AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

I also want to recognize the other units who serve here: the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, out of Omaha; the U.S. Air Force Heartland of America Band; the 311th Airlift Flight; the 343d Air Force Recruiting Squadron; and the U.S. Air Force Weather Agency. Would someone please ask them to turn up the heat a little bit? [*Laughter*]

Let me just say one other thing. These last 8 years have been a great honor for me, and it has been a joy to serve. But the one thing that I will leave office feeling more strongly than I did even on the day I took the oath of office, almost 8 years ago, is that the true greatness of America resides not in its leaders but in its citizens. And yes, it's important who wins; and yes, it's important that we all believe that the system is truly democratic and fair. But our system is premised on the hard work, the innovation, the values, and the devotion to freedom of our citizens and especially, of course, those who serve us in uniform.

America is a different and better place than it was 8 years ago. We've had all kinds of economic progress, but a lot of social progress, as well. And I would just like to say to you that as you look ahead in this new century, we will become more and more interdependent on each other and on people beyond our borders. It will become more and more important, therefore, that every person has a chance, that every person carries his or her own load, and that we always remember we do better when we work together.

We have a great future out there, but we've got some challenges. If you look at where we are now compared to where we were 8 years ago, we're here because, as a people, we worked hard; we worked more closely together; we thought about the future; and we decided to pay the price for that future. That's why we're still around here after over 224 years.

So, you stay with it. Stay with it here at Offutt; stay with it here in Nebraska. Keep looking toward tomorrow. And remember that I may have been late, but I sure was glad when I got here.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. on the tarmac. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Gregory H. Power, USAF, Commander, 55th Wing, and Adm. Richard W. Mies, USN, Commander in Chief, United States Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base; Senator-Elect Ben Nelson of Nebraska and his wife, Diane; Secretary of State Scott Moore of Nebraska; Mayor Hal J. Daub of Omaha, NE; and Acting Mayor Bruce Sorenson of Bellevue. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Nebraska 2000 Victory Reception in Omaha, Nebraska

December 8, 2000

Thank you very much. First, let me say to my great friend Vin, to Laurel, thank you for having me here. It took me a little while to get to Nebraska. [*Laughter*]

I was at Offutt, and I told the crowd, I said, one of my, sort of, critics said, "It'll be a cold day when the President comes to Nebraska." [*Laughter*] So I just picked a cold day and showed up. [*Laughter*] And I'm very glad all of you came. And I'm glad that this wonderful home has been opened to us and previously, a few months ago, to Hillary, something for which I'm very grateful. I expect some of you were here that night, and I'm very grateful for that.

I want to say congratulations to Ben and to Diane. It's great news for me. You know, I served with both Ben Nelson and Bob Kerrey when I was a Governor. I had a hard time getting a promotion. I was a Governor for 12 years—[*laughter*]—and I never got bored with it. I'd be happy if I were doing it, still. But we served together, and I was thrilled when Ben genuinely mustered the courage—both of them, together—to run again.

I've been through that deal, where you run for something and it doesn't work out. And then it's all very well—everybody else is telling you run to again, but they don't know how bad it hurts when it doesn't work—[*laughter*]—and the sort of pain threshold you have to cross to gather yourself together again. And they did it, and I really believe he'll be an excellent Senator. And we need people representing our party in Congress who have a sense of compassion and who are

progressive, but who can be trusted to manage the economy, as well.

Because the thing that we have proved, I think, in the last 8 years—and I'm coming to Bob Kerrey on this—is that the most progressive social policy begins with a good economic policy that keeps interest rates down, lets the private sector grow, creates jobs with low unemployment, makes it possible for people to borrow money to start or expand businesses, to pay for college loans or car loans or credit cards or home mortgages.

That's why we've got over two-thirds of the American people in their own homes—over 70 percent in Nebraska—for the first time in the history of the country, because we've had a combination of—we had a good progressive policy on health care, on education. We had a balanced policy on crime. But it started with an economic policy that would work. And when you put it all together, we wound up with more economic progress and social progress than the country has had, certainly, in our lifetime.

So I'm very grateful for that. But in order to do it, you have to have the right balance of people in the Congress and, certainly, representing our party. So I'm glad he's going to Congress—to the Senate, and he's going to have a partner in the new Senator from New York, which I'm also very proud of. [*Laughter*]

Bob Kerrey and I served together a long time ago. We've been together in a lot of places. We were even at the Indianapolis 500 once. You remember that? Nineteen eighty-six or '87, a long time ago. And we've been friends a long time. I had very mixed feelings when he announced that he wanted to retire from the Senate. I was happy for him, because I think he's got a truly exciting opportunity, which I believe will still keep him in the spotlight in national political life, at least I hope it does. I was sorry for the people of Nebraska and sorry for the United States Senate, because the Senate will be a poorer place.

