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Federal firearms license, were able to order guns over the Internet for delivery to their home in Montclair, New Jersey. Because they used a forged license, there was no scrutiny, no background check, no questions asked. It was only because of the actions of a suspicious UPS delivery man that this scheme was thwarted.

Unfortunately, the Internet, despite all its benefits, is making it easier for guns to fall into the wrong hands. There are now 4,000 firearm sales-related sites on the Internet, and there are 80 sites where you can actually buy a gun at auction. Clearly, we must do more to ensure that every sale over the Internet is legal and that no one uses the anonymity of cyberspace to evade our Nation's gun laws.

That's why today I'm announcing that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is launching a new website, called EZ CHECK, to prevent criminals and juveniles from using fraudulent licenses to buy firearms. The system, linked to the ATF website, allows licensed gun dealers to quickly verify that licenses presented to them for purchase or shipment of guns are valid. In addition, the ATF is proposing new measures to require gun sellers to verify licenses and report individuals who use invalid ones.

By making it easier to check the validity of gun licenses, we'll make it harder for guns to fall into the wrong hands and give law enforcement and the gun industry a new tool to put a stop to illegal sales.

EZ CHECK is a part of our comprehensive strategy to strengthen gun laws and better enforce those already on the books. In 1993 we passed the Brady law, which has kept more than half a million felons, fugitives, and domestic abusers from buying firearms. In 1994 we passed an historic crime bill, which has funded more than 100,000 additional community police officers around the Nation. The bill also toughened penalties and banned assault weapons.

Meanwhile, gun prosecutions have been rising. Federal firearms prosecutions have increased 16 percent since 1992, and the average sentence has gone up by 2 years. Since this strategy is working, it's quite curious to me that those who argue for more enforcement over new gun safety legislation are, nevertheless, refusing to fund key elements of our $280 million gun enforcement initiative, including funds for an additional 1,000 gun prosecutors. So I ask this Congress, don't just talk about strong enforcement; give us the tools to do the job.

I'm also calling on Congress to help prevent gun crimes from happening in the first place by passing our long-overdue commonsense gun safety measures, requiring background checks at gun shows, mandating child safety locks for handguns, and banning the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips.

We must begin this new century by abandoning the stale debate from the last one about whether it's better to strengthen gun laws or enforce existing ones. The ATF's new EZ CHECK system, combined with our unprecedented enforcement budget and our strong commonsense gun safety proposals, will do both. They'll be a major step forward in our efforts to crack down on gun criminals and save lives.

Our current prosperity gives us the chance to focus on the big challenges of the new century. Making America the safest big country in the world is a challenge big enough to be worthy of our attention and one we must meet for the sake of our future and our children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:34 p.m. on September 22 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Palo Alto

September 23, 2000

First of all, thank you for talking a few seconds longer so I could—[*laughter*]—could almost finish my Indian meal. I want to thank the Doctors Mahal and their children for opening their home. Thank you, Vish. Thank you, Dinesh. Thank you, Joel Hyatt.

You know, for a long time, Joel Hyatt was the first legal entrepreneur in America. He

had this sort of legal services for the masses. He was advertising before it was fashionable. Hillary and I used to look at Joel's ad on television. She said, "You know, he was behind us at Yale Law School, but he's way ahead of us in income." [*Laughter*] So I'm very proud of him and grateful for his service to the party.

I would also like to thank all of those who provided this wonderful meal and the people who served it today. It's really quite a wonderful occasion for me. Back when I was a civilian and had a private life, I used to spend a lot of time in Indian restaurants, starting from—I fell in love with them when I was in England living for 2 years, where most of the impoverished college students like me ate Indian food at least four times a week. [*Laughter*] We figured if we couldn't be full, at least we would be warm, and we loved it. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you for supporting our party, and I want to make just a few brief observations, if I might. First of all, the primary thing I have tried to do as President is to turn the country around and make the systems of our country work so that Americans have the tools and the conditions to make the most of their own lives.

If you look at the Indian-American community in this country, if you look at the phenomenal success just here in Northern California, the industry and enterprise and imagination of people will carry communities and countries a long way if governments aren't getting in the way but instead are offering a hand up. And that's basically what we've tried to do.

I'm very grateful for the partnership that I formed way back in late 1991 with a number of people in Silicon Valley who helped me to adopt good—both macroeconomic policies and to do better by the high-tech community and the information technology revolution in general. And I am very grateful for that.

I also appreciate the kind words many of you said about the opening that my administration and I have made to India and the restoration of harmonious and good relationships which were, as I said at our table, understandably a little out of kilter during the cold war when India had to relate to the Soviet Union because of the tensions between India and China, but for more than a decade now have made absolutely no sense at all. So we are working hard on a partnership that I believe will be one of the most important relationships that the United States has for many, many decades to come.

In a larger sense, your presence here—I met one person who came through the line and said, "I can't believe it. I've been here one month, and I'm meeting the President." [*Laughter*] And I think that is adequate testimony to the increasing importance of mobility and openness in our global society, increasing interconnectedness, and therefore, increasing the importance of networks. Now, some people believe that networks will replace nation-states. I don't believe that, because there will still be plenty of work to be done by both. But I do believe that global networks will become more and more important.

There is a book I've been talking quite a bit about lately that—the author actually wrote me a letter last week and thanked me. But I haven't asked for any royalties or anything. [*Laughter*] The title of the book is "Non Zero," written by a man named Robert Wright, who wrote a fine earlier book called, "The Moral Animal."

But the argument of "Non Zero" is that even when human history seems to be regressing, in the Dark Ages, for example, in the early part of the last millennium, basically, there is a long process of increasing interdependence which has reached its apotheosis in our time; and that the more interdependent people become, the more they are compelled to treat each other in better and better ways, because the more you are interdependent with others, the more your victories require other people to have victories, as well.

So the title is a reference to game theory, but that—in a zero-sum game, in order for one person to win, someone else has to lose. In a non-zero-sum game, in order for one person to win, you have to find a way for others to win as well. And he basically argues that the present stage of economic, political, and social development is the latest and by far the most advanced example of the growth of interdependence.

And that's also, by the way, been at the heart of a lot of what I've tried to do in racial, religious, and ethnic reconciliation. I think the trick is not to get people to give up their identities but to take great pride in their identities, their ethnic and their religious convictions, but to recognize, at least in this lifetime, the ultimate primacy of our common humanity and a way of reaching across divides so—not so that we can give up our differences but so that we can celebrate them and still find a way to work together and move forward.

That's another reason I think that it's very important that you be involved in the political life of your Nation. When Secretary and Mrs. Mineta and I were riding over here, I told him that I believed that it was imperative for the next administration to do more to get Indian-Americans and others who come here from other countries involved not just in the political process but in the governmental process in appointed positions at high levels, in more boards and commissions and more advisory committees, working on more projects, because you really are making the world of the new millennium.

One of the things that I used to say earlier in the year, when our electoral prospects didn't look as good as they do now, when I would assure people that I thought that the Vice President would prevail, is that the question is not whether we're going to change. Anybody in a governmental position who advanced the proposition that things are going so well we shouldn't change, I wouldn't vote for that person.

If there had been a candidate this year running, saying, "Vote for me. Bill Clinton's a great President, and we don't need to change anything," I would vote against that person, because the underlying circumstances of life are changing so much that's not an option.

The real issue is not whether but how. Are we going to change in a way that enables us to take advantage of a unique moment in human history? Are we going to meet the big challenges this country faces? Are we going to continue to successfully integrate all the different groups of immigrants that are coming into our country? Are we going to have a policy with regard to other nations that recognizes that their challenges are our challenges?

We actually had—Vice President Gore and I had some people in the other party making fun of us not very long ago when we said that AIDS was a security challenge. But it is. When you look at democratic African countries with infection rates hovering around 40 percent in their military, when you look at countries we've worked hard to stabilize as free societies that within just a few years will have more people in their sixties than in their thirties, when you look at wars that have been propagated and the children that have been turned into soldiers and what that's doing to the fabric of society and how the epidemic feeds that, we have to have a broader notion of what is in our security interests.

First, it's about more than military; it's about nonmilitary causes, as well. And secondly, it's about a lot of things that have to do with health and education and well-being.

Climate change, if we don't do something about it, will become a national security concern because more and more land will become unarable, and people will fight more and more over that which is. More and more countries will have water supply problems.

We're working very hard to finish up the peace agreement in the Middle East, and one of the things you never hear anybody talk about is the importance of these nations reconciling so that we can meet the coming water challenge in what is perhaps the second most arid part of the world.

So I wanted to be here not only to thank you for what you have done and thank you for what you are doing but to tell you that to me, your support for our administration and for what we're doing in this election season is a stellar example of what I think America needs to be doing more of.

When I ran for President in 1992, I had a more systematic outreach to all sorts of immigrant groups than anyone ever had. And I did it because I believed that you were important to America's place in the world as well as to America's economic growth and social health. I still believe that more strongly.

So I would just like to leave you with this. There are huge differences between the two

parties in America. There are some similarities, and that's good. We've stabilized our country over many years because we've managed to have two parties that could be broadly representative. But in the last decade, as you know, we had a much more stark ideological difference and a challenge that had to be met.

