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TEXT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 13, 1998

PRESS BRIEFING BY
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER SANDY BERGER,

SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE AMERICAS MACK MCLARTY,
UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE CHARLENE BARSHEFSKY

The Briefing Room

3:43 P.M. EDT

MR. RUBIN: Okay. It's a briefing on the President's trip to Santiago by the National Security Adviser, Samuel Berger; the United States Trade Representative, Charlene Barshefsky; and the Counselor to the President and Special Envoy for the Americas, Mack McLarty. Thank you.

MR. BERGER: Thank you, Eric. I'm pleased to be joined by Charlene Barshefsky and Mack McLarty. Together we want to preview for you the President's to Chile this week, both for a state visit and for the Santiago Summit of the Americas.

I'd like to spend a few minutes describing what we hope to accomplish during this trip and how it fits into the President's focus on the Western Hemisphere. I'll also run through the schedule of key events. Mack will speak about the summit in more detail, the road traveled from Miami, and what we'll be focusing on in Santiago. And then Charlene will talk about our vital trade agenda in the Americas and update you on where we are with respect to the free trade area of the Americas.

Let me start, first of all, on the focus that the President has placed on our hemisphere over the past year. The state visit to Chile and the Santiago Summit are the culmination of a yearlong engagement with the Americas, arising from -- originating back, actually, three and a half years ago with the first Summit of the Americas, which the President convened in Miami in 1994. As you know, the President then last year went to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean in May, and in October went to Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina. ◦

The objective of these trips, of these visits is to build upon an extraordinary convergence of our hemisphere around values and interests we share -- in democracy, open market economies, and cooperation against common threats. There has been a quiet revolution in this hemisphere, and the President is determined to build upon it.

As the chart that is not behind me illustrates, but the one that's behind the one that's behind me -- 34 of the 35 nations today in the hemisphere embrace democracy and free markets, as you can see, compared to the time of the '67 and '56 summits. Now, lest you add up the numbers and say that our crack graphics squad cannot add, there obviously have been an additional number of countries in the hemisphere during this period.

Decades of civil war and coups have given way generally

in the hemisphere to peace and stability. Despite the peso crisis in Mexico and the effects of the Asian financial problems, economic reforms in the hemisphere have resulted in the lowest inflation and highest growth in two decades. Forty-two percent of all US exports -- Ross Perot does this somehow easier, I don't know quite how he does it -- forty-two percent of all U.S. exports, \$286 billion go to hemispheric countries in 1997. That represents a 17 percent increase in exports in 1997.

Q From when?

MR. BERGER: From the year before. Versus a 5.6 rise worldwide. And if you look at this chart, you see the extent of our overall exports that go to the western hemisphere. And quite a bit of that is to Latin America, but when you take out Latin America, Canada, and the Caribbean, it's \$308 billion. The result is -- in a sense these two charts capture the two important trends of democratization and economic growth and economic market opening which resulted in the hemisphere being united as never before as we enter the 21st century.

Now, Mack will talk more about the road from Miami to Santiago, but it certainly has been a road that has been marked by a number of concrete realizations of commitments that were made in Miami. In Miami we agreed to expedite ratification of a protocol providing that any state that ceased to become a democracy would be

expelled from the OAS. That was done in October '97. We agreed to initiate a process of regional confidence building. Since then we have established an OAS committee on hemispheric security. On the economic integration side, you can see from these charts, what is happening is not only economic growth but economic integration between us as and the hemisphere and within the hemisphere, within regional groups within the hemisphere.

We talked at the summit about eradicating poverty and trying to combat disease. In 1995, for example, the First Lady launched a measles elimination program. Those cases today have been reduced from 23,000 in 1994 to roughly 2,000 in the hemisphere today. In Miami we agreed to recommend that multilateral development emphasize microenterprises, microlending. The Inter-American Development Bank has adopted a five-year \$500 million strategy to promote microenterprises.

In the area of the environment, there were a number of commitments made in Miami, national action plans to take the lead out of gasoline. In 1996 12 countries had eliminated leaded gas, and by 2001 there will be 20.

Those are simply illustrative of a series of the roughly 100 commitments that were made in Miami and the progress that has been made on most of them.

Now, the people in Latin America have chosen democracy

and open markets, but for democracy and markets to endure they must deliver for their people. That is, their people need to understand that democracy delivers, that democracy works. They need to move beyond the basic building blocks of elections and market economics to the second generation of issues faced by all democracies, but particularly new democracies: education, rule of law, health care, worker rights, press freedom, anti-corruption. And this is precisely what the agenda and the focus of the summit in Santiago will be -- the second-generation issues that these countries face together, and where cooperation can help give democracy deeper roots. And Mack will have more to say about this in a few minutes.

On the economic integration side, the Miami Summit set forth a vision of bringing the Americas together around open markets through a Free Trade of the Americas Agreement by the year 2005. In Santiago the leaders will launch negotiations with timetables and a work plan. They will direct their trade ministers to begin negotiations with the objective of concrete progress by the year 2000. Charlene will talk more about that.

They will establish a mechanism to allow labor, the environment, and other civil groups to contribute to this FTAA process. And they will also pursue commitments to strengthen bank regulation and market oversight to promote stability in financial markets, something that since Miami we have come to learn is far more important.

Now, let me talk a bit about Chile itself, because the first two days of the trip is a state visit to Chile, and it will really give the President an opportunity to spotlight Chile's quite impressive achievements. Chile is a country that has succeeded in achieving both an increase in economic growth and a decrease in its poverty rate. Its annual growth since 1990 has averaged 6.9 percent, while its poverty rate has dropped from 40 percent in 1990 to 23 percent in 1997.

President Frei is committed to providing access to computer networks, for example, for all 1,500 secondary schools and 50 percent of primary schools by the year 2000.

The Chile of today has emerged from the turbulent and dark past that we are all too familiar with to become a vibrant democracy working to ensure that all of its citizens share in the fruits of an open market economy.

Now let me briefly just run through the schedule so you can know where you're going to be at various points. We will leave Wednesday at about 8:30 p.m. and arrive in Santiago at 6:30 a.m. in the morning -- a delightful red-eye, all-night flight.

On Thursday the President will meet with President Frei. They will finalize and then sign a U.S.-Chile communique on which we've been working. They will tour a neighborhood of Santiago and have a roundtable conversation with community leaders, which will

provide an opportunity to discuss Chile's record of economic growth and poverty reduction. And then finally -- not finally, next to finally -- the President will address business leaders, which together with the event in a poor neighborhood, will provide I think the two sides of the coin that we've talked about so much; that is, economic growth to provide opportunity, a social safety net in order to make sure that that opportunity is spread widely. And then that evening there will be a state dinner.

On Friday we will helicopter to Valparaiso, where the President will address a joint session of the Congress, in which he undoubtedly will highlight Chile's success in reclaiming its democracy and spreading the benefits of its prosperity to more of its people. We'll tour a rural area near Valparaiso, and return to Santiago.

Saturday begins the summit. In the morning most of the events will take place in the Sheraton Hotel. In the opening session the President and President Frei will make opening remarks which will be open to the press. Then they will have sessions during the day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., three discussions: one on democracy, one on education, one on poverty alleviation. And then that evening there will be a summit gala for leaders and spouses.

And then on Sunday the summit resumes at 9:00 a.m. at the Sheraton. There will be two leader discussion sessions, one on trade, and the final one, which really has no specific agenda will be

essentially an open-ended discussion. At about 12:30 the summit will conclude at the former Congress building with statements from several leaders, including President Clinton, President Frei, Prime Minister Chretien, since Canada is likely to be the host of the next Summit of the Americas.

The President will then go speak to the staff and families at the embassy, as he always does when he travels. And we will depart for Washington about 3:45 p.m. and a mere 10 hours later we will be back in Washington.

Let me ask Charlene and then Mack to speak and then we'll take -- Mack, then Charlene.

MR. MCLARTY: Sandy, thank you. The President and our administration has had a policy of sustained engagement and the intense Presidential focus that was noted in Sandy's comments for the past several years, in fact, beginning from the first days of the administration.

We are well aware, the President is acutely aware, of our history in the region from time to time, which has been marked by intervention or neglect. I think he is also keenly aware of this quiet revolution that Sandy noted, a profound change, in many ways as profound as the fall of the Berlin Wall. We have both, from time to time, used the phrase "this is not your father's Latin America," which is, I think, a good way of describing some of the changes --

remarkable changes of 34 out of 35 countries are now democratic. In Central America we don't have the United States and the Soviet Union in a Cold War battlefield or civil wars there. And in fact the export market for U.S. goods in Central America is larger than all of the former Soviet states put together.

The real story from an economic standpoint has been the taming of hyperinflation, which, of course, was the cruelest burden to those below the poverty line. Some example of that is Argentina in 1989 had an inflation rate of 5,000 percent; today it's .3 percent with a 7 percent annualized growth rate. As the minister of finance told us in Brazil when we traveled there, our inflation rate, Mr. President, is 5 percent; the difference is, that is an annual figure not a weekly one. So a remarkable economic change.

In terms of the sustained engagement, our goal is to create what we have phrased as a Greater Americas, based on mutual trust, respect, and reward. And we have certainly discussed with the American people about our views regarding Latin America. After all, we are the fifth largest Hispanic nation in the world, the United States, and in turn, to sharpen and improve their views of us.

Sandy has already noted the first-term record of the convening of the summit -- restoring peace in Guatemala, as friends of that process; restoring democracy in Haiti; the support of the Mexico peso crisis; and the passage of the NAFTA; as well as the two presidential trips to the region, including two summits with the

Central American leaders and the Caribbean leaders.

The Vice President has traveled to the region five times, emphasizing economic growth and environmental stewardship. The First Lady has traveled to the region four times, emphasizing issues of health care, poverty, and including all aspects of women's inclusion in society as well as indigenous people.

Now, the Miami Summit affirmed what is called the first generation of reform, which are free and fair elections, stable and open economies. And I think it's fair to say an architecture was put in place to further that progress, and one of the centerpieces -- not the only, but one of the centerpieces was the Free Trade Area of the Americas by the year 2005.

We have made real progress on that road from Miami to the promise of Santiago, but the key point here is that progress is not assured and not guaranteed. It is critical in my view, as someone from the private sector, to have a second generation of reform in order to sustain the first generation, the macroeconomic reform.

