

Last year, the Congress provided substantial assistance to help stave off a disaster in American agriculture. And I am ready to work with lawmakers of both parties to create a farm safety net that will include crop insurance reform and farm income assistance. I ask you to join with me and do this. This should not be a political issue. Everyone knows what an economic problem is going on out there in rural America today, and we need an appropriate means to address it.

We must strengthen our lead in technology. It was Government investment that led to the creation of the Internet. I propose a 28-percent increase in long-term computing research. We also must be ready for the 21st century from its very first moment, by solving the so-called Y2K computer problem.

We had one Member of Congress stand up and applaud. [*Laughter*] And we may have about that ratio out there applauding at home, in front of their television sets. But remember, this is a big, big problem. And we've been working hard on it. Already, we've made sure that the Social Security checks will come on time. But I want all the folks at home listening to this to know that we need every State and local government, every business, large and small, to work with us to make sure that this Y2K computer bug will be remembered as the last headache of the 20th century, not the first crisis of the 21st.

For our own prosperity, we must support economic growth abroad. You know, until recently, a third of our economic growth came from exports. But over the past year and a half, financial turmoil overseas has put that growth at risk. Today, much of the world is in recession, with Asia hit especially hard. This is the most serious financial crisis in half a century. To meet it, the United States and other nations have reduced interest rates and strengthened the International Monetary Fund. And while the turmoil is not over, we have worked very hard with other nations to contain it.

At the same time, we have to continue to work on the long-term project, building a global financial system for the 21st century that promotes prosperity and tames the cycle of boom and bust that has engulfed so much of Asia. This June I will meet with other world leaders to advance this historic purpose, and I ask all of you to support our endeavors.

I also ask you to support creating a freer and fairer trading system for 21st century America. I'd like to say something really serious to everyone in this Chamber in both parties. I think trade has divided us, and divided Americans outside this Chamber, for too long. Somehow we have to find a common ground on which business and workers and environmentalists and farmers and Government can stand together. I believe these are the things we ought to all agree on. So let me try.

First, we ought to tear down barriers, open markets, and expand trade. But at the same time, we must ensure that ordinary citizens in all countries actually benefit from trade, a trade that promotes the dignity of work and the rights of workers and protects the environment. We must insist that international trade organizations be more open to public scrutiny, instead of mysterious, secret things subject to wild criticism. When you come right down to it, now that the world economy is becoming more and more integrated, we have to do in the world what we spent the better part of this century doing here at home. We have got to put a human face on the global economy.

We must enforce our trade laws when imports unlawfully flood our Nation. I have already informed the Government of Japan that if that nation's sudden surge of steel imports into our country is not reversed, America will respond.

We must help all manufacturers hit hard by the present crisis with loan guarantees and other incentives to increase American exports by nearly \$2 billion.

I'd like to believe we can achieve a new consensus on trade, based on these principles. And I ask the Congress again to join me in this common approach and to give the President the trade authority long used and now overdue and necessary to advance our prosperity in the 21st century.

Tonight I issue a call to the nations of the world to join the United States in a new round of global trade negotiations to expand exports of services, manufactures, and farm products. Tonight I say we will work with the International Labor Organization on a new initiative to raise labor standards around the world. And this year, we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world.

If we do these things—invest in our people, our communities, our technology, and lead in