.

And when I finished, in 1964, in high school, every kid my age was full of optimism. Unemployment was low, inflation was low, growth was high. We believed that all the civil rights problems would be solved by the Congress and in the courts, peacefully. We believed we would win the cold war because of America's values. And no one thought that there would ever be any trauma coming out of Vietnam. In other words, we were pretty relaxed about being, then, at the high point of the longest economic expansion in American history. We thought things were just going to take care of themselves.

Now, a year later there was Bloody Sunday in Selma. Two years later, there were riots in the streets. Four years later, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle.

And a few months later, Richard Nixon was elected President on the first of what became a whole series of what I called "us" and "them" campaigns. You remember what his slogan was? He represented the Silent Majority. You remember that? Which meant that those of us who weren't for him were in the loud minority. And it was a very clever slogan for the time.

But this point is: it was "us" versus "them." And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" for a long time ever since. And I have done my best to end that, here and around the world, because I think it is dumb, counter-productive, wrong, and I haven't yet met a person who was genuinely happy demonizing other people.

But I'm telling you this to make this point: I have waited 35 years for my country to be in the position that we now enjoy today. Where we can literally build the future of our dreams for our children, where we can

be a force for good around the world, where we can take on all these challenges.

But what I want you to know is; I have lived long enough to know that the worst thing we can do is take all this for granted, to believe that no matter what we could do, that there are no consequences to this election, there are no consequences to how we behave in our lives and in our communities, that this thing is somehow on automatic, and everything's just going to be hunky-dory. That's what I thought in 1964, and I have waited 35 years for my country to be in this position again.

So if somebody asks you why you came here today, you tell them what I told you and you tell them we don't want to blow this chance. We have fewer crises abroad, fewer crises at home, and a greater opportunity to do right. And we're Democrats, and we need to do it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Denise Rich, Laura Ross, Betsy Cohn, Sharon Patrick, luncheon co-hosts; Susan Patricof, member, national board of directors, Women's Leadership Forum; Agnes Varis, president, Agvar Chemicals, Inc.; Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, and Carol Pensky, national finance cochair, Democratic National Committee; Representative John Lewis; civil rights activists Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.

Remarks at the Selfhelp Austin Street Senior Center in New York City

March 30, 2000

Thank you so much. Well, Linda, based on your speech here, I would say you have a good chance to succeed your mother as an effective senior politician—[laughter]—when your time comes. Didn't she do a good job? I thought she was great.

I want to thank you and your mother and your family for being here. Congressman Anthony Weiner, thank you for welcoming

me to your district, and for the truly outstanding leadership that you have provided to your constituents and to this country. You should be very proud of him. He's done a great job in Washington, DC.

I want to thank Richard Aronson, the CEO of Selfhelp Community Services, for what you do, and for the whole self-help movement, which I believe so strongly in. I'd like to thank Rabbi Skolnik of the Forest Hill Jewish Center for hosting the Selfhelp Austin Street Senior Center. I want to thank my long-time friend, your borough president, Claire Schulman, and all the people from Queens, the officials who are here. Thank you for coming.

I have brought a number of people from the White House. There's a big crowd here. But I brought two people I want to acknowledge. First of all, Tom Freedman, who works with me in the White House, because he's an old friend of Congressman Weiner's, and he lived with him. And whenever the Congressman gets a little too pushy with me, I remind him that I know things about his lost youth. *[Laughter]* So I thank Tom for coming—although I must say, that crack about the busy life of a political spouse is one of the best jokes I've heard on me in a long time. *[Laughter]* I loved that.

And I want to recognize one person who has played a major role for 8 years now in the economic success of this administration. I think, clearly, the most knowledgeable Director of the Office of Management and Budget, member of the President's Cabinet, in the history of that office, a man who got his bar mitzvah in the synagogue upstairs and who had the party here in this very room, Mr. Jack Lew, who's here with me today. Thank you, Jack, wherever you are. Stand up, Jack. When he told me he got his bar mitzvah here, I asked if he were prepared to go through the exercise again today. *[Laughter]* And he said his head was too crowded with my budget numbers.

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly honored to be here, and to be in the presence of Americans who have served our country in so many profoundly important ways. Many of you, well into retirement, continue to serve today, providing the volunteer power that runs this center and doing other things

of immense value to your community. Your energy and your experience are a precious natural resource. They are part of the answer to how we are going to deal with the challenge of Americans living longer lives, to ensure that those lives will also be better and more fulfilling lives.

But there's another thing that I worry about all the time, that you just heard so eloquently discussed by Linda Nadel. I am the oldest of the baby boomers; I was born in 1946. The generation between—of people born between 1946 and 1964 is loosely known as the baby boom generation. We were, until 2 years ago, the largest number of children ever to go through the public schools of America. Only now, for the last 2 years, have we had a larger number of children in our schools.

When we retire, there will only be, at present rates of childbirth and immigration, about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I can tell you, I grew up in a medium sized community where most of my friends were just middle class working people, and most of my childhood friends whom I still know today are middle class working people. And they all worry very much about whether our society is prepared for the retirement of the baby boom generation. And all of us who are parents are worried to death that our retirement might somehow burden our children, and their abilities to raise our grandchildren.

So I came today to talk to you about the challenges that American seniors face today—one of which has already been discussed by Congressman Weiner, which is the challenge of prescription drugs and the fact that it's not covered by Medicare today—and the challenges that America will face when we have even more seniors in the future.

Social Security and Medicare are the foundation of our commitment to seniors and to millions of Americans with disabilities. Fiscal responsibility has been the foundation of my answer to the challenge of the baby boomers' retirement. Seven years ago, when I became President, we had a \$290-billion deficit, our national debt had quadrupled in 12 years, and Medicare was predicted to run out of money in 1999, last year.

