

Videotaped Statement on the Occasion of the Second Annual "Night of 1000 Dinners"

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Statement on the Second Annual "Night of 1000 Dinners" Being Held December 5, 2002

Washington, DC

December 3, 2002

I am honored to join you on this second "Night of 1000 Dinners," co-sponsored by our valued mine action partners, the United Nations Association of the United States of America and the Canadian Landmine Foundation.

The first "Night of 1000 Dinners" was a success. \$1.4 million dollars were contributed to our common fight to make the world mine safe. This exemplifies how citizens and non-governmental organizations can work in partnership with governments.

To those who hosted and participated in last year's round of dinners, I extend a hearty welcome back. I am grateful for your steadfast support to help future generations "walk the earth in safety."

To our new guests around the world, we warmly welcome you to our tables. Thank you for joining us in this great endeavor.

Very shortly, we will sit down and enjoy the earth's bounty. But let us not forget that too many people in mine-affected countries risk life and limb when they venture to plant, sow crops or gather food. Too many go hungry and remain trapped in poverty because a deadly, mechanical pest infests their lands.

The Governments of the United States, Canada, and other donor nations have made great progress in reducing landmine casualties and restoring mine infested land to productive use. These official programs have been reinforced by the efforts of the United Nations Association of the USA, the Canadian Landmine Foundation, and other non-governmental organizations and concerned citizens through public-private partnerships.

But countless landmines still pose a deadly threat to innocent people all over the world. We still have a long way to go before our work is done.

That is why the United States welcomes the involvement and support of private citizens and non-governmental organizations. We are committed to promoting even more public-private partnerships in support of mine action. As we celebrate our good fortune to be sharing a fine dinner this evening, let us vow to redouble our efforts. Let's think of how we can engage more of our fellow citizens, more civic groups and more private sector businesses to give their support to humanitarian mine action efforts in the coming year.

Thank you again for gathering together this evening. Thanks also to those Embassies of the United States, Canada, and other nations that are participating in this "Night of 1000 Dinners."

I toast your health and success.

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