I think most of us would agree the bright line between foreign policy and domestic policy has blurred. You'll see that at this summit. From a U.S. perspective, whether it's jobs, the economy, energy prices, gasoline prices with summer vacations coming

up, education, fighting the drug trade, alleviating poverty, or protecting the air we breathe, the issues we will discuss at this summit are the issues that affect our citizens and families here at home. They are issues that our people care about and care about deeply.

The summit agenda will very much follow the Miami agenda: first, strengthening our respective democracies; secondly, trade and economics, including financial coordination, which I think should be emphasized and highlights; thirdly, addressing poverty; and fourth, of course, emphasizing education. We'll certainly try to marshal resources, particularly where we have leverage in the multilateral organizations -- the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization -- particularly focusing those resources on education.

I think in terms of education the emphasis to strengthen the resources devoted in Latin America to primary and secondary education is particularly important to strengthen their democracies and their economies. There are clearly dramatic changes in terms of distance learning taking place throughout the hemisphere and indeed the world and our own country. And some of the same issues, including resources, teachers in the classroom, size of the classroom, and so forth, will be very much discussed at the summit.

I think it's a fair question to ask, how is improving education in Latin America going to help people here in the United States? I think the answer is, good schools make good neighbors.

Education advances our economic and security interest in the region.

First, it expands the middle class that buys U.S. goods and services that are noted on this chart. Secondly, it reduces the opportunity to buy or sell illegal drugs to be part of that undercurrent and undertow. It reduces illegal immigration by encouraging people to stay at home with their families, and it makes for more stable democracies, and with partners who are ready and willing and able, as they have demonstrated, to stand by us not only in the hemisphere, but in terms of our peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and our efforts in the Persian Gulf.

You have a number of presidents who have spent a number of years devoting their efforts to education, including President Clinton. President Cardoso has been a lifelong teacher and academician, as has his wife; President Zedillo a former Minister of Education; President Frei, President Figueres and others have talked about and been dedicated to educational reform for at least a decade, if not longer.

I think all of us would agree in this global economy, which Ambassador Barshefsky will talk about, the key to inclusive growth both here in this hemisphere and worldwide, is education. And in many ways I think that will be the legacy of this summit.

In terms of democracy, I think we will see an emphasis on broader democratic participation, certainly the strengthening of the judicial system in Latin America -- a fair, open professional

judiciary is key to any modern contemporary working democracy.

Attorney General Reno, Justice Breyer have worked very diligently on this effort.

Press freedom -- something important specifically to all of you in this room, is an issue we have pushed, encouraged, and the President raised it when he went to Argentina on our last trip, and the hemisphere embraced it. And through the inter-American human rights part of the OAS, no new bureaucracy, we will establish, I think, at this summit a special rapporteur to advocate for freedom of expression.

Now, that may be perhaps even more important than just the fundamental tenant of freedom of expression, because over the past 10 years 200 journalists have been killed in Latin America and some in the United States in pursuit of a story, doing their job professionally and responsibly. And I think this effort will clearly help address these crimes of impunity.

I think, finally, corruption is certainly a very important issue in the hemisphere. The hemisphere is leading the way with the signing of the Corruption Convention over a year ago, and that measure, as I think was announced here, has been sent to our Congress for ratification.

The region clearly still has too much poverty -- over 150 million below the poverty line, despite the progress that Sandy

noted. And these targeted issues, while they can be viewed as rather mundane, are critical for including everyone in an open-market democracy in terms of microcredit to small business -- which I certainly can identify with coming from a small business, a family-owned business -- land titling; and certainly women's issues and inclusion in the economy and the democracy.

In terms of the economic issues, Charlene will speak to the trade issues specifically. I'd just like to note a couple of things very briefly. First of all, we should look at not only trade, economic integration, which is obviously occurring in a rather dramatic way, but we should look also at investment and we should look at financial coordination, that is. the stability of the banking system and the financial markets. We've seen what can happen seriously in Mexico, in this hemisphere, when that does not take place in the right way, and certainly in Asia. And I think Latin America in many ways has become a model to emulate there, as opposed to avoid, and has shown a remarkable resilience in the face of Asia contagion because they've had the capacity and the will to act in relatively modern financial systems.

In terms of energy on the economy, three of our four top energy suppliers are from this hemisphere. And I think all of us understand the relation to energy prices, inflation, and our overall economy.

In terms of the FTAA launch, there is a true consensus

we'll have a comprehensive and a credible launch, and that should not be taken for granted and it should not be minimized. The importance of it I think is very clear, with 40 percent of our exports going to this hemisphere, with our exports growing twice the rate to this hemisphere as any other region in the world.

One fact, as a business person, about half of the population in Latin America is under 21 years of age. So if you project that market potential out in a natural market, the numbers obviously become very compelling and very important. We export more to Brazil than we do to China, more to Chile where we are visiting than we do to India.

In terms of the summit process, I think the region has found its voice on the world stage. We have a much more mature dialogue in the region than in any times, I think, in the past. I think it is time to put our consultations on a more regular basis and I think this Santiago summit will accomplish that. We'll schedule the next time and place for the next summit meeting. I think the agenda has been one reached by consensus and I think, in that regard, we have a common agenda. The issues that we address in Santiago are issues that matter to the American people and to the people throughout the Americas.

I think the real opportunity of Santiago is to change the very shape and nature of the character of our relationship in the

hemisphere, and to have truly a foundation for both security and prosperity as we move toward the 21st century.

AMBASSADOR BARSHEFSKY: I'll try and be brief. We've talked about the political declaration that the leaders made in 1994 at Miami, that there should be a free trade area of the Americas. As important as that political declaration was in 1994, the formal launch of these negotiations following three and a half years of preparatory work, ensures the realization of the Miami vision. There will be a free trade area of the Americas. A comprehensive launch will be initiated in Santiago, along with all that that implies.

And let me tell you what has been agreed. First off, the entire negotiating structure from here to 2005 has been agreed. The first three years of the process will be hosted by Miami. The final two and a half years of the process will be co-chaired by the United States and Brazil. We in the United States were very concerned about this launch that is in the start and the conclusion, because there are two parts of a negotiation that matter, and only two: the setup in the beginning, and the end.

The middle will always go as the middle goes -- up and down, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, the trajectory is usually positive. But the setup is very, very important, and that's Miami. And the conclusion, by co-chairing with our other major hemispheric partner, ensures that we will indeed conclude the agreement on time.

We have also agreed on concrete progress by 2000. I think this will largely be reflected in the negotiation and adoption of a series of business facilitation measures. Let me give you some illustrative examples of what that might encompass: customs, meaning customs coordination, meaning paperless entry with respect to customs; a series of provisions related to government procurement and transparency in government procurement -- there is very little transparency of the process in our hemisphere now; services trade, I think we'll see some progress there of a very concrete nature. I also think we'll see some progress with respect to telecommunications trade and some other areas.

We have also for the first time established a committee within the FTAA itself to receive the views of labor, environmental NGOs, and other groups who obviously have a stake in the outcome of the process. The setting up of this committee is really rather a milestone in the history of the FTAA thus far. Our hemisphere has been reluctant to establish a committee within the FTAA to listen to the views of civil society broadly and to take those views into account in the course of the negotiation.

This year there has been rather -- I should say over the last several years -- there has been rather a change of attitude, and I think a growing recognition in our hemisphere that people -- all segments of society -- need to feel empowered by this process of hemispheric integration, not disempowered by it. And so we have for the first time now established a committee within the FTAA to be

chaired by the ministers themselves, that is to say, by those most responsible directly to their political constituencies, to take into account these views and to translate these views, where appropriate, into negotiating objectives.

In addition to, as Mack said, a credible launch, the launch will be very comprehensive, covering all areas of trade and covering areas of trade we can project into the future -- so global electronic commerce now figures prominently on the agenda, as it should, since Internet usage in our hemisphere has the highest rate of usage, the highest growth rate in the world, including in Asia, interesting.

Economically, as you know, the markets of Latin America are the most dynamic, and the most dynamic export markets for us. And let me just add for your use a couple of extra numbers. As Sandy Berger said, in 1997, our exports for Latin America and the Caribbean grew more than three times as fast as our exports to the rest of the world. During the second half of 1997, we exported more to our hemisphere than to the entirety of the European Union.

In 1997, Mexico surpassed Japan as our second largest trading partner. Think about that a minute. Mexico has an economy one-twelfth the size of Japan. We sell more to Mexico than we do to Japan, and they have now surpassed Japan as our second largest trading partner.

And last, our export increases to the Western Hemisphere accounted for 63 percent of our export growth worldwide in 1997. That is to say, 63 percent of the growth in our exports globally stayed in our hemisphere, went to our hemisphere. And much of that is accounted for indeed by Canada and Mexico.

Let me just say in closing that because of the economic transformation in Latin America, including, as Mack pointed out, reigning in hyperinflation, you have 500 million consumers, a burgeoning middle class, and extraordinary opportunity for American exports. And this is exports in all of the categories that we see, and in all of these categories we've experienced substantial growth already -- and that is in goods, in services, in agriculture as well.

You also have a wave of privatization in our hemisphere, and as we look at areas like power generation, energy, telecommunications, the United States is well poised to capture those opportunities as well. And this range of opportunity will be enhanced substantially as Latin American barriers come down. Their tariff barriers alone average four times what ours are to their products, and non-tariff barriers in Latin America remain a persistent problem. So we see a substantial expansion of opportunity for the United States as we pursue the FTAA.

And by opportunity, of course, I mean U.S. jobs, because that's what the bottom line is here from our point of view. We already have an economy in which, of new jobs created, one in five

depend on exports. One in five new jobs are in manufacturing and dependent on exports. And we know that exports pay on average 15 percent more than non-export related jobs.

Our future in terms of increasing U.S. economic growth is in exports; it is in opening markets abroad where the other 96 percent of the world's population lives, and most particularly, in our hemisphere, which we ought to view as our neighborhood. We need to remain well-positioned to capture that opportunity, and that is what the FTAA will do.

MR. BERGER: Questions. Have we worn you down?

Q -- have you been able to convince the labor unions that this is such a good thing for them?

MR. BERGER: We will obviously be consulting as we go along in these negotiations with labor and business, with Congress and all other affected segments of society, to convey what I think is clear, and that is that the future of America's economic growth and a greater production of jobs is going to come in greater trade.

