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10/01/97 (I)

Divider Title: _____

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO WEATHER FORECASTERS

East Room
(October 1, 1997)

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Welcome to the White House on a cool, overcast day, about 60 degrees. How am I doing? I'm auditioning. You know, I have to leave this job after three years, and I don't know what I am going to do. And I am too young to retire, and I'm used to delivering bad news. I thank you for coming and for devoting this much of your time to the briefings and to giving us a chance to meet with you on what is a profoundly important issue -- and one, frankly, that you, just in the way you comment on the events that you cover, may have a real effect on the American people.

People look to you to figure out what they're going to wear in the morning and whether something really bad is going to happen. If so, they expect a timely warning and advice. So you not only get watched more than anyone else on the television news programs to find out about the weather, sometimes you are actually saving lives and always performing a public service. And we thank you for that.

I'd also like to thank your outstanding partners at NOAA and the National Weather Service. I'm very proud of them and what they have done. In the past decade alone, they have doubled the amount of warning time we have to prepare for tornadoes, quadrupled the time for flash floods. And those are just two of the ways that our people here, with NOAA and the National Weather Service, and their research and technology have improved our nation's safety and planning.

You know, I spent most of my time over the last four and a half years telling the American people that we had to prepare for the 21st century, with all of its new opportunities and all of its new challenges if we want to keep the American Dream alive for everyone who will work for it and maintain our leadership for peace and freedom, and keep our country coming together with all of its diversity and clash of interests, whether it's racial and ethnic or religious or whatever. And we have really focused on trying to just get the country to think about how we have to build these bridges to the future, how the future will be as we want it to be.

Clearly, to me, this climate change issue is one of the principal challenges that we face -- a challenge that, if we meet it, will ensure the continued vitality of our small planet and the continued success of the United States throughout another hundred years; a challenge that should we fail to meet

it, could imperil the lives of our children and, if not our children, our grandchildren on this planet -- how they live, how they relate to others and whether they are able to continue to pursue their dreams in the way that our generation has.

In trying to come to grips with this climate change issue, and then talk to the American people about it, there are four principles that have guided me and I'd like to go over them very briefly.

First, I am convinced that the science is solid, saying the that climate is warming at a more rapid rate, that this is due in large measure to a dramatic increase in the volume of greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere, and that nobody knows exactly what the consequences are going to be or when they're going to be manifest, but, on balance, it won't be all that long and they won't be good. That is sort of a summary of what the prevailing scientific opinion is.

I know there are those in a distinct minority who have a different view, but I am persuaded, having carefully looked at all this, that the vast majority opinion is, in fact, in all probability, accurate. And that, therefore, we would be irresponsible not to try to come to grips with the results of these findings.

Now, unlike a lot of weather forecasts, there is something we can do about this weather forecast because we've got enough lead time -- at least we believe we do. So I think that's very important.

Now, the second thing I want to say is that if we know that the majority of our scientists have this view, and they say, we don't know precisely what the bad effects of global climate change are or exactly how fast the climate will change; that means we don't know how severe the droughts and the floods of the future will be in a particular region, but we know that it won't be long and the consequences won't be good -- if we know that, then it seems to me it is incumbent on the United States, when the nations of the world meet in December in Kyoto, Japan, to discuss climate change, that we be prepared to commit ourselves to realistic and binding limits on our own emissions of greenhouse gases.

With 4 percent of the world's population, we enjoy over 20 percent of the world's wealth. That also explains why we produce over 20 percent of the world's greenhouse gases. Those two things are related. Now, I believe that we have a responsibility to cut back. First, because the world is looking to us for leadership, and, secondly, because we won't have any influence in getting anybody else to cut back if we don't.

To give you an example of how significant that is, we've got all these other countries that are growing that have far larger populations than we do. We estimate that the developing countries of Asia and Latin America will grow at roughly three times the rate of the United States, Japan, Europe and Canada in the next 20 years. If that is true, we'll have to work very hard to maintain our 20 percent share of wealth. But even if we do maintain our standard of living and grow our economy, we won't be for long the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases. So if we expect others to show restraint, we must do the same and we must lead the way.

The third principle is that we must embrace solutions that allow us to continue to grow the economy while we honor our global responsibilities and our responsibilities to our own children. We have worked too hard here, from the first day, to revitalize the American economy to jeopardize our progress now. And, furthermore, we cannot make changes that will leave whole chunks of that economy out in the cold without having a response to them.

So the question is: Can we emphasize flexible, market-based approaches? Can we embrace technology to make energy production more efficient and put fewer greenhouse gases into the atmosphere? Is there, in short, a way out of astronomical taxes or heavy-handed governmental regulation that will permit us to gradually bring down our greenhouse gas production and still grow the economy and enjoy what we've been enjoying here for the last four and a half years? I believe the answer is, yes.

Now, let me just give you one example. Typically, about two-thirds of the energy produced by power plants is absolutely lost in the form of wasted heat, billowing out in clouds of steam, or pumped out into rivers. A company called Trigen has doubled the efficiency of power plants in Philadelphia, Chicago and Tulsa, simply by capturing the waste heat and turning it into steam to warm office buildings and fuel factories, and in the process, by definition, dramatically cutting the volume of greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere to do the same amount of work in all those places.

That is just one small example. The Vice President and I have been working with the Big Three automakers, our energy labs, and the UAW for years now on a new generation of vehicles that we hope will get triple the gas mileage of a typical car. Perhaps the design will even include a blend of gasoline and electricity in a way that avoids the worst problems of electric cars -- that is, they don't go very fast, and you have to charge them up too often -- but gets the benefit of the energy conservation elements of the cars.

All these things are out there, and we found over time -- how many times have you seen America rise to a challenge? We didn't know how we were going to get to the Moon when President Kennedy said we were going there, but we got there because we put our resource behind it, and we started with what we knew, and then, in the process of exploring the outer limits of what we knew, we found a lot of things we didn't know, and we were able to put them to work toward a common mission. This is a scientific mission even more important in its implications than our race to the Moon in the 1960s. And yet we know a very great deal about how to do it without crippling the American economy.

Finally, because of what I said earlier, because we represent only 4 percent of the world's population, and because the developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, increasingly, are going to grow at three times the rate of the developed countries, I believe we have to ask all nations, both industrialized and developing, to be a part of this process.

I'm happy that other countries are developing. It's actually good for our economy when countries move from the ranks of the very poor countries into middle income countries, because then they can do more business with us. So it helps us when other people lift their children out of poverty and have a brighter future. It also means that they, too, however, become bigger energy users, and it imposes on us even heavier responsibilities, all of us, to change our patterns of energy use so that all of us can grow our economies without contributing to this greenhouse gas problem.

But because of the growth rates in the future, both the population and economic growth and the associated energy use, we could have a great deal of effort by Europe, by the United States, by Canada, by Japan, and still be in very difficult straits on this issue within 40 years, unless we get real solid support from the developing countries. Should we make allowances for their growth? Of course, we should; but in some way, in a fair and appropriate way they should also participate in this agreement. Now, if that doesn't happen, then their emissions, the emissions of the developing world will exceed the emissions of the developed world by about 2035.

Now, those are the things I want to do. I want to try to get America to accept the fact that the majority scientific opinion, the overwhelming majority scientific opinion is accurate. I want us to make a commitment, therefore, to go to Kyoto with binding targets. I want us to implement our commitment in a way that continues to grow the economy in a different way, but still maintains our robust entrepreneurial economy. And I want to find a fair way for the developing countries to participate. Those are my four objectives.

On Monday, we're going to try to take another step toward putting these principles into effect. We invited noted economists and industrial leaders, state and local governmental leaders, and leaders from the environmental and scientific communities here to the White House Conference for a White House Conference on Climate Change. Our goals are simple. We want the American people to understand the importance of the challenge and to allow outside experts to help inform the policy process so we'll make the best decisions.

Now, I'd like to ask you to think about this in terms of the work you do. When we had the terrible floods in the Dakotas and Minnesota not very long ago, a young congressman from South Dakota was in my office -- happened to be a member of the other party -- I don't believe there's a partisan aspect to the weather -- although some days it seems stormier than others around here. And this young man said -- I was talking about climate change, and he said, Mr. President, we've had 300 year floods in the last nine years. He said, does that mean I get to go 500 years without one? And you'd be amazed how many people just sort of from their anecdotal, personal experiences have this sense that there is more instability in the climate than there used to be, and understand that it has something to do with the changes in the relationship of where we live and whatever little patch of land we occupy and this larger globe and the atmosphere which envelopes it.

So what I hope will happen at the Climate Change Conference I also hope has happened a little here today. What I want to do is to deal with the central political problem here -- and I don't mean political in terms of party politics; I mean political in terms of how the body politic, how our society responds to this -- if we have a problem that is a clear and present danger that we can see and feel, we get right on it. How did we get to the Moon? Because the Russians beat us into space, so we knew how to keep score, we would beat them to the Moon. And if we didn't, since there was a Cold War and nuclear weapons, goodness knows what the consequences would be.

Now, it is much harder when you have no manifestation of this problem unless you happen to live in a place which has experienced an unusual number of or intensity of weather aberrations. And, even so, they go away and then you can start thinking about something else. It is difficult when you are not quite sure how to keep score, and you don't know who the enemy is.

All of you live with the weather as a fact of life, and a pre-condition for life on our planet in a way that nearly no one else in the world does. The men and women of America who tune in and listen to you talk about the weather and rely upon you are either enlightened or entertained or disappointed by whatever it is you say and however you say it. Most of them are sort of like Sergeant Joe Friday -- they just want the facts.

This is a case where people need the facts and the context. Where if all you do is just try to get people to start thinking about this -- you might not even know how you feel about it, or exactly what you think should be done. That's okay. But I would ask you to think about whether you should ask people to think about this.

Because our country always gets it right. We always get it right once we focus on it. But right now, while the scientists see the train coming through the tunnel, most Americans haven't heard the whistle blowing. They don't sense that it's out there as a big issue. And I really believe, as President, one of my most important jobs is to tell the America people what the big issues are that we have to deal with. If we understand what the issues are, if we start with a certain set of principles, we nearly always come to the right place.

That's what we did -- we passed the first balanced budget in a generation earlier this year, partly because we had already gotten the deficit down by over 85 percent, but partly because we got people in both parties to agree that there's a goal -- we're going to balance the budget -- and then the Republicans said, here are the things we want in the balanced budget plan, and the Democrats said, here are the things we want, and we found out a way to reconcile them, and still do the most important thing, which was to balance the budget, and we did it.

That's how we have to deal with this climate change issue. We have to say, there's a challenge out there, we have to respond to it, here's the principles we want in our response. And then we have to get after it. But we can't do it until we build the awareness of the American people.

So I hope you will think about how your work has been affected by what we believe is going on in the climate. And, again, I don't ask for you to advocate or do anything outside whatever your own convictions or parameters of permissible speech are, but I do think it's very important, since you have more influence than anybody does on how the American people think about this, that at least you know what you believe and how you think we should proceed.

Thank you for being here, and thank you for your leadership.

The first time I ever really thought about this issue in this way was when I was reading Al Gore's book which preceded our partnership. Sometimes he thinks all the great things he did preceded our partnership. I think most of the greatest things he's done occurred after our partnership started. I remember so well -- one of the first times -- we have lunch once a week, and I remember one week we were having lunch very early in this term -- this is over four years ago. And he said, just in case you missed it in my book, here's the chart -- of how much we are increasing the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and here's 10,000 years and here's the last 50, like that.

So I can now pass Al Gore's climate test, and I'm very proud of that. I think we should be proud that we have a Vice President who not only cares about this issue, but knows enough about it to have an opinion worthy of the respect of any scientist in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice President.

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Speeches



Michael V. Terrell

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**THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Vice President**

For Immediate Release

Contact: (202) 456-7035

**REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
TO WEATHER FORECASTERS
ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

**THE EAST ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON DC
2:03 P.M. EDT
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1997**

Transcript by Federal News Service, Copyright 1997. (202-347-1400)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: (Applause.) Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the president and the first lady it's my honor to welcome you to the White House. And before I present the president to you I want to briefly acknowledge our Deputy Secretary of Commerce Robert Mallet (sp), our Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Rich Romenture (sp), the Director of NOAA Dr. Jim Baker. I think James Lee Witt left but was here. Dr. Jack Gibbons, the president's science adviser; Katie McGinty, the chair of the Council on Environmental Quality; Todd Stern, who is assistant to the president's staff secretary heading

up the president's climate team; Dan Tarullo, assistant to the president for international economic policy. And I want to especially acknowledge as a group all of the scientists who spoke at NOAA this morning.

I understand that they did a very thorough job, and I want to thank them on behalf of the president. And we are so delighted to welcome all of you to the White House. And not only because of the opportunity it provides to have an exchange about this important issue, but also because in the words of one of you who came through the line, ``Finally'' -- this is his phrase -- ''Finally you guys get to meet a group that get more flak than you do.'' (Laughter.) And I imagine it's not very easy being a weathercaster --(laughter) -- and I'm sure you can all tell some great stories about incidents that you've run into.

But in any event, we are just delighted that you are here. I'm going to have a chance to talk with you at a little bit more length in a few moments.

It is my pleasure to present the president to you not only as the president of our country, but as a personal friend I've been privileged to work with close at hand for almost five years now. And I just want to say on a personal note that when an issue like this one comes up that's extremely complex, extremely difficult, excruciatingly difficult, it really is a great thing for a country to have as president somebody who really rolls up his sleeves and asks every time what is the right thing to do, what are the real best interests of the people of the United States of America. It's really a privilege and a pleasure to work with him, and it's an honor for me now to present to you the President of the United States, Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I appreciate the kind words. And ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your warm welcome of me back to this podium here. And actually, the president's kind of put me on the spot because he's emphasized the fact that I am not a scientist. I am a lay person speaking to a group made up mostly of scientists. And so I want to convey my own keen awareness of that fact here at the outset and ask for your indulgence as I attempt to describe why I believe this issue is so important in a lay person's terminology.

Many of you have heard the old story -- probably a bigger percentage of this group than most because it's fundamentally about a weather story. Anybody have Johnstown, Pennsylvania in his or her coverage area? Right.

Well, the fellow who talked about -- the survivor of the Johnstown flood who talked about it on every occasion -- I'm sure you've heard this -- and people used to walk the other way when they saw him coming because all he would talk about is the Johnstown flood. When he died he went to heaven and Saint Peter said, ``Well you take it easy today, and tomorrow you'll have five minutes to just introduce yourself to the assembled gathering.'' And he said, ``Well, that's great. I'm going to tell them about the Johnstown flood.'' And Saint Peter said, ``Well now, you know, are you sure you want to do that?'' And he said, ``Yeah, it was the most exciting thing that happened to me on Earth.'' And Saint Peter said, ``Well, that's okay, but just remember that Noah is going to be in the audience and --'' (laughter, scattered applause.) So I'm keenly aware that Noah is in the audience here. (Laughter, applause.)

My own way of thinking about this is as a symptom of a larger, underlying issue. You know, we've heard about the destruction of the rain forests and the hole in the ozone layer and

the disappearance of living species. And I read an article the other day about the depletion of all the ocean fisheries and the fact that all these fish that people eat are dwindling in numbers. And there are all of these issues that kids talk about in schools and global warming.

I think they're all related in the following sense. In our lifetimes, we have been seeing some profound changes in the relationship between humankind and the Earth's environment. And that's the first obstacle, in my opinion, to really coming to grips with this issue of global warming. Because right away, most of us think, ``Well, now wait a minute, the Earth is so big, you know, we can't possibly have an impact on the global environment.'' That used to be true. I think that that has changed in our lifetimes, and I think it's changed for three reasons that have all come together in the last century or so.

The first big change is population. If you think about it, you know, we're now adding the equivalent of one China's worth of people ever 10 years now. If you put that in the perspective of the history of the human race, well, that's something that's very, very new.

If you go back to the beginning of the human species -- and I don't want to try to put a date on that, because I'm from Tennessee and we had a trial there about that -- (laughter) -- and I'm a little sensitive. But if for purposes of argument you assumed that the scientists are correct and that the human species emerged probably about 140,000, 160,000 years ago, and there were two people -- we know that much -- and then for the first, you know, tens of thousands of years, for the first 130,000 years, there wasn't very much change at all, until the first cities -- and I'm pretending to draw a graph here -- (laughter) -- and then when the last Ice Age ended and agriculture began and the first cities emerged 9,000, 10,000 years ago, it started to go up a little bit. By the time of Julius Caesar there were 250 million people on Earth. And by the time Christopher Columbus sailed, there were 500 million people on Earth. And by the time of the American Revolution, there were 1 billion people on Earth. And by the end of World War II, there were 2 billion people on Earth. That's when I was born, and when some of you were born.

And just to recap, you go 10,000 generations before you get to 2 billion people. But in my 49 years, we've gone from 2 billion to 5-1/2 billion. And in the next 50 years, we're going to 8 or 9 billion, right up to the ceiling.

And so if it takes 10,000 human lifetimes to get to 2 billion and then in one human lifetime you go from 2 billion to 8 or 9 billion, that is a huge change in the relationship between people and the Earth. It's happening right now, in our lifetimes.

Now the second factor is the scientific and technological revolution, which magnifies the amount of power that we have, for good or ill. And most of it's been for the good -- raising our standard of living. And a lot of the solution to this undoubtedly will be more new technology and better technology. But the fact is, some of the new power that we have, we haven't always used them wisely, we haven't always really been able to anticipate some of the consequences that would come from it.

Take nuclear weapons, for example. Warfare has been with us for as long as histories have been written. But once nuclear weapons were invented, the power transformed the consequences of warfare, so we had to change our way of thinking about it.

In the same way, the way we get food and shelter and exploit the earth for sustenance has been with us for a long time. But now some of these new abilities have consequences that we haven't always anticipated.

One quick example on that: chlorofluorocarbons, the culprits in the ozone hole, which you

all know about very, very well, they were first invented in this century, and they weren't produced in large quantities until after World War II. And yet just in that short period of time, in our lifetimes, most of us, they have transformed the concentration of chlorine in the atmosphere. The air we're breathing in this room has six times as many chlorine atoms in each lungful than it did when this room was built or when we were born. And that doesn't hurt human health. But indirectly it is the reason for that cause in the stratospheric ozone layer.

But my point is if we are able just in a few decades to change by a factor of six the concentration of a basic chemical in the atmosphere of the earth, that's evidence that some of these new technologies can have a huge impact. And we don't anticipate them. That's really the third cause of this underlying change. Our grandparents would pay more attention to canning and recycling and reusing things, and we kind of sometimes act as if we don't have to take consequences for the -- take responsibility for the consequences of what we do.