And essentially, our party now is a modern political party with a modern economic philosophy that is pro-growth, pro-high tech, pro-immigration, pro-education, but believes that the most important solutions are community-oriented solutions, the ones where everybody wins.

We believe that everyone deserves a chance, that everyone counts, and that we all do better when we help each other. And when you strip it all away, that really is the fundamental difference here. That explains the difference in our position on a Patients' Bill of Rights and theirs; our position on a drug benefit for seniors who don't have it now and theirs; our position on raising the minimum wage and theirs; our position on tax cuts so that everybody can afford 4 years of college for their children and theirs; a whole range of issues. And thank goodness, the last 8 years have given us some evidence that if you do all this within the framework of fiscal prudence and a sensitivity to the economic opportunity areas of American society, it turns out that good social policy is good economic policy as well.

So I came here, I guess, finally more than anything else, just to say thank you. This is an interesting election for me. It's the first time in 26 years I haven't been a candidate. [*Laughter*] My party has a new leader. My family has a new candidate. [*Laughter*] And I tell everyone who will listen, my new official title is not Commander in Chief but Cheerleader in Chief. [*Laughter*] And I'm enjoying it immensely.

I think that Hillary will be elected in New York if we can keep getting—building her support, and I think that we're going to do very well in these Senate races. I think we'll do very well in the House races. But we have to win the White House, because of the stark differences on economics, the environment, crime, education, health care. On all these issues, there are real differences.

And I hope that if we do win, and I believe we will, that you will intensify your involvement. I hope you'll continue to support the fundraisers, but I want to see more Indian-Americans in the Government, on the boards, on the commissions, coming to us with specific ideas that ought to be broadly spread, because we have only scratched the surface of the public benefits of the information revolution.

And I'll just close with this. I went to Flint, Michigan, a couple of days ago, which was the home of a lot of the early automobile factories. They still have 7, but they only have 35,000 people working in the car plants there as opposed to 90,000 people at their height.

After the Second World War, an enormous number of people, both African-Americans and European-Americans from my home State, couldn't make a living on the farm anymore, and they moved to Flint or to Detroit or to other towns in Michigan where they got jobs in the auto industry, and they became good, middle-class citizens.

So when I ran for President, everybody from my home State, it seemed like, moved to Chicago or Michigan. I won big victories in Illinois and Michigan, and the gentlemen who were running against me never did figure out why. It's because half the people who live there were born in Arkansas—[*laughter*]—because they literally couldn't make a living, so they went up there.

Now, Flint's gone through this enormous economic restructuring, but I went there because they have one of these community computer centers we're setting up, like the ones I saw in the little village of Nayla, for example, in Rajasthan when I was in India. But they have—in Flint—I went there for a specific reason. They had a particular emphasis on the power of the Internet and new software technology to empower the disabled, and we had this great disability rally.

But before, I went through—and I looked at the technology there and saw how people who were deaf could use it, people who were blind could use it, and I also used this laser technology that is fully activated and operated by one's eyes. And it's very important for people who are completely paralyzed or for people who are suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, where eventually, you lose

all momentum, movement in your body except for your eyes.

The people there in Flint, Michigan, every week get an E-mail from a guy with Lou Gehrig's disease in North Carolina who is a friend of mine. And we were friends in the 1980's, and he was a young, handsome, vigorous man. And we worked on education and economic development in the South, and he was tragically stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease. He's had no movement for some time now.

In the next month or two, he will publish a book that he wrote with his eyes, thanks to the Internet. Maybe even more important, he can talk with his wife and children. And I've mastered the technology enough so that I've turned on lights and turned them off, I turned on the tape deck to listen to music and turn it off. And I finally got "good morning" down—[*laughter*]—but I could see how, with a couple of days' effort, particularly if you couldn't move your head, which is the primary thing that throws it out of whack—it was an amazing thing.

Stephen Hawking, the famous British physicist—and a lot of you may have read his books—is a friend of mine. And he has lived longer with Lou Gehrig's disease than any person ever recorded, as far as we know, any person in history. And he has lived longer because he has just this movement in two fingers. But he can operate a machine that has thousands and thousands of words in it, and he's memorized the order of all of them. And he came to the White House and delivered a speech on the future of time and space for Hillary in one of our Millennial Evenings that he wrote himself, put into his machine, and then pulled out with a voice box. And he is alive today because he can share what he can think and feel and know with other people.

So that is the other thing I would like to say about this. I'm glad all this money has been made here. I'm glad that our country has added all this wealth. I hope we can do a better job by bringing these kinds of opportunities to poor areas and poor people who have been left behind in our country and in other countries.