Q How far can you negotiate until you need fast track? How many months or years until you absolutely --

MR. BERGER: Let me answer and then I'll ask Charlene to

answer. We launched the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations -- in Uruguay, by the way -- (laughter) -- without fast track authority, and did not have fast track authority for over two years in those negotiations. Obviously, as we come to the conclusion -- or before we get to the conclusion of these negotiations, that is something that we will need to have, and it's something the President is deeply committed to obtain, and we will continue to work towards that objective. But I don't think it is necessary for the launch of these negotiations.

Charlene.

AMBASSADOR BARSHEFSKY: Yes, if I might say, I think the fast track question points up to a kind of split dynamic that's occurring in our hemisphere. The launch of these negotiations is as well positioned as it could possibly be. That's with or without fast track. We have precisely the launch, the scope, the U.S. at the center of it, that we want it to have, and that we would have had whether we had fast track now or not.

But what you see in our hemisphere, on the other hand, is an acceleration in sub-regional integration -- that is, in countries integrating with each other around the United States, not with the United States. And so you see an acceleration of ties between Mercosur -- that is, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay -- and the Central American countries. An acceleration of the ties between Mercosur and the Andeans; an acceleration between Canada and

Chile; between Chile and certain of the Central Americans; or between Chile and Mexico; Mexico and Mercosur; the EU and Mercosur; Asia and Mexico.

That acceleration has occurred, I believe, because countries see a potential window of opportunity that they might not have envisioned had the U.S. had fast track right now. That's not from our point of view an overly positive development. We don't object to these sub-regional arrangements, obviously, where they expand trade, as most tend to do. But we do want to ensure that the United States remains at the center, as the center of a constellation of trading relationships. The FTAA launch helps us reassert that central role, but the acceleration of sub-regional integration is something I think we have to look at very carefully.

Q When do you need to have fast track, though? The launch is next week, but obviously, you're going to need -- and it looks now like the administration is not going to even push again until next year.

AMBASSADOR BARSHEFSKY: We have said all along that the timing of fast track depends on two things -- one is the substance, and the second is the chemistry, both of which we continue to consult with Congress on. And, as Sandy has said, fast track remains a priority for this administration.

Q -- going to be embarrassing, really, because this

was the goal, wasn't it -- to have Chile on board for a NAFTA thing?

It sounds like everything you've said is a rationale of trying to get around the fact that you failed in --

MR. BERGER: I'll say a couple of things, Helen. First of all, what we set out to do in Miami in 1994 was to launch a free trade area for the Americas, a negotiation at this summit; we're going to do that. And those negotiations will proceed vigorously.

There is, in addition to that, obviously more to this summit, as there was more to Miami, than trade. And I think one of the things that I've talked about, Mack has talked about, are the other issues that increasingly are important to the quality of democracy and the quality of society in these countries. Obviously, to take full advantage of the growth in this hemisphere and to reach fruition in a free trade agreement we will need to have fast track authority. But I believe we will have it.

MR. MCLARTY: Sandy, let me just reenforce a couple of points there. First of all, I think the Miami summit, it should be restated -- if the centerpiece, as many suggested, was the establishment of the FTAA with Chile having a comprehensive trade agreement, the heart of the Miami summit was democracy -- the 34 countries that had moved toward democracy; indeed, established political liberty and democracy. And they are two sides of the same coin.

Secondly, I think we should keep agreements in perspective. What is driving this process and these numbers are not trade agreements. What is driving this process is the interconnective global economy and the private sector, both businesses large and small, and ultimately the consumers' knowledge of and desire for lower priced, competitively priced goods and services.

So I think Helen, had the President and the administration -- and I have heard this on my some 40 or so trips to Latin America -- not made a concerted effort to achieve fast track, then I think you would have some concerns and problems. I think it is well recognized in these democratically elected governments that, as we discussed earlier, our batting average on legislation and trade legislation is very good. They have their own Congresses, and they're not always successful in a perfectly straight line either.

So I think what is important is to move forward with momentum on this agenda, as Ambassador Barshefsky has noted. And finally, I would suggest the actual summit agenda, which was reached by consensus, was actually essentially agreed upon in large measure over a year ago, well before the fast track vote even took place.

Q Ambassador Barshefsky, you said that the United States is at the center of this process. In Santiago, Brazil will be signing a number of trade agreements, and the President won't be signing any. I wonder, most commentators seem to think that Brazil

is now at the center of this process. How do you avoid having the President look like he's become superfluous?

AMBASSADOR BARSHEFSKY: Well, should I start with the fact that we're a \$7 trillion economy? The United States will always be at the center. But your question goes exactly to the point I made before, which is you see an acceleration in the coming together of sub-regional arrangements to the exclusion of the United States. And this is really where fast track becomes important -- not for the launch; the Uruguay Round was launched without fast track and we're well positioned here, excellently positioned here with respect to the launch of the FTAA negotiations.

Where the rubber hits the road is where you see other countries integrating around us, and for that we're going to need fast track authority.

I do think, now that there will be this comprehensive launch of negotiations, we will soon see countries focus their resources on that. And I think that will begin to subsume a lot of this other sub-regional activity, but for right now what you see, in this last six months especially since the fast track vote was postponed, is an acceleration with respect to the level of sub-regional negotiation. But in terms of the United States, the United States is a 7 trillion pound gorilla.

MR. MCLARTY: One quick thing, I think the negotiations

are not win-lose. I think the FTAA is clearly a win-win proposition, and I think the markets are indeed very complementary of each other. I think we see that in terms of resources -- I spoke of energy -- and of investments in the region, which Charlene spoke of, infrastructure projects -- so I want to make sure when we talk about the center of what we do need to have is the position in the launch, which we have, to shape the agreements, particularly on issues that are important to us and the American people.

Q Is Pinochet going to attend the Congress, the National Congress event on Friday? Do you know what to expect?

MR. BERGER: We don't know whether he will.

Q Have there been conversations with Chilean officials about whether he's going to come?

MR. BERGER: I know it's been a subject of some discussions at the advance level, but I have no idea whether he's going to be there or not.

Q Will that affect what the President says if he's in the audience?

MR. BERGER: No, he will say the same thing whether he's in the audience or not. Chile is a democracy with a glorious recent history of having reclaimed its democracy, and I can assure

you that what the President says will not be affected by whether General Pinochet is in the audience or not.

Q And what bilaterals is he going to have on the sidelines of this summit?

MR. BERGER: Not absolutely clear because of the nature of this. This is a little bit more like -- for those of you who were on the Africa trip -- Entebbe in a sense than a situation where there will be formal bilats. There will be opportunities in the breaks for the President to sit down with President Zedillo, Prime Minister Chretien, and a number of others. It will be somewhat more informal.

Q What about -- will he have a special message about Paraguay's recent turmoil over the elections there?

MR. BERGER: Our message will be the same as the message of all of the countries that are in the region -- Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and others -- which is that we hope and expect that constitutional democracy will be upheld in Paraguay.

Q Sandy, two of the subjects of the summit are education and combatting poverty. What is the United States going to do concretely on those issues? Are there going to be commitments of money or --

MR. BERGER: Well, on education there will be

commitments, not only in terms of multilateral funding but also bilateral commitments as well. I'll let Mack, perhaps, speak more specifically about it. Go ahead, Mack.

MR. MCLARTY: John, I'll get you the precise figure. I think your question is on point in terms of marshaling resources and leveling and leveraging the multilateral agencies, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank and both President Iglesias and President Wolfensohn will be in attendance at the summit. I think the AID has had an active program in the hemisphere; as you know, they will continue that with somewhat reduced funding over the last several years, but targeting that funding, particularly in terms of the poverty efforts.

But I think what you will see is a continued, concerted, focused, and effective effort on the part of the governments, both at the federal, state, and local levels in Latin America, take full advantage of these expanded resources. And I think you will see their efforts in terms of poverty alleviation to be quite effective and to be sustained efforts. We obviously want to be fully supportive of that.

In terms of education, there will be a number of memoranda of education agreements signed with Chile, with Brazil. And Secretary Riley, of course, will be on the trip and can answer, I think, in specific detail the educational aspects that will take place at the summit and with Chile.

Q I apologize if it's been asked before -- are there American business leaders going with the President.

MR. BERGER: There are not American business leaders going with the President. There of course are many American companies that have subsidiaries in Chile. The President will be speaking to the American Chamber of Commerce in Chile, as he does in a number of countries. But there -- as far as I know, none going on the trip.

Q So there's no delegation as there was to Africa.

MR. BERGER: There will be a Congressional delegation that will be going with us, as there has been in all of our trips in the second term. And we look forward to that. But I don't -- there will be no private delegation.

Q Many members of the Hispanic caucus in the delegation?

MR. BERGER: Yes.

Q Mack, you mentioned that on the economic agenda, international financial stability will be a big point in Santiago. Right after the peso crisis, the United States took the lead in international fora, particularly the G-7, to address this problem

through the IMF, with greater transparency and surveillance of international banking, et cetera. And for about a couple of years, there was an awful lot of self-congratulations, that a lot progress had been made -- it's even in the Halifax and Leone communiques -- and boom, we got the Asian crisis when there had been every indication that enough prevention had taken place.

What are you going to be doing in Santiago to reassure investors and consumers and everybody else in the world that something is finally taking hold to prevent this kind of crisis?

MR. MCLARTY: Well, I think, increasingly, as I noted, Latin America has been looked at as a model to emulate, not avoid, in terms of financial institutions, central banking functions and reform of the banking system. I saw that both at the APEC conference in Vancouver, where you had Asian leaders and members of the private sector from those countries attending APEC talk to President Zedillo, discuss with President Frei, what they had done in that regard. I saw it again at the Davos Conference World Economic Forum.

While it is not perfect, clearly the leaders in Latin America have had the capacity and the will to act in terms of fiscal discipline. That's why their inflation rates have stayed under control, that's why their budget deficits are much, much smaller, I think, overall, than even many countries in Europe. And I think we will want to support an increasing and deepening of that kind of transparency and openness that the financial markets clearly judge.

And I think that's why you have seen to date stable financial markets in Latin America despite a sharp decline in oil prices, where many of the economies are very dependent on oil prices.

I think you're correct in terms of the efforts the President has made to provide leadership in overall financial architectures -- Secretary Rubin and Secretary Bentsen before him and actually started at the G-7 in Naples. I think it's clear more needs to be done, and particularly reform, in a local basis in the individual countries affected, which is at the very heart of the IMF program. I think the difference is Latin America has taken those reforms and has taken very positive steps, and in some of the areas they have not.

MR. BERGER: And if you meant to ask by that question whether we would welcome Congress passing the supplemental, which would provide IMF funding and funding for the NAB, which grows directly out of Halifax and is specifically designed to provide for these kind of circumstances -- the answer is yes.

Q Sandy, also what I was wondering about was having put their house in order, as you put it -- the Latin American countries -- are you going to try and enlist them in Santiago to help you globally, have them put some pressure on Asian finance ministries and banking supervisor groups and so on.

MR. BERGER: I think this is happening informally

already. In Vancouver, when APEC met at the end of last year, I think President Zedillo had an enormous impact there. In a sense, he's walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and he's come out on the other side. And he said to the leaders, there are certain rules that you've got to follow: you've got to tell the truth, you've got to take the hard knocks as quickly as you can, and you've got to restore the confidence of the markets.

I think there is beginning to be, as I've said before, a differentiation in this global financial marketplace. Not all emerging markets are alike; not all Asian markets are alike; not all Latin Americans are alike; some are more disciplined than others; some are better run than others. And I think that the time that's passed since the Asian problems began, in some ways established that degree of differentiation on the part of international investors to be a little bit more discriminating and a little less spontaneous in terms of the movement of capital.

Q While we're on international stabilization issues, Japan a few weeks ago announced a package of stimulation measures to revive the Japanese economy. But despite that, the IMF global world economic outlook today forecasts zero growth for Japan for 1998. Does that mean that they have taken insufficient steps? Are you looking for them to do anything else?

MR. BERGER: Well, I don't know what factors they took into account when they made that judgment. We have said that the steps that the Japanese government undertook last week were good

steps forward but that, as we've said before, it is extremely important that that economy be stimulated and increase at a faster rate of growth -- not only for its own health but also for the overall health of the Asian economies.

Q Sandy, you just touched on drug trafficking briefly -- what progress do you expect on the idea of multilateral drug certification and on the possibility of a Latin counter-narcotics center in Panama?

MR. BERGER: Well, let me answer and then ask Mack to add. We will make progress at this summit in expanding the multilateral alliance against drugs that we began to talk about when we were in Mexico and Brazil and elsewhere. The purposes of these efforts are to increase cooperation throughout the hemisphere, both a demand reduction and supply reduction. And to the extent that we can -- and they will include an element of evaluation of the performance of individual countries. And we think this is an important step forward.

Q Could this be a replacement of certification with time?

MR. BERGER: Well, certification is an act of Congress; it's the law of the land. We obviously intend to comply with it. Both of these are directed toward the goal of enhancing cooperation in fighting drugs in the hemisphere. If at some future point the

alliance were strong enough and viable enough that it were advancing that goal, obviously one might take a look at that. But I think at this point I would say they complement each other.

Q Yes, but if this certification is U.S. -- I mean, unilateral measure from the United States, and as you are trying to build a partnership with Latin America, this alternative would be the only politically correct solution on the long run, wouldn't it?

MR. BERGER: Well, we certainly want to be politically correct. As I said, both of these -- the motivation of both of these regimes is to enhance the cooperation throughout the hemisphere on fighting drugs, which is a deadly threat to each country in this hemisphere. Whether it's the United States that purchases \$57 billion worth of drugs, which poisons our children, or other countries where the narco-traffickers are eating away at the very foundations of democracy, there is no greater threat we have in common. And so it is extremely important that we work on this problem together through whatever means we can. We think the alliance against drugs will be one more instrument to advance that cooperation.

MR. MCLARTY: Well, the only -- I think Sandy really has covered the subject very well. The only additional point I would make in terms of the cooperation is that from a Latin standpoint or a Caribbean standpoint, they view this deadly threat, as Sandy noted, as seriously as the families of our countries do. This is not

something we are imposing are having to try to change any views. The truth is, it is a very formidable foe. So I think it calls for increased cooperation. I think that will be achieved at Santiago. The goal of cooperation, the multilateral drug alliance, and certification are the same. Certification is the law, as Sandy noted, and we'll continue certainly to abide by and enforce that law.

In terms of the Panama multilateral drug counter-narcotics center, it is an idea that has been well received, but there are a lot of issues still outstanding, and I would not anticipate that it would come to fruition at this summit. I think it could obviously be a part of a multilateral effort.

MR. LOCKHART: I just wanted to let you all know about a change in the schedule on the trip we're taking tomorrow. The President will now overnight in Houston and travel Wednesday morning to Alabama to view the tornado damage and the work that FEMA and the local authorities are doing to help with the cleanup.

The trip presents some logistical challenges to us, not the least of which is some of the people who are going on that trip are also going on the Chile trip, besides some other ones we're working through. So we will let you all know as soon as we can, possibly by tonight, on the coverage details, but I think it's important that people going on the trip tomorrow pack for two days.

Q Will he then come back here?

MR. LOCKHART: He will come back. There is a possibility that we will bring the press plane back tomorrow night and just take an expanded pool for the trip over to Alabama. We are working through those things now, but for your own comfort you should assume you're staying for an extra day.

Q Will the press charter leave at the same time from Andrews?

MR. LOCKHART: The press charter is still leaving at the same time, and that's what we're trying to work through now, how we reconcile the two things. But the press charter is still leaving early Wednesday morning.

END

4:40 P.M. EDT

ARMS Email SystemRECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 15, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

TO NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

Room 450

Old Executive Office Building

1:00 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon; welcome to the White House. Lee, thank you for the award. Thank you for your comments. Thank you for your strength. Thank you for your leadership for our farmers. I've known

him for years -- I don't think I've ever focused on what a good speaker he was before. (Laughter.) He could have been a politician or a preacher in addition to a farmer. It was great.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman for his truly outstanding work, along with Rich Rominger, Carl Whillock and the others here from the Department of Agriculture, who really try to be your advocates every day. whillock

We have at least NFU members who work at USDA -- Mike Dunn, Larry Mitchell, and John Stencil. And I thank them in particular. I want to thank Senator Dorgan and Congressman Pomeroy for coming and for being your vociferous advocates. I talked to Senator Harkin right before I came over here today and he has also been your great friend, along with Senator Conrad and Senator Daschle and Congressman Boswell from Iowa, who couldn't come this morning, but all these people have been up here working hard for you. And I wanted you to know that.

I also would like to say that the National Farmers Union has done a lot of good for this administration and for our efforts here in Washington, from helping to keep our food supply safe to working to expand health care to giving us the first balanced budget in 29 years in just a couple of weeks now. You have been with me every step of the way, and I am very grateful for that.

When I was a boy growing up in Arkansas I knew a lot

about agriculture, but I didn't know much about the intersection of agriculture and politics. When I became a governor and served for a dozen years, many of them very, very hard years in the 1980s on the farm in my state, I came to appreciate what it was like when the national government had good policy, what it was like when it had bad policy, and what it was like when it had no policy.

I remember there were a couple of years when I was doing everything I could to be creative, and I think when you were head of the South Dakota Farmers Union, the state of South Dakota actually came to me and the governor then and asked me for a copy of the banking laws that I had changed in Arkansas -- because I changed our state banking laws to try to help the bankers keep more farmers on the farm. And when we had that terrible situation, when the price of land collapsed, all the collateral on the loans was no good, there was no way for people to finance their farms and they were losing them, and we were able to give some help to our farmers then. But through the whole thing I always felt so helpless that there wasn't an appropriate national response.

Now I feel especially bad for the farmers because it's been such a good time for the rest of the country. We've got nearly 17 million new jobs now and the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, and the lowest inflation in 32 years, the highest home ownership in history, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years. To somebody living in a city,

to tell them that we have a farm crisis more extensive than we've had in decades, it's very hard for them to believe and understand.

You may note that in the local people today I was criticized for supporting a farm relief initiative in Congress. And Secretary Glickman said, don't be upset, this is good news because they have noticed that the farmers are out there. (Laughter and applause.)

Yesterday I had a chance to go to New York and speak with some of the leaders in the United States in international finance, from our nation's point of view, to talk to them about what I think we need to do to try to keep the global economy from further destabilizing, to try to help some of these countries help themselves that are in terrible trouble, to try to keep the global financial crisis from spreading to other countries, and to try to build an adequate trade and financial system for the 21st century that will benefit all Americans.

One, but -- not the only -- but one element of the farm crisis is that the farmers have felt first the crisis going on in the rest of the world. Because with roughly a quarter of the world's people in recession with declining economic growth, representing roughly a third of the world's economy, our agricultural, which depends so much on exports, have felt that quicker than the rest of the economy. But it's an important thing for Americans to be aware of what's going on on the farm today, and to be aware that since the

farmers, in effect, are the foot soldiers in the front lines of America's march into the global economy of the 21st century, if we don't do something to help our farmers, eventually all other Americans will feel it as well. (Applause.)

And so I am delighted that you're here, and I thank you for coming. Let me also, once again, say I thank you for making available the opportunity for all of these young people to be here. I want them to see their country in action. I want them to learn -- much earlier than I ever did -- the relationship between the work that's done every day on the farm and the work that's done up here. I think it's very important. It will make them more effective citizens and more effective in farming in the years ahead.

Now, what's really going on here? I wanted to give this speech today -- I realize to some extent I'm preaching to the saved today. (Laughter.) But what I hope will happen by your coming here and by this event unfolding is that, maybe, finally, we will break through the national consciousness and the consciousness of the Congress -- and our friends in the press corps -- not to panic, not to think that America's not doing well, but to say that at a time when our country is doing well, surely at a time when the rest of us are doing well, we can be more attentive to the genuine needs and the conditions on the farm in America. (Applause.)

Events in the past year have strained many family farms to the breaking point. You know what they are: flood, drought, crop

disease have wiped out entire harvests. Plummeting prices at home, collapsing markets in Asia -- where our exports are down 30 percent in one year because of the economic crisis in Asia -- these have threatened the livelihood of entire communities.

Many farmers this year will see their net incomes drop by more than 40 percent below what they've earned on average for the last five years. And, of course, in some places like North Dakota, the drop is much, much steeper. If we don't do something and do it now -- I want America to hear this, this is not a false alarm -- if we don't do something, and do it now, we could literally lose thousands and thousands of family farmers this year. (Applause.)

I want to come back to this and why it's not just about who's competitive in the market. The results are plain to see and painful to watch. Foreclosures and farm auctions are the order of the day already in many communities. I met a farmer named Deb Lungren not long ago who told me that in 1957 her grandfather made \$11,000 on their family farm. And in 1997, she made \$10,000 on the same land. The banks are ready to foreclose on the Lungren home. They don't see how they can possibly make it another year. I'll bet everybody here could tell me somewhere between one and a dozen stories just like that.

Now, again I say, I think every American has got a stake in rural America. Our farms feed the world and us at very low real

costs, at very high quality. They also feed our sense of ourselves. They reinforce our values of hard work and faith and family and devotion to community and the land.

When I signed that Farm Bill, as Secretary Glickman said, in 1996, at a time when crop prices were strong -- and I would remind you the alternative was far worse; we would have been in even worse shape if I had vetoed it and we'd gone back to that decades-old law -- I tried to make it clear that sooner or later we would have to do more to provide a safety net for hard times; that all the good things in that Farm Bill could not possibly wipe away the fact that if we have a family farm structure in America with widely varying prices because of market developments around the world, and the inevitable march of nature and disease, that sooner or later there would come a time when we see that if you really wanted a strong market, you had to do more for the family farmers. Well, that time has arrived.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman for all that he's done. And in July, we announced that 80 million bushels of wheat, worth a quarter of billion dollars, would be purchased to help hungry people around the world and to help our farmers here at home. I strongly supported Senator Dorgan and Senator Conrad's proposal to provide farmers with emergency assistance. Last month I signed into law new legislation to speed up farm program payments to help farmers who need the money now. And Secretary Glickman is doing everything else he possibly can to help.

I know him well enough to know that from his years in Congress representing Kansas, and his years as Secretary of Agriculture, if there is one, single thing buried in the laws and regulations of the Department of Agriculture that he can do that he has not yet done to try to help farm income, he will find it and do it. But with crop and livestock prices still in danger of dropping, with foreign markets still in danger of collapse, and with thousands of farms in jeopardy, we simply have to do more.

The first and most important thing to do is to help the farmers in greatest need -- those who have suffered significant losses of crop and livestock. I'll continue to press Congress to enact emergency assistance to do that; critical assistance to help thousands of farmers in keeping with the traditional budget rules that recognize the necessity of providing citizens help in times of crisis. We pass emergency bills for floods, for earthquakes, and we ought to do it for farm failure. (Applause.)

The next thing I think we ought to do -- indeed we have to do -- is to do what we talked about back in 1996. We've got to reinforce the safety net for farmers and ranchers. That's why last Thursday I announced my support for Senator Harkin and Daschle's proposal to lift the cap on marketing loan rates for a year. (Applause.)

Yesterday our proposal was defeated in the United States Senate. Today it apparently is going to be voted on in its discrete elements. Whatever happens, we must find some way to provide emergency assistance to farmers facing dire circumstances so they have the resources now to plan for next year's crops.

And finally, let me say, we have to revive the rural economy through exports. The speech that I gave in New York yesterday outlining steps we need to take to try to limit and then resolve the global financial crisis, and then plan a better financial and trade system for the 21st century over the long-term, will have more immediate impact on farmers if we can implement all these steps than any other group in America.

Farm products from one of every three acres is sold abroad. We must continue to open new markets. We must continue to enforce our existing trade agreements. And we must give the International Monetary Fund the resources it needs to strengthen and reform the economies of our customers in Asia, and to try to protect the contagion from spreading to our friends in Latin America, so that others can continue to buy all of our goods and services, and especially our farm products.

For nine months now, since I called on Congress to do this in the State of the Union, there has been no action. The Senate has passed the funding for the International Monetary Fund, but with just a few weeks left the House has still not acted. Our farmers and

ranchers have a bigger stake in the short-run in the passage of this than any other group in America. So I ask you to support that as well, and tell the Congress we have to do it and do it now.

Now, these are the steps that I think we have to take.

I'd just like to take one step back before I close and say that there has been a debate in America for decades that underlies the skepticism of those who don't support what I propose; who say, well, farmers ought to be subject to the market like everybody else -- a guy running a dry cleaner, nobody brings the clothes into be cleaned, he goes out of business. The people who basically believe that -- in the face of all the evidence that we have the most productive agriculture in the world -- don't understand the intersection between global impacts on farm prices, the financing challenges that family farmers, as opposed to big corporate farmers, face, and what can happen to you just by getting up in the morning if it happens to be a bad day. (Applause.)

I know a lot of you feel like Job -- you know? Test my faith, Lord; I didn't mean it that seriously. (Laughter.) But we have an opportunity here -- we have an opportunity to break through a kind of euphoria that's out there about the condition of our economy and let people know what's going on on the farm. We have an opportunity to tie the global financial crisis to what's going on on the farm. We have an opportunity to convince congressmen who come from suburban and urban areas that the welfare, the health, the strength of their citizens' -- their citizens' -- economy rests in

lifting the whole American economy and doing the right thing beyond our borders. And they can see it in your studies, in your lives, in your experience -- nothing more fully embodying the best of America than you do.

So let me say -- I don't know how else to say this:

There is suffering on the farm. There is agony on the farm. This is a horrible affront to everything we have worked so hard to achieve to lift the economy for all Americans. And we cannot afford to walk away from this session of Congress -- I don't care if there is an election; I don't care what else is happening -- we can't afford to walk away until we do something to stave off the failure of thousands of productive family farms in America. We cannot do it. (Applause.)

Now, let me leave you with one beautiful quote.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that American farmers -- and I quote -- "are the source from which the reservoirs of our nation's strength are constantly renewed." For six years I have worked to renew America. We're a lot better off in virtually every way than we were six years ago. But we cannot walk across that bridge into the 21st century -- we cannot truly renew our country if we leave our family farmers behind.

So let's go up to the Hill and tell everybody that we all want to saddle up and go together. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

1:20 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 23, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

TO THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS DINNER

Washington Hilton

Washington, D.C.

7:59 P.M. EDT

AUDIENCE: Viva Clinton!

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Twelve more years! (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's for the guy that just left. (Laughter and applause.) Thank you.

Congressman Becerra, thank you so much for your remarks and for your truly outstanding leadership of the Hispanic Caucus. Thank you, Carmen Delgado-Votaw, for your welcome. I thank all the members of Congress and our administration and staff who are here for their service to our country. I thank you for that warm welcome, for being my friends, for standing with me on sunny days and in strong winds. (Applause.) But most of all I thank you for being willing to fight for the America we want for our children in a new century.

Before we begin, as the Vice President indicated, I would like to say just a word about Hurricane Georges. In Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, in Haiti, in the Dominican Republic, businesses and homes have been swept away and lives have been lost. Tonight our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of this terrible storm. Our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, has told me

that we
are already assisting in the cleanup effort and we are providing
humanitarian
aid in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. (Applause.) We are also helping
the
people of Florida to prepare for the hurricane, and Secretary Cuomo is
leading a
delegation to Puerto Rico. I thank him for that. (Applause.) We will be
there
every step of the way to help these communities and these people to
rebuild.

I also want to join the Vice President in paying tribute to Henry
B.
Gonzalez and Esteban Torres. (Applause.) They are both friends of mine.
I
first met Henry Gonzalez in 1972. I never will forget an evening I spent
with
him in the Minger (phonetic) Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, the weekend
before the
presidential election. And about the only thing we had to enjoy was the
mango
ice cream they had served there for over 100 years. (Laughter.)

On the night before my election as President in 1992, we had a
late-night rally in San Antonio; and thinking of that night so long ago --

years ago then -- I got \$400 worth of mango ice cream for our campaign plane so

that we could eat it with two reasons to be happy. And let me say that Henry B.

Gonzalez has been a pioneer and a conscience for the Congress and the country.

He has the heart of a lion and we'll always be grateful to him. (Applause.)

From his days as a UAW shop steward to his days as chair of this caucus, Esteban Torres has fought tirelessly to make certain that economic growth benefits all working people, and not only the people of this country, but of Mexico as well. He has been a lion in the fight for a decent and better America. I will miss him very, very much. And I thank you, sir, for your service. (Applause.)

If I could just continue the appreciation for a minute, I want to thank the members of this caucus and their supporters for what has been done for America and what we have done together. Together we expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit and cut taxes for 15 million hard-working families, including more than 1 million Hispanic families. And when the majority in Congress tried to slash it, together we said no.

Together we increased the minimum wage for 10 million Americans, including nearly 2 million Hispanics. And we are trying to increase it again for 12 million Americans. I'm very disappointed

that yesterday over 95 percent of the Senate Republicans voted against it, but I haven't stopped fighting, and I don't think you have either. It is time to raise the minimum wage for people who need and deserve it. (Applause.)

Together we fought for and won the biggest increase in children's health care in more than three decades to insure up to 5 million uninsured children, almost all of them in low-income working families in America. We expanded the Head Start program and passed the Family and Medical Leave law, to give millions of people a chance to take time off from work when a baby is born or a parent is sick. Together we have opened the doors of higher education with the Hope Scholarship, more Pell Grants, tax credits for all higher education, deductible student loans. Because of your efforts, everyone who is willing to work hard can now go to college without being afraid of being crushed by the burden of debt, and I thank you for that. (Applause.)

Together, under the leadership of the Vice President we created more than 100 empowerment zones and enterprise communities, community development banks; we doubled small business loans to minorities, tripled them to women. Administrator Aida Alvarez is here and she would want me to say that businesses owned and operated by Hispanic women are the fastest growing category of small business in America today. (Applause.)

Together we shaped and passed an historic crime bill to

take guns off our streets, put police back on our streets, and provide more prevention and help, and still have put Africa in the first place. Together we have built an America that has the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate in a generation, the fastest real wage growth in 20 years, a record number of new small businesses every year, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the highest home ownership in the history of our country -- and you did it. None of this could have been done without the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. (Applause.)

I thank the Vice President for mentioning those who serve and who have served in the Cabinet, in high administration positions, and in the White House. I thank you for all you have done as well.

Now, having said that, the real question before us this evening is what shall we do with this moment of prosperity? What shall we do with this moment of opportunity? You know, a lot of people, when times get really good, tend to do one of two things -- and I would argue both of them are wrong. One, just say, well, I've worked really hard, times have been tough, I think I'll just relax for a few years. Or two is to say, well, things are so good, nobody can mess it up, so I think I will just indulge myself in some diversion. As a country we cannot do that.

I tell you tonight, my friends, that the challenge before us is what do we do with this prosperity, what do we do with

this confidence, what do we do with these good times? I feel very strongly that we need to begin to understand that the good times that we have had in the last six years is a time that has come to thank God for our blessings and then to say we intend to use these blessings to meet the big challenges facing America that will shape the future of our children, and to go back and pick up those folks who have not participated in the benefits of the last six years and give them a chance to do it as well.

(Applause.)

There was an old Mexican proverb that says, "El que no siembra, no levanta" -- he who does not sow, doesn't get a crop. It is time to sow the seeds of the future, to build the America we want for our children. We cannot afford to rest; we have work to do.

And what is that work? First, we cannot rest until we save Social Security for the 21st century. (Applause.) Now, what do I mean by that? Every person in this audience thrills when ever anyone refers to mi familia. Our family, our national family is getting older -- I ought to know, I am. I'm the oldest 52-year-old man in America. (Laughter.) I am the oldest of the baby boomers, all of you who are my age.

When all of us are retired, there will only be about two people working in America for every one person drawing Social Security. Now, we have three choices. We can do something now -- modest, but disciplined -- to preserve this system into the future, with all of its benefits. Or we can do nothing until the crisis

occurs and we'll have two choices. Those of us who are older can live off our children's money. Or we can just do without a lot of the benefits that have lifted half the seniors in America out of poverty today. I don't think either one of those is a very good choice.

In just a few days we will have the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years. (Applause.) Now, I believe if we really care about our national family, we ought to stand up and say, look, we know it's just a few weeks before the election. We know there are those on the other side who say that we ought to have a tax cut right now based on projected surpluses into the future. And we know that's wildly popular at election time.

But we didn't get the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years and the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years by doing what was popular today. We did it by doing what was right for the long run, and we'd like to at least see the ink turn from red to black, then dry a little bit and save Social Security before we squander this surplus. That is what I believe we should do. (Applause.) Thank you.

Second, we can't rest until all our kids in all our communities have a world-class education. (Applause.) Our budget -- our balanced budget provides for hiring 100,000 more teachers to lower average class size to 18 in the early grades. All the research shows that does more to help children learn and have permanent

learning gains than anything else we can do. (Applause.)

It provides funds to build or repair 5,000 schools with kids the largest they've ever been in our classroom -- the largest number of students. It provides funds to hook up all of our classrooms to the Internet, not just those of the wealthiest school districts.

It provides funds to reward school districts who undertake sweeping reforms like Chicago has. In Chicago today the summer school -- the summer school -- is the sixth biggest school district in America. Over 40,000 children every day during the school year get three square meals at school. Yes, have high standards; yes, end social promotion; but for goodness sakes, do something for those kids that deserve a better shot and need more help to succeed in life. (Applause.)

And our budget provides funds to hire 35,000 teachers to go into troubled inner-city and other isolated neighborhoods by saying to the brightest young people, we'll pay your way to college if you'll teach off the cost by going into those tough neighborhoods and giving those kids a world-class education. (Applause.)

No community in America has a bigger stake in this than the Hispanic community. That's why I established an advisory commission on educational excellence for Hispanics, and why I have

proposed a special \$600 million Hispanic education action plan to transform schools with high drop-out rates, to support Hispanic colleges, to help adults who want to learn English or get a high school diploma, to help all Latinos, young and old, to reach their dream. (Applause.)

And you and I know, yes, our children must master English. That's why I fought for a 35 percent increase in bilingual education -- (applause) -- to help 1,000 school districts improve teacher training and add extra classes for students who haven't yet mastered English. You know, when people go around and tell me all about the failures of bilingual education, I say, well, look at the number of school districts who have so many more children whose first language is not English that don't have any teachers who have been certified to teach them English. Let's solve the problem instead of making it a political issue. (Applause.)

The Hispanic Action Education plan would help to train 20,000 teachers to help children with limited English. This is not just a Hispanic problem anymore. Just across the river here in Fairfax County, there are children from 150 different national and ethnic groups. Being able to speak more than one language is a gift that more of us need. (Applause.) But in America, unless one of those languages is English, our children can never reach their full potential. This is not the subject of a divisive political battle. Let's look at the facts, put our children before our politics, and do what's right for the country, and actually give people the chance to

speak this language. (Applause.)

Let me also say we can't rest, with 160 million Americans in managed care plans, until we pass a strong, enforceable patients' bill of rights that says doctors ought to make medical decisions, not accountants. (Applause.)

Think of this. Don't you believe whatever your health plan is that you ought to have the right to see a specialist if you need it. If you walk out of this banquet tonight and, God forbid, you get hit by a car, don't you think they ought to take you the closest emergency room, not one halfway across town that happens to be covered by your plan? (Applause.)

Those of you who are older, remember what it was like when a child was first born into your family. How would you feel if, because the mother or the father is in a plan covered by a small business, if the small business changes health plans and you're six months pregnant, or your wife is six months pregnant -- I think you ought to be able to keep the same doctor until the baby is born. But that's not what plans provide today. I think that ought to be a right.

If you've ever had anybody in your family in chemotherapy treatment, it's pretty tough. I've been there; a lot of you have. You try to make jokes about whether your hair is going to fall out. You try to deal with people when they get sick to their

stomach and they can't eat. Nobody ought to have to worry, in addition to that, about whether in the middle of the chemotherapy treatment somebody is going to send you a letter in the mail and say, I'm sorry, you've got to change doctors, you've got to do it all over again, you've got to start all over again. That is wrong. That is wrong, and we ought to stop it. (Applause.)

That's what we ought not to rest until we do. We ought not to rest while any of our communities are still segregated by income or race. The government should lead the way in word and deed. I've asked Secretary Cuomo to crack down on unfair housing practices, to double the number of housing discrimination cases, to work with you to undertake a major legislative overhaul so public housing will help to deconcentrate poverty, mix incomes, and thereby mix people of all races and ethnicities. We can't live together as one nation unless we're able to live together in our own communities. And I ask you to help me work together on this.

We can't rest until every neighborhood can reap the benefits of our economic growth. That's why we should fund the empowerment initiatives the Vice President and Secretary Cuomo have worked so hard for -- to get more investment, more jobs, and more opportunity into the neighborhoods which still have unemployment rates that are too high and incomes that are too low. We can do it now. If we can't do it now, with unemployment rates so low, when we will ever be able to do it? We should not walk away from this session of Congress without that empowerment agenda. (Applause.)

We should be proud that we have the lowest welfare rolls in 29 years, that we made good on our promise to restore some benefits to legal immigrants. (Applause.)

But there is much more to be done. The pressures to move from welfare to work are intense, and the transition can be especially difficult for Hispanic women who lack language or job skills. I want to make sure every individual has the tools to succeed in this transition. That's why we fought for a welfare-to-work fund in the balanced budget, to help people make it; for \$50 million more for transportation, for people who don't have cars. And that's why I have proposed in my balanced budget a \$21 billion child care initiative to add to what we fought for in the welfare bill. Nobody should have to give up being a good parent to succeed in the work place. (Applause.)

And we cannot rest until we do have an accurate census count. I just want to make sure everybody in this room understands the importance of that. Some in Congress would have us ignore the best scientific methods for ensuring the most accurate count. That is, methods that Republican, as well as Democratic, experts say is the best way to make sure everybody gets counted. I don't know why some people are afraid of having all Americans counted -- counted in the drawing of congressional districts, counted in the delivery of federal aid funds. In 1990, 5 percent of our Hispanic citizens were not counted. Nearly 70 -- listen to this -- nearly 70,000 Hispanic

children in Los Angeles County alone were left out.

Now, we can do better than that. This is a fundamental issue. This is a civil rights issue. If you believe every American counts, don't you also believe we have to count every American? (Applause.)

And while we're at it, once again I call upon the Congress to give the 4 million people of Puerto Rico the right to choose their own status. It is important. (Applause.) Now, in December the Puerto Rican people go to the polls. The Republican leaders of the Senate say, they will "consider" the results of the referendum. I say I will respect the results of the referendum. (Applause.)

Now, we cannot rest until we keep economic growth going throughout the world, until we contain all this trouble our friends in Russia and Asia are experiencing, until we do everything we can to keep it from spreading to Latin America, which has been threatened by global financial events that they had nothing to do with creating. This is in our interests. The Latin markets are our fastest growing ones. They are the people that are doing more every year to buy American products as we build closer ties.

I have spent a lot of time on Latin America. Hillary has gone to Latin America several times and is about to go again. We always believed that in the future of America, not only would

Hispanic Americans become our largest minority, but Latin America would become our closest partners for democracy as well as for prosperity. (Applause.)

Now, when you see all this debate in the paper about the IMF, that's really what that's about. The International Monetary Fund is the way that we work with other people to help countries that are doing the right thing get back on their feet and to try to stem and limit this economic turmoil. I ask your help in that. We need to do it for the benefit of our own people, as well as for our obligation.

Finally, let me say we cannot rest until we continue to work to bring America together across racial and ethnic lines. Last week, for the final time, I met with my Advisory Board on Race and received their report. Again, I say to you this is not a black/white issue, this is not even a black/white/brown issue. America is becoming ever more diverse. And it is our great, great asset as we move toward a new century in what is not only a global economy but, increasingly, a global society, where we face the same opportunities and the same dangers. We have got to learn to stop using our racial and ethnic differences as wedge issues in political campaigns and start lifting them up as money in the bank for 21st century America. (Applause.)

I see General McCaffrey out there, our drug czar. You know, we had a meeting the other day with the new Colombian

President, a man who has actually had his own life imperiled for standing up against narco-trafficking. No children anywhere have an interest in anything other than doing everything we can to keep them away from the dangers of drugs. No children, without regard to race or income, have an interest in anything other than an America which educates all our children. No people anywhere in this country have an interest in anything other than an America which guarantees quality health care to all of our kids and gives every working family the dignity of knowing that if they work hard and obey the law, at least they should not live in poverty. That is the kind of America we have to build.

And let me say that immigration has been and will be an important part of that process. It is not only good for America, it is America. (Applause.) And I say to you, we must continue to welcome new immigrants, to encourage them to become a full part of American society and to help them become citizens and voting citizens, not stand in their way when they seek to do it. (Applause.)

So I say to you, you have been very kind to me tonight. You were enthusiastic. You cheered. You were happy. I had a temptation to throw this speech away and give you an old whoop-de-do -- (laughter) -- even though I'm not running anymore for anything. But I decided it was the wrong thing to do because you need to know what is really at stake, what is really going on, what really should bring you here.

In a few weeks all of you and all our fellow citizens will be given a chance to go to the polls in November and choose what to do with this moment. Will it be partisanship or progress? Will it be about people or politics? Will we squander the moment or seize

it? That is the decision before us. And as happy as I am and grateful for the reception you gave me, that's not what this is about. It's about you and your children and all the people out there all over this country. That's what this is about.

Thirty years ago, Robert Kennedy traveled to California to see a prostrate Cesar Chavez, who was fasting in penance, bed-ridden, for the violence caused by the struggle for farm workers' rights. That night they broke bread together at a Thanksgiving mass, and someone read the words Chavez was too weak to speak, words I would like to share with you tonight as I leave. Here is what he said: "Our lives are all that really belong to us, so it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of people we are." He said later that that night was the night Robert Kennedy made up his mind to run for President and, ultimately, to give his life for many of the causes for which we struggle today.

My friends, you and I are bound by a commitment to fulfill the legacy of this country's history, to deepen the meaning of our freedom, to widen the circle of opportunity, to strengthen the

bonds of our community, and to stand against all those and all the forces that would divide us, demean us, or hold us back. Most everybody here has a magnificent American story. Most everybody here can look back on parents and grandparents and great-grandparents of whom you are immensely proud but who overcame unimaginable odds and braved great sacrifices so that one day their children or their children's children could put on the clothes we wear tonight and come to a banquet like this tonight and be grateful to them for what they did for us.

Once in a generation a country is in the position we find ourselves in tonight. With this kind of success, this kind of prosperity, this kind of confidence, this kind of opportunity to lead in the world, we cannot rest, we cannot indulge ourselves. We have work to do. We have work to do so that when our children and our children's children reach their maturity, they will know that we did what was right in this time, and we listened to the words of Cesar Chavez.

God bless you, and thank you so much. (Applause.)

END

8:30 P.M. EDT

ARMS Email SystemRECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: SUNTUM_M (SUNTUM_M@a1.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:26-Sep-1998 20:11:00.00

SUBJECT: 1998-9-25 remarks at DNC dinner

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TO: Andrei H. Cherny ("Andrei H. Cherny"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Angelina Walker ("Angelina Walker"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Christopher S. Lehane ("Christopher S. Lehane"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Jodi R. Sakol ("Jodi R. Sakol"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Lawrence J. Haas ("Lawrence J. Haas"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Patricia M. Ewing ("Patricia M. Ewing"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])
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TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt ("Thomas M. Rosshirt"@lmgate4.eop.gov [@LNGATE])

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READ:UNKNOWN

TO: cmbeach (cmbeach@msn.com [UNKNOWN])

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TO: Alexander L. Boyle (CN=Alexander L. Boyle/OU=PIR/O=EOP [PIR])

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TO: Mark J. Bernstein (CN=Mark J. Bernstein/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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TO: Marsha E. Berry (CN=Marsha E. Berry/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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TO: Martha Foley (CN=Martha Foley/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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TO: Michael Waldman (CN=Michael Waldman/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])
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TO: Serena C. Torrey (CN=Serena C. Torrey/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sheyda Jahanbani (CN=Sheyda Jahanbani/OU=NSC/O=EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Steven J. Naplan (CN=Steven J. Naplan/OU=NSC/O=EOP [NSC])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Susanna B. McGuire (CN=Susanna B. McGuire/OU=WTIO/O=FOR [WTIO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

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TO: Tanya E. Martin (CN: Tanya E. Martin/OU=OPD/O=EOP [OPD])
 READ:UNKNOWN

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Thurgood Marshall, Jr. (CN=Thurgood Marshall, OU=WHO, O=FOR FAMILIO)
 READ: UNKNOWN

TO: Todd Stern (CN=Todd Stern/OU=WHO/O=DOE (WHO))
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Tracy F. Sisser (CN=Tracy F. Sisser/OU=WHIO/2 TOP [WHIO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Virginia Apuzzo (CN=Virginia Apuzzo,'C' WHO,'O'-EOP [WHO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Virginia N. Rustique (CN=Virginia N. Rustique/OU=WHO/C=EOP [WHO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Wayne C. Johnson (CN=Wayne C. J. Johnson/OU=O.A./O=FOR [O.A.])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: William C. Haymes (CN=William C. Haymes/OU=OA/O=EOP [OA])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: William H. White Jr. (CN=William H. White Jr., OU=WHIO/O-EOP [WHIO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Woyneab M. Wondwossen (CN=Woyneab M. Wondwossen/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])
 READ:UNKNOWN

TO: CROWLEY_P (CROWLEY_P@) CUNNINGHAM@
READ: UNKNOWN

TO: CUTLER_L (CUTLER_L@al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

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TEXT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

(San Jose, California)

For Immediate Release

September 25, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

AT DNC DINNER

Tech Museum of Innovation

San Jose, California

9:55 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, John. I sort of hate to speak after that. (Laughter.) He made a better case than I could have made for myself. I thank you. And I want to thank Mayor Susan Hammer for her friendliness and her leadership in this city.

I'm delighted to be back here again, or in the new Tech, and I do hope that because of this event tonight you'll receive even wider publicity and you'll have throngs of children coming here, learning all the things that they need to see about their own future. (Applause.) Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of you for being here tonight. Some of you are probably in danger of over-exposure. There are several people here who were with Hillary last night in Seattle. (Laughter.) And you've already heard the better of the two speeches, I can tell you that. (Laughter.)

We've been working -- I was in Chicago today and she was in Portland and Seattle last night, and we're going to, as you know, spend the night with our daughter tonight. And then I'm going on to San Diego tomorrow and then to Texas and then back to Washington. But I can't thank you enough, all of you,

for the kind things that you said as I was going around before the dinner about my family and what we're dealing with. And I just want to thank you on a very personal basis. Even Presidents have to be people from time to time, and you made me feel like one tonight and I thank you very much. (Applause.)

I also want to thank you for giving me a way to work with this community. When I came out here with Al Gore and we were working in 1992, I felt that it was imperative that we establish a strong relationship with the people and the companies in this area for what we could do together to rebuild the American economy, and then to build an American future that is worthy of our people. And you mentioned a few of those issues, but it's just the last list of issues. We've worked on a lot of things over the last 6 years, things that I never would have known very much about and that most Presidents probably wouldn't had it not been for your input and your consistent involvement, and even sometimes your stimulating argument. And I thank you for that.

I don't know that that was the greatest endorsement my Vice President could ever get, what John said. (Laughter.) But it's not all bad. I do want to say something about him. I thank you for working with him. As you all know, one of the reasons I asked him to become my vice presidential partner is

that he had a background in technology issues far superior to mine and a consuming interest in it. And all of you have fed it and broadened it, and I'm very grateful to you.

I think that when the historians write about this administration, they may differ on whether our economic or social policies were right or wrong, but one thing is absolutely beyond question, and that is that the Vice President had more influence on more important issues in more areas than any person in the history of this country that ever held that job. And he's made it possible for us to do a lot of the things that I've done, and I'm very grateful to him. (Applause.)

Now, if I could just run over -- you mentioned a couple of things. We have worked out the so-called H-1B visa issue. It will be coming to my desk soon. And it was done in a way that's really good for everybody in America, because in addition to permitting more visas of high-skilled people to come into our country and strengthen us, it also provides a lot more funds to train our own people, to upgrade their skills. So it's a good, good bill. It has the best of both worlds.

The securities reform legislation is now in conference and they're arguing only over some legislative intent language that those of you who are working the issue are very familiar with. But I think we'll be successful there. I think we've reached a broad agreement on encryption policy and now you

just have to make sure you work with us on the implementation of it so that the rules don't contradict the policy, but instead reenforce them. And I think we can do that.

There's legislation to implement the world intellectual property agreements to which we are a part, and there's some problems there, but I think that on balance it does a lot of good. And I hope you'll help us get it right and get it through. The bill which keeps the Internet free and open, interrupted for a period of time by various kinds of local taxes is making its way through the Senate, and there are some extraneous issues that are having an impact on it, but those of you who are working it understand that and I remain committed to it. And I think we can be successful there. And I think it's very, very important.

One other thing I'd like to just say to you is a lot of you are very concerned, as you should be for your own markets, with the situation in Asia. And I am working very, very hard to help those countries regroup, to restore growth and to limit the reach of the contagion. I believe we're doing about all we can do at this time, but we need some support and I'll say more about that in a minute.

Now, I mention these issues partly to make a specific point to Silicon Valley, but partly to make a more

general point. Today I was at Moffett Air Force Base and we had an open arrival. And typically, when we do this, a couple hundred people will show up that are associated some way or another with the base facility. There were about 600 people there today, and they were all different kinds of people talking about very specific things about their lives, things that had changed -- the schools their kids were in, the Family and Medical Leave law, other things that we had all been involved in together.

I entered public life because I thought it would give me an opportunity to work with people to help them make the most of their lives. I believed that Washington would serve America better if we worried more about the people that lived outside Washington than where people stood on the totem pole inside Washington. And I think you believe that, too. And that's what I ask you to think about tonight.

I'll be very brief. I want to mention to you what I think are the central questions facing the country in this election season which is unfolding rapidly now, and then what I think are some of the central questions facing this country over the next 20 years, because I ask you to begin thinking about it. We were talking about it at one of the tables tonight. And this community has got to continue to be involved in America to help us raise our imaginations and raise our visions toward these long-term issues as well.

I tell all my fellow Democrats that contrary to what you might think, the great enemy of our cause in this election is not adversity, it is, instead, complacency. Because oftentimes, when people are doing well and things are doing well and they have a high level of comfort and confidence, particularly if they come through a very wrenching time -- and our country came through a pretty wrenching time in the late '80s and early '90s, indeed throughout the decade of the '80s -- that tendency is to say, we'd like to relax a little bit. We're tired. Things are good for us now. We just want to not think about this -- in this case, "this" is politics right now.

You live in a world that never permits that, because it's changing so fast. One thing I'd like to ask you to do is to think about how you can communicate that sense of urgency to the rest of your fellow Americans. And that's what I hope to do here tonight -- because even though people may not understand it in the way you do, if you're struggling to develop a new product, a new service keep up with some new discovery, the truth is that everyone else's life is more dynamic than most people realize as well.

And while I am profoundly grateful that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, and the smallest percentage of people on welfare in

29 years, and next week the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years, and the highest home ownership in history, and we just learned yesterday the lowest African American poverty rate ever recorded, the biggest increase in wages in 20 years -- I'm grateful for all that. The truth is that this is a dynamic world. (Applause.) And so the right thing to do is not to rest on that, but to build on it -- to ask ourselves, okay, what else needs to be done.