We had to make some tough choices. Vice President Gore and I presented the budget to the Congress, and he cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate—one of his good jokes, Congressman, is that whenever Al Gore votes, we win, because he only gets to vote when the vote is tied—[laughter]—and the first budget passed by a single vote in the House.

But it began to turn the country around. We got the deficit coming down. We got interest rates coming down. We got the economy growing again. And now, we've been able to have balanced budgets and surpluses, doubling our investment in education, and still providing needed tax relief to working families.

This strategy was very controversial when we first started it, but it's not so controversial anymore. We've had the first balanced budgets back to back in 42 years, the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, and 21 million new jobs. If we keep going, we'll be able to make our country debt-free in the next dozen years for the first time since 1835.

Now, I want to focus, though, on the specific challenges you face and the specific challenges that we baby boomers face as we move into our senior years. What does all this mean? On that score, remember, again, when I took office, I got a report that said the Medicare Trust Fund was going to be broke in 1999, last year.

But the strong economy has helped. So have a lot of the Medicare reforms and a lot of our antifraud measures. And Medicare and Social Security are now on a path to a sound future. Today the Social Security and Medicare trustees issued the report they issue every year at this time on the financial health of these two vital programs.

But the first thing I'd like to do is to tell you what kind of shape they're in. The Social Security trustees announced that the economy has now added 3 years to the expected life of the Social Security Trust Fund. It is now solvent until 2037 with the present situation.

The Medicare trustees told us that Medicare is in the best shape in a quarter century. Better managed, more efficient, and now solvent until 2023, 24 years longer than the solvency on the day I took office, and I am very pleased by that.

This means that the commitment to fiscal discipline and good Government can make a difference in the lives of families, not only here in Queens but all across our country. Let me just give you a couple of other examples. Just a decade ago, Medicare premiums were increasing at double-digit rates every single year. Today, with better management and with a strong economy, we've been able to slow the rate of growth dramatically, producing a savings of more than \$200 a year in the premiums for a couple over 65.

We're also enabling seniors who are willing and able to work, to do so without losing their Social Security benefit. Last year I asked Congress to work with me to allow our seniors to work without being penalized, and both Houses have now passed that legislation to eliminate the Social Security earnings caps for seniors.

Now that's the good news. But let me say to all of you: While the trustees reports showed that Social Security and Medicare are secure today, we must stay focused on the challenges of the future. In 30 years, the number of Americans on Medicare, the number of Americans over 65, will double. I hope to be one of them. But they will double.

Now, let's face it. This is a high-class problem. This is the kind of problem we have because we're living longer and better lives, because of the miracles of modern medicine, because of the miracles of basic public health, because we're taking better care of ourselves, and that's all very, very good. But we have to prepare for it. And we have to be ready for the challenges we know ahead.

We want all seniors to have access to state-of-the-art medical care. We want all Americans to be able to live out their lives in comfort and dignity, without fear of being a burden to their families.

I'd like to just mention one of the families here with us today: Wichna Szmulewicz and her husband Szymon are Holocaust survivors. Szymon has Parkinson's disease. Wichna takes care of him. Their prescription

drug costs take almost 20 percent of their annual income. This is not right. Wichna does not want a handout, but she doesn't want to be burden to her grown children, and she does need some help. That's what our proposal, that Congressman Weiner and the other members of our caucus support, to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit in Medicare, is all about.

I think we ought to do our part to help these folks and people like them in this room, in this community, and all over this country. We should not consume our surpluses with big, risky tax cuts until we have first used the surplus to strengthen Social Security and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and to invest in our children's future through education, science and technology, and medical research. And we ought to pay this national debt off. I was so pleased to hear you clapping for that. That means we'll have another generation of prosperity with lower interest rates, more growth, higher incomes, and more jobs.

So I have asked the Congress to use every dollar of our Social Security surplus to pay down the debt and use the interest savings from it to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. If we just took the interest savings we'll get from paying down the debt with the Social Security taxes you are paying and we put that interest saving into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could extend the life of Social Security to 2054, beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

It's a simple bill. We're for it. The President is for it. The Vice President is for it. The Congressman is for it. The Democratic candidate for Senator from New York is darn sure for it. [*Laughter*] And if we can just get a little help from our friends on the other side of the aisle, we can extend the life of Social Security to 2054, beyond the life of the baby boom generation, and no baby boomer will have to worry about being a burden to his or her children or grandchildren. That is a wonderful opportunity and a simple thing to do.

The second thing we have is a great opportunity to strengthen and modernize Medicare. You know, if Lyndon Johnson were President today and he were starting Medi-

care again, he would never sign a bill that didn't include prescription drug coverage.

Just think how different medicine is today than it was 35 years ago. Today, often the most cost-effective medical treatment, keeping people out of hospitals, keeping people out of surgery, lengthening life and quality of life, involves prescription drugs. Well, when Medicare was enacted, we didn't have CAT scans or MRI's. We certainly didn't have drugs that lowered cholesterol or fought osteoporosis. Now, not having a prescription drug coverage in Medicare is like paying a mechanic \$4,000 to fix an engine because you wouldn't spend \$25 to get the oil changed and a clean filter.

I simply propose to add a purely voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare. It will make, also, preventive drug screenings more affordable, will have an extra pot for people who have truly catastrophic costs for drugs, if they need insurance for that.

I also want some further changes to make Medicare more efficient. One of the reasons we've got the life of the Fund out as far as we do is that we have a much, much lower error rate—in other words, things being done that shouldn't be done, things being paid for that shouldn't be paid for—than we had 7 years ago. If Congress will work with me, we can get this done this year.