When I was a young man in college, I worked in the United States Senate. And it was a time that was very contentious and quite partisan in some ways. We were having all the civil rights and the Vietnam war battles of the late Johnson years, when I went to work in the Senate. But the Senate was a place where there were 8 or 10 or 15 people that everybody, without regard to their party, respected and thought, you know, these people talk—they weren't carrying the party line. They weren't just trying to hurt somebody. They were standing up there, saying something that they really believed would make America a better place. Even if they didn't agree, no one really believed that they were just motivated by kind of blind partisanship or power grabbing or manipulation. They believed it was right.

And I think Bob Kerrey has been that kind of Senator. He's been willing to disagree with everybody, including me—[*laughter*]—if he thought it was right. But the main thing is, he's kept us debating issues that we ought to be talking about. And the real problem with all this intense partisanship—and by the way, with the exponential cost of campaigns—and what it does to both sides is that it tends to freeze people into yesterday's position, at the very time they should be debating what tomorrow's position ought to be. Well, Bob was always thinking about what tomorrow's position ought to be. And America is always about tomorrow. And that's the last point I want to make.

You know, it's gratifying for me for people to come up and say, oh, I feel like I got a leg in the grave, and people say, "Oh, I'm going to miss you and all this, and thank you for it." [*Laughter*] But it's been an honor to serve. I've loved it. Even the bad days were good. I would do it all again tomorrow in a heartbeat. But what I want to say to you is, the most important thing is that we do the right things, that we have good ideas, good values, work together, do the right thing.

If we hadn't been doing the right things in the last 8 years, I could have given the same speeches, and the results would not be the same. It's not about talking; it's about doing the right thing. So that's another reason I'm glad you're here today. And I want to ask you to keep supporting the direction that our party has taken, generally represented by those of us who are standing up here, because the country desperately needs—and basically even people who don't

know they do, agree with the direction that we've taken in the last 8 years.

About two-thirds of the people support what we're trying to do. They just can't bring themselves to vote for us in an election. [*Laughter*] That's the truth. That's the truth. And so this is very important, because I've worked as hard as I could to get the country turned around. It's been 50 years since we've paid down the debt 3 years in a row. If we keep going—if we keep going, in somewhere between 9 and 12 years, depending on what judgments are made by my successors in the Congress and the White House, America could be out of debt for the first time since 1835. And I can't tell you what that means.

In a global economy where we compete for every dollar with people all over the world and where, so far, we've been doing so much better than everybody else—we keep buying more than we're selling—to pay that debt off guarantees a whole—all these young people here, we'll give them 20 years of lower interest rates, a stronger economy, higher productivity, a whole different future. That's just one example.

So I'm going to try to be a good citizen, and I'm going to try to help work on the things that I worked on as President as a private citizen but to do it in a way that doesn't get under foot of the next President. And I have loved doing this. But the most important thing is that people like you stay active in our party and keep pushing us to be thinking about tomorrow. Just keep pushing us toward the future, keep moving, and keep reaching out like a magnet.

And again, I would like to thank Ben. I would like to thank Bob Kerrey for the 8 years that we have worked together, President and Senator, and the many years of friendship before that. I want to thank Peter Hoagland, who came down from Washington with us today, for the years that we worked together when he was a Congressman from Nebraska.

I want to say to you that the best days of this country are still out here. We've had 8 good years, but if we build on it instead of reverse it, it's just going to get better.

But keep in mind, I will say again: It's more important that the people be pushing toward tomorrow than who has a particular office. As long as we're open to the proposition we have to keep working; and we have to keep working together; everybody counts; everybody deserves a chance; we all do better when we work together. That's what the Democrats believe, and if we keep doing it, we're going to be just fine.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Vinod Gupta and Laurel Gottesman, reception hosts; and Senator-elect Ben Nelson of Nebraska, and his wife, Diane. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Death of Representative Julian C. Dixon

December 8, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Congressman Julian Dixon. Julian was a champion for the people of his district, his State, and our Nation. In his 22 years in the United States Congress, Julian worked tirelessly for his district, served with distinction on the appropriations and intelligence committees, was a powerful advocate for the people of the District of Columbia, and worked hard to make sure that the voices of the less fortunate could always be heard. He was a kind, gentle man who earned the admiration and respect of all who knew him. I saw that recently when we visited a wonderful diner in his district together. I will miss him, and I join all Americans in honoring Julian Dixon for this lifetime of service to his country. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Bettye, his son, Cary, his family and many friends.

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

The President's Radio Address

December 9, 2000

Good morning. Eight years ago this week, I brought together leading minds from all around our country for my first economic summit. The challenge then was immediate and clear: The deficit was $290 billion and rising; 10 million Americans were out of