But in any event, when I was in the sixth grade we had a geography class with a map of the world in front of the room that the teacher would pull down when it was time for class. And one of my classmates -- this is a true story -- was fascinated with the fact that South America and Africa had kind of the same outline, South America and the west coast of Africa. And he raised his -- he got up his courage one day and finally asked the teacher ``Did they ever fit together?'' And the teacher said ``That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. That's'' -- and he went on to become a drug addict and a ne'er-do-well. (Laughter.) But the -- his creativity was stifled, but -- (laughter).

You know, in the middle and late 1950s most people thought that ``continental drift'' was just a lunatic kind of idea because they had an assumption that continents are so big they obviously can't move. Yogi Berra once said ``What gets us into trouble is not what we don't know, it's what we know for sure that just ain't so.'' (Laughter.) And one of the things that we know for sure that ain't so now is that we can't have a big effect on the earth's climate system. That used to be true. But now because of the growing numbers and the more powerful technology and our attitude toward it we can have a big effect. And the most vulnerable part of the earth's environment is the atmosphere, because it's the smallest part. It's so thin.

My friend Carl Sagan used to say that if you had a big globe of the earth that had a coat of varnish on it, the thickness of the atmosphere would be less than that coat of varnish, relatively speaking. Of course, y'all -- this is one of the many things y'all know much better than I do. But the fact is if you go from Pennsylvania Avenue straight up to the top of the sky, it's not as far as it from here out to National Airport, where most of you flew in, up to the top of the troposphere. It's very, very thin. And that's the reason why we're able to change the composition of chlorine in the atmosphere, and it is the reason why we are now able to change the composition of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. And, of course, CO₂ is the main one.

Now, here is where I got involved in this and the whole reason I became interested in this. I had a teacher. And back in the 1950s -- 1957 and 1958 -- there was an event worldwide called the international geophysical year. Many of you probably remember that a lot better than I do. Some of y'all took -- played prominent roles in it.

Well, this man's name was Roger Revel (sp). And he played a unique role in it. He was the first and only person to say ``Let's measure CO₂ in the atmosphere.'' And up until that time there had never been such measurements. And some years after that in the middle 1960s when I went to college he was a teacher, and he presented the results of what they were finding. And that's the whole reason why I got interested in this.

Now, if you'll forgive me -- I can't draw as well as y'all can, either, by a long shot, either. But this is what he showed. (Pause.) And that's -- most of you know this very, very well. That's what's happening to CO₂ in the atmosphere. And the reason why it goes up and down once a year is, of course, that most of the land mass on the earth is north of the equator. And, you know, you got all of the Eurasian land mass and all of North America and Mexico, just a little bit of South America and a little bit of Africa and Australia below it. So three-quarters of the land mass of the earth is north of the equator, so three-quarters of the vegetation is north of the equator. So when it's spring time in our part of the world and the leaves come out and the deciduous vegetation in the northern hemisphere, then the whole earth, so to speak, takes a big breath in of carbon dioxide. And so the concentrations go down worldwide. And then in the fall obviously the reverse happens and the leaves fall, and all that carbon dioxide that's been locked up in the vegetation is exhaled back into the atmosphere, and the concentrations go back up again. But obviously from -- as it's easy to see from this, the peaks each year keep going up.

He presented six or seven -- the first six or seven years, and I followed that after that time because it really was striking to me, and later on in the House and then in the Senate tried to see what had happened to it. And, of course, as you know, it has kept on going up rather dramatically. And obviously the basic dynamic is very, very well known that when you have that thicker blanket of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, the infrared radiation from the sun is trapped in larger quantities and the temperature of the earth begins to go up.

But the chart that the president was talking about -- and I hope you'll forgive me for showing this, but this is the one he was talking about here. This is -- can y'all see that? This is from Antarctica. And there there's two miles of ice. And each year a little bit more falls. It's technically classified as a desert because the precipitation is so low. I couldn't get over that when I went down there because it sure doesn't look like a desert, but because each annual layer is so thin, thousands of layers can stack up without the weight of the column crushing them completely. And so they can dig down through those layers of ice and measure the bubbles of air trapped when the snow fell each year. In exactly the same way that foresters can bore a hole into a tree trunk or cut the tree down and read the tree rings, they can measure each year's atmosphere when the snow fell in Antarctica. And it's kind of a time machine enabling them to read what the CO₂ content was and also to read what the temperature was. And that's a little more complicated and out of my depth. But the way it's explained to me is that there are different isotopes of oxygen -- oxygen 16 and oxygen 18, I believe -- and the ratio in which they appear turns out to be a highly accurate thermometer that enables them to measure exactly the temperature in the air when the snow fell.

Well, anyway, that's what this chart is all about. And it looks more complicated than it is. It only has two lines. This is the temperature level here in yellow, and this is the CO₂ level in blue. This is the present day here on the right-hand side of the graph, and it goes backwards in time 160,000 years, to the time when the scientists say people first appeared on earth in our modern form. And this is the last Ice Age here. This is present day temperature, this is the last Ice Age. This is the next-to-last Ice Age. And this is the period of great warming in between the last two ice ages.

Now, in New York City, for purposes of comparison, this is the difference between a nice day like today and having one mile of ice over your head. That much difference on the cold side is the difference between glaciers covering that much of North America and not. So it's a

huge difference.

Now, on the CO2 end of this, it has fluctuated between -- well, here's the last Ice Age, here's the next to last Ice Age, and here's the period of warming in between the two Ice Ages. And it has fluctuated between 190 to 200 parts per million to around almost 300 parts per million.

Now, there are two points that this graph makes to me. The first one is these two lines appear to me to go together. If my sixth grade classmate who asked whether South America and Africa fit together could see this graph, he would say ``Looks to me like they fit together.'' And, in fact, they do. The exact relationship is complex. There's mutual causality. But the fundamental reality is that higher levels of carbon dioxide warm the atmosphere and temperatures go up.

Now, the second point of this graph is the one that I think is the most significant point. This is the current level of CO2. We are now in the process with our growing numbers and new technologies, putting so much CO2 in the atmosphere now it's unbelievable. And we are pushing the level of CO2 in the atmosphere up so that in the lifetimes of some of our children we will see CO2 levels up at -- it goes up one more. There you go. Can you get that? Okay -- up to that level.

Now, if for as far back as we can measure CO2 and temperature have gone up and down in lockstep and if we are now in the process with this new relationship we have to the earth's climate pushing the level of CO2 up there, then shouldn't we take responsibility for changing that? Shouldn't we accept responsibility for the consequences of what we're doing?

I think this is an ethical issue, because folks that say ``This is no problem, we shouldn't worry about it, it's not anything to occupy our time,'' what they're really saying is that it's probably perfectly all right to push the CO2 concentrations in the earth's atmosphere up to that level. I think it's probably crazy. And I think that if our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, living through the expected and predicted consequences of this, could reach back in time and say to us, ``Did you know you were doing this? Did you know it was going to have this effect on us?'' And we said, ``Well, we knew basically the facts, but we thought it was perfectly all right. We didn't think we had to worry about it.'' I don't think that's an ethical answer. I think we have a responsibility to them to do what we can to do something about this and change this.

Thank you. You can -- here; we can just put this down like this. What about that?

Q (Off mike.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Okay. Now let me finish up real fast here.

There are people who say the evidence isn't in. (Sighs.) We had a meeting earlier this -- earlier today about tobacco, and we had the joint leadership of the Congress down and other -- the committee chairs and so forth, to talk about the tobacco issue.

You know, the surgeon general's report came out in 1964, 33 years ago. And we have been -- we have allowed ourselves to be manipulated a little bit by a group of people that have said, on behalf of tobacco companies, for all this time, with a straight face, ``There is no link between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer.''

And I come from a tobacco state. And you know, I've heard this all my life. But long after

the scientists and the doctors said, ``The evidence is in," there were some people casting doubt upon it, long after the mainstream group said, ``Look, you know, the argument's over. This is a very serious threat. More people die of this each year than Americans died in World War II. When can we start doing something about it?"

If you asked the scientists today, ``Exactly how does smoking cigarettes cause lung cancer," they will say, ``We really don't know how to cross all the Ts and dot all the Is. We really don't know. But if you look at the number of people who smoke cigarettes and get lung cancer, and the number of people who don't and the much smaller percentage that get lung cancer, you can tell that there is a close relationship." And of course, they dig much more deeply into the science, and they home in on it to the point where virtually all reasonable people say, ``Yes, smoking causes lung cancer. Let's do something about it."

This is comparable, but there are in this case also people who will say, ``We do not have the evidence."

Now of course, there are ways to see the effects of this -- the hot years we've been having, the increases in temperature.

I went to Glacier National Park last month -- or earlier this month. And if you've been there, you know what a beautiful place it is. In 30 years there will be no glaciers in Glacier National Park. It'll be the Park Formerly Known as Glacier, with all apologies to the Artist Formerly Known as Prince. (Laughter.)

But I went to a place called the Grinnell Glacier, and they had marked off where it was previously and where it is now, and it's really clear. It's really obvious on the ground.

You may remember a few years ago, when they discovered that 5,000-year-old man in the Alps, in Italy, I believe it is. You remember that guy? And you know, how come they never discovered that guy before? You know, these hikers walking along -- ``Hey, there's a 5,000-year-old man." (Laughter.) Looks like they would have noticed him before. (Laughter.) Well, of course, the answer is, the ice hadn't melted there before, and -- in 5,000 years.

So the -- and every mountain glacier in the world, with the exception of a very unusual couple of glaciers in Norway -- every glacier in the world in mountains is receding rapidly; sea levels going up, and so forth.

And you know, look at the -- in Chicago -- I know several of y'all are here from Chicago -- was it two summers ago where the 400 people died in the heat wave? There are some people here from Detroit. A few years ago somebody got malaria in Detroit -- a tropical, subtropical disease. In the month he got malaria, the average temperature was six full degrees warmer than the 30-year average for that month. Again, you know, you can't say that's cause and effect. But the odds are shifting toward the kinds of consequences that are associated with rising temperatures.

Now before I close, I just want to make one other point. And this, again, is something that you all can describe a lot better than I can. But what the scientists tell me is that weather is partly an engine for redistributing heat. And again, please forgive me for talking about something that y'all know much better than I do. But again, the way it's been explained to me is that the temperature at the Equator, being so much warmer than the temperature at the poles, that the redistribution of heat from the Equator to the poles, through wind currents and ocean currents and cloud systems, defines the overall long-term pattern. And if that ratio, between this temperature and that temperature changes, then the pattern can change.

And one of the things I'm sure they talked about this morning is that warming takes place

not just gradually worldwide, but much more rapidly at the poles, because when the -- when you have ice on a surface, 95 percent of the sun is bounced -- bounces right off it. But when the ice melts and it's open ocean, 95 percent is absorbed -- same thing in the tundra -- so that at the edge of the ice, when it's melting, it picks up more heat, and it's a feedback loop. And it eats away at the edge of it, so that at the poles, both the North and the South Pole, the ice melting -- and other factors -- cause it to warm much more rapidly. If it's a five-degree warming, that's maybe one degree at the Equator, and maybe eight or nine degrees at the pole.

So if the pattern of weather worldwide is established in a pretty stable pattern since the end of the Ice Age for redistributing heat, and you've had a stable relationship between this temperature and this temperature for all that time, and then all of a sudden this goes up only one degree and this goes up eight or nine degrees, all of a sudden those patterns of ocean currents and wind currents and cloud systems are vulnerable to change.

One scientist tried to explain it to me by -- this doesn't really work well, but he said that if you take your watch band and form a pattern, you can go up and down, and it still has the same pattern. But if you change a basic characteristic, like the angle of one of the edges, and you change it enough, at one point -- at some point it adopts a different pattern.

Look at El Nino. Look at what's happening to El Nino right now. It used to be -- and y'all correct me if I get these numbers wrong -- but it used to be one out of seven years, on average. Now it's three years out of five, or this -- the one before this was almost continuous for several years.

One of the news magazines this week has a graph showing what's been happening since the late '80s -- you know, before and after. It used to be once every seven years; now it's just very, very common. And of course, the consequences are easy for everybody to see.

But there are a lot of other sub-global systems that are affected by changes in water temperature and changes in these larger overall patterns.

Look at what's happening in Indonesia and Malaysia right now: planes crashing, boats colliding together, schools being closed, all because the pattern that they're used to has been disrupted. And the forest fires are out of control because they don't have the monsoon rains that they usually have at this time. And the consequences are very, very profound.

If we sit back and do nothing and allow this to happen without change, then what the mainstream scientists from every country in the world are telling us is that it's going to have profound changes in the pattern of climate and in the effects on people.

Well, let me just close by adding my thanks to those the president has already expressed, each and every one of you, for what you do every single day, for saving lives, for helping people plan their lives, for serving your communities in such a profoundly important way. And also, thank you very, very much for responding to the call of the president to come and spend a little time immersing yourself in aspects of this that NOAA and the other agencies involved here have spent so much time on. And on a personal basis, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak to you. I appreciate it very much. (Applause.)

(To staff) Could I do questions?

Thank you very much. I'd be happy to try to respond to a few questions, if you would like to throw any at me. Or comments. Yes, sir.

Q (Off mike) -- John Fisher from -- (off mike) -- South Bend, Indiana. There is a -- it seems to me there's still a debate about the effect that humans have on the contribution to

global warming and global climate change, yet both in remarks you made and in remarks by the president you seem to dismiss them as a big minority. You just referred to the ones on your side, if you will, of ``mainstream scientists''. Is the debate on that issue (within ?) the administration over?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: On the fact that there is a human factor in causing this? Yes. And not only in the administration, in the international panel on climate change, which has, what, 2,500 scientists from every country in the world, they have studied this for several years now. And just a couple of years ago they found what they call ``the smoking gun'' and came out with this consensus statement that there is now a discernible impact from human causes.

Now, one of the other obstacles to broadening the consensus on that is that as you all know better than everybody, the noise level in the system is so profound that there are going to be very, very big changes just in the natural course of events. You take hurricanes. Back in the 1930s, as y'all can say better than me, there was a string of powerful hurricanes, more frequent, more powerful than what we're experiencing now. And there are other extremes that are natural.

But out of that noise level, this consensus international scientific process has now said that they believe that debate is over, that yes, the human cause is now discernible. And as these concentrations grow it will become more profound and a much more significant part of the cause.

Q And the administration accepts that fact that that debate is over.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. On that one point, yes, sir. Here, and then there.

Q Kevin O'Connell (sp) from Channel 2 in Buffalo. Two things have happened in this country. Our concentration of industrial strength has moved from the traditional rust belt areas of the Great Lakes down into a more suitable climate for employment. And something that you touched on and so the president did as well is this whole idea of worldwide development. In an article in the newspaper the other day I was reading where some of the underdeveloped countries are saying ``It's all well and good for the United States to say `Help us with the environment' because they're already developed. How dare they develop and then put the clamp on us to develop?'' --which seems like a legitimate argument. What type of program, format, game plan do you have to explain to them that their participation is needed even though it may, in fact, slow their industrial progress?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, that's one of the main issues that this big conference coming up in Japan in December. You put your finger right on one of the big political questions: how do you get them to be a part of it?

We believe they've got to be a part of it, because their emissions are growing even more rapidly than ours, some of them --China, for example, India, for example. But as you said, it's easy to understand their basic point. You stated it very well. We've got our development; are we going to pull up the ladder before they have a chance?

Well, the response back to them from the developed countries is ``Look, there are new

technologies today. If we had it to do over again, we wouldn't do it exactly the same way, we'd use some new technologies that don't pollute as much, they're much more efficient, they're cheaper, they're more effective." You have a big problem in these developing countries with pollution anyway, not only in Indonesia and Malaysia. Go to Beijing, you know, the -- Sao Paolo, any of the giant cities in the developing countries. They're eager to buy new technologies that will allow them to improve their standards of living without causing their children to choke to death with the pollution that's already so bad there.

At the same time they address those problems, they're going to be solving this conflict also: allowing development without the kind of predicted increases in greenhouse gases. We're also talking with them about an idea of trading emissions. That's worked with sulphur dioxide extremely well. Not everybody's happy with it, but the cost of getting dramatic reductions in sulphur dioxide has been less than one-tenth of what was projected because when you trade the emission rights, then the market helps you find the most efficient way to do it.

Now the United States is the world leader right now in developing these new technologies. We have a program called the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles -- just to name one example -- that's under way in Detroit and Washington, where the auto companies and our national laboratories and the university communities are trying to dramatically improve the efficiency of automobiles with the same price and the same affordability and the same comfort levels. We believe we can do that.

I mean, look at what's happened with microprocessors in the computer industry. They're being used now for new materials, new design techniques. I think we're -- I think we have a tremendous opportunity to create more jobs, more new businesses, in developing and selling the new technologies that are going to be necessary.

Somebody -- yes, sir?

Q Mr. Vice President, Frank (Perrywell ?), Fox News in Philadelphia. Could you be a little more specific on your numerical goals for greenhouse gas reduction? When you go to Kyoto, do you have a plan that you want to say, "I want X percent reduction over so many years"?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: No country in the world has specified yet what their opening position is going to be at that conference in Kyoto -- (chuckling) -- and we're no exception. We are in the midst of a debate. We're consulting with business groups, labor groups, congressional members who are actively involved in this. And we have not finalized a numerical position for that opening round in Kyoto.

Kyoto, incidentally, will be the beginning of this process, not the end. If you think back to exactly 10 years ago, there was a meeting in Montreal, Canada, where the first treaty was signed to deal with these chlorofluorocarbons -- the chemicals that destroy the stratospheric ozone layer. At that time -- actually many years before -- the scientists had said, "This is a huge problem, and here's the cause, and you need to do something about it," but it took 13 years for governments in the world to get around to doing something. And then when they had that meeting in 1987, they established the framework, set some broad, general goals, and then, as more evidence came in, the public consensus built up, and then you had people in Congress saying, "Hey, we've got to do a lot more" -- same in parliaments in the rest of the world. And once the framework was established and we began to find the best ways to solve the problem, it ended up being a whole lot easier to solve than anybody predicted at the time.

They predicted that it would be impossible to solve that problem; absolute catastrophe, they said. Not that it's been easy, but it's been much easier than anybody predicted it would be.

Now, this meeting will be similar to that 1987 Montreal protocol meeting in that what'll happen is a framework will be established, some broad goals will begin moving down the road in the right direction. And then later in the process, as we find the best ways to solve it and public attitudes demanding more change grow stronger, then you'll see the process pick up steam.

Over here.

Q Mr. Vice President, Steve Shell (sp), Fox News Chicago. You mentioned Chicago a few moments ago. Were you suggesting that global warming was the cause of the loss of those 400 to 500 (guests ?), those 400 to 500 people?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: No. Let me be precise in what I'm saying. Right after I said that I talked about the malaria incident in Detroit, and I followed that up by saying you cannot say that any of these specific events is caused by global warming. But you can say and you should say the odds of these things happening are dramatically changing and going way up because the odds of having that kind of summer in Chicago are now much higher than they were 10, 20, 30, 40 years ago. And what they're predicting here in Washington DC, a study that came out recently, what do you call it? The heat index, which is a combination of temperature and humidity? In a doubled CO2 world, which is down here, the heat index in -- where's Rosina? Give me the numbers.

STAFF: The heat index in Washington DC in a doubled CO2 world would go from 75 to 90, and in a quadrupled CO2 world could rise well over 110.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: So just in a doubled CO2 world, an average heat index of 75 in Washington DC would go to 90 in Washington DC. And after that happened, you know, on any given day if somebody said is this because of global warming, we'd say well, there are a lot of factors. You know, there's normal fluctuation, it's July instead of May, et cetera, et cetera. But the odds of it being that much higher are shifted.

And Rosina mentioned a quadrupled world. You know, incidentally, some of the scientists several years ago in order to study this problem picked a doubled CO2 concentration as a convenient measuring stick to run the computer models and see what's going to happen. And so everybody talks about a doubled CO2 world.

Actually, in the scientific community now, a lot of them have kind of despaired of ever being able to stop it at a doubled world. And they say we're now headed toward a quadrupled CO2 level, which would be -- you know, as much as this goes up, it would go much higher than that. I don't believe that. I believe that we have enough sense to stop that.

I read an article one time, several years ago, about New York City before the automobile and how the population was growing and the number of horses and carriages were growing. And they projected out into the future what was going to happen. And they added up the amount of horse manure that would be associated with doing things the same way they did them then, with that increased population and more carriages and so forth.

You know, it's sort of comparable. I can't imagine that we would allow this to happen. But

as a free people in a self-government in the nation that is privileged to be looked to by other nations around the world for leadership, especially on problems that affect the whole world, we can't just sit back and assume that this is going to happen, because we're headed very rapidly toward a situation that can be extremely dangerous.

And this is another important point that the scientists make: It doesn't necessarily happen gradually. You can cross a threshold beyond which things change for the worse.

Look at pfiesteria. And I don't pretend to understand that, but it just -- it appeared all of a sudden in some of those areas feeding the Chesapeake Bay. Now, whatever the causes are -- and of course, there are scientists who believe they know what the causes are -- whatever they are, it got to a point where a threshold was crossed, and then all of a sudden, it was a big problem.

Look at the ozone hole. You know, those chlorofluorocarbons gradually increased in concentration, and then all of a sudden it crossed a point where this big hole in the ozone layer opened up.

There are similar kinds of things that the scientists say could happen in global climate that are difficult to predict. But it's not safe to say, ``Well, we can just gradually increase this.'' And of course, it's rapidly, in terms of what we've seen in the past, but in terms of a human lifetime, we're just increasing this steadily. We don't know when we'll reach the danger point.

In back there. Yes, sir?

Q Chuck Aither (sp) from Detroit.

Just wondering, within days of my accepting this invitation, I received an overnight package from the coalition -- I don't know how many others did -- indicating that we should come here to ask tough questions if there's any other evidence about solar activity. There are spots running on regular TV, indicating that we should be concerned about the fairness of whatever is proposed in Kyoto.

It seems to me that, this morning and this afternoon, we haven't heard specific recommendations, outside of hybrid cars and engine changes, which impact Detroit greatly, about what you would expect from us as Americans or from members of a world society; what we should do, as we would during an Ozone Action Day, to change our activities to help out. What specifics could you share with us that you might present?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, we need to put a greater emphasis on this partnership with Detroit in developing the new generation of vehicles. We need to pursue similar partnerships, as we're doing in the building industry and in other industries. We need to institute cooperative measures that will allow the trading of emissions in the way that I described earlier. And we need to set some broad goals for emissions levels that are realistic and achievable and then try to get a worldwide agreement to meet those levels and that's what we're going to try to negotiate in this meeting in Kyoto.

Yes?

Q Kerri Coleman (sp), CBS Nightly News in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Vice President, you were talking about global population, you know, growing essentially out of control. Has the administration thought in any way, shape or form about policy affecting those developing countries relative to overpopulation. I know it's a sticky subject, but have you guys sat down

and thought about the recommendations to the rest of the world.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Yes sir, we have. And one of the first things actually in the first few days that President Clinton was in office, he signed an executive order changing a policy that had been called the Mexico City Policy because the last worldwide conference on population was in Mexico City and a previous administration had said the United States would not participate in any of these international programs and the president changed that. Then we went to the next worldwide conference which was in Cairo on population and development. The president asked me to lead the delegation there. We created a new consensus and got a new worldwide approach that most everybody in the world has joined into.

Now we probably don't want to spend much time on this, but the --this doesn't have to be as controversial as some people make it out to be. There are certain conditions which, when established in a country, lead to a dramatic change in their population growth rates. The scientists talk about what they call a demographic transition that goes from high birth rates and high death rates to low birth rates and low death rates. And most all of the developed countries, the advanced countries, have made that transition.

And you know, we think back -- we don't need to think back more than one or two generations in the United States to when our parents -- and certainly our grandparents -- were in families with six, eight, 10 kids and more. It hasn't been that long ago. But now, you know, it's -- the two-child family is the average and so forth.

Well, the developing countries still have very, very large families. What makes for that difference? It turns out that there are about three things:

Number one, child survival rates, which, when you think about it, is really important, because most of these countries don't have a Social Security system. They count on the fact that at least some of their children will survive into adulthood and take care of them when they're old. If you have a very high child mortality rate, and a high percentage of the children die in infancy or in childbirth, then you've got to have a lot of children in order to guarantee stability and -- I mean, you know, in your old age. And that's just a factor. So when you increase the survivability of children and decrease child mortality, it tends toward a lower family size.

Secondly, availability of birth control information and culturally appropriate and acceptable techniques. And that's the controversial part. But they decide that for themselves. And when that's available, that's the second factor.

The third factor is the empowerment of women, socially, politically, and in the context of the family, to participate in the decisions about childbearing. And I guess with some people that's controversial, too. I don't think it should be.

But when those three conditions are established, those countries make that change, and their population begins to stabilize.

We're actually beginning to experience some good news around the world with the beginnings of a stabilization in world population. But the momentum in the demographic system is such that we're inevitably going to go to eight or nine billion. The question is whether these changes will keep us from going to 10, 12, 14 billion. But there's emerging good news there. Now, that same kind of momentum, of course, is in the greenhouse gas emission part of this, too.

Yes, right here.

Q Curt Chappy (sp), WBLT Knoxville. Our viewers want to know ``How's it going to effect me personally?'' I guess my question is is what are your goals in the next 10 or 15 years? It looks like it's kind of heading up real quick. Can we turn it around, or is it going to be like a little kind of spike down and back up?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: No, I think we can definitely turn it around. It's going to be difficult. It will take time. But we can solve it.

Think back to the problem I mentioned about the chlorofluorocarbons. In Tennessee, over in middle Tennessee there's a company called Northern Telcom. They're actually a Canadian company, but their largest number of employers are in the United States. After that Montreal conference on how to solve that problem the CEO of that company said ``We're going to be the first to get rid of chlorofluorocarbons.'' And his engineers said ``We have no idea how to do that.'' And he said ``I don't care. We've got to do it.'' That stimulated creativity. And they began to ask ``What do we use these chlorofluorocarbons for that we can't do without them for?'' They used them to clean circuit boards. ``What can we use as substitutes?'' And they couldn't find acceptable substitutes. And then somebody asked ``Why do these circuit boards get dirty in the first place?'' And they started to think in a fresh way. And they developed a new approach called the no-clean process that completely eliminates chlorofluorocarbons.

Most all their competitors are paying them license fees now. They have the most productive, best, cheapest approach in the world.

It's now the industry standard. And they ended up making a lot of money from that decision by that CEO.

There are a lot of similar examples when we make up our minds that we've got to do something, we find a better way to do it. There are going to be all kinds of new technologies that come out of this effort to reduce the emissions of CO2. And, now, on a worldwide basis, that problem with an ozone hole is really being solved. Now, there's a black market problem and we're clamping down on that and there's still all kinds of things that need to be done, but it's a success story.

Let me -- I can only take a couple more because they tell me my schedule is getting rough. Yes sir.

Q (Inaudible) -- from Miami. I was struck by the analogy where you -- with the smoking stuff -- (inaudible) --

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Right.

Q Where do you see this event today in that process? Are we at the 1964 surgeon general's report are we somewhere further down the line. Is this where we begin the discussion on the future or how do you see it?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: No, I think we're significantly further down the line. The cause-and-effect relationship is firmer than established in 1964. There was subsequent surgeon general's reports after that. I don't know what the exact analogy would be, but I think that -- I

think that we're at the point now where a lot of people who had been fighting against this are now reevaluating their positions. I'll give you a couple of quick examples. One is a guy -- a scientist at NOAA. Is Tom Karl (sp) here? Yes sir. Years ago -- and forgive me if I'm misstating your history on this issue -- (laughter) -- but I remember reading some articles where he was raising real serious questions about this, that and the other. He's recently produced this ground-breaking analysis showing the increase in moisture in the atmosphere that comes as a result of this. More precipitation in one-time storm events because there's more coming off the oceans, the capacity of the atmosphere to hold it is increased, when the meteorological conditions present for a storm, the likelihood of a larger amount falling all at the same time is increased. I'll give you a second example. The CEO of British Petroleum, the largest producer of oil in the United States of America -- fields in the Gulf of Mexico and also on the North Slope. Brown -- his first name is John Brown, the CEO of British Petroleum, there's this article in the Los Angeles Times today.

British Petroleum unilaterally imposes greenhouse gas emissions on itself. He made a speech at Stanford and he said, ``I'm part of the oil industry. We, as an industry, have been pushing back against this concern. We've been classified as skeptical. I've just reviewed all the evidence. I believe the time to act is now. And so I'm changing this company's whole approach and we're going to shift over toward a much higher mix of renewable sources, much more emphasis on efficiency'' -- et cetera, et cetera.

He's going to be in the position of the that guy at Northern Telcom that I told the story about with chlorofluorocarbons. And we're at a point now where more and more people who have been on the other side are really looking at their hold cards and saying, ``You know, this is -- this is coming, and we've got to do something about it. Are we going to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution?''

In any event, I want to -- I want to thank all of you for coming here, because just by spending the time to engage in this dialogue, and especially to talk with the folks that talked with you in detail this morning, just by gaining so much more in depth knowledge about this from the people who spend full-time studying it, you are becoming part of the solution and we appreciate it very much. Thank you very much for coming to the White House. Appreciate it. (Applause.)

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON "BACK TO WORK"
American University
Washington, D. C.
September 9, 1997

Thank you very much. First, thank all of you for that wonderful welcome. I told President Ladner that after you gave me such a buoyant welcome, I really didn't want to speak. I thought I should quit while I was ahead.

I appreciate the President's welcome and his profound words. I thank Neal Sharma for his introduction and for his leadership here among the students. To Chairman Jacobs and Professor Mintz, Secretary and Mrs. Dalton, City Councilman Thomas; to all the trustees and alumni and faculty and staff and students who are here, and the friends of American University who are here.

There are many people in our administration who graduated from A.U., or who otherwise have affiliation with it, including your former President, Joe Duffy. And one of the most important is here with me today -- former professor Judy Winston, who is the executive director of my race initiative, about which I want to talk a little. But I'd like for Judy to stand wherever she is. She's here somewhere. Thank you, Judy. There she is.

At the start of a new school year, this is a time when students are going back to work, and when those of us here in Washington are going back to work after the August recess of Congress. It is a time of genuine hope and earned optimism for America. And I can hear it in your spirited voices here today. I think it's a good time for me to talk to you and to our country about what we have to do in the remaining months of this year to make the most of this moment in preparing our country for the 21st century.

It is now, hard for me to believe, almost six years since I first announced my candidacy for President. Then, in late 1991, America seemed to be moving toward the new century with uncertain steps. Dramatic changes in the way we live and work and relate to each other and the rest of the world threatened the values by which we live our lives. We were in danger of becoming a more divided nation at the very moment when we needed to be moving forward resolutely together.

On the day I declared my candidacy I said that our mission as a people must be to keep the American Dream alive for all who would work for it; to keep America the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity; and to bring our own people together across all the lines that divide us into one America. America's oldest and most enduring values -- opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all -- these things had to remain strong and vibrant in a new and different time, which required a new course of action.

Our nation has remained young and strong now for over 220 years by always meeting new challenges in ways that renew our oldest values. That is the wellspring of our greatness. Our nation was not founded on religion or race or geography, but on a set of incandescent ideals, which have been reiterated and reaffirmed and reembraced at every critical moment in our history -- Lincoln at Gettysburg; the Progressives forging a new freedom for an Industrial Age; Franklin Roosevelt rescuing America from the abyss in the name of our oldest ideals; Dr. King challenging America to live out the true meaning of our creed. At every single moment of challenge and change, we Americans have found a way to keep these old ideals not musty words scratched on parchment, but instead, living guideposts for a new era.

For four and a half years now, Americans have worked to make this a time of change for our generation. We set a bold new economic course, reducing the deficit by over 80 percent even before the recent balanced budget agreement, expanding exports through over 200 trade agreements, and investing in our people and their future. We set about establishing America's credibility in the post-Cold War world, forging new alliances and standing up for our values from Bosnia to Haiti. And we addressed a generation's accumulation of profound social problems, bringing work and responsibility and community action to bear on the challenges of crime and welfare and poverty. And we began to build a new government, not intent on doing everything, but not content to do nothing; instead, a progressive government committed to giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives.

Today we see the results. Unemployment remains below 5 percent; nearly 13 million new jobs since 1993; inflation remaining low and stable; investment growth and consumer confidence at their highest levels in a generation; after decades when they remained flat, finally family incomes beginning to rise again. Violent crime has dropped dramatically for years now. We have seen the largest drop in welfare roles in history. And many of our poorest urban and rural communities are in a springtime of renewal.

In late July, America reached a new milestone when I signed into law the first balanced budget in a generation. This was about more than numbers on a ledger. It embodies the single largest increase in aid to education since 1965. It includes the biggest increase in aid to help people go on to college and to community colleges and to graduate schools. The biggest increase since the G.I. Bill was passed 50 years ago -- and it will literally open the doors to college education to every person who is willing to work for it.

It includes the largest single investment in health care since the passage of Medicaid in 1965, largely designed to insure up to 5 million children who don't have health insurance today.

It restores just benefits for legal immigrants, and billions of dollars are provided to help move people even more from welfare to work.

Now, after years in which the deficit dominated our politics and dampened our economy, America finally has lifted that burden from the next generation. After years in which the two parties seemed often as tired and trapped as punch-drunk fighters in a ring getting smaller and smaller, finally we found a way for Democrats and Republicans to work together for the national interest. And in so doing, we've proved to ourselves that America can still work.

We are steering the vast changes underway today in technology, trade and our social makeup -- the very changes that once produced so much doubt and unease -- in ways that will ensure that they will become powerful forces for good. In all this I want to emphasize that we are not merely riding the crest of the latest rise in the economic cycle. Our economic plan with the balanced budget at its center is the platform on which we are building America's future. Americans of this generation are forging and leading an entirely new economy. A larger proportion of Americans work in a computer industry today than worked in the auto industry at the height of the 1950s. And in the cutting age industries of the future -- computers, biotech, aerospace -- America leads the world. But America also leads the world again, for the first time since the 1970s, in automobile production and sales.

In this new economy there still will be ups and downs; there will be recessions and crises; they'll demand action. But the economy has fundamentally changed. Once, the wealth of people came mainly from the gold in the ground or the abundance of our farmland or the power of our factories. Now you know as well as anyone it will come from the skills of our people and the power of our imagination.

The news is good today. And in the face of good news the easiest thing to do is to rest, to take a vacation, to believe our work is done and to be satisfied that our challenges are met. But complacency is not an option and vacations have to remain short in a time still full of challenge and change. There is, in fact, a lot more to do to renew our values, to strengthen our nation, to deal with problems still unresolved, if we are really going to give you the 21st century you deserve. Now we have to take the steps that are clearly before us. And the time to start is now, this fall, with a series of concrete actions we can take to cap a year of real progress for America.

First and foremost, we must press on to make opportunity available for all of our people. Equal opportunity is our central value, but the very meaning of that has fundamentally

changed. For example, in the 19th century, opportunity meant access to a land grant. In the 21st century, it will mean access to a Pell Grant to a community college, to a trade school, to a university. And more education is important. We have made enormous progress. As I said, this budget contains the biggest increase in funds to help give people access to higher education in 50 years; not only the largest Pell Grant in our history, but in the last two budgets 300,000 more work-study position, new opportunities for savings in IRA for college education, and tax credits that will literally make it possible for everybody in the country who doesn't have any access to college to get two years of college, and will help people to pay for four years and for graduate school. Nothing like this has ever been done before, and it will revolutionize opportunity when it comes to getting a college education.

But I want to explain something that's very important about why we're focusing on the next three months. The balanced budget agreement contains a five-year plan for balancing the budget and contains the tax cuts. It has a spending plan in it. But the spending plan still has to be implemented every single year. And that is what Congress will do in the next three months in passing appropriations. So they have to authorize the money for the Pell Grants. They must authorize the money for the work-study slots. They must authorize a doubling of funds for computers in every classroom so that we can meet our goal of hooking every classroom and library up to the Internet by the year 2000. They must authorize the America Reads initiative -- which will help us to mobilize some of those community service folks you were talking about, work-study students all across the country, thousands of AmeriCorps students going into our schools, working with teachers and parents to make sure every single 3rd grader in this country can read independently. We have to do that.

We also must get through the appropriations process with our commitment to national education standards intact. We know, for example, that America has the finest system of higher education in the world, and people come from all over the world to be a part of it. And I'm very proud of that. We also know, however, that we do not do as well as we should in our K through 12 education for all of our children. Of course, it's harder in America than a lot of other places -- we have more diversity. We have more racial diversity, we have more linguistic diversity, we have more cultural diversity, we have more income diversity than we would like. The other diversity is all to the good, I think.

But we are making progress. For the first time this year on the international math and science scores, our nation ranked well about the national average in math and science scores -- well above the world average in math and science scores -- for 4th graders. But we still ranked below the world average in scores for 8th graders, as our children meet adolescence and all the difficulties that many of them face come to bear. We have to do better.

We are the only major nation in the world that does not have high, clear, uniform academic standards of excellence in basic courses in public education. We don't have them. It is a legacy of our state constitutional responsibility for education K through 12 and local control of the schools. But uniform standards -- mathematics are the same in Maine and Montana. And children have to learn to read whether they live in Washington or the southern tip of Florida.

We are now on the brink of being able to have a nonpartisan board set up by Congress for this purpose, to approve the development of examinations of 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. There are some who don't think we should do it. They say it's a federal power grab. It isn't. The tests are voluntary. No state, no school district has to participate. The government is not developing the tests, we're simply paying for it.

But I hope that all of you who got here to this university will look at all the 52.2 million children enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in America now, the biggest number of children ever, from the most diverse backgrounds ever -- we are robbing them of the future you are here to claim if we let them get out of school without the basic skills they need to succeed in the university. And I hope you will support our efforts at national standards.

Now, your student body president made a wry remark about Social Security and I know a lot of you don't think it's going to be there. But it is. It is going to be there. Clearly, one of our most serious responsibilities is to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are there for the next generation of Americans. It is wrong to let people pay into the fund for a benefit they will never receive. That is wrong.

We will begin in the next three months to build on this budget agreement in dealing with Medicare. This budget agreement extends the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by a decade. In fact, the structural changes that we have built in may even save enough money to carry it far beyond that. But we will also appoint -- the leaders of Congress and I -- members of a bipartisan commission to study Medicare and make recommendations for how it can be preserved for the next generation of Americans well into the 21st century.

We have shown that we can put our fiscal house in order while improving services for our elderly. Now we have to secure the future of this program. And then, we'll be beyond that to deal with Social Security as well. We can do this. If we can balance the budget, we can plainly do this. These are problems that revolve around demographic changes in our society and we owe it to you not to have to face this burden. I am confident that we will fulfill our responsibilities.

The next thing we have to do is to continue our efforts to expand trade to the rest of the world. The United States is now the world's number one exporter again. But we must continue to do this. We must continue to do it not only because it is right for us, because it is right for the world. Let me just give you a couple of interesting statistics. We have less than 5 percent of the world's people in this country; we have about 20 percent of the world's wealth. We cannot maintain our wealth unless we sell what we have to the other 95 percent of the people in the rest of the world.

Second, the growing economies of the emerging countries, principally in Asia and Latin America, but also increasingly in Africa, are going to grow much more rapidly in the next 10 years than the advanced economies of America, Canada, and Europe. If we participate in that growth, we can move huge numbers of countries now classified as poor nations into the ranks of middle-income nations, where millions of children will have a more decent, more humane, more supportable future; where democracy will thrive; where we will have good partners not only in economic relationships, but also in solving the other problems of the world when you have to take responsibility for them.

The United States has a clear, clear obligation to continue to expand the frontiers of trade. And tomorrow, in the East Room at the White House, I will launch a campaign to persuade the Congress to renew the traditional authority presidents have had for over 20 years now to break down foreign barriers to America's goods and services. This is very important to you and your future.

We do not need to be afraid to trade with the rest of the world. We are the most productive economy in the world. There will always be changes in this economy. There will always be new jobs being created and some going away. But on balance, we have benefitted for 60 years by leading the way to integrate the world's economies. And that will promote peace; it will promote freedom; it will promote stability; it will raise the level of living standards in other parts of the world even as it maintains America as the world's most prosperous nation. And I hope you will support that as well.

As we expand opportunity, we must also continue to demand responsibility from our citizens. Among other things, we have a common responsibility to do all we can to strengthen our families for the 21st century. This new economy puts extraordinary pressures on parents, demanding more time away from their children, imposing new demands for affordable child care, bombarding children themselves with commercial images that make it harder than ever for them to be raised according to our most basic values.

We are working to pass a juvenile justice bill to help keep our children out of gangs, off of drugs and away from guns. We will host the first ever White House Conference on Child Care, to explore ways all sections of society, including our government, can better address perhaps the greatest problem facing working parents today. And we must make this historic opportunity real in our efforts to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco by passing sweeping legislation that focuses first and foremost on reducing smoking among young people. More people die from that than any other problem in our society today.

Next, we must meet a very large environmental challenge in the next three months. We will work toward a worldwide climate change treaty this December in Kyoto that protects the environment even as it promotes global growth by committing the nations that sign on to it to specific, clear guidelines in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. We know -- You can clap for that -- that's all right.

Now, there are students here from all over the world, students from all over our country. Many of you have witnessed -- and your families have witnessed -- in your own homes, significant changes in climatic patterns in the last decade, and more extreme climatic developments. It is becoming a part of the common parlance of America, all over the country, to talk about the 500-year flood we had along the Mississippi River. One member of Congress, who happened to be a member of the other party, said to me the other day -- he said, "Mr. President, we've had three 100-year floods in the last five years in my home state." He said, "Does that mean I get to wait 500 years before we have another bad flood?"

Many of you who are studying this issue know that a panel of over 2,500 scientists has concluded that the climate of the Earth is significantly warming in ways that will have not entirely predictable, but almost certainly destructive, consequences unless we do something about it.

This is something that will affect people of all incomes, of all backgrounds, from all parts of our country, and, indeed, the whole world. We need the young people of America, particularly the university students who are in a position to study this issue, to make this a gripping national issue. And we also need people who have the confidence in our ability to break new technological and scientific barriers to stand up and say, you cannot make me believe that we can't reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially and still grow the American economy. We could reduce them 20 percent tomorrow with technology that is already available at no cost if we just changed the way we do things.

Now, this will be a very controversial debate. And there will be people who say, President Clinton has spent five years killing himself to revitalize the American economy and now he's going to take it down overnight by committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America. That is not true. But if you let the sea level rise and we flood the southern coast of Florida and we flood the southern coast of Louisiana, and we otherwise disrupt what life in the United States is like over the next 50 years, then your children will pay the price for our neglect. We can grow this economy and do right by the environment. I think you believe that, and I need you to help me convince the American people that it can be done.

Finally, let me say we have a responsibility to improve the way our political system works. The amount of money raised by both parties is more than doubling now every four years. The primary driving thing is the cost of access to you, the voters. That is what is driving this, the cost of access -- through television time, through radio time, through mail, through printed materials. One of the things we have to do is to guarantee free or reduced air time for candidates for offices so that they won't need so much more money. And we are seeking that now.

But there is also a very important piece of legislation sponsored by Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Russ Feingold that will come to the floor of the Senate later this month. Every year I have been President I have supported a good campaign finance reform bill. And every year I have seen the bills blocked by a filibuster in the United States Senate -- every single year. Now, the people who don't want it this year say they're going to do it all over again. They may do it, but if they do it this year we intend to see that it happens in the full glare of public light. I ask for your support for campaign finance reform this year.

The third thing we have to do is to do a lot of work in the next three months to advance our interests and our leadership around the world. We live in a world very different from the Cold War world, and we still have to do a lot to shape it. We have an opportunity to lock in the gains of democracy and stability and free markets, and lay the foundations for the century in which you will live most of your lives.

So far this year, we have ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, so our soldiers and citizens will be safer from the threat of poison gas. We have worked hard to build an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe for the first time in history -- inviting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join NATO. I look forward to working with the Senate to ratify this historic step next year, and I'm pleased today that a group of America's leading citizens endorsed it.

We're forging new partnerships with Russia, with Ukraine, with Europe's other new democracies, working with all of our friends in Europe to give the people of Bosnia a chance to share in Europe's democratic future.

First we stopped the war and turned killing fields into playing fields again, and bomb shelters into schools. Now we have to redouble our efforts to build a lasting peace. In the months to come, we will continue to pursue peace in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland; continue to fight rogue states and terrorists; continue to make sure our military and diplomacy are the strongest in the world. But above all, in the remaining months of this year, we are going to reach out to our hemisphere and to Asia.

Over the last decade in the Americas, coups, conflicts, and command economies have given way to democracies and free markets. Next month I'm going to Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina to work to expand trade, to fight drugs, to protect the environment and to strengthen our partnerships. The Americas can become a stronghold for our own peace and security.

By the way, 70 percent of our increased trade in the last year has come from the Americas, from our own neighbors in our hemisphere and we should stick with them.

Because I want this effort to be truly bipartisan I reached my hand across the aisle to choose an Ambassador to one of our most important allies and neighbors, Mexico, when I asked the Republican Governor of Massachusetts, Bill Weld, if he would serve. I believe still that he is the best person to be Ambassador to Mexico. And I believe -- and I would believe this if there were a president of another party with a nominee with whom I did not agree -- I believe when a president nominates someone for a job that person is entitled to a hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee, and I think he ought to get it.

This fall, the President of China will come to Washington. China is home to a quarter of the world's people. In less than two decades, its economy may be the largest on Earth. America has a profound interest in seeing that China is stable, open, at peace with its neighbors. We want it to embrace political pluralism and the international rules of civilized conduct. We want a China that works with us to build a secure and prosperous future. China will choose its own destiny; but if we engage China, instead of isolating ourselves from her, we can help to influence the path it takes.

President Jiang's visit is an important opportunity, not so much for grand statements and dramatic gestures as for constructive work on common challenges like the one we face on the Korean Peninsula, or protecting the environment, or stopping

the spread of nuclear weapons, and for expanding the frontiers of free trade between us. It's also a chance for us to address candidly and face to face our differences on issues like human rights and religious freedom.

Sitting down together across the table is far more likely to produce progress than pointing fingers across the Pacific. So when President Jiang comes here, I hope the American people will welcome him, and will say, yes, we have things that we disagree with you about, but you represent a quarter of the world's people, a large measure of the world's future, and your people and our people will be better off if we find a way to forge that future together.

Finally, in the next three months, we will be working for new ways to preserve perhaps the most fragile value of all, the bonds of community that bind us together as Americans. In this century, we have absorbed wave after wave of immigrants, drawn here by our abundance and our ideals. This century has seen unparalleled racial progress as African Americans and other minorities join the American mainstream. Still, the very forces of progress that are propelling us forward could also pull us apart, threatening to isolate us -- each with our own Web page, but linked by few human bonds of community.

The age-old dilemma of racial inequality, racial prejudice, or just plain old fear and mistrust of people who are different from us is compounded by the new task of absorbing new immigrant groups into what is already the world's most diverse democracy. Within a decade our largest state, California, will have no majority race. Within just a few decades this entire country will have no majority race. We can study the demographic patterns and know what America will look like in the 21st century, but we have to look inside to imagine what America will be like in the 21st century. That answer is up to all of us.

I have asked the nation to join me in a great national conversation about race, an effort to redress imbalance, to root out hatred and prejudice, to deal with real underlying problems that may have nothing to do with race but that manifest themselves in racial inequality and tensions, and, above all, to bring Americans of different backgrounds together to face one another honestly across the lines that divide us.

Your President noted that you have people from 140 different racial and ethnic groups here on this university campus. Good for you. You can be America's laboratory. You figure it out and let us know.

This diversity of ours is a Godsend. It is a huge gift in a global economy and a global society. If we can find a way not only to respect our differences but to actually celebrate them, and still say what binds us together is even more important, we

will have solved the conundrum that is paralyzing Bosnia -- that is still leading to people blowing themselves up to kill innocent children in the Middle East -- that has my people in Ireland still arguing over what happened 600 years ago -- that has led to vicious tribal warfare in Africa, leaving hundreds of thousands of people hatcheted to death. And yet, look around this room.

This is a question of imagination, of vision, of heart. And it is also very important to be hard-headed about it; until everybody has economic opportunity that is real and educational opportunity that is real and streets that are safe, there will be racial disparities in America that will manifest themselves in things that look like racial discrimination whether they are, or not. We have to deal with the underlying real causes here, as well.

But don't kid yourselves -- fear of people who are different is an underlying real cause. How did people get to be Serbs or Croats or Muslims in Bosnia? How did they belong to the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, or the Muslim faith in Bosnia? It's an accident of history, of geopolitics going back hundreds and hundreds of years. The people are biologically indistinguishable. But they were more than happy to abandon decades of peace and begin within weeks to murder each other with abandon and shoot each other's children not very long ago.

There is something in us all that in our most defensive periods makes us want to find somebody else we can look down on -- I mean, no matter how bad it is for me, at least I'm not her or him. Isn't there? And every one of us at some point in our life has been guilty of that in some way or another.

You come here in this magnificent university environment, you cheer with your great enthusiasm and hope for the future, you look at each other and you're different and you like it. That's the way we've got to make daily life in America. People have to get up in the morning and feel good about this country with all of its diversity, because we have to know what's good about the differences between us and celebrate them, and we must know, too, what it is that binds us together: What are the requirements of membership in the American community? What do you have to believe in and be willing to live by and be willing to stand up for in order to be an American? That is what we are going to do. We have to visualize our future as a truly multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious democracy that still runs in a straight line from here all the way back to George Washington. I'm convinced we can do it, but I'm convinced that all of you have to lead the way.

Now, let me say that a lot of this work has to be done with Congress. And I'm very pleased by the relationship that we had working on the balanced budget. I'll work with them to do everything we can to implement the budget, to confirm the judges

and the others who await action. We are in uncharted territory, to some extent, but we know the times demand action of us, and I am sure the American people, without regard to their party, want us to work together in the public interest.

For all of you who are students here, consider this: It is now 844 days to the year 2000 -- to a new century and a new millennium and a new era of human endeavor. Will it bring new progress, new prosperity, and new greatness for America? It is basically up to us.

Thirty-four years ago here at American University, President Kennedy delivered what many people believe was his greatest speech. It was an era bristling with superpower tension, but President Kennedy looked forward and saw a day when the Cold War was a thing of the past. Because of decades of work to uphold our values by Americans of both parties, we are now living in the world John Kennedy imagined 34 years ago at American University.

So I leave you with this thought: It all depends on your imagination. It all depends on your imagination. Think how many children's lives we could save in all these trouble spots of the world if all the people with power and the people that support them just imagined their future in a different way -- just took their heart and their head together and came up with a different picture than the one they see before them every morning when they get up. It is the most important force in the world.

President Kennedy imagined the world we are living in today, 34 years ago in the speech here at American University. Now it is up to you and to me and to our fellow Americans to imagine what the 21st century will be, and then to do what is necessary to make that vision a reality for all our people. That is what I came here to ask for your help in doing -- for your help and for that of every other American. You've got a lot riding on it. And I'm betting that we're going to get there.

Thank you and God bless you.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 9, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON "BACK TO WORK"

American University
Washington, D. C.

12:30 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. First, thank all of you for that wonderful welcome. I told President Ladner that after you gave me such a buoyant welcome, I really didn't want to speak. I thought I should quit while I was ahead. (Applause.)

I appreciate the President's welcome and his profound words. I thank Neal Sharma for his introduction and for his leadership here among the students. To Chairman Jacobs and Professor Mintz, Secretary and Mrs. Dalton, City Councilman Thomas; to all the trustees and alumni and faculty and staff and students who are here, and the friends of American University who are here.

There are many people in our administration who graduated from A.U., or who otherwise have affiliation with it, including your former President, Joe Duffy. And one of the most important is here with me today -- former professor Judy Winston, who is the executive director of my race initiative, about which I want to talk a little. But I'd like for Judy to stand wherever she is. She's here somewhere. Thank you, Judy. There she is. (Applause.)

At the start of a new school year, this is a time when students are going back to work, and when those of us here in Washington are going back to work after the August recess of Congress. It is a time of genuine hope and earned optimism for America. And I can hear it in your spirited voices here today. I think it's a good time for me to talk to you and to our country about what we have to do in the remaining months of this year to make the most of this moment in preparing our country for the 21st century.

It is now, hard for me to believe, almost six years since I first announced my candidacy for President. Then, in late 1991, America seemed to be moving toward the new century with uncertain steps. Dramatic changes in the way we live and work and relate to each other and the rest of the world threaten the values by which we live our lives. We were in danger of becoming a more divided nation at the very moment when we needed to be moving forward resolutely together.

On the day I declared my candidacy I said that our mission as a people must be to keep the American Dream alive for all who would work for it; to keep America the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity; and to bring our own people together across all the lines that divide us into one America. America's oldest and most enduring values -- opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all -- these things had to remain strong and vibrant in a new and different time, which required a new course of action.

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was not founded on religion or race or geography, but on a set of incandescent ideals, which have been reiterated and reaffirmed and reembraced at every critical moment in our history -- Lincoln at Gettysburg; the Progressives forging a new freedom for an Industrial Age; Franklin Roosevelt rescuing America from the abyss in the name of our oldest ideals; Dr. King challenging America to live out the true meaning of our creed. At every single moment of challenge and change, we Americans have found a way to keep these old ideals not musty words scratched on parchment, but instead, living guideposts for a new era.

For four and half year now, Americans have worked to make this a time of change for our generation. We set a bold new economic course, reducing the deficit by over 80 percent even before the recent balanced budget agreement, expanding exports through over 200 trade agreements, and investing in our people and their future. We set about establishing America's credibility in the post-Cold War world, forging new alliances and standing up for our values from Bosnia to Haiti. And we addressed a generation's accumulation of profound social problems, bringing work and responsibility and community action to bear on the challenges of crime and welfare and poverty. And we began to build a new government, not intent on doing everything, but not content to do nothing; instead, a progressive government committed to giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives.

Today we see the results. Unemployment remains below 5 percent; nearly 13 million new jobs since 1993; inflation remaining low and stable; investment growth and consumer confidence at their highest levels in a generation; after decades when they remained flat, finally family incomes beginning to rise again. Violent crime has dropped dramatically for years now. We have seen the largest drop in welfare roles in history. And many of our poorest urban and rural communities are in a springtime of renewal.

In late July, America reached a new milestone when I signed into law the first balanced budget in a generation. This was about more than numbers on a ledger. It embodies the single largest increase in aid to education since 1965. (Applause.) It includes the biggest increase in aid to help people go on to college and to community colleges and to graduate schools. (Applause.) The biggest increase since the G.I. Bill was passed 50 years ago -- and it will literally open the doors to college education to every person who is willing to work for it. (Applause.)

It includes the largest single investment in health care since the passage of Medicaid in 1965, largely designed to insure up to 5 million children who don't have health insurance today. (Applause.) It restores just benefits for legal immigrants, and billions of dollars -- (applause) -- are provided to help move people even more from welfare to work.

Now, after years in which the deficit dominated our politics and dampened our economy, America finally has lifted that burden from the next generation. After years in which the two parties seemed often as tired and trapped as punch-drunk fighters in a ring getting smaller and smaller, finally we found a way for Democrats and Republicans to work together for the national interest. And in so doing, we've proved to ourselves that America can still work.

We are steering the vast changes underway today in technology, trade and our social makeup -- the very changes that once produced so much doubt and unease -- in ways that will ensure that they will become powerful forces for good. In all this I want to emphasize that we are not merely riding the crest of the latest rise in the economic cycle. Our economic plan with the balanced budget at its center is the platform on which we are building America's future.

Americans of this generation are forging and leading an entirely new economy. A larger proportion of Americans work in a computer industry today than worked in the auto industry at the height of the 1950s. And in the cutting edge industries of the future -- computers, biotech, aerospace -- America leads the world. But America also leads the world again, for the first time since the 1970s, in automobile production and sales.

In this new economy there still will be ups and downs; there will be recessions and crisis; they'll demand action. But the economy has fundamentally changed. Once, the wealth of people came mainly from the gold in the ground or the abundance of our farmland or the power of our factories. Now you know as well as anyone it will come from the skills of our people and the power of our imagination.

The news is good today. And in the face of good news the easiest thing to do is to rest, to take a vacation, to believe our work is done and to be satisfied that our challenges are met. But complacency is not an option and vacations have to remain short in a time still full of challenge and change. There is, in fact, a lot more to do to renew our values, to strengthen our nation, to deal with problems still unresolved, if we are really going to give you the 21st century you deserve. Now we have to take the steps that are clearly before us. And the time to start is now, this fall, with a series of concrete actions we can take to cap a year of real progress for America.

First and foremost, we must press on to make opportunity available for all of our people. Equal opportunity is our central value, but the very meaning of that has fundamentally changed. For example, in the 19th century, opportunity meant access to a land grant. In the 21st century, it will mean access to a Pell Grant to a community college, to a trade school, to a university. (Applause.) And more education is important. We have made enormous progress. As I said, this budget contains the biggest increase in funds to help give people access to higher education in 50 years; not only the largest Pell Grant in our history, but in the last two budgets 300,000 more work-study position, new opportunities for savings in IRA for college education, and tax credits which will literally make it possible for everybody in the country who doesn't have any access to college to get two years of college, and will help people to pay for four years and for graduate school. Nothing like this has ever been done before, and it will revolutionize opportunity when it comes to getting a college education. (Applause.)

But I want to explain something that's very important about why we're focusing on the next three months. The balanced budget agreement contains a five-year plan for balancing the budget and contains the tax cuts. It has a spending plan in it. But the spending plan still has to be implemented every single year. And that is what Congress will do in the next three months in passing appropriations. So they have to authorize the money for the Pell Grants. They must authorize the money for the work-study slots. They must authorize a doubling of funds for computers in every classroom so that we can meet our goal of hooking every classroom and library up to the Internet by the year 2000. It must authorize the America Reads initiative -- which will help us to mobilize some of those community service folks you were talking about, work-study students all across the country, thousands of AmeriCorps students going into our schools, working with teachers and parents to make sure every single 3rd grader in this country can read independently. We have to do that. (Applause.)

We also must get through the appropriations process with our commitment to national education standards intact. We know, for example, that America has the finest system of higher education in the world, and people come from all over the world to be a part of

it. And I'm very proud of that. We also know, however, that we do not do as well as we should in our K through 12 education for all of our children. Of course, it's harder in America than a lot of other places -- we have more diversity. We have more racial diversity, we have more linguistic diversity, we have more cultural diversity, we have more income diversity than we would like. The other diversity is all to the good, I think.

But we are making progress. For the first time this year on the international math and science scores, our nation ranked well about the national average in math and science scores -- well above the world average in math and science scores -- for 4th graders. But we still ranked below the world average in scores for 8th graders, as our children meet adolescence and all the difficulties that many of them face come to bear. We have to do better.

We are the only major nation in the world that does not have high, clear, uniform academic standards of excellence in basic courses in public education. We don't have them. It is a legacy of our state constitutional responsibility for education K through 12 and local control of the schools. But uniform standards -- mathematics are the same in Maine and Montana. And children have to learn to read whether they live in Washington or the southern tip of Florida.

We are now on the brink of being able to have a nonpartisan board set up by Congress for this purpose, to approve the development of examinations of 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. There are some who don't think we should do it. They say it's a federal power grab. It isn't. The tests are voluntary. No state, no school district has to participate. The government is not developing the tests, we're simply paying for it.

But I hope that all of you who got here to this university will look at all their 52.2 million children enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in America now, the biggest number of children ever, from the most diverse backgrounds ever -- we are robbing them of the future you are here to claim if we let them get out of school without the basic skills they need to succeed in the university. And I hope you will support our efforts at national standards. (Applause.)

Now, your student body president made a wry remark about Social Security -- (laughter) -- and I know a lot of you don't think it's going to be there. But it is. (Applause.) It is going to be there. (Applause.) Clearly, one of our most serious responsibilities is to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are there for the next generation of Americans. It is wrong to let people pay into the fund for a benefit they will never receive. That is wrong.

We will begin in the next three months to build on this budget agreement in dealing with Medicare. This budget agreement extends the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by a decade. In fact, the structural changes that we have build in may even save enough money to carry it far beyond that. But we will also appoint -- the leaders of Congress and I -- members of a bipartisan commission to study Medicare and make recommendations for how it can be preserved for the next generation of Americans well into the 21st century.

We have shown that we can put our fiscal house in order while improving services for our elderly. Now we have to secure the future of this program. And then, we'll be beyond that to deal with Social Security as well. We can do this. If we can balance the budget, we can plainly do this. These are problems that revolve around demographic changes in our society and we owe it to you not to

have to face this burden. I am confident that we will fulfill our responsibilities. (Applause.)

The next thing we have to do is to continue our efforts to expand trade to the rest of the world. The United States is now the world's number one exporter again. But we must continue to do this. We must continue to do it not only because it is right for us, because it is right for the world. Let me just give you a couple of interesting statistics. We have less than 5 percent of the world's people in this country; we have about 20 percent of the world's wealth. We cannot maintain our wealth unless we sell what we have to the other 95 percent of the people in the rest of the world.

Second, the growing economies of the emerging countries, principally in Asia and Latin America, but also increasingly in Africa, are going to grow much more rapidly in the next 10 years than the advanced economies of America, Canada, and Europe. If we participate in that growth, we can move huge numbers of countries now classified as poor nations into the ranks of middle-income nations, where millions of children will have a more decent, more humane, more supportable future; where democracy will thrive; where we will have good partners not only in economic relationships, but also in solving the other problems of the world when you have to take responsibility for them.

The United States has a clear, clear obligation to continue to expand the frontiers of trade. And tomorrow, in the East Room at the White House, I will launch a campaign to persuade the Congress to renew the traditional authority presidents have had for over 20 years now to break down foreign barriers to America's goods and services. This is very important to you and your future.

We do not need to be afraid to trade with the rest of the world. We are the most productive economy in the world. There will always be changes in this economy. There will always be new jobs being created and some going away. But on balance, we have benefitted for 60 years by leading the way to integrate the world's economies. And that will promote peace; it will promote freedom; it will promote stability; it will raise the level of living standards in other parts of the world even as it maintains America as the world's most prosperous nation. And I hope you will support that as well. (Applause.)

As we expand opportunity, we must also continue to demand responsibility from our citizens. Among other things, we have a common responsibility to do all we can to strengthen our families for the 21st century. This new economy puts extraordinary pressures on parents, demanding more time away from their children, imposing new demands for affordable child care, bombarding children themselves with commercial images that make it harder than ever for them to be raised according to our most basic values.

We are working to pass a juvenile justice bill to help keep our children out of gangs, off of drugs and away from guns. We will host the first ever White House Conference on Child Care, to explore ways all sections of society, including our government, can better address perhaps the greatest problem facing working parents today. And we must make this historic opportunity real in our efforts to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco by passing sweeping legislation that focuses first and foremost on reducing smoking among young people. More people die from that than any other problem in our society today. (Applause.)

Next, we must meet a very large environmental challenge in the next three months. We will work toward a worldwide climate change treaty this December in Kyoto that protects the environment even as it promotes global growth by committing the nations that sign on to it to specific, clear guidelines in the reduction of greenhouse

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gas emissions into the atmosphere. We know -- (applause.) You can clap for that -- that's all right. (Applause.)

Now, there are students here from all over the world, students from all over our country. Many of you have witnessed -- and your families have witnessed -- in your own homes, significant changes in climatic patterns in the last decade, and more extreme climatic develops. It is becoming a part of the common parlance of America, all over the country, to talk about the 500-year flood we had along the Mississippi River. One member of Congress, who happened to be a member of the other party, said to me the other day -- he said, "Mr. President, we've had three 100-year floods in the last five years in my home state." He said, "Does that mean I get to wait 500 years before we have another bad flood?"

Many of you who are studying this issue know that a panel of over 2,500 scientists has concluded that the climate of the Earth is significantly warming in ways that will have not entirely predictable, but almost certainly destructive consequences unless we do something about it.

This is something that will affect people of all incomes, of all backgrounds, from all parts of our country, and, indeed, the whole world. We need the young people of America, particularly the university students who are in a position to study this issue, to make this a gripping national issue. And we also need people who have the confidence in our ability to break new technological and scientific barriers to stand up and say, you cannot make me believe that we can't reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially and still grow the American economy. We could reduce them 20 percent tomorrow with technology that is already available at no cost if we just changed the way we do things.

Now, this will be a very controversial debate. And there will be people who say, President Clinton has spent five years killing himself to revitalize the American economy and now he's going to take it down overnight by committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America. That is not true. But if you let the sea level rise and we flood the southern coast of Florida and we flood the southern coast of Louisiana, and we otherwise disrupt what life in the United States is like over the next 50 years, then your children will pay the price for our neglect. We can grow this economy and do right by the environment. I think you believe that, and I need you to help me convince the American people that it can be done. (Applause.)

Finally, let me say we have a responsibility to improve the way our political system works. The amount of money raised by both parties is more than doubling now every four years. The primary driving thing is the cost of access to you, the voters. That is what is driving this, the cost of access -- through television time, through radio time, through mail, through printed materials. One of the things we have to do is to guarantee free or reduced air time for candidates for offices so that they won't need so much more money. (Applause.) And we are seeking that now.

But there is also a very important piece of legislation sponsored by Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Russ Feingold which will come to the floor of the Senate later this month. Every year I have been President I have supported a good campaign finance reform bill. And every year I have seen the bills blocked by a filibuster in the United States Senate -- every single year. Now, the people who don't want it this year say they're going to do it all over again. They may do it, but if they do it this year we intend to see that it happens in the full glare of public light. I ask for your support for campaign finance reform this year. (Applause.)

The third thing we have to do is to do a lot of work in the next three months to advance our interests and our leadership around the world. We live in a world very different from the Cold War world, and we still have to do a lot to shape it. We have an opportunity to lock in the gains of democracy and stability and free market, and lay the foundations for the century in which you will live most of your lives.

So far this year, we have ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, so our soldiers and citizens will be safer from the threat of poison gas. (Applause.) We have worked hard to build an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe for the first time in history -- inviting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join NATO. I look forward to working with the Senate to ratify this historic step next year, and I'm pleased today that a group of America's leading citizens endorsed it.

We're forging new partnerships with Russia, with Ukraine, with Europe's other new democracies, working with all of our friends in Europe to give the people of Bosnia a chance to share in Europe's democratic future. (Applause.)

First we stopped the war and turned killing fields into playing fields again; and bomb shelters into schools. Now we have to redouble our efforts to build a lasting peace. In the months to come, we will continue to pursue peace in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland; continue to fight rogue states and terrorists; continue to make sure our military and diplomacy are the strongest in the world. But above all, in the remaining months of this year, we are going to reach out to our hemisphere and to Asia.

Over the last decade in the Americas, coups, conflicts, and command economies have given way to democracies and free markets. Next month I'm going to Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina to work to expand trade, to fight drugs, to protect the environment and to strengthen our partnerships. The Americas can become a stronghold for our own peace and security.

By the way, 70 percent of our increased trade in the last year has come from the Americas, from our own neighbors in our hemisphere and we should stick with them. (Applause.)

Because I want this effort to be truly bipartisan I reached my hand across the aisle to choose an Ambassador to one of our most important allies and neighbors, Mexico, when I asked the Republican Governor of Massachusetts, Bill Weld, if he would serve. (Applause.) I believe still that he is the best person to be Ambassador to Mexico. (Applause.) And I believe -- and I would believe this if there were a president of another party with a nominee with whom I did not agree -- I believe when a president nominates someone for a job that person is entitled to a hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee, and I think he ought to get it. (Applause.)

This fall, the President of China will come to Washington. China is home to a quarter of the world's people. In less than two decades, its economy may be the largest on Earth. America has a profound interest in seeing that China is stable, open, at peace with its neighbors. We want it to embrace political pluralism and the international rules of civilized conduct. We want a China that works with us to build a secure and prosperous future. China will choose its own destiny; but if we engage China, instead of isolating ourselves from her, we can help to influence the path it takes.

President Jiang's visit is an important opportunity, not so much for grand statements and dramatic gestures as for constructive work on common challenges like the one we face on the

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Korean Peninsula, or protecting the environment, or stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, and for expanding the frontiers of free trade between us. It's also a chance for us to address candidly and face to face our differences on issues like human rights and religious freedom.

Sitting down together across the table is far more likely to produce progress than pointing fingers across the Pacific. So when President Jiang comes here, I hope the American people will welcome him, and will say, yes, we have things that we disagree with you about, but you represent a quarter of the world's people, a large measure of the world's future, and your people and our people will be better off if we find a way to forge that future together. (Applause.)

Finally, in the next three months, we will be working for new ways to preserve perhaps the most fragile value of all, the bonds of community that binds us together as Americans. In this century, we have absorbed wave after wave of immigrants, drawn here by our abundance and our ideals. This century has seen unparalleled racial progress as African Americans and other minorities join the American mainstream. Still, the very forces of progress that are propelling us forward could also pull us apart, threatening to isolate us -- each with our own Web page, but linked by few human bonds of community.

The age-old dilemma of racial inequality, racial prejudice, or just plain old fear and mistrust of people who are different from us is compounded by the new task of absorbing new immigrant groups into what is already the world's most diverse democracy. Within a decade our largest state, California, will have no majority race. Within just a few decades this entire country will have no majority race. (Applause.) We can study the demographic patterns and know what America will look like in the 21st century, but we have to look inside to imagine what America will be like in the 21st century. That answer is up to all of us.

I have asked the nation to join me in a great national conversation about race, an effort redress imbalance, to root out hatred and prejudice, to deal with real underlying problems that may have nothing to do with race but that manifest themselves in racial inequality and tensions, and, above all, to bring Americans of different backgrounds together to face one another honestly across the lines that divide us.

Your President noted that you have people from 140 different racial and ethnic groups here on this university campus. Good for you. You can be America's laboratory. You figure it out and let us know. (Applause.)

This diversity of ours is a Godsend. It is a huge gift in a global economy and a global society. If we can find a way not only to respect our differences but to actually celebrate them, and still say what binds us together is even more important, we will have solved the conundrum that is paralyzing Bosnia -- that is still leading to people blowing themselves up to kill innocent children in the Middle East -- that has my people in Ireland still arguing over what happened 600 years ago -- that has led to vicious tribal warfare in Africa, leaving hundreds of thousands of people hatcheted to death. And yet, look around this room.

This is a question of imagination, of vision, of heart. And it is also very important to be hard-headed about it; until everybody has economic opportunity that is real and educational opportunity that is real and streets that are safe, there will be racial disparities in America which will manifest themselves in things that look like racial discrimination whether they are, or not.

We have to deal with the underlying real causes here, as well.
(Applause.)

But don't kid yourselves -- fear of people who are different is an underlying real cause. How did people get to be Serbs or Croats or Muslims in Bosnia? How did they belong to the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, or the Muslim faith in Bosnia? It's an accident of history, of geopolitics going back hundreds and hundreds of years. The people are biologically indistinguishable. But they were more than happy to abandon decades of peace and begin within weeks to murder each other with abandon and shoot each other's children not very long ago.

There is something in us all that in our most defensive periods makes us want to find somebody else we can look down on -- I mean, no matter how bad it is for me, at least I'm not her or him. Isn't there? And every one of us at some point in our life has been guilty of that in some way or another.

You come here in this magnificent university environment, you cheer with your great enthusiasm and hope for the future, you look at each other and you're different and you like it. That's the way we've got to make daily life in America. People have to get up in the morning and feel good about this country with all of its diversity, because we have to know what's good about the differences between us and celebrate them, and we must know, too, what it is that binds us together: What are the requirements of membership in the American community? What do you have to believe in and be willing to live by and be willing to stand up for in order to be an American? That is what we are going to do. We have to visualize our future as a truly multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious democracy that still runs in a straight line from here all the way back to George Washington. I'm convinced we can do it, but I'm convinced that all of you have to lead the way.

Now, let me say that a lot of this work has to be done with Congress. And I'm very pleased by the relationship that we had working on the balanced budget. I'll work with them to do everything we can to implement the budget, to confirm the judges and the others who await action. We are in uncharted territory, to some extent, but we know the times demand action of us, and I am sure the American people, without regard to their party, want us to work together in the public interest.

For all of you who are students here, consider this: It is now 844 days to the year 2000 -- to a new century and a new millennium and a new era of human endeavor. Will it bring new progress, new prosperity, and new greatness for America? It is basically up to us.

Thirty-four years ago here at American University, President Kennedy delivered what many people believe was his greatest speech. It was an era bristling with superpower tension, but President Kennedy looked forward and saw a day when the Cold War was a thing of the past. Because of decades of work to uphold our values by Americans of both parties, we are now living in the world John Kennedy imagined 34 years ago at American University. (Applause.)

So I leave you with this thought: It all depends on your imagination. It all depends on your imagination. Think how many children's lives we could save in all these trouble spots of the world if all the people with power and the people that support them just imagined their future in a different way -- just took their heart and their head together and came up with a different picture than the one they see before them every morning when they get up. It is the most important force in the world.

President Kennedy imagined the world we are living in today, 34 years ago in the speech here at American University. Now it is up to you and to me and to our fellow Americans to imagine what the 21st century will be, and then to do what is necessary to make that vision a reality for all our people. That is what I came here to ask for your help in doing -- for your help and for that of every other American. You've got a lot riding on it. and I'm betting that we're going to get there.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF REMARKS MADE BY
VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
Many Glacier Hotel, Glacier National Park, MT
Tuesday, September 2, 1997**

I thank all of you for joining me here in Glacier National Park -- one of the greatest glories of America's park system. The rich landscape we see all around us -- the deep valleys and dramatic summits -- date back more than a billion years, when Ice Age glaciers cut through this terrain, shaping and sculpting what is now one of the largest wild areas in the United States.

It's easy to understand why Glacier means so much to the families that come here. It is a land that seems almost untouched by time, undamaged by man's heavy hand. To look out on Glacier's alpine beauty is to want to preserve it and protect it -- for our children, and for our children's children.

That's a responsibility President Clinton and I have taken very seriously -- not just here in Glacier, but in all of America's special places. That's why we prevented oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge. That's why we preserved 1.7 million precious acres in Utah by creating the Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument. That's why we protected 1.4 million acres of the unique California desert. That's why we're restoring the Florida Everglades. That's why we're protecting Yellowstone National Park from the dangers of mining on its borders. That's why we're putting record resources into our parks and rivers and wilderness preserves. To President Clinton and me, preserving America's special places isn't just good public policy -- it's a moral obligation.

I have come here today because Glacier National Park faces a grave threat to its heritage -- and it's one that can't be met with a simple local restoration plan. The 50 glaciers in this park -- which date back to the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago -- are melting away at an alarming rate. Over the last century, we have lost nearly three-quarters of all the glaciers in this park. Grinnell Glacier has retreated by over 3,100 feet. If this trend continues, in about thirty years, there won't be any glaciers left at all. To borrow a phrase from a well-known pop musician, this could become be the Park Formerly Known as Glacier.

What's happening at Glacier National Park is part of a global pattern. Glaciers are retreating worldwide. This is strong evidence of global warming over the past century -- the disruption of our climate because of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, all over the world. The overwhelming evidence shows that global warming is no longer a theory -- it's a reality. Greenhouse gases keep rising at record rates. The last few decades have been the warmest of this century -- and the ten warmest years in this century have all occurred since 1980.

More than 2,000 scientists from all over the world on a special panel on climate change found that the evidence shows, and I quote, "a discernable human influence on global climate."

If we stay on our present course, scientists predict that average global temperatures will rise by 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit in the next century. That may not sound like much. But keep in mind that the difference in temperature between today and the last ice age, when all the glaciers in this park were formed, is only about nine degrees Fahrenheit. That's why, if we fail to act, scientists believe the human impact of global warming will be severe:

Infectious diseases could spread, affecting families and children in regions that had been too cold for tropical viruses to survive. Farmers and rural communities could be in jeopardy, since farms depend on a stable climate to be productive. Back in 1988, when we faced both record temperatures and droughts, the United States lost a third of its grain supply. We could face greater floods, droughts, and heat waves. Some see the unusually severe flooding in the Midwest, the Dakotas, and around the country -- those "hundred-year floods" that seem to be happening every couple of years now -- as early evidence of this.

As we see here at Glacier, the impact on our natural heritage and special places could be just as strong.

Our seas could rise by one to three feet, flooding thousands of miles of Florida, Louisiana, and other coastal areas. A sea level rise of just one foot could place a third of the Florida Everglades completely underwater; it would also threaten our coral reefs, and endanger the countless varieties of fish that live in them. With warmer temperatures, we could lose important parts of our forests. Some have predicted that the Northeast could lose all of its sugar maples; and in New Hampshire's White Mountains, the fall foliage would lose its vibrant colors.

Scientists aren't the only ones who are concerned. The President of the Reinsurance Association of America, Frank Nutter, says that significant, perhaps permanent changes in our climate could bankrupt the insurance industry in years to come. Strong words from an industry that's all about calculating risk. This spring, John Browne, the CEO of British Petroleum, the largest oil producer in the U.S., acknowledged that, and I quote, "If we are all to take responsibility for the future of our planet, then it falls to us to begin to take precautionary action now."

My purpose today is not to be alarmist -- nor is it to say that we need radical changes in the way we live and work. But it's time to face the facts: Global warming is real. We helped to cause it -- and by taking reasonable, common-sense steps, we can help to reduce it.

What we need is an approach that is prudent and balanced. On one hand, we must recognize that energy consumption has led to enormous increases in our standard of living throughout this century, and we want to continue those increases. On the other hand, we see all around us today glaciers that have survived for 10,000 years, now facing the prospect of melting away in a single century. We've seen people struck by severe heat waves -- more than 400 lives lost in Chicago just two years ago -- and many others who have lost homes, jobs, even their lives to increasingly heavy storms.

We need to understand our role in climate change -- and we need to act to address it.

Thanks to President Clinton, we're already working to develop new energy technologies, to shrink greenhouse emissions in ways that will continue prosperity. Let me give you just a few examples:

First of all, after a decade of declining budgets, President Clinton is working to restore our commitment to the Energy Department's research into renewable energy and energy efficiency.

We need help from Congress to do that. If we really want to move forward in this area, and capture these new energy markets for America -- if we want to keep up with nations like Germany and Japan, which are already establishing an edge in these technologies -- Congress has to join us in meeting the challenge.

We're working with the auto industry through our Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles -- to try to triple the fuel efficiency of cars with no loss in comfort, safety or cost. We're working with the building industry through our Partnership for Advancing Technologies in Housing, to make homes cheaper, more energy-efficient, and more environmentally-friendly.

But we know that America's efforts alone will never be good enough. Because winds circle the earth within a few weeks, greenhouse gases don't respect national borders. Any real solution to global warming must be an international solution -- including developing nations as well as industrialized ones.

This December, when the nations of the world meet in Kyoto, Japan on this issue, the United States will work to achieve realistic, binding limits on the emissions of greenhouse gases.

We will emphasize approaches that are flexible and market-based, to give industry the opportunity to develop the most cost-effective solutions.

We will continue our efforts in research and development. We will work with industry, with environmental groups, with all who share a stake in this problem here at home. And we will ask all nations, developed and developing, to join with us to meet this challenge.

We don't have all the answers today. But we know we must reverse the trend of global warming. We must safeguard our precious natural resources, and put a premium on public health and safety.

Thirty years from now, I want my grandchildren to live in a world that is safer from disease, freer from droughts and floods, able to grow the food they need for their children and families.

But just as importantly, I want them to understand that God created only one earth -- and that its parks and forests and wilderness preserves can never be replicated. Our responsibility to this land is one of the most profound and sacred responsibilities we have. It is really a responsibility to each other -- and to future generations.

Ultimately, that's why we came here today, to the very Crown of this Continent. We've got to start facing up to that responsibility -- not just for the sake of these glaciers that are melting before our very eyes, but for the sake of our children. Here in the shadow of these glorious mountains, let us resolve to make that start -- let us protect this land for its rightful inheritors -- and let us fulfill our obligation to the millions of families who have yet to enjoy it.

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And -- but he said a trenchant thing. He said, think about it; if we have a healthy economy, a responsible fiscal policy, a crime policy that works, a welfare policy that works, a sensible foreign policy and a strong defense, all the other policy choices ahead of us favor the sensible progressive party and a sensible progressive approach.

speeches

And so we talked about it for half an hour. You think about it. The economy works well, but 20 percent of the kids in this country are living in poverty. If we can't bring the benefits of free enterprise to the inner cities and the isolated rural areas now when the economy is strong, when can we do it? When can we do it? (Applause.) When can we do it? One.

Two, all over the world we know now that we have common environmental challenges. I've got a big challenge just to convince the American people I think that this whole climate change issue is a big issue. But in December, the nations of the world will gather in Japan and will commit, I hope, to specific binding targets to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases. Why? Because it's not going to be very pleasant if we're all rich in 50 years, but we're wearing oxygen masks. And because it's not necessary. And because we know that the technology is there to grow the economy and preserve the environment. But that is a delicate matter. How are we going to do that? The second problem.

Third, you cannot possibly have a country in which there is opportunity for all unless we do a much better job of educating young children. Now, I believe the historic legacy of this budget we just signed will be that it has the biggest expansion in opportunities for people throughout their lifetime to go to college, two-year, four-year, graduate school, you name it -- we do more to help them than any time since the passage of the G.I. Bill 50 years ago. But in spite of all that, we're still not educating the children in our cities to international levels of excellence.

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July 24, 1997

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT AT
DISCUSSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 24, 1997

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AND THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT DISCUSSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

The East Room

1:57 P.M. EDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Please be seated ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the President and the First Lady, it is my pleasure and honor to welcome all of you to the White House. I'm going to present the President in just a moment.

Before doing so, on his behalf, I would like to acknowledge the distinguished guests who are present. I will formally introduce our panel of Nobel laureates and university scientists in just a moment. I want to acknowledge members of the President's Cabinet who are here -- Administrator of the EPA Carol Browner; Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley; Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman; Secretary of Energy Federico Pena; Under Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers; Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency James Lee Witt; Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality Katie McGinley; the President's Science Advisor, Dr. Jack Gibbons, and other distinguished guests who are present. We meet today to discuss the future of our planet and the realities of global climate disruption.

I want to acknowledge one other person who is in the room somewhere and I haven't had a chance to see him yet, but Charles David Keeling is here. And, Dr. Keeling, thank you very much for joining us. And he was responsible, along with one other, in measuring carbon dioxide in the atmosphere for the very first time back in the last 1950s. And my own introduction to this issue came about as a direct result of the measurements which showed the annual cycle of carbon dioxide and the steadily increasing peaks of concentrations of carbon dioxide, and now, of course, we know other greenhouse gases, as well, that resulted from those measurements.

Later, when I came to the Congress quite a few years after that, in

holding hearings I saw that those concentrations had increased dramatically and, of course, all around the world scientists were studying it intensively. And now we will soon hear from these scientists about what the world's scientific conclusion is about what this means for increased droughts and floods, dramatic changes in the distribution of forests and croplands. And all of this gives rise to great concern that we are committing future generations to a planet that is altered in profound ways that can cause great harm to future generations.

This administration has always worked on a simple principle when addressing problems of a scientific and technical nature, and that principle is: Science must inform policy decisions. Scientists are by nature a cautious group, but the world's scientific community is telling us in many ways that they believe that we as a civilization are disrupting the balance of the world's climate. In the words of the 2,000 scientists who participated in the intergovernmental panel on climate change -- and I quote -- "there is a discernable human influence on global climate."

More than 2,600 scientists have signed a letter about global climatic disruption, which we'll be hearing more about in just a few minutes. Today, we hear about the concerns of scientists. They speak as eminent experts and as U.S. citizens who care about the future of this planet. Each has a resume far too long to recount, but let me briefly introduce those who are with us today.

Dr. Sherry Rowland won the 1995 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his pioneering research in atmospheric chemistry, explaining the destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer. He is also a professor at the University of California at Irvine and an official with the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Mario Molina shares the 1995 Nobel Prize with Sherry Rowland. He is the Lee and Geraldine Martin Professor of Environmental Science at MIT.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco is an eminent ecologist, past President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, very active with the AAAS, and also past President of the Ecological Society of America. She is currently the Wayne and Gladys Valley Professor of Marine Biology and a distinguished Professor of Zoology at Oregon State University.

Dr. Stephen Schneider is a climate scientist and professor at Stanford University, recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and winner of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Westinghouse Award for Public Understanding of Science and Technology.

Dr. Bob Shope has devoted his professional life to the study of viruses carried by biting insects. He is currently a professor in the Departments of Pathology and Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Texas.

Dr. Henry Kendall won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1990. He is Chairman of the Board of the Union of Concerned Scientists and the J.A. Stratton Professor of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

And John Holdren is an expert on energy and environmental science and delivered the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance lecture on behalf of the Pugwash Conferences. He is currently the Director of the Program on Science, Technology and Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and Professor of Environmental Science and Public Policy in the Department of Earth

and Planetary Sciences at Harvard.

And now I would like to introduce the person who is leading our country and the world toward a recognition of what must be done to deal with this issue. It is my honor, ladies and gentlemen, to present the President of the United States, President Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank you for being here -- members of the administration and concerned members of the public, the scientists and other experts that are here.

I would also like to say a special word of thanks to the Vice President. In one of our earliest meetings together -- we meet once a week and have lunch -- he went over the whole history of greenhouse gas emissions and climatic change. And I became convinced first that he was convinced that something was wrong. (Laughter.) Then I became convinced something was wrong. And it's been a great help to me, and I believe, to the people of the United States to have him in the position that he's in not only with the convictions that he has, but with the knowledge that he has. And I'm very grateful to him for what he has done to help me come to grips with this issue.

To me, we have to see this whole issue of climate change in terms of our deepest obligations to future generations. I have spent most of my time in the last four and a half years trying to prepare the American people for a new century and a new millennium. It is also very important that we protect the Earth for that new millennium, to make sure that people will be able to take advantage of all the things we are trying to do, the opportunities we are trying to create, the problems we are trying to solve.

It is obvious that we cannot fulfill our responsibilities to future generations unless we deal responsibly with the challenge of climate change. Whenever the security of our country has been threatened, we have led the world to a better resolution. That is what is at stake here. And the scientists have come here to explain why.

As the Vice President said, the overwhelming balance of evidence and scientific opinion is that it is no longer a theory, but now a fact that global warming is for real. The world scientists believe that if we don't cut our emissions of greenhouse gases, we will disrupt the global climate. In fact, there is ample evidence that human activities are already disrupting the global climate, and that if we stay on our current course, the average global temperatures may rise 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit during the next century.

To put that in some context, the difference in average temperature between the last Ice Age, which was 10,000 to 12,000 years ago -- 10,000 to 12,000 years ago -- and today, is about 9 degrees Fahrenheit. So we could have two-thirds of that change in 100 years unless we do something.

If we fail to act, scientists expect that our seas will rise one to three feet, and thousands of square miles here in the United States, in Florida, Louisiana and other coastal areas will be flooded. Infectious diseases will spread to new regions. Severe heat waves will claim lives. Agriculture will suffer. Severe droughts and floods will be more common. These are the things that are reasonably predictable.

In the face of this, the United States must confront a

challenge that in some ways is the most difficult of all democracy's challenges to face. That is, we have evidence, we see the train coming, but most ordinary Americans in their day-to-day lives can't hear the whistle blowing. They have no -- unless they have lived in a place where they have experienced severe and unusual and completely atypical weather disruptions in the last five years or so, the degree of the challenge is inconsistent with the actual perceived experience of most ordinary Americans. And this is true, indeed, throughout the world. And that presents us our challenge.

A democracy is premised on the proposition that if the American people, or any people in any democracy, know what the facts are and believe them, way more than half the time they will do the right thing. And so what we are doing today is beginning a process in which we ask the American people to listen to the evidence, to measure it against their own experience, but not to discount the weight of scientific authority if their own experience does not yet confirm what the overwhelming percentage of scientists believe to be fact today. This is a great exercise and a great test for our democracy.

I do want to say that I am convinced that when the nations of world meet in Kyoto, Japan, in December on this issue, the United States has got to be committed to realistic and binding limits

on our emissions of greenhouse gases. Between now and then, we have to work with the American people to get them to share that commitment. We have to emphasize flexible market-based approaches. We have to embrace research and development efforts in technology that will help us to improve the economy -- improve the environment while permitting our economy to grow. We have to ask all nations, both industrial and developing, to participate in this process.

But if we do this together, we can defuse this threat. And we can make the 21st century what it ought to be, not only for our children, but for all the children of the world. I believe the science demands that we face this challenge now. I'm positive that we owe it to our children. And I hope that we can find the wisdom and the skill to do democracy's work in the next few months, to build the consensus necessary to actually make action, as opposed to rhetoric, possible.

And for all of you for your commitment to that, I thank you.

And now I'd like to ask Dr. Rowland to be the first of our distinguished scientists to lead off. (Applause.)

* * * * *

THE PRESIDENT: I wish every American could hear what we've heard today. But thanks to our friends in the media, a good number of them will hear at least a portion of what we have heard today. And this is the beginning of a consistent long-term effort that we all have to make to involve the people of this country in this decision. And I thank you all for the points you've made because, in different ways each of them will resonate with citizens of this country in a way that I believe will give us the support we need to take the action that has to be taken.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Vice President, the Cabinet, other members of the administration and I will be out in the country discussing this. We'll be working with the American people; we'll be talking about solutions as well as problems. The truth is,

it's like anything else -- the quicker you get -- another answer Dr. Holdren might have given is that the quicker you get after this the less extreme the remedy you have to embrace to have a measurable effect to avoid an undesirable outcome. And the longer you wait, the more disruptive the ultimate resolution will be. So that's another thing that I'd like to emphasize.

Before we close I hope you will permit me to make a brief statement. Just before I came in here to this meeting I learned that today, and not very long ago, retired Supreme Court Justice William Brennan passed away. He was a remarkable human being, one of the finest and most influential jurists in our nation's history. He served on the Supreme Court for 34 years. He was perhaps during that period the staunchest, most effective defender of individual freedom against government intrusion.

His devotion to the Bill of Rights inspired millions of Americans and countless young law students, including myself. And one of the great honors I have had as President was to be able to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in my first year in office.

He once said, the role of the Constitution is the protection of the dignity of every human being and the recognition that every individual has fundamental rights which government cannot deny. He spent a lifetime upholding those rights, and he authored some of the most enduring constitutional decisions of this century, including *Baker v. Carr* on one person, one vote; *The New York Times v. Sullivan*, which brought the free speech doctrine into the latter half of the 20th century. The force of his ideas, the strength of his leadership and his character have safeguarded freedom and widened the circle of quality for every single one of us.

We will miss him greatly. And I know you join me in sending our best wishes and our prayers to his family and friends, and our gratitude for his life.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

3:05 P.M. EDT



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8/4/97

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Aug 4

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 4, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Cabinet Room

10:25 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Before we start, I think it's only fair to note that we are observing another anniversary of Helen's 50th birthday. (Laughter.) We wanted to give you a birthday cake with a tell-tale number of -- ("Happy Birthday" song is sung.) (Laughter and applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Now, may I have a press conference? (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to make a statement and you get the questions. (Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Take it to the press room and cut it up. (Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you. This is painful. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You don't make it look that way. It's painful for me, too. (Laughter.)

I'm glad to be joined today by the CEOs of 10 Fortune 500 companies who have come here to meet with me on climate change. These companies represent electric utilities, the oil and gas industry, finance, high technology, and heavy industry. They are all intimately interested in this issue and will be affected by whatever happens on it in our country and throughout the world.

We want a responsible approach to climate change. We believe that the science makes it clear that the climate is changing. I want to proceed based on some fairly straightforward and simple principles. First of all, as we get ready for the Kyoto conference, I believe there should be realistic but binding limits to emissions of greenhouse gases. I believe that we have to do it in a way that keeps our economy growing. And I believe that we ought to embrace flexible, market-based policies. I believe we should reemphasize and reenergize our efforts in research and development to find as many technological solutions to this as possible, and to keep our nation in the forefront of what is now a \$400 billion market for environmental technologies.

And finally, I believe the agreement has to be a global one. I think all nations, developed and developing, should be a part of this. So this is part of an ongoing process that I and our administration have undertaken to try to make sure we're working together with all the people who would be affected by this issue and try to reach, hopefully, a common position.

We're going to have a good meeting today, and I'm looking forward to it. And, again, I want to thank all the executives for coming here and giving vent to their views.

Q What do you think of the opposition, who says there is no such thing as global warming and that they don't agree with the scientists -- some of the scientists?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that the real question is -- I don't think that very many people disagree with the fact that there is climate change now, I think there's some disagreement about what the impact of it is and what the appropriate response is. There's still some debate there. But I think the scientific evidence for the fact of climate change is pretty compelling.

We had that panel of scientists, including the Nobel Prize winners here the other day, and I received a letter from -- I don't know -- over 2,500 of them, from scientists about it. So I think that there's pretty clear evidence that the climate is changing and could be changing substantially. There is still some difference about what the consequences of that will be and what we ought to do about it.

But I think if we follow these principles, we'll be staking out a responsible position, which will permit us to continue to grow economically and do our part in the world. After all, we have only four percent of the world's population, but we account for 20 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions, which you would expect since have slightly over 20 percent of the world's output.

Q Mr. President, how seriously are you considering using a line-item veto to kill some provisions of the budget you'll sign into law tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I asked Mr. Bowles to -- once we got a budget agreement and it passed -- to institute an intensive process to review both the spending and the tax bills to see if there were any items that would be appropriate for the line-item veto. And I have not yet received the results of that review.

I support the line-item veto; I did all along. And I think if we have it, it ought to be used -- I believe that it ought to be used somewhat sparingly. And my experience as Governor was that once I used it a few times I didn't have to -- I didn't need to use it very much anymore. And that's what I would hope would happen. We'll just see -- you probably know more about the likely targets for it than I do at this point. I was interested in the big-picture items in the budget. We got virtually 100 percent of what I sought and I'm elated with the budget. I think it's good for America. I think it will keep the economy growing, and I think it's a responsible thing to do. So whatever I do on that shouldn't be in any way detracting from the terrific job that the Congress did on it.

Q Mr. President, one question on UPS -- the standards for presidential intervention are relatively high. Are you considering doing anything else to intervene to bring an end to the strike?

THE PRESIDENT: On UPS?

Q Yes, UPS.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first we urged the federal mediator, and we got that. And we got -- obviously, it didn't work. I still think the parties ought to go back to the table. UPS is a very important company to our country and there are a lot of employees there, and I hope they go back to the table. But at this time I don't think any further action by me is appropriate.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

10:32 A.M. EDT

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6/26/97

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL SESSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations
New York, New York

~~June~~
July 26, 1997

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, ladies and gentlemen: Five years ago in Rio, the nations of the world joined together around a simple but revolutionary proposition, that today's progress must not come at tomorrow's expense.

In our era, the environment has moved to the top of the international agenda because how well a nation honors it will have an impact, for good or ill, not only on the people of that nation, but all across the globe. Preserving the resources we share is crucial not only for the quality of our individual environments and health, but also to maintain stability and peace within nations and among them. As the father of conservation in our nation, John Muir, said, "When we try to pick anything out by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

In the years since Rio, there has been real progress in some areas. Nations have banned the dumping of radioactive wastes in the ocean and reduced marine pollution from sources on land. We're working to protect the precious coral reefs, to conserve threatened fish, to stop the advance of deserts. At the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, we reaffirmed the crucial importance of cooperative family planning efforts to long-term sustainable development.

Here in America, we have worked to clean up a record number of our toxic dumps and we intend to clean 500 more over the next four years. We passed new laws to better protect our water, created new national parks and monuments, and worked to harmonize our efforts for environmental protection, economic growth and social improvement, aided by a distinguished Council on Sustainable Development.

Yesterday, I announced the most far-reaching efforts to improve air quality in our nation in 20 years, cutting smog levels dramatically, and, for the first time ever, setting standards to lower the levels of the fine particles in the atmosphere that form soot. In America, the incidence of childhood asthma has been increasing rapidly. It is now the single biggest reason our children are hospitalized. These measures will help to change that, to improve health of people of all ages, and to prevent as many as 15,000 premature deaths a year.

Still, we here have much more to do, especially in reducing America's contribution to global climate change.

The science is clear and compelling: We humans are changing the global climate. Concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are at their highest levels in more than 200,000 years, and climbing sharply. If the trend is not changed, scientists expect the seas to rise two feet or more over the next century. In America, that means 9,000 square miles of Florida, Louisiana, and other coastal areas will be flooded. In Asia, 17 percent of Bangladesh, land on which 6 million people now live, will be lost. Island chains such as the Maldives will disappear from the map, unless we reverse the predictions.

Climate changes will disrupt agriculture, cause severe droughts and floods and the spread of infectious diseases, which will be a big enough problem for us under the best of circumstances in the 21st century. There could be 50 million or more cases of malaria a year. We can expect more deaths from heat stress. Just two years ago, here in the United States in the city of Chicago, we saw the tragedy of more than 400 of our citizens dying during a severe heat wave.

No nation can escape this danger. None can evade its responsibility to confront it. And we must all do our part -- industrial nations that emit the largest quantities of greenhouse gases today, and developing nations whose green house gas emissions are growing rapidly. I applaud the European Union for its strong focus on this issue, and the World Bank for setting environmental standards for projects it will finance in the developing world.

Here in the United States, we must do better. With 4 percent of the world's population, we already produce more than 20 percent of its greenhouse gases. Frankly, our record since Rio is not sufficient. We have been blessed with high rates of growth and millions of new jobs over the last few years, but that has led to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions in spite of the adoption of new conservation practices. So we must do better, and we will.

The air quality action I took yesterday is a positive first step, but more must follow. In order to reduce greenhouse gases and grow the economy, we must invest more in the technologies of the future. I am directing my Cabinet to work to development them. Government, universities, business and labor must work together. All these efforts must be sustained over years, indeed, over decades. As Vice President Gore said Monday, "Sustainable development requires sustained commitment." With that commitment, we can succeed.

We must create new technologies and development new strategies like emissions trading that will both curtail pollution and support continued economic growth. We owe that in the developed world to ourselves and, equally, to those in the developing nations.

Many of the technologies that will help us to meet the new air quality standards can also help us to address climate change. This is a challenge we must undertake immediately and one in which I personally plan to play a critical role.

In the United States, in order to do our part, we have to first convince the American people and the Congress that the climate change problem is real and imminent. I will convene a White House Conference on Climate Change later this year to lay the scientific facts before our people, to understand that we must act, and to lay the economic facts there so that they understand the benefits and the costs. With the best ideas and strategies and new technologies and increased productivity and energy efficiency, we can turn the challenge to our advantage.

We will work with our people and we will bring to the Kyoto conference a strong American commitment to realistic and binding limits that will significantly reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases.

I want to mention three other initiatives briefly that we are taking to deal with climate change and to advance sustainable development here and beyond our borders.

First, to help developing nations reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the United States will provide \$1 billion in assistance over the next five years to support energy efficiency, develop alternative energy sources and improve resource management to promote growth that does not have an adverse effect on the climate.

Second, we will do more to encourage private investment to meet environmental standards. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation will now require that its projects adhere to new and strengthened environmental guidelines, just as our Export-Import Bank already does and as I hope our allies and friends soon will. Common guidelines for responsible investment clearly would lead to more sustainable growth in developing nations.

Third, we must increase our use of new technologies even as we move to develop more new technologies. Already, we are working with our auto industry to produce cars by early in the next century that are three times as fuel-efficient as today's vehicles. Now we will work with businesses and communities to use the sun's energy to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels by

installing solar panels on 1 million more roofs around our nation by 2010. Capturing the sun's warmth can help us to turn down the Earth's temperature.

Distinguished leaders, in all of our cultures we have been taught from time immemorial that, as Scripture says, "One generation passes away and another comes, but the Earth abides forever." We must strengthen our stewardship of the environment to make that true and to ensure that when this generation passes, the young man who just spoke before me and all of those of his generation will inherit a rich and abundant Earth.

Thank you very much.

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9/11 – 12/95

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The Interplay of Climate Change, Ozone Depletion, and Human Health

Remarks by Vice President Al Gore
at the
Conference on Human Health and Global Climate Change
National Academy of Sciences
September 11-12, 1995

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It's my honor to be here with you, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity that you have given me to speak.

And I'd like to thank Dr. Jack Gibbons for his tremendous work on this conference, organizing this event along with those who work with him, Associate Director Robert Watson, in particular, and Rosina Bierbaum and their colleagues who, along with Jack, do an extraordinary job. It's a privilege for me to be able to work with them on a daily basis.

I also of course want to thank Dr. Kenneth Shine, President of the Institute of Medicine, for the tireless work that you and your colleagues have done. All of us who had an opportunity to participate to whatever degree in this conference owe you a great debt of gratitude.

I'm gonna get into trouble if I try to acknowledge the other distinguished guests who are present, partly because I don't have my glasses on, and I may be looking right at some well-known individuals that -- "Why didn't he mention me, that I was here?" I see Brian Atwood, and I'm not going to make that mistake by leaving him out, but he's easy to pick

out even without my glasses. But, to all the distinguished guests, please feel acknowledged as a group.

I have a number of things that I want to say in my remarks here, and I know that this has been a long day for you already. I know it has been a day filled with facts, and figures, and insights, and extremely interesting presentations, but there's something going on in the Senate right now that I'd like to lead off with because I want you to know about it.

Literally as I speak, a Senate subcommittee is marking up the EPA appropriations bill. Marking up of course means making the decisions about how much money will be allocated for which purpose. What they are doing at this very moment might I fear strike at the heart of our efforts for a better and safer environment. Of course, it is only one chapter in the nation's annual story of how we set our priorities, and at the end of the process perhaps any mistakes can be rectified. But there's no question that we have been witness to a systematic attack on the environmental priorities that are shared by the vast majority of Americans--an attack both in the House and the Senate. But the Senate has a chance to do better than the House. The House was extremely reckless in its slashing. They didn't stop to think about what it means to the environment and what it means to our future. Most of those here understand pretty clearly that more attention, not less, should be devoted to an effort to better understand the huge impact human civilization is now having on the Earth's environment. And I have at times been puzzled by an aggressive know-nothing attitude adopted by some who seem to believe that this is an ideological or partisan or political issue when it really shouldn't be and in the

past wasn't, because after all, when the scientific community has come together in decades past as you have come together for this conference here, and when the scientific community in the past has presented clear and compelling evidence that a particular problem should be watched carefully and was likely to cause our civilization difficulty and danger, the response by and large wasn't partisan in the past. Democrats and Republicans joined hands and put politics to one side. Many of our most important environmental initiatives occurred during former President Nixon's administration. We've had outstanding officials in Republican administrations protecting the environment as well as in Democratic administrations. And many of the important legislative accomplishments received strong bipartisan support. So, what's going on now in a partisan atmosphere is relatively new and quite troubling.

When I think of Congress's current attitude toward the environment, I'm reminded of Robert Penn Warren's book, *All the King's Men*, and the passage where the lead character Jack was walking in a field. He hears someone walking behind him, but Jack doesn't turn around to find out who it is. Instead, he decides that if he doesn't look at who is following him, then there really isn't anyone there.

And he explains in the following words, "What you don't know don't hurt you, for it ain't real, and it doesn't matter what you do or what goes on around you because it isn't real anyway."

Well, these problems are real. Exactly what shape they have, exactly when the impact of which phenomena will be felt where are all questions that receive continued attention and scrutiny, and deserve argumentation. But the existence of an unprecedented relationship between the human civilization and the Earth's environment is quite real, and the evidence for it is entirely undeniable, at least for any reasonable person.

And instead of trying to wish this reality away, we are exploring its deeper meaning and evaluating our options.

In this conference, for example, we are examining the relationship between climate change and health. This conference grew in part out of a briefing in the White House last October, which I remember vividly.

For a long time, I have been among those concerned about the return of some diseases we thought we had conquered -- like tuberculosis and measles -- and new foes that have been appearing on the scene like Ebola and AIDS. And this led me to consider, as it did others, "What are the potential human health impacts associated with climate change?"

So, for starters, I asked Bob Shope, Mary Wilson, and Eric Chivian just that question.

After quite some time listening to their presentations and engaging in give-and-take, we agreed that the relationship between human health and climate change is a concern that touches on everything from the food we eat to international security.

But their answer to the initial question was clear. While we know enough to be concerned, there has not been enough research on the issue. There isn't enough work on the connection between human health and climate change, even on the most practical level. For example, they said that, in all of the times students spend in medical school throughout their years, a grand total of only six hours are devoted to training physicians about all aspects of environmental health. Six hours? That's it? That's not six hours as the word "hours" is used in a course curriculum. That's six hours total! I was astonished to hear that.

And when I asked how well we are prepared to respond to unexpected outbreaks of disease, I couldn't believe that answer either. We're perhaps unduly comforted that when some new outbreak of a strange virus occurs in some village in Africa as in the movies, the experts are right there on the scene. Actually, there is no formal system for disease surveillance on a global scale.

Those answers served as catalysts for this conference.

Unlike the character in *All the King's Men*, we couldn't convince ourselves that, if we didn't look at what could find out about this question, it would go away. All the evidence

indicates that we're gonna have to deal with it sooner or later. In fact, we have to deal with some of the consequences right now.

And so, today is designed to create an opportunity to come up to speed on what we do know about the climate change/human health relationship. I know full well that you have been deeply involved in those discussions already today, and I certainly don't want to repeat what has been said. But, particularly in light of the pending congressional action with respect to the research budget, the environmental budget, and the public health budget, I do want to point out some of the Administration's concerns about these issues.

Tomorrow, in the break-out sessions, we're going to ask you to give us ideas on how to move forward on issues of disease surveillance, disease prevention, medical education, R&D, international cooperation, and community outreach. Progress is already being made. For example, our agencies are making important strides in developing a surveillance strategy and have done so over the last year, but of course there is certainly a great deal that remains to be done.

And we really do want to hear all of your ideas. That's why so much time and attention has been devoted to the organizing and staging of the opportunities that you will have to present ideas. And you come from every possible arena. You are educators, scientists, researchers, NGOs. You're from industry and the medical and national security communities. You are government officials from every level -- local, state, federal, and international.

Now, in order to set the context, I've spoken before about the radical changes that have occurred in our environment just in my lifetime. I've told some of you that I believe very deeply that this dramatic change, for which global warming or climate change is only the most prominent manifestation, is really attributable to an underlying change in the fundamental relationship between human civilization and the Earth's environment. As is often the case, when a fundamental change takes place, one can't point to a single causal factor to explain it. In this case, I've come to believe that this radical change in the relationship between civilization and the Earth has come about because of the confluence of three factors at the same time, the first being the population explosion, which is now adding the equivalent of one China's worth of people every ten years, and that's a fundamentally new reality.

The second change is the scientific and technological revolution, which has dramatically magnified the average impact that each of the billions of people on Earth can potentially have on the Earth's environment. A nation of a billion people that suddenly acquires automobiles has more impact on the air that they breathe and on the global atmosphere than without. Of course, for all of the positive benefits of each technology and scientific advance we could list, there are also some unanticipated effects. My point is that when you take the scientific and technological revolution as a whole, it obviously has led to a new coefficient by which the impact of human civilization on the earth must be measured.

And the third factor, the most subtle in some ways but the most important in other ways, is the factor that Robert Penn Warren was getting at: there has been a change in

thinking about our duty to consider the future consequences of our present actions and a sometimes willful assertion that we can't possibly have any meaningful impact on the Earth's environment, therefore we shouldn't think about it much less worry about it or study it in detail.

Together, these three elements have combined to produce what scientists, what some of you would call a discontinuity: a fundamental change in the relationship between human civilization and the earth.

Father Thomas Berry once tried to drive this point home by saying that we are now in the fourth geologic era, one that began some 65 million years ago with the dying off of a huge percentage of the living species on earth, the time when the dinosaurs disappear, and back then, the Cenozoic Era began, and we're still in that era. Father Berry asked the question: is it possible that, because of the combined effects of all the impacts that we're seeing now in this relationship between human civilization and the earth, including the incredibly high rate by which living species alive in our time are disappearing, is it possible that we will see the effective end of the Cenozoic Era in the lifetimes of people now living and the beginning of whatever new era is later named.

Well, what do we know about it. There is a scientific consensus on the most salient issues, a revisionist few notwithstanding: we know that human activities are causing the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to increase dramatically in the atmosphere. I

don't think anyone really disputes that. Carbon dioxide has increased nearly 30% since the industrial revolution, methane has more than doubled, and nitrous oxide has gone up by 15%. We know these things, and again I don't think there's any dispute of that. We also know that the current trends are leading to an even more rapid accumulation of greenhouse gases and that, as this trend continues, the concentration greenhouse gases will continue to mount. Again, this is not controversial.

I've brought a graph that some of you have seen, and I'll just spend a moment on it. It's not as complicated as it looks. In a moment, I'll ask for some help on this. It has two lines on it: temperature and carbon dioxide. Many are quite familiar with this. This comes from the ice core record in Antarctica and, of course, precipitation on an annual basis is very low in Antarctica. And so, thousands of years worth of precipitation can stack up without totally crushing the record. They dig a bore hole down and analyze the air bubbles that are trapped in it, and, through a very clever -- and again, noncontroversial -- technique, they can measure the percentage of carbon dioxide that was in the atmosphere during the period that the layer of precipitation fell. And by measuring the ratio of oxygen isotopes one to the other, they can establish with a high degree of accuracy what the atmospheric temperature was when that precipitation fell. And they dug all the way back 160,000 years. On the temperature line, you can see the last Ice Age. The difference in New York City between now and the ice age is a nice day like today and having a mile of ice over your head.

(Laughter)

All right. Now, the second line is CO₂, and what you can see is that it has gone from 190 parts per million during the ice ages to 300 parts per million during the period of great warming in between the last two ice ages, and is going up now.

There are two points that I think are significant from these measurements. Number one, there is some relationship between those two lines. The precise nature of the relationship can be argued about and hasn't been established to the satisfaction of those who say there's actually mutual causality of a complicated sort here. But the relationship is clearly there just as -- I often use the example of what happened in my sixth grade class when a young boy pointed to the outline of east coast of South America and the west coast of Africa and said, "Did those two things ever fit together." My teacher said, "No, of course not. That's the most ridiculous things I have ever heard." (Laughter) He went on to become a drug addict and a ne'er-do-well. (Laughter) But, before that kid graduated from college, that geography teacher had been required to eat his words because the correlative relationship was proven to be backed up by geological evidence, and continental drift became an established fact.

Now, the second point is -- I said there was no controversy about what will happen to CO₂ and the other greenhouse gases over the next 30, 40, 50 years. Within the lifetimes of people who are in this auditorium, the CO₂ will go . . . (pause and flips up two more vertical panels--laughter) . . . up to here. Okay? Now, nobody has ever said there is a one to one relationship between CO₂ and temperature. Clearly there's not. That's foolishness, of course.

But there is a relationship. And there are thresholds in science beyond which discontinuities take place. And, what many people who are concerned about this issue are really saying is that when you take CO₂, which has changed within this order of magnitude for as far back as we can measure, and has a correlative relationship with global temperature, and then you push the concentrations of it up to an absurd level, completely beyond our historical experience, the burden of proof should lie with those who are aggressively saying, "That doesn't matter at all. That doesn't matter at all."

Okay. Thank you very much.

Now, in addition -- and, of course, people point out that as an absolute percentage of the atmosphere, CO₂ is a relatively small component. Well, as a percentage of the blood, hemoglobin is a relatively small component. It nevertheless has significance. And since the role of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases is magnified by the increased amount of water vapor, which begins to grow with rising temperatures, it is misleading to say that it's only a small part of the atmosphere, especially since, as the historical record shows, it has been associated with rather large changes in temperature. Now in addition to the greenhouse gases, human activities have increased the atmospheric concentrations of sulfate aerosols -- the key ingredient in acid rain -- especially over industrialized areas in the Northern Hemisphere. Greenhouse gases tend to warm the atmosphere, while sulfate aerosols tend to cool the atmosphere.

Now, what else do we know. We know that the Earth's climate is changing. In just the last century, the Earth's temperature has risen by about a half a degree Centigrade or one degree Fahrenheit. The nine warmest years this century have all occurred since 1980. This August was the hottest ever recorded for 6 states: my home state of Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, New Mexico, and West Virginia. In the United Kingdom -- and this a newly arrived at fact - August in the U.K. was the hottest since recording began in 1659. There are plenty of other measures -- from the tree-ring record to the record in land-based glaciers -- that all demonstrate that the current period is by far the hottest that we have been able to measure. Now, it is clear then that the Earth's climate is warming. And the evidence is getting ever stronger that this warming now under way is not due to natural variability, but to human activities.

Some of you may have seen the front page story in the New York Times yesterday. It's important to put that in context because some things have been established for a long time. CO₂ is increasing. It is increasing because of human activities. The temperature is increasing. When CO₂ continues to increase at some point, everybody agrees that, at some point, it will of course lead to warmer temperatures. What has been uncertain in the minds of many is whether or not the warming that has already taken place can be attributed to the accumulation of human-induced greenhouse gas increases that has already taken place. The new evidence addresses precisely that point.

Our modeling and observational data are showing some striking agreements. We can now simulate the observed temperature record by taking into account the documented changes in greenhouse gases, sulfate aerosols and stratospheric ozone depletion. When you take all three factors and measure them simultaneously, the agreement between observations and model simulation is quite remarkable.

I'd like to show you some new results if we could use the overhead projector there.

Now, this first overhead shows that models can now reproduce the global average surface temperature over the last 100 years. This model projects that a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide would result in a world about three -- really closer to four -- degrees Centigrade warmer, and that's close to eight degrees Fahrenheit warmer. And here you have the observational record. And when sulfate aerosols and ozone depletion, especially sulfate aerosols, are factored in, you can see that it most closely corresponds with the three degrees Centigrade run, and actually closer to the four degree Centigrade run.

Just to clarify, this projects that a world in which atmospheric carbon dioxide is doubled will be a world that is eventually between three and four degrees Centigrade warmer than today. That world is not hypothetical. That is the world that could be lived in by people who are in this auditorium -- I see a few younger ones here in this auditorium. (Laughter)

All right. Now, the next overhead shows that the carbon dioxide-aerosol model used in the first overhead closely reproduces the horizontal and vertical patterns of observed temperature changes. Now, why is this significant? Here's what the old models that did not factor aerosols showed. Now, first of all, this graph illustrates the entire global atmosphere -- this is the Equator, this is the Southern Hemisphere, and this is the Northern Hemisphere, and this is the atmosphere from the earth's surface up to basically the beginning of the stratosphere at around 17 kilometers at the equator. It's expressed in millibars of pressure. What it shows, contrary to the CO₂-only model, is that you get more warming in the Southern Hemisphere in significant measure because of the cooling effect of the aerosols in the Northern Hemisphere. Now, this is Dr. Oort's 25-year trend of temperatures in the global atmosphere, and those who were previously troubled to whatever degree by the lack of correlation between observations and data can now look and see for themselves what the factoring in of the aerosol data shows. And the correspondence again is striking.

So, you can see that models are doing a pretty good job of simulating some of the key features of the observational record.

Let me move on and share with you some very new results concerning climatic change over the United States. Tom Karl of NOAA, who is with us today, has looked at 5 climate variables that models predict should have changed in a greenhouse gas world: more precipitation in winter is one of them; a greater proportion of precipitation falling in extreme events, that is, when more than 2 inches will fall within 24 hours; more severe droughts in the

warm season; an increase in "above normal" temperatures; and a decrease in the day-to-day variability in temperature. Now, the data shows the expected changes in each of these variables, strongly suggesting that we are seeing a greenhouse signal in the observed changes in the climate of the U.S., even though, as has often been noted, the land area of the United States is a small percentage of the earth's surface.

Now, this overhead shows that winter-time precipitation has increased over the last century as projected, and the next overhead -- if I can go to that -- shows that the proportion of precipitation falling in extreme events has increased, thus increasing the chances of severe floods. This is the percent of the United States with a much-above normal proportion of total annual precipitation coming just from one-day extreme events defined as more than two inches in a single day. Now, how many -- I don't know where in the United States you live, but where I lived in the last couple of decades, I've read so many newspapers stories about people saying, "Well, that's a 500 year flood. Our statistics show that we can count on these on average every 500 years." And then, a couple years later, "Well, we've had another 500 year flood." (Laughter) And then a couple years after that -- has anybody seen that in the areas in which they live? Of course the denuding of watersheds contributes, and there are all kind of factors that go into it. But one of the factors that is demonstrated by this record is an increase in the percentage of precipitation coming in extreme events.

And I just noticed over the weekend a story in The Washington Post where farmers in a nearby area were complaining about the simultaneous, what seemed to them to be a

simultaneous, increase in the number in flooding and in droughts. And of course anecdotal data you can screen out altogether. However, an increase in flooding and droughts simultaneously is consistent with what is predicted. Droughts are predicted because of midcontinental drying and increased soil evaporation rates.

In addition to those changes in temperature and precipitation, there is other evidence of significant change: decrease in Northern Hemisphere snow cover; decrease in Arctic sea ice; the relatively dramatic and uniform retreat of alpine glaciers worldwide. You remember, when was it, a few years ago they found that 5,000 year old hiker in the Alps. All of a sudden, he was just laying there, and why didn't they notice that guy before? (Laughter) You know, Hannibal didn't see him . . . Well, of course, the answer is the ice the hasn't melted there before-- at least since he was, you know, in the snow there, and now there's bare ground there.

Sea level continues to rise. Some stunning new scientific results from NASA's work in satellite measurements now show that we don't have to rely on the relationship between the sea level and the land, because there's all kinds of controversy about it: how much the land is subsiding, and how much is it due to the sea level. From space now, they can calibrate so precisely that they can measure global average sea level increase, and it's happening, I believe, at the rate of about 2.5 millimeters per year.

Now, El Nino, which is associated with changed weather patterns has increased in frequency from once every 7 years to 3 years out of every 5. Hurricane formation -- I'm sure it's way too soon to talk about the results, but the rate of hurricane formation is at an extremely high level this year.

So, we've now reviewed some of the evidence of climate change to date.

The real question is: "What will happen in the future?". Without climate change policies that limit global emissions of greenhouse gases, there is no doubt that the Earth's climate will change. It's not a question of will it change, it is a question of when, by how much, and where. The question of when is now being answered. It has already begun to change significantly. And the best evidence is consistent with a prediction that, in the lifetimes of people now living, we will commit the world to an increase of up to 3 and 4 degrees Centigrade -- up to 8 degrees Fahrenheit. The scientists warn us that change is coming.

That rate of increase 2 - 8 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100 is a rate unseen on the planet for at least the last 10,000 years, since the end of the last ice age. And significantly, it is rate of change that is too fast for many ecological communities to adapt. And, of course, in areas of the latitude of the United States and higher latitudes, the warming is projected to be even more than the average.

So, how will global warming affect us?

There are clearly profound implications at the regional level for food security, water supplies, natural ecosystems, loss of land due to sea level rise, and human health. This may lead to environmental refugees and further exacerbate problems with global security. But I would like to dwell for just a few minutes on the key human health issues.

A temperature increase of 2 to 8 degrees Fahrenheit is projected to double heat-related deaths in New York City, and triple the number of deaths in Chicago, L.A. and Montreal.

The very young, the elderly, and the poor will be the ones most at risk. So will those with chronic cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. The past summer's stunning number of deaths in Chicago -- a reported over 500 in just a few days -- make these hypotheses all too real.

And I caution that the measurement of health effects by correlation to temperature alone is insufficient in many ways, but one that's obvious is something that we hear about on the nightly weather forecast: they now tell us what the heat index is. And the combination of heat and humidity produces the heat index or, as some refer to, the misery index. And an increase of 8 degrees Fahrenheit may be correlated with an increased in the heat/humidity misery index of 12 to 15 degrees.

Changing temperatures and rainfall patterns are predicted to also increase the spread of infectious diseases. Insects that carry disease organisms may now move to areas that were

once too cold for them to survive. These new breeding sites and higher temperatures may also speed reproduction.

Diseases we had hoped were just a memory in this country are suddenly a renewed threat. Cholera is resurgent in our hemisphere. After years of being contained in much of the world, Dengue Fever has returned to countries that had not seen the disease in 50 years. It was in the newspaper just last week that, with 50,000 cases of Dengue Fever reported in Central America this summer, it is also now a potential threat in the United States.

Malaria, too, is of course a global concern, and some of the new strains are more troubling than any that have been seen. Malaria already infects several hundred million people each year -- mainly in the Tropics. But this July, for the first time in 40 years, more than 100 people contracted malaria in a Russian city. To make matters worse, malaria, as I mentioned, is mutating so quickly that, for some forms of the disease, almost every known treatment has become ineffective.

And besides the return of old diseases, there are new ones to the U.S. scene.

Think about the hantavirus, which struck so suddenly in the Southwest. There is a strong connection between this virus -- which is transmitted to humans from rodents -- and the environment. Look at the record. A 6-year drought ended with a spring of heavy rains, which increased rodent foods like pinion nuts and grasshoppers. This altered the balance

between rodents and rodent predators like coyotes and owls. The rodent population increased tenfold in one year. And suddenly, a new fatal illness was in the headlines.

Now, speaking of headlines, you may have noticed as I have that every once in a while, a newscaster will remind us that a particular day is a day set aside to honor something that we didn't even know existed, much less was deserving of honors. Today is such a day. September 11 is the day when some people are celebrating what they call officially, "No News Is Good News Day." (Laughter) The idea behind it is, "don't read, listen to or watch the news today, and you'll feel better tonight." (Laughter) I think we can understand how that got started. (Laughter) It's an idea not without some appeal.

But, unfortunately, ignoring the news does not make it better. Closing your eyes to a problem doesn't make it vanish. You can't simply wish ozone holes away. I think I can speak for all of us when I say that if that were possible, we'd have all done it long ago.

So it astounds me, in light of all the data that has been collected over the years, that some are once again challenging the fact that there is ozone depletion. And what's even more amazing is that some people are listening.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have an extraordinary international consensus: we have thousands and thousands of atmospheric measurements linking manmade CFCs to global ozone depletion.

This is the time of the year, early to mid-September, when the ozone hole opens up above Antarctica, and it's opening up right now. Within a few days, it'll be up to 50% of its predicted level this year. Not long after that, it will be fully open.

We've seen the radical depletion of the ozone layer, and we will soon see the changes in health that are linked to it.

Luckily, the international consensus informed a determination by peoples around the world to do something about it. An international concerted action has not begun to pay off with a decline in the rate by which these chemicals are being put into the atmosphere. But the problem is not going away for a long time, and neither will the health consequences.

We all know that depletion of the ozone layer increases the amount of UV-B radiation that reaches the Earth. And so now we have to confront the fact that the observed depletion of ozone of 5-10% in summertime, when people are outdoors a lot, will increase non-melanoma skin cancer in fair-skinned populations by about 10-20%.

In addition, there will be an increase in the incidence of cataracts and other eye lesions, and cataracts are already the third largest cause of preventable blindness in the U.S. These numbers would be much higher yet were it not for the success of the Montreal Protocol. We must not forget though, that even with that world-wide action, it will be until the middle of the next century before the ozone layer recovers.

And it's incredible to me that, even though the scientific community has spoken loudly and clearly, time and time again, with a strong united voice, saying that the problem is real, it is occurring, and the science is sound--in spite of all that, some who ought to know better just don't want to hear the truth.

So Congress, for example, is holding new hearings on the science of ozone depletion next week -- hearings that seem obviously to be more influenced by the tiny minority few who stand way outside the mainstream, than by the consensus view of the international scientific community. It's amazing to me, really, that people could close their ears to such an overwhelming consensus.

Well, for the past 25 years, the United States has been committed to the bipartisan effort to protect the environment that I referred to in the beginning. And the result has been a great American success story. President Clinton has worked to continue and expand that effort. He has fought to make sure that the United States is at the forefront of a global environmental movement.

We're striving to return greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

We're striving to convince others to make as much progress as is possible. We're engaged in international negotiations to address this global problem. We're helping to develop

treaties not only for the protection of our own nation, but for the health and welfare of the world community of which we are a part.

We know that science is essential to our understanding of global problems.

Decisionmakers must realize that political science and economics no longer have all the answers. We must now also rely on physical and medical science. Therefore, we are participating in international scientific assessments and supporting developing countries' efforts through the Global Environment Facility. We have our own U.S. Global Change Research Program, a well-balanced effort to examine the causes and the consequences of climate change. The Administration has increased funding for clean renewable energy, energy efficiency and pollution prevention after a decade of woefully inadequate budgets. Tomorrow morning, I'll be giving the keynote address to yet another meeting of our effort to produce a new generation of vehicles, a partnership between the public and private sectors.

The President's budget reduces air pollution by actively promoting the use of energy efficiency and cleaner fuels such as solar, wind, geothermal, and natural gas. Energy efficiency programs actually more than pay for themselves: they save money for average American households. Solar and wind power have tremendous potential to create clean jobs for the United States while reducing emissions as we enter the twenty-first century.

But everything I've just mentioned is right now under attack in the United States Congress. The House and Senate passed short-sighted budgets that slashed these programs by over 40%. As a result, the U.S. will emit tens of millions of metric tons of carbon that would have been avoided if the President's budget was enacted. And again, the last chapter in this story has not been written for this year's budget.

And so, now we get back to where I began.

All of what I have discussed is being threatened under the mantle of budget cuts. We've mapped a course toward a balanced budget that nevertheless allows increased investments where they are needed. And what is threatened above all is our ability to protect public health.

Instead of addressing the environmental issues, the Congress has made this all about politics, pure and simple.

I don't think they're listening to what the American people are really saying with they're deepest convictions about this set of issues. Beyond climate change and health, if you look at environmental health more broadly, you can also look at the gutting of effective enforcement of the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. And the extraordinary incidences where the lobbyists for the largest emitters of pollution into the water were asked to come in and take the seats reserved for duly elected representatives of the American people and, while

sitting there, actually write the changes to allow their employers to vastly increase the amount of pollution they dump into the water. It's a shameful episode in the history of our Republic.

It is the special interests who now control the environmental budget in the Congress. The House attached 17 special interest riders to the EPA Appropriations Bill: they cover everything from the amount of chemicals that can pollute to our waters to reporting requirements about those pollutants.

Here is one of those pollutants that they said may not be any problem at all. They wrote specific language prohibiting further efforts to remove arsenic from drinking water because, in their view -- and I have had some of them say this to me directly -- they believe the evidence is not convincing that arsenic in drinking water is a problem. Just as they believe that the evidence on the ozone hole is not convincing.

They would allow factories to dump 15 million pounds extra of toxic chemicals into our nation's water's every year. They would let oil refineries release hazardous waste directly into the air. Under the House budget, the EPA couldn't finalize any proposal for drinking water protections against many items, including radon and I mentioned arsenic.

The Congress wants to severely limit the public's right to know by limiting the next phase of expanded information on chemical releases into communities where citizens who live in the community ask for the right to know what it is that's settling on their laundry on the

clothesline, and what it is their children are breathing, to get the information. They passed a special law saying, no, we'll eliminate that right to know.

Well, we've learned the hard way that cleanup costs are always much higher than the cost of prevention. But the House wants slash the enforcement of all environmental programs by half, including the prevention programs. For instance, the Congress wants to limit the EPA's enforcement of the cleaner Great Lakes standard, even though the lakes provide drinking water for more than 23 million Americans.

So, this attack is broad scale and very determined. So is our opposition.

The budget cuts now being proposed by the Congress would, however, seriously diminish our ability to generate the knowledge base and technological solutions upon which we could base useful arguments in the future about what the best approach might be. Slashing NASA's Mission to Planet Earth and the National Biological Service will deprive us of the environmental information and monitoring that we need.

And I'm not only just speaking of environmental success. I'm talking about economic success as well.

I won't belabor this point, but there's no dichotomy between economic growth and environmental protection. The new environmental technology industry is already a \$300

billion industry worldwide. We have a chance to dominate it, but again, some in Congress don't want to hear about it.

And make no mistake. This isn't about government efficiency. It is a direct and deliberate attack that effectively eviscerates our environmental regulations.

We can not let them succeed, in my view.

The President has vowed to veto this effort. He has issued an executive order to protect existing right-to-know laws and is expanding right-to-know programs.

Ladies and gentlemen, the role of the scientific community in articulating clearly the best accepted understanding of what we know and what we can say with sufficient confidence to enable the American people to take prudent measures to safeguard our future is absolutely critical.

And so, I wish to conclude by expressing my thanks to all of you, whatever your particular personal points of view on any of these issues, for spending the time to share with your colleagues and peers in a concerted, determined effort to look at the evidence relating to the relationship between human health and climate change.

At the conclusion of that book *All The King's Men*, the character I mentioned has traveled a long road, and he now, at the end, sees his relationship to others saying: "...only out of the past can you make the future." Well, we're addressing past mistakes to make sure that we have a future. And by your participation here, your work in the past, and your continued efforts for the future, you share a legacy that looks forward. Of course, you face incredible challenges, but you know that only by teaching, studying, and protecting our environment can we continue and succeed. You do look to the future, and so must we all.

Thank you very much for your participation.