But fundamentally, the wealth itself is not an end. It's a means to an end. And what really matters to people is their life story. Norm and Danny and I were talking about that on the way in. That's one thing I learned as a young boy from my relatives who had no money but were very wise. They said, "Just remember, there is not much difference separating the very successful from people that have had a lot of bad breaks in life. And everybody's got a story. And people should be able to live their story. They should be able to dream and live their story."

And one of the things that I am thrilled about is that this information revolution and what's happening with the Internet has the potential to lift more people more quickly out of poverty, adversity, and disability than any development in all of human history by a good long stretch.

But it will be very important for the United States to lead the way and very important—this is another big difference between the two parties. One of my greatest regrets is that the United States is—we have never succeeded in winning a big debate about what our responsibilities are in the rest of the world and how fulfilling them helps us. If we help a poor country become a middle-class country and a trading partner, it helps us. It's also the morally right thing to do.

So that is another argument, I would hope, for all of you staying very actively involved. We need to imagine what all these technologies can do and all of these new ideas that you're coming up with and all of these new companies you start, what it can do, not simply to pile wealth upon wealth but to do it by continuing to advance society, by continuing to find those non-zero-sum solutions so that we all win.

If we become what we ought to become, if we make the most of this truly magic moment, I'm convinced that it will be in no small measure because people like you played a full part in it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:36 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Anomol and Surjit Mahal; Vish Akella, event chair, who introduced the President; Dinesh Sastry, board member, Democratic Leadership 2000; Joel Hyatt, finance chair, Democratic National Committee; and Secretary Mineta's wife, Danaelia.

Remarks at a Barbecue for Congressional Candidate Mike Honda in San Jose, California

September 23, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, I never, in my wildest dreams, thought I would be introduced by a Japanese-American wearing cowboy boots. [*Laughter*] I mean, you're the walking embodiment of one America right there. [*Laughter*] I love it. Good for you. Look, we've got to have a little fun. It's too nice. You know, we're all having a good time.

I want to thank Jessie and Surinder and the Singh family for welcoming us to their beautiful home, and for so conveniently having such a nice deck so we can all gather. Let's give them all a hand. [*Applause*] That's really great that they had us. Thank you.

I want to thank Secretary Mineta and his wonderful wife for flying out here with me today so he could be here with Mike. You should be very proud of Norm Mineta. He's doing a good job at the Commerce Department; he did a great job for you.

And I want to thank your Representatives who are here. They are some of the best in the Congress, some of the best I've ever seen, and you're very fortunate. I want to thank Anna Eshoo and Zoe Lofgren and Sam Farr. And Paul Pelosi, thank you for coming today. And we look forward to Nancy's continued progress. And I thank Senator Liz Figueroa for coming here. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of you for coming, and I'd like to say, before I get into any substantive remarks, how profoundly grateful I am to the people of this State, and particularly the people of this community for over 8 years now—partnership and friendship and support for me and the Vice President and our administration. Some of you in this audience were here the very first time I came to Silicon Valley a long time ago, and I am very grateful to you.

I am also grateful because this has been my daughter's home for 3 years now. And I wonder if we'll ever get her back from here. [*Laughter*]

I wanted to be here today because I like Mike Honda, and I admire him, and I strongly support him, and because the stakes in this particular race are quite high.

I've done everything I could do in the last 8 years to show that a Democrat could be pro-business and pro-labor, pro-growth and pro-environmental protection, for a high-tech future and the preservation of traditional American values. And that's what I think he represents. And I can't tell you how important I think it is for Mike and so many of our other good candidates here—I'm going to southern California to help some more of them tonight—to win these House races.

I think it's very important that the American people decide what they think this election's about. I've often found in politics that what people think the election's about determines for whom they vote and how it comes out. And if somebody were to say, "Vote for me because I think Bill Clinton's been a great President, and I won't change anything," I'd vote against that person, because the world is changing.

The question is not whether we're going to change, but how we're going to change and whether we're going to use this moment of incredible prosperity and social progress to meet big challenges and seize big opportunities or whether we're going to be sort of distracted and take some of the siren songs that are being sung in this election.

You know, anybody in this audience that's over 30 years old can remember at least once in your life when you made a mistake, not because things were going so poorly but because things were going so well you thought you no longer had to concentrate. If you live long enough, you'll make one of those mistakes. I see a lot of people nodding their heads. [*Laughter*].

It is sometimes more difficult to make a good decision in good times than it is in tough times. I mean, I know the people took a big chance on me in California in 1992. I can only imagine how many people on election day in 1992 walked into the ballot box and said, "Should I really vote for this guy? He's only 46. His opponent says he's only the Governor of a small southern State." I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment, and I still do. [*Laughter*] So people think, "You know, this is a big chance." But now, give me a break. Look at what California was