But I cannot tell you how important this is. More than three out of five seniors on Medicare in this country today do not have adequate, affordable prescription drug coverage. And I think it is a great mistake, as some have suggested, to limit this coverage to people at, let's say, 200 percent of the Federal poverty line. For a single widow, that's \$16,000 year. Now, that may seem like enough to live on, unless you have \$300 or \$400 a month in medical bills, for medicine alone, and a lot of people do.

So again, since this is a voluntary program, I believe we should make everyone on Medicare eligible to buy into it. The broader the participation, the more cost-effective it will be. Very often, we've got seniors who either don't have any medical insurance that covers prescription drugs, or if they do, it is very limited. And very often the seniors who have the least money are paying the highest prices

for drugs of anybody in this country, and it is wrong.

Now, we are in good shape now. The life of the Medicare Trust Fund is secure until 2023—I mean 23d of whatever it is, I just forgot. [Laughter] What is it, Jack? Twenty-twenty-three, I got it right. My budget would take it out to 2030. I would like to have a 30-year cushion there. I would like for people to know that it would be there for 30 years. But it would also provide this prescription drug coverage.

Now I can tell you what is going to happen. Your Congressman and I are going to go back to Washington and there will be people to say—oh, mostly on the other side of the political, I would say—“Well we know this is a hot issue, and we’ve got to do something about it. So let’s just provide drug coverage for people up to 150 percent of the poverty line.” It’s not enough. Medicare was intended to benefit all seniors, to help all seniors to keep from being driven into poverty. And this is an insurance program.

We would never, I will say again, we would never, ever think of creating a program if we were starting all over again with Medicare today that did not have a prescription drug component. You know it, and I know it. Since we wouldn’t do that, since the program’s in the best shape it has been in in a generation, since we have the funds to take it out to 30 years of life, let’s add a prescription drug benefit that everybody in this room and everybody in this country who is eligible by age and who needs it can buy to provide the kind of security in health care all American seniors deserve.

I just want to say one other thing, sort of off my script, that a lot of you will remember, and you will identify with this. You only get a few chances in life as a people to do really big, good things, when times are going along so well and the circumstances are there, that you can do this. When Medicare was created, it was during what was up until this time the longest economic expansion in American history. And so the American people felt secure, and they supported their elected Representatives in doing things like beginning to provide national health to our schools and providing Medicare. Now that’s the last time we were able to do something like this.

Now we are in the longest economic expansion in our history. But these things don’t go on forever. And if we can’t do this now, when will we ever do it? If we can’t do the really big, right things now, in Medicare, in continuing to pay our debt off, in improving the education of our children, in providing economic opportunity to the neighborhoods and the rural communities and the other places that have been left behind, when will we ever get around to it?

So I want to ask all of you, whatever your political background, to give us some support to reform Medicare and provide this prescription drug benefit, to lengthen the life of Social Security to 2054, to make sure that the baby boomers’ entire lives are a blessing to this country and not a burden to our children and grandchildren, and to immediately provide the seniors of today the prescription drug coverage that so many millions of them need.

This is an honorable and a good thing to do, but it is a solemn obligation, and we will never have a better chance to do it. And therefore, we have a solemn responsibility to get the job done.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:01 p.m. in the Crystal Room at the senior center in the Borough of Queens. In his remarks, he referred to Linda Nadel, office manager, Services Now for Adult Persons Senior Center, who introduced the President, and her mother. Ruth Freidman, lobbyist for senior issues; and Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik, Forest Hill Jewish Center.

Statement on the Regional Funding Conference for Southeast Europe

March 30, 2000

I want to congratulate the countries of southeast Europe, the Stability Pact, the European Commission, and the World Bank on the success of the Regional Funding Conference for Southeast Europe in Brussels.

Last year we launched the Stability Pact with a common understanding that an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe can only be built when the countries of southeast Europe are integrated with the rest of the continent. For that to happen, the countries

of the region have to accelerate their political and economic reforms, and the donor community needs to support the region's efforts.

I am very pleased by the progress that has been made on both fronts. The Governments of southeast Europe have begun to take steps to implement the reforms they have promised, including those that will improve their investment climate and strengthen the rule of law. And today, the donor community, including the United States, has reaffirmed its support for the region. We have agreed to fund Quick Start Projects ready to begin this year that will improve regional infrastructure, fight corruption, and advance reform. Countries have pledged \$2.3 billion for these projects, out of a broader package of total assistance to southeast Europe in 2000 estimated at over \$6 billion. Over 85 percent of this assistance is being provided by European countries and institutions together with international financial institutions. I congratulate our European partners for their leadership.

The message today from Brussels is clear. A democratic southeast Europe is on the road to a better future. While Serbia was represented at this Conference by the opposition, we look forward to the day when it will be represented by a democratic government.

Statement on House Action on the Supplemental Budget Request

March 30, 2000

I am pleased that the House of Representatives today took action that would meet many of the essential, immediate needs in my supplemental budget request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and providing for our troops in Kosovo.

It is vital that Congress avoid delay in meeting these needs; the costs of delay are great. A delay in Kosovo funding would soon jeopardize our current level of military readiness around the world and our ability to help the people of Kosovo build peace and a bet-

ter future. A delay in support for Colombia's antidrug efforts would signal that Colombia lacks the international support to prevail against drug traffickers. At home, delaying funding for the victims of Hurricane Floyd would leave thousands in temporary housing possibly through their second winter and without funding to replenish the program for home energy assistance. A delay in LIHEAP funds, would leave many Americans, especially the elderly and infirm, vulnerable in the event of an extreme heat wave this summer.

