President's letter to PITAC Co-Chairs about the importance of IT R&D, (August 10, 1998)

President Clinton Welcomes Plan to Strengthen U.S. Leadership in Information Technology

August 10, 1998

Mr. Bill Joy, Co-Chair
Dr. Ken Kennedy, Co-Chair
National Coordination Office for Computing,
Information, and Communications
Suite 690, 4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Bill and Ken:

Thank you for your Interim Report advising me of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee's (PITAC) findings and recommendations on future directions for federal support of information technology research and development. The Vice President joins me in thanking you and the other PITAC members for your guidance on how best to preserve America's commanