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• William J. Clinton

Remarks to Westinghouse Employees in Linthicum, Maryland

March 11, 1993

Thank you very much. I want to say a special word of thanks to the people from Westinghouse who greeted me when I arrived: Gary Clark, who introduced me, Dick Linder, Gladys Green, Rich O'Leary, and Gary Eder. And thank you to all of you who made this tour possible.

I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress who are here, who have worked very hard for a long time and before I became President to help to design a plan to strengthen our economy even as we reduce military spending. Your Senators, Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes, are here. Your Congressman, Ben Cardin, is here. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico; Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein of California; Senator Bill Cohen of Maine; Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island; Congressman Martin Frost of Texas; Congresswoman Jane Harman of California; and Congressman Tom Foglietta of Pennsylvania. I think that is the entire delegation here, along with Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore and Governor Schaefer. I'm glad to see all of them. I have to note here, you can tell who the best politician is. Of all these people I've introduced, only Senator Mikulski found a seat. *[Laughter]*

I'd also like to thank the members of my Cabinet who have helped to work on the statement that I will announce today who are here: the Defense Secretary Les Aspin, Labor Secretary Bob Reich, Veterans Affairs Director Jesse Brown, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. I want to thank all of them for their work.

All of you know from personal experience how much American industry has been changed by the cutbacks in defense. Defense spending peaked in 1985. And by 1997, it will have been reduced approximately 40 percent, perhaps more, from its 1985 peak. These changes have led not only to reductions in military personnel abroad and closings of bases at home but dramatic changes in military contracting that have affected companies like this one and which have affected the economies of the States of California, Connecticut, Texas, and many others.

It has been said that while change is certain, progress is not. And that certainly is true when it comes to the challenge of meeting the national economic goals that we have in the face of cutbacks in military spending. As I said, these cutbacks have been made since 1985; more are to come. They are essential in a world in which we need funds to be reinvested in the domestic economy and in which the security threats we meet today, while very serious, are different and clearly less expensive than those we faced when the Soviet Union and the United States faced each other across the Berlin Wall with the barriers of the cold war and the imminent prospect of nuclear war. So these changes had to come. But if we do nothing in the face of change, we have learned the hard way that we are its victims. If we take bold action, we can be the beneficiaries of change.

All of you here at Westinghouse Electronic Systems Group are proof that you can make change your friend. In 1986, just 16 percent of the work done here was nondefense. Today, it's 27 percent. By 1995, half or more of your work will be nondefense. What you have done here is what I wish to do nationally: take some of the most talented people in the world who produce some of the most sophisticated military technology and put that to work in the civilian economy.

The military surveillance technology I have seen here can now be used to help commercial airlines avoid wind shears. Military security technology can now be used to help police officers on the streets and in their patrol cars to be safer and to solve crimes and to find missing children more rapidly. State-of-the-art batteries is helping here to develop an electric car which may well provide an enormous opportunity for America to become more energy-independent and to dramatically reduce the pollution of our atmosphere, at a time when we have been reminded anew that there really is a hole in the ozone layer and there really are problems with unlimited emissions of CO₂.

Clearly, defense conversion can be done and can be done well, making change our friend and not our enemy. But in order to do it we must act, act decisively, act intelligently, and not simply react years after the cuts occur.

Last year, when a candidate for President, I outlined a plan to create new jobs in the civilian economy. Anticipating this challenge, farsighted Members of Congress appropriated approximately \$1.5 billion for defense conversion last year, including ideas that literally came from the minds and the efforts of some of the Members of Congress who are here with us today. They've demonstrated aggressiveness in adapting to change. But until today, in spite of that act, none of the money appropriated by Congress was released, and there was no comprehensive plan for what to do with it.

Today I want to explain how we're going to put your money to work to put Americans to work and how we're planning for the future by investing in our people, encouraging our companies, and assisting our communities. Our first priority has to be investing in our people. Keep in mind, as you all know here, when the defense budget is reduced, that affects, obviously, contracts and therefore the jobs of people who work in the private sector. It also affects the size of the military force itself, the configuration of our defense forces abroad and here at home, and the people who will be affected by the reductions.

Our defense reinvestment and conversion initiative will rededicate \$375 million right away to help working people affected by defense reductions with employment services, job training, and transition assistance; \$150 million of that will go to Government and employer-sponsored job training programs; \$112 million will help members of the Guard and the Reserves make the transition to civilian life and to provide severance pay and health benefits to civilians who are leaving Government employment.

There's also initiative to provide early retirement benefits for military personnel with 15 years of service or more, to start a new program to encourage them to put their skills to work in vital areas like teaching, law enforcement, environmental restoration, and health care. Under a provision offered by Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, any member of the military who is being mustered out with 15 years or more of service can go to work in law enforcement, for example, and earn a year of military retirement for every year they were in law enforcement, so that these people who have committed their lives to the service of our country and could not reasonably have known that this reduction would occur and would affect them can still earn their military retirement by serving their country here at home.

We must also recognize the ripple effect of defense adjustment and target assistance to our communities. In 1993 alone, we will triple the budget of the Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment. The \$30 million we've committed to this task will be invested in helping our communities find the tools and the expertise to adjust to the changed nature of their local economy. It will be an investment that pays off in the long-term.

In addition, through the Commerce Department, we'll invest another \$80 million in a revolving loan and grant program to directly and immediately aid communities hit hardest by defense cuts.

Finally, the Secretary of Defense has assured me that he will do everything he can to speed the environmental cleanup on bases that are closed so that they can be turned over either to commercial purposes or to local government at the earliest possible time so that there will be a minimum loss of economic activity in areas where bases are closed.

But all the worker training in the world and all the community assistance in the world will do no good if there are no jobs for those workers and no businesses for those communities. The private sector is the engine of lasting economic growth in our system, and therefore, our plan must help our companies to make these transitions to compete and to win.

We seek to go beyond the debate of the past in which some thought Government alone could do everything and others claimed Government could do nothing. In this area there are two things Government can do to aid companies like this one: promote dual use research and promote civilian use of technology that was formerly developed for military purposes. That is what you have done here. We want to speed and expand that process all across the United States.

One of the success stories of the cold war was the Defense Advanced Research Agency, or DARPA. DARPA helped keep America on the cutting edge of defense research. To meet the new challenges of the new world, we're giving DARPA a new mission and restoring its old name, because before 1972 that Agency was known simply as the Advanced Research Products Agency. By going back to that name and refocusing the Agency's efforts on dual use technologies, such as that which you have demonstrated to me here today, rather than strictly military applications, we'll be better able to integrate research to strengthen defense and to promote our economic security here at home.

Starting now, this Agency, ARPA, will allocate more than \$500 million to technology and industrial programs like the ones we've seen here today. We'll support industry-led consortia and dual use technologies and promote efforts to break through with commercial uses of formerly defense technologies. Programs will be selected on the basis of merit and will require matching funds from the corporations affected. We're even going to set up a toll-free number to attract good ideas from good companies. And you will like this. The number is 1-800-DUALUSE. The hot line will be hooked up tomorrow, so don't call today. *[Laughter]*

To help walk companies through their new opportunities, ARPA will provide them with this book, which puts together programs from the Defense Department, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Energy, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. It is a remarkable coalition of Agencies finally putting all the information together for defense technology conversion, reinvestment, and transition assistance.

To further coordinate assistance, ARPA will work with four other Agencies, the ones I just mentioned. And we're going to have a series of regional outreach meetings all across this country, again, to try to mobilize other companies to get involved in this initiative so that they can save or create jobs instead of lose jobs in the face of defense reductions.

We want Government-industry partnerships to help develop advanced materials. We want companies to form regional technology alliances so they can share information and develop new products and new markets. Our manufacturing extension programs will help bring state-of-the-art technology to companies in much the same way as the Agricultural Extension Service helped our farmers more than two generations ago begin to become the most productive in the world. And through the Small Business Innovation Research Program, we'll help small businesses in their efforts to develop dual use technology.

But dual use technology is just the beginning. We have to explore also new opportunities in purely civilian technologies. This year alone, we'll invest \$300 million in emerging nondefense technology. The Department of Energy will speed the transfer of technology to private industry from our national labs. And when Congress passes the stimulus package I have proposed, we'll have millions more to invest in research and development partnerships, in advanced technology programs, and in computer

networks for schools and libraries around the country.

As with every aspect of the program for change I have asked the American people and the Congress to embrace, defense conversion will require us to literally reimagine and reinvent the way Government works. I've asked the National Economic Council to take the lead in our efforts to streamline and coordinate our conversion efforts so that you don't have to deal with a big bureaucracy where all the information is in many different places and sometimes seems to be operating at cross purposes.

Shifting to a civilian economy is of obvious concern to the Defense Department, but it's also the business of the Commerce Department, the Labor Department, the Energy Department, NASA, and many other agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will have even more veterans now as people are coming out of the service and going into the civilian work force. Our National Economic Council will cut through red tape, break through turf battles, and help to deliver services to our customers quickly and efficiently.

I don't pretend that this will be easy, and all of it will take some time. But the choice we face is between bold action to build a stronger and safer and smarter America, or continuing to cut defense with no appropriate response or with one that is too localized and too limited.

The soldier-statesman Dwight Eisenhower once observed that the resourceful American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. Our challenge is now to reverse the process. You have given us a stunning example of just how brilliantly that can be done here in this fine facility. I know today that the world's finest makers of swords can and will be the finest makers of plowshares, and they will lead America into a new century of strength, growth, and opportunity.

Thank you very much.

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