The bill produced by the House today, while meeting essential needs, is also flawed. The House bill is too large—providing unnecessary funding for certain areas while failing to fund areas of the highest importance, including Embassy security for our diplomatic personnel in Kosovo and elsewhere in the region, building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops, and contributing our Nation's share to the U.N. peacekeeping force there. In addition, the House bill fails to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations.

Because the needs in my budget request are essential and immediate, I urge the Senate to turn swiftly to its work on the budget request and to produce a better, right-sized bill, that includes the necessary level of funding for Kosovo and debt relief, and that should pass without delay.

NOTE: In this statement, the President referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City

March 30, 2000

You know what I want to do? I want to tell you this is Michael—birthday. It's also—George, where are you? Is that your name, George? It's his birthday, also, and he came all the way from Alaska to be here. [*Laughter*] So I'm trying to think about what I should do when I leave office, and I think I'll do birthday parties. [*Laughter*] Birthday parties—no, this is good.

John and Margo have been so good to us, and this is going to be such a long, arduous

campaign. and Brian Snyder said to me when Ed Rendell was talking about how we just had this wonderful party here, Brian said, “Well, why don’t you just stand up and suggest to Margo that she just leave the table settings out”—[laughter]—“and we’ll be back several more times.” [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, I’m grateful for your presence here, but I’m particularly grateful to John and Margo for being so good to me and to the Vice President and to the DNC and also to Hillary. It means a lot to me. And their son, I’m grateful to him, because he keeps me in Pokemon cards—[laughter]—which I give to my nephew, which raises my status within our family. Far more important than being President is being able to give your nephew Pokemon cards. So I am profoundly grateful for that as well. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you, this is my speech—see, I made my big speech here. [Laughter] I know that many of you have come to a lot of these; others may be at your first one. But I wanted to tell you that I’m working very hard in this election and not only because I like and admire and am grateful to my Vice President but because I think he understands the future and has the knowledge and experience to lead us there, not only because I want desperately to become a member of the Senate spouses’ club—[laughter]—but because I believe in what we’ve done in the last 7 years.

I didn’t run for President the first time I had a chance to run, because I didn’t think I was ready to run. And I had been Governor for quite a long time in 1988, when the election was open, and it looked like we had a good chance to win, and I almost ran. And I realized that no one should run for President who does not have a very clear idea, not only of what the conditions of the country are and the challenges facing it but of what you would do on the day after the inauguration, across a whole broad range of issues.

All of you, in your own ways, have been quite successful in life or you wouldn’t be here tonight. And one of the things that I always tell people when they ask me about this job is, I say, “Well, I think a lot of folks get in trouble because they forget it is a job.” I mean, it’s a job like other jobs. And the

only difference is, you have to completely define to some extent what it is for you. That is, how you will allocate your time, what you believe the priorities are, and what you intend to do.

So I speak to you tonight as someone who is not on the ballot. For the first time in nearly a quarter century or more, I won’t be an active participant in an election as a candidate. Most days, I’m okay with it. [Laughter] So I’m here—as much as I’m here as President, I’m here as a citizen of this country who desperately loves America, who is grateful for the good fortune that we enjoy at this moment but who has had the unique perspective, I believe, to know a few things about where we are and where we’re going and what’s really at stake here.

So I just want to make a couple of points. Point number one is, there are real differences between these two parties. And they’re not the differences people used to believe existed. One of the things I promised myself when I got elected is, when I left, nobody would ever be able to say that the Democrats were weak on spending, weak on deficits, weak on taxes, weak on defense, weak on crime, weak on welfare, couldn’t be trusted to run the country. Well, you don’t hear anybody even talking about that in this election.

But—so what are the real differences? And I would just like to talk to you about them. And I know you understand it, but I think it’s worth focusing on. First of all, we have real differences on the budget, what we do with your money. We believe that we can afford a tax cut but that it has to be targeted and limited so that there is enough money left to keep paying down the debt, to save Social Security and Medicare when the baby boomers retire, and to continue to invest in what works in education, in science and technology, in health care, in the environment, and the other things we have to go forward with together as a people. That’s what we believe.

They believe that we should have a tax cut bigger than the one I vetoed last year, one which would—frankly, it speaks well of you that you’re here, because all of you would come out better with their deal in the short run. But what would happen is, I mean, I

think—give yourself a few points here for being here. You would all come out better with their deal in the short run. But what would happen is, we would go back to the bad old days of deficits, and then they would have to have big cuts in education, in health care, in the environment, science and technology, a lot of which is powering this economic boom we're in. And in addition to that, they would not have the funds to guarantee that when all the baby boomers retire, we wouldn't impose an unconscionable burden on our children and grandchildren, through the cost of medical care, Medicaid, Social Security.

Now, this is a huge thing. And let me say, I think it's important because it's not like we don't have any evidence. We tried it their way for 12 years, and we had high interest rates, high unemployment, low growth. We quadrupled the debt, and we were in a terrible fix.

Now, we have the longest economic expansion in history, 21 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment and welfare, a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime. So it's not like there's not evidence here, and yet, that is the issue. That is the issue in the Presidential race. That is the issue in the Senate race in New York. That is the issue. Who is right on the economy and the budget? Are they right, or are we right?

To pretend that there are no consequences because things are going well would be the height of folly. It's a huge issue. Now, there are other issues. We have a different view about America's role in the world. We agree on some things, my administration and the Republican leaders; I'll give them credit for that. They're trying to help me pass the bill that would permit China to become a member of the World Trade Organization.

I think it's important to our national security and real important to our economy. And one of the things I want all of you to understand, since you may not have been thinking about it is, we have to lower no tariffs; we have to lower no trade barriers. This entire bill involves our letting China into the WTO in a way that they lower tariffs; they lower trade barriers; they let us sell things like automobiles and automobile parts and have distributorships in China, they didn't used to

do; and we don't have to agree to transfer our technology or put manufacturing plants up there or anything.

It's a one-way street. It's 100 percent in our favor. The only reason they do it is that in turn, they get full membership in the World Trade Organization, which is good for us, because that means if they violate their trade obligations, we have an international body to take it to.

So the Speaker of the House is trying to help me pass a bill that literally could save democracy in Colombia by increasing their capacity to fight the drug traffickers and the guerrillas and reducing their ability to import drugs into this country and helping the farmers to find something besides coca to grow.

But on other areas, we're very different. I think we ought to support the U.N. and get people to share our burdens more than they do. I believe in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and they don't. That's a big issue in the Senate race here, a big issue in the Presidential race. I think it would be folly for us to walk away from arms control after the United States has led the way not just in my administration, but in previous administrations, Republicans and Democrats.

This is a departure for the Republicans. To walk away from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and say we'll just always be able to build bigger, more sophisticated bombs, and instead of just a few countries with nuclear weapons, there turn out to be a few dozen, who cares? I care. And I think it's a big issue. And you ought to care. You shouldn't assume that there will never be another nuclear weapon exploded, no matter what, if instead of a few countries with nuclear weapons, you have a few dozen. So there are big issues here.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage. They don't. I think we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights for the 190 million Americans in a managed care system. And at least so far, they don't. I believe that we ought to pass commonsense gun safety legislation to protect more kids from violence. And I believe we can do it without, in any way, interfering with the rights of sports people and hunters.

But I got asked in my press conference what I thought about all the mean things

Charlton Heston's saying about me. [*Laughter*] And I said I still liked his movies. [*Laughter*] I still liked his movies, and I liked him. You know, he came to the White House a couple of years ago, and I thought he was a delightful man.

I don't care what they say about me. That's part of the cost of doing business and being President, this being attacked by people who disagree with you. This is not about me and the NRA; this is about whether people stay alive or not. This is a big issue—huge issue in the Presidential race.

Their position, the Republican position in Washington is that guns are the only thing in our national life where there should be no prevention; it should all be punishment. Now, if you raised your children on the theory that there should never be any prevention, there should only be punishment, your kids wouldn't turn out so good, even if they had welts across their back from being punished.

Or as I never tire of saying—they always say, “Just enforce the laws on the books. Just punish people when they violate them.” Well, we have increased gun law enforcement over what the previous administrations have done. And in my budget, I've asked for a lot more people to help us enforce the gun laws more strongly. And there's something to be said for that. You would be amazed what a small number of gun dealers are responsible for selling guns to such a large number of criminals. So there's something to be said for enforcement.

But one of the reasons that gun crime is at a 30-year low is that the Brady bill has kept a half a million felon, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. And they were against that as a party. We only had a handful of Republicans supporting us in Washington. And Governor Bush and the Republican congressional leadership, they've been against closing the gun show loophole, against banning the importation of large-scale ammunition clips, which makes a mockery of our law against assault weapons, because you just bring them in, those clips, and then modify the guns. And this has a lot to do with whether your kids are safe.

And again, it's the difference in the way they think than we think. Suppose I said that

I agree with the Republican philosophy we should abandon all prevention and only do punishment. For example, I've been in a lot of airports in my life, and nearly everybody I've ever met is honest in an airport—99.9 percent of the people in airports are perfectly honest. They bear me no ill will, and they're overcrowded anyway, and people are frustrated, and they're often late. And if you walk through one of those metal detectors and you've got a big, heavy money clip or an elaborate belt or something, you're liable to set it off three or four times, and you're angry and frustrated. And I'm just sick of it, and so I just think we ought to take those metal detectors out of the airport. And the next time somebody blows up an airplane, we ought to throw the book at them. [*Laughter*] That's the philosophy.

This is a big deal here. It's a different way of thinking. I do not believe it is necessary to demonize them the way some of us have been demonized in the past and still are. I don't want us to have our counterpart of Richard Viguerie, who represents the hardcore far right and does Mayor Giuliani's fundraising letters. You know, thinks my wife is basically up there with a Communist brigade or something. [*Laughter*]

We don't have to do that. We can talk about the honest differences. But I'm telling you, there are big differences here. And it's not like we don't have any evidence. What they're saying is, “Don't bother me with the evidence. We know where the money is. We know where the votes are. We know where the intensity is. Don't bother me with the evidence.” And to be fair, they just disagree. I'm not willing to let another child die for their theory. I think we ought to have a safer country.

And so—and I think it would be a disaster for us to give up the fiscal responsibility that has brought us this far when we can take this country out of debt in a dozen years for the first time since 1835 and guarantee all the young people another generation of prosperity. And I could give you lots of other examples.

But the point I want to make is: There are big differences, and the record is clear. The evidence is in. And I hope you will share that with people. And I just want to make

one other point, which I try to say at every turn. In February, we had this big celebration of beating the longest economic expansion in history. Now, we've got the longest economic expansion in history, and there was not a war in it, which I'm especially proud of.

So when this happened, being kind of obsessive about American history, I asked my Council of Economic Advisers—we were in there talking about it, and I said, “When was the last longest economic expansion in history?” And they said 1961 to 1969, which many of you in this room remember well and participated in.

Now, I want to tell you something about that, why this election is so important. I graduated from high school in 1964 at the high water mark of that economic expansion. President Kennedy had just been killed, and the country was heartbroken, but we united behind President Johnson. He was wildly popular, won an historic victory in 1964. Inflation was low. Unemployment was low. Growth was high. Optimism was rampant about the ability of Congress and the courts to resolve the civil rights challenge of the country in a peaceful manner. Everybody thought we were going to win the cold war as a result of the superiority of our system, and nobody would have believed that Vietnam would tear the heart out of the country—1964. And so, we all just went merrily along our way.

Now, within a year, there was the terrible incident in Selma, Alabama, at Bloody Sunday, which I just celebrated the 35th anniversary of. Within 2 years, there were riots in our cities and the country began to split apart over Vietnam. Four years later, in 1968, I graduated from college, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for President anymore because the country was split right down the middle over Vietnam.

Then President Nixon won the election on one of those divisive campaigns. He said he represented the Silent Majority, which, by definition, meant that the rest of us were in the loud minority. And so it was one of those things of “us” versus “them.” And that's something the Republican Party was very

good at. They demonized us real well and quite effectively all during the eighties, and they still make a lot of votes making people think that we somehow don't share their values because I'm for things like the hate crimes bill and “Employment Non-Discrimination Act,” and I don't think gay people ought to be bashed if they're good citizens.

But that happened. And then, shortly after that election in early 1969, the longest economic expansion in American history vanished. And we went on to the oil price shocks, the inflation of the seventies, the stagflation of the late eighties, and everything that's happened ever since. What's the point of all this? The point is that I've lived long enough to know nothing lasts forever, nothing can be taken for granted, and I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children.

This is a big election. And you cannot let people believe that this is something that they can approach casually, just because times are good. When times are good, you have to look to the next generation. We can take this country out of debt. We can save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation. We can dramatically reform our schools. We can provide opportunities in areas that haven't participated in this recovery. We can lead the world toward greater peace and freedom, but we cannot do it unless we have leadership who understands the future, has the knowledge and experience to take us there, and is committed to it.

We dare not risk, by our inaction or our cavalier attitudes, blowing what is, I know, the chance of a lifetime. I've worked as hard as I could as President to turn this country around. I am grateful for the chance I've had to serve. But I really think as a country, we should view this as the beginning, not the end, that we've sort of turned this thing around. And now, we have a chance to paint on a canvas our dreams for tomorrow. That's what this whole deal is about.

So if somebody asks you tomorrow why you were here tonight, say, “There's a difference between the parties. I think the last 7 years were right, and the stakes could hardly be higher.” And those of you that are about

my age, you just think about it. We've waited for 35 years, and we need to seize the chance.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:42 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Sherman, president, M.J. Sherman Group; dinner guest George Beirne; dinner hosts John and Margo Catsimatidis and their son, Yianni; Brian Snyder, investor, Biocraft Laboratories; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City
March 30, 2000

Thank you, Mark. Thank you, Jeff. And thank you for coming, all of you.

And I wanted to say a special word of appreciation to all of our musicians here. Thank you for playing tonight. You did such a wonderful job. And I want to thank Luther Vandross. We've never had a conversation about "Evergreen," but I think it's the best love song of the last 25 years. [Laughter] And so I was very happy when he sang it tonight.

I want to thank all of you for coming here. And I will be quite brief, because I want to spend time visiting with you and letting you say whatever you want to say to me, or ask questions, or whatever.

But you know, I'm not running for anything this year. [Laughter] And most days, I'm okay about it. I am campaigning to become a member of the Senate spouses' club, however. [Laughter] And I'm feeling better about that.

But I want to say just a couple things to you, to amplify what my good friend Ed Rendell said. When I came to Washington in January of 1993, our country was, I thought, in quite a bit of trouble. We had high unemployment. We had high interest rates. We had quadrupled the debt of the country in 4 years. We had no real, serious technology policy, no real, serious environmental policy, no real, serious long-term economic policy. We certainly had no health care policy.

And our elections were basically—I thought it almost turned into caricature affairs, where basically for several years, even decades, the Republicans had succeeded in convincing enough Americans that the Democrats were weak on defense, weak on the economy, weak on the budget, weak on welfare, weak on crime, weak on this, that and the other thing. We couldn't be trusted with the White House. And the wheels had to practically come off before any of us could win. And I happened to be standing there when the wheels ran off.

It wasn't quite that simple. But I guess what I would like to say to you is that all of you here in your different ways have been immensely successful, or you wouldn't be here tonight. All of you, also, are capable of looking beyond your immediate self-interest, or you wouldn't be here tonight, because the other guys would give you a bigger tax cut quicker. And yet you're here.

So the first thing I want to say to you is that all these elections are for people to hold jobs. They're not to posture. They're to hold jobs. It matters what your vision of the country is. It matters what your vision of the job is. It matters what you know and how you go about your business and whether you care. In other words, it's a job, the Presidency.

You know, I want Al Gore to be elected because I know him better than anybody in this room and most people in the world. And I think he's a good man, and I know he's a courageous person. And I'm devoted to him, and he's been loyal to me. Yes, that's all true. But I also want him to be elected because I think he understands the future and has not only the ideas but the experience and the work habits to get us there.

This is a job. It's not a place just of rhetorical or political posturing.

And the same thing is true of the Congress. And I go about doing as much work as I can to try to help all these folks raise enough money to be competitive. They're all going to be outspent. You know, our candidate for President is going to be outspent. Hillary's going to be outspent. They're all, no matter how much money we raise, they're all going to be outspent.

But in 1998, we were outspent by \$100 million, and we gained seats in the House

of Representatives in the sixth year of a President's term for the first time since 1822. Why? Because we had ideas, we had a message. People thought we were interested in them, and they thought the Republicans were interested in themselves and playing Washington power games. And it didn't matter that they had more money; all that mattered was, we had enough.

So I thank you for being here. But I hope that in addition to being here, you'll be able to manifest this commitment throughout this year. Because this is a profoundly important election, this millennial election. And there are real differences between us. The differences that we have, from our nominees for President to the nominees for Congress, including the big Senate race here in New York, over the budget alone, should determine the outcome of the election.

We want a tax cut, all right, but we think it ought to be small enough and targeted enough to help families like those who served us tonight and entertained us tonight to raise their kids, provide long-term care for their parents, get a tax deduction for college tuition, afford better child care; induce people like you to invest your money in poor areas in America so everybody can be a part of this economic recovery and still have enough money left over to pay this country out of debt for the first time since 1835; to save Social Security and Medicare when all the baby boomers retire and there will only be two people working for every one person retired; to invest in world-class education and stop investing in things that don't work; to make major commitments to science and technology and to basic research.

So many of you tonight are here because of your achievements in health care or in the information revolution, the telecommunications revolution, or a combination of both. And I think you share my conviction that we need to continue basic research to enable us to build a new energy future for America. This is a huge deal; you know, this global warming is not a canard. It's not a false threat. It's a reality. And the good news is that for the last several years, it is no longer true that you have to put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to grow an economy. In fact, if we were more diligent about

building a different energy future, we'd be generating even more jobs, by far. And I won't bore you with a long wonkish solution why, but if you want to talk about it, I'd be glad to. It is stunning to me, the prospects that we have.

You know, in a few weeks I'll have the privilege of announcing that the sequencing of the human genome has been completed. What this means is that, I think, within 10 years, the practice of medicine will be totally unrecognizable, as we know it. And a lot of you who have been on the forefront of trying to get us to live healthier lifestyles and take more preventive action, it will be a joyous treasure trove of opportunity that will lead to a lengthening of our lives and the quality of life.

So what I'm trying to say to you is, there's big, big opportunities out there. But there are not big guarantees out there. Are we going to continue this economic policy that has brought us to this point and continue to pay our debt down and continue to be responsible, or not? Are we going to invest in education and health care, and science and technology, and a different energy future, or not?

Are we going to assume our responsibilities around the world to try to take the world away from a dangerous future of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Or are we going to agree with the Republican Senate, their Presidential nominee, and their nominee here, that we shouldn't adopt the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a historic abandonment by the Republican Party of their normal bipartisan commitment to disarmament? These are big questions.

So I hope that you will embrace this. You know, a lot of you here who have done very well are younger than I am by a good stretch. So I just want to—I'll close with this story. I try to tell this story every time I have a meeting like this.

We celebrated in February the longest economic expansion in American history—21 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 30-year low in welfare, a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime. And I was happy as a clam.

But I—I always try to study the history of my country, as well as to think about the

future. So I—we had the Council of Economic Advisers in there, and I said, “Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?” And they said, “Mr. President, it was the 1960’s, 1961 to 1969.”

So for those of you who are my age or older, take a walk down memory lane. And for those of you who are younger than me, listen to this. This is a magical moment of opportunity in this country. And most of you are completely immersed in the future and imagining all these possibilities. And so am I.

But when the last longest economic expansion occurred in the 1960’s, I can tell you—I graduated from high school in 1964—we thought it would go on forever. And we thought it was on automatic. We thought—we had low inflation. We had low unemployment. We had high growth. We had a civil rights challenge, but we thought it would be solved in the Congress and the courts, not in the street. We thought we would win the cold war because of our innate and self-evident superiority and never dreamed the country would be divided over Vietnam. We thought it would just happen—1964, when I finished high school.

Within 2 years, there were riots in the streets over civil rights. Within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn’t run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the war in Vietnam.

A couple months later, President Nixon was elected on a campaign of representing the Silent Majority, which means if you weren’t for him, you were in the loud minority, beginning the construct we saw all the way through the 1980’s, right to the ’92 election, to the ’96 election; that you will see in 2000, where the other party tries to divide the American people between “us” versus “them.” And I’m supposed to be one of “them” because I believe things like we shouldn’t discriminate against gay people, if they’re good, God-fearing, taxpaying citizens and they show up and do their duty. I’m for hate crimes legislation. I’m for the employment non-discrimination legislation. So that

makes me one of “them” instead of one of “us”? I don’t think so.

But that was the portrait of what happened between 1964 and 1968. And within 4 months after that, the longest expansion in American history was history.

And what I want you to know, you young people here, is, I have waited for 35 years for my country to have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I am determined to see the politics of America focused on, how can we make the most of the sequencing of the human genome? How can we build a different energy future? How can we bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind? How can we be a force for peace and prosperity and unity in troubled places around the world? How can we build one America? That’s what I think politics is about.

If somebody asks you tomorrow morning why you were here tonight, I hope you’ll give them that answer. This is the best chance you will ever have to build the future of your dreams for your children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Fox and Jeffrey Arnold, dinner co-hosts; musician Luther Vandross; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Proclamation 7284—Cancer Control Month, 2000

March 31, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Since the discovery of the DNA double helix in 1953, we have learned much about the relationship between genetics and cancer, and researchers have begun to isolate and study genes whose alteration and dysfunction may cause the disease. In the last decade, increased understanding of cancer and growing public awareness of its symptoms and risks have helped us to reverse the

upward trend in cancer rates in our Nation. Cancer cases and death rates have declined slightly but steadily in the United States; the 5-year survival rate has improved for all cancers; and 8.4 million Americans are now cancer survivors.

Despite these encouraging trends, this is no time for complacency. Last year alone, more than 1 million people were diagnosed with cancer, and more than 560,000 died from it. And cancer rates are still disproportionately high among certain racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. That is why my Administration remains committed to fighting this deadly disease in every sector of our population. Since 1998, we have boosted investment in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health by an unprecedented \$4.1 billion, including a dramatic increase in funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the primary Federal cancer research agency.

Early detection and preventative treatment remain the best weapons we have in the battle against this disease, and several promising initiatives at the NCI will improve our effectiveness in both areas. The NCI recently issued a "Director's Challenge" to spur research nationwide into defining key genetic changes that mark tumors as malignant or precancerous. This information will improve the way tumors are classified and lay the groundwork for more precise molecular diagnosis. The NCI is also developing and testing molecular markers specific to certain cancers, as well as working on new technologies to improve detection. This research will help doctors to intervene early, with minimally invasive procedures, to prevent the disease from becoming full-blown.

Another powerful weapon in our crusade is information. Better understanding of risk factors can help people make smarter choices—like quitting smoking or undergoing needed cancer screening. The Cancer Information Service (CIS), a free education service provided by the NCI, acts as the public's link to clear and understandable cancer information. I encourage Americans seeking information on the latest cancer research and treatments to call CIS at 1-800-4-CANCER or to access the NCI directly on the Internet at <http://www.cancer.gov>.

Finally, as we intensify our efforts to fight cancer, we must ensure that no American is left behind. The NCI is working to implement cancer control and prevention programs in minority and underserved communities, as well as to increase minority participation in clinical trials and research. As a result of these efforts, nearly 20 percent of the more than 20,000 patients now entering clinical treatment trials are from an ethnic minority group.

Investment in science and technology produced tremendous progress in health care during the last century. In this new century, we must reaffirm our dedication to the research, information sharing, and access to care that will help us ultimately win the fight against cancer.

In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution (52 Stat. 148; 36 U.S.C. 103) requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation declaring April as "Cancer Control Month."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 2000 as Cancer Control Month. I invite the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the appropriate officials of all other areas under the American flag to issue similar proclamations. I also call upon health care professionals, private industry, community groups, insurance and managed care companies, and all other interested organizations and individuals to unite in support of our Nation's determined efforts to control cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 4, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

Memorandum on Census 2000

March 31, 2000

Memorandum for All Federal Government Employees

Subject: Census 2000

We as a Nation are participating now in the largest peacetime mobilization in our history. I refer to Census 2000, the twenty-first census we have conducted in this country.

The decennial census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution, and responding to it is a civic responsibility for everyone living in this country. It is a truly universal activity that we can participate in, and full participation is important to the success and progress of every community.

The data collected will determine how more than \$185 billion annually in public funds are shared fairly among the Nation's communities. The data provide the basis for planning and implementing thousands of laws and programs at every level of Government. The census numbers also are used to decide how many seats each State is allocated in the House of Representatives and to equitably draw voting districts at the State and local level.

Census 2000 is an event that offers us an opportunity to engage the spirit of civic participation that is so important to our representative democracy. The census is important to you and your family. It is important to your community. It is important to our Nation. It is in this spirit that I urge all Federal employees to complete their census forms.

William J. Clinton

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

**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.

March 25

In the morning, the President traveled from Mumbai, India, to Islamabad, Pakistan.

In the afternoon, the President met with President Rafiq Tarar of Pakistan in the President's Office at the Presidential Palace, and later met with 1999 coup leader Gen. Pervez Musharraf in the Conference Room at the Cabinet Secretariat Building.

In the evening, the President traveled to Muscat, Oman, where he met with Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said in the Sultan's Quarters at the Royal Flight Terminal. Later, the President traveled to Geneva, Switzerland.

March 26

In the afternoon, the President met with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria in the meeting room at the Intercontinental Hotel. Prior to and following his meeting with President Asad, the President had telephone conversations with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel.

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

March 27

The President announced his intention to appoint Don Casey as Vice Chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ralph S. Freedman as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

March 28

The White House announced that the President sent the Congress a FY 2000 supplemental request for \$253 million, which includes funding for the Social Security Administration, aviation safety improvements, and summer jobs for low income youth.

March 29

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Columbia, South Carolina, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, New York.

March 30

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward M. Bolen, Geoffrey T.

Crowley, Robert W. Baker, Debbie Branson, Kendall W. Wilson, Robert A. Davis, and Jerome Randolph Babbitt to be members of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jane Lubchenco and Warren M. Washington to be members of the National Science Board.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

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

Submitted March 27

Gregory G. Govan,
of Virginia, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Chief U.S. Delegate to the Joint Consultative Group (new position).

Roger L. Hunt,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice a new position created by Public Law 106-113, approved November 29, 1999.

Beverly B. Martin,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice G. Ernest Tidwell, retired.

Withdrawn March 27

Jose Antonio Perez,
of California, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of California for the term of 4 years, vice Stephen Simpson Gregg, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 1999.

Gail S. Tusan,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia vice, G. Ernest Tidwell, retired, which was sent to the Senate on August 3, 1999.

Submitted March 30

J. Randolph Babbitt,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Robert W. Baker,
of Texas, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Edward M. Bolen,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Debbie D. Branson,
of Texas, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 3 years (new position).

Geoffrey T. Crowley,
of Wisconsin, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 2 years (new position).

Robert A. Davis,
of Washington, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of 2 years (new position).

Kendall W. Wilson,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council for a term of one year (new position).

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 March 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released March 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart on the President's meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Released March 27

Announcement of the nominations for U.S. District Judges for the District of Nevada and the Northern District of Georgia

Statement by the Press Secretary on Peru's April 9 national elections

Released March 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the OPEC oil production decision

Statement by the Press Secretary on the transmittal to Congress of the FY 2000 supplemental appropriations request

Released March 29

Statement of Beth Noland, Counsel to the President, on the Privacy Act and the Executive Office of the President

Released March 30

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy Chris Jennings and on the Social Security Trustees Report

Announcement: White House Special Envoy for the Americas, Buddy MacKay To Attend Inter-American Dialogue Conference in Costa Rica March 31 through April 3

Released March 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert

**Act Approved
by the President**

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