

Council on Foreign Relations

Our Shared Future: Globalization in the 21st Century

Speaker: William Jefferson Clinton

Presider: Peter G. Peterson

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Excerpts, emphasis added:

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Now, there are two other things that I think are important in building a world with more partners and fewer terrorists. First I think we have to support further institutional integration of the nation states. We should be for cooperation. In general I think that even if things aren't perfect, anything that aids integration and resists disintegration is a positive thing. **Therefore, I am, as everybody knows, at odds with the position of the current administration on the comprehensive test ban treaty, the Kyoto treaty, the International Criminal Court.** I think we should make our full contribution to the fund that the Secretary General has set up to fight AIDS and other childhood diseases, infectious diseases. And I think it's important that we make the WTO work, which means that we have to set a good example.

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[Audience]: Julie...American University. You said that a lot of it, Mr. President, boils down to leadership. And I was wondering how you would characterize your leadership on human rights versus that of the current administration?

WJC: I wouldn't. (Laughter) I wouldn't. I think if there are ... there are some things that I think it's appropriate for me to express my opinion on, when I have a clear record and they changed it. **So I don't think there's ... it shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody that I don't agree with America's decision to withdraw from the comprehensive test ban treaty or Kyoto or the international criminal court.** But I think ... and I have opinions about economic policy and all that sort of stuff ... but I think that it doesn't really serve the public debate or advance the cause of human rights for me to get into the comparison business. That's something the rest of you can do. So I just shouldn't do that.