Now, in this election season I think there are the following major issues that, to me, are very important. We had a big vote on one in the House today. There are some who say, well, we're going to have a surplus for the first time in 29 years and it's just a few weeks from the election, so let's have a tax cut. And even though I'm not a candidate anymore and won't be running for anything anymore, I understand the appeal of that -- but I think it's dead wrong. For one thing, I'd just like to see the red ink turn to black and dry before we start spending again. (Laughter.) I've been working for this for six years, I'd just like to see it dry, you know? (Laughter.)

And in a more serious way, in this world financial situation we have been a pillar of stability and strength and responsibility, and we need to communicate that to people. And I know it's popular to offer a tax cut right here before an election, but in this case it would be wrong.

And there's another reason it's wrong. It's wrong because we finally have, I believe, a bipartisan consensus for making modifications in the Social Security system that will enable us to preserve it when the baby boomers retire -- and at present rates, at least, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing. And I can just tell you the baby boomers are -- and a lot of you are too young to be one -- (laughter) -- but, basically, the baby boom generation is everybody between the ages of 52 and 64. And when that group -- only the present group in school is bigger than the baby boom generation. And when that group retires, unless we act now in a modest, measured, disciplined way -- and if we don't do anything until the time comes to face it, and with every year it will become a more severe decision because you'll be closer in time to it -- we'll have the decision of either cutting benefits for seniors so much that we'll erode the safety net, which today accounts for 48 percent of the people on Social Security being lifted out of poverty -- that is, they would be in poverty were it not for Social Security.

Or, in the alternative, we'll decide we can't bear that and we'll raise taxes dramatically to maintain the old system, in which case we will undermine the standard of living of our children and grandchildren, which would be equally wrong. And that's not necessary. But in order to avoid it we have to make an election-year decision and tell the American people the

truth that we ought to do something for the next 30 years and not for the next 30 days, and save Social Security before we entertain a tax cut out of this surplus. I think it is very important. (Applause.)

The second issue, if we want to continue to lead the world economy we at least have to pay our way. For eight months now I've been trying to get the Congress to approve our contribution to the International Monetary Fund. Now, it's not perfect. And the IMF is having to make adjustments, too, to recognize the new realities of the global economy. But it is the most important instrument for helping countries, first of all, reform as they should, and then if they do, get back on their feet; and, secondly, for helping us limit the contagion that is now gripping so many Asian economies from bleeding over into Latin America, for example, our fastest growing market as a country, and into countries that have done a good job in managing their own economies. I think it is absolutely imperative.

And it's pretty hard to make an issue this, normally, esoteric, an issue in an election year. But I'm telling you, if we don't exercise our responsibility to try to stabilize the global economy, as Alan Greenspan said the other day, we cannot forever be an island of prosperity in a sea of dislocation. We have got to do this and I feel very strongly about it. (Applause.)

The third thing that I think is very important is that the education agenda be continually pushed forward. Eight months ago I put before the Congress an education program, based on the best research about what is working in our schools. Among other things in the balanced budget, not spending the surplus, it would provide funds for another 100,000 teachers to be hired to take average class size down to 18 in the early grades. It would provide a tax incentive program to rebuild, remodel or build 5,000 schools at a time when it's a big problem. It has the funds to continue our part of hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000. It has funds for another, over a several year period, 3,000 charter schools -- and finally, Reed Hastings, for all the work you've done here in California, California is leading the way, thank you very much. (Applause.)

And a lot of other things that are very, very important, including paying the college expenses of 35,000 young people who can then pay their college expenses off by going into inner-city areas and other areas of teacher shortage and teaching for a few years to pay their expenses off. It contains the best examples of the most reform-oriented, big-city school system in the country, which I visited again today, I think for the sixth time, in Chicago, where they have ended social promotion. And under-performing students in what used to be thought of as the

worst big-city school system in the country -- I went to a school

district today where 100 percent of the kids live in Cabrini Green, one of the most economically challenged housing projects

in America. They have doubled their reading scores and tripled their math scores in four years.

And there is no social promotion, but they don't just throw the kids out. Every child that doesn't perform has to go to summer school. And they have after-school tutoring programs, so that now the summer school program in Chicago is the sixth biggest school district in America -- the summer school. Over 40,000 children get three square meals a day there.

But learning is beginning to occur because they have standards and accountability, but support. They don't treat children who don't perform as failures; they treat them as people who need more support and more help. And I think that's important. (Applause.)

So we need to save Social Security. We need to fund the IMF. We need to pass the education program. Two other things I want to mention. I have worked very hard for the last six year, along with the Vice President, to persuade the American people that we can improve the environment and grow the economy. And compared to six years ago, the air is cleaner, the water is cleaner, the food is safer, lots of toxic waste dumps have been cleaned up. But there are still people who just don't believe it. And we're having a huge environmental fight up there, and protecting these environmental initiatives is very important.

Finally, I strongly believe that Congress ought to pass a uniform patients' bill of rights for the country. And there may even be some disagreement about that in this audience, but I'd just like to tell you what my experience is here. There are 160 million Americans in managed care plans. Forty-three big managed care companies are supporting this legislation. Why? Because they provide these protections and they know that they're being punished in the marketplace for doing what they believe is right.

Now, a lot of you are employers and you're concerned about controlling costs, but let me just tell you some of the things that are actually happening in America today. In big cities, if somebody walks outside a hotel and gets hit by a car, depending on what the coverage of the plan is, they might drive past three hospitals to get to an emergency room covered by the plan, instead of going to the nearest emergency room. There are places where, even if your doctor recommends you see a specialist and says, I'm sorry, I can't do this, they still can't get to see a specialist until they go through three or four layers of approval.

Many times all these horror stories you hear about people being denied care are not quite accurate. Actually, almost always, or more than half the time, the managed care company does approve the procedure, but the delays are so great

that it's too late to do the right thing.

Another big problem for small businesses is when the employer changes providers, very often immediately all the employees are affected by it. Now, that sounds reasonable. Except if you're pregnant, and you're six months pregnant, you shouldn't have to give up your obstetrician for any other reason, eight, and nine. If you're in the middle of a chemotherapy treatment, you shouldn't have to give it up in the middle of the treatment. That's what this bill does. And it also protects the privacy of medical record, which I think is very, very important.

So I think this patients' bill of rights is the right thing to do for the country and I hope it will pass. Those are the big issues, to me, that we ought to be fighting for. (Applause.)

Now, in the election the voters will have a clear choice. Do they want this kind of progress or do they want partisanship? Do they want this to focus on people or do they want this to focus on politics? And you can help us.

Now, if you look at the long run -- let me just mention something very briefly, just a few things that I wish you'd begin to think about. How are we going to change Social Security and Medicare so that we legitimately care for the elderly without bankrupting their children and grandchildren?

What are we going to do? We'll be making those decisions -- I hope and pray -- in the first six months of next year. How are we going to do this? The Medicare Commission will complete its report and we will complete our year-long work on Social Security in December.

The second question: What else do we need to do? Higher education, to really provide world-class education K through 12 in America? Everybody knows we've got the best system of higher education in the world, how are we going to give every child -- without regard to their circumstances in life -- that opportunity?

Third question: How can we convince people that the problem of climate change is real and the biggest long-term environmental challenge, closely related -- especially in California -- to the problem of ocean degradation, which is fast becoming a global problem? And how can you here, who know it to be true, convince people that there is no longer an iron link between old-fashioned, industrial-era energy usage and economic growth? Because, make no mistake about it, that in the end is what is holding back our advances in the environment. Most people who are in decision-making capacities honestly believe you can't grow an economy unless you use energy in the way we've been using it for the last 50 years, and unless you use more of the same kind. You can help; you can make a huge difference there.

Fourthly, what are we going to do over the long run -- and it has to be done fairly soon -- to modify the world financial system and the world trading system so it works for ordinary people and it limits these huge boom-bust cycles without interrupting the free flow of capital? I am very worried that in country after country after country, if you have something, and after year of falling living standards, that people will fall out of love with free markets and free governments.

It's only been the last three or four or five years that, for the first time in all human history, more people are living under governments that they chose themselves than dictatorships of one kind or another. This is a precious gift, this gift of freedom, but we have to prove that it will work for ordinary people. And the United States has to take the lead in that. And all of you have a huge stake in it -- a huge stake in it.

Everything you want to do with the Internet rests on the premise that people will get freer and freer and freer, and that it is a very good thing. And you know believe that. (Applause.) So we have got to deal with that.

And finally, I just ask you to help me -- I got the last report of the President's Initiative on Race last week, and I've got this on my mind, too. If you think about what I do in

foreign policy as your representative -- we're worried about Kosovo today. What is Kosovo? It's an ethnic conflict between Serbs and Albanian Muslims. What is going on in the Middle East? It's an ethnic and religious conflict. I'm going to do a lot of work on that next week. What is the conflict that we're celebrating I hope the final end of in Northern Ireland? It's a religious conflict.

You may have been reading, a few years ago we had this horrible war in Rwanda where over three-quarters of a million people were killed in a tribal conflict. And now in the Congo there are five different countries intervening in their conflict there and part of it is the settling of old scores among tribal conflicts.

Now, here in Silicon Valley you see people from all over the world, from all different racial and ethnic groups and religious and cultural backgrounds, finding a way to work together to make common cause. And over the long run it may be our ability to prove that we can preserve and advance the American system and give deeper meaning to the Constitution of the United States as we grow more diverse, that anything else that will permit us to be a powerful force for good in the 21st century.

And so I say to you I hope you'll keep working on

that and I hope you'll keep lifting that up, because I see deep in the heart of people all over the world this almost compulsive drive to define themselves in negative terms -- in the fact that their life has meaning because they are not the "other," whatever the "other" is. And just the way you do things here is a constant, daily rebuke to that. And that's what America has to do. We have to prove that we are bringing good that will reach other if we hope to be a positive force in bringing out the best in people throughout the world.

Finally, let me just say that I believe that the best days of this country are still ahead of us. And I believe that we have been given a precious gift, but an enormous responsibility. The real question before is, now that we have all this prosperity, now that we have all this confidence, now that we have this dominant position in the world, what are we going to make of this moment? Are we going to relax? Are we going to feed on each other? Are we going to care for each other and build a better tomorrow? I think I know what your answer is, and I want you to help me make that America's answer.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

10:16 P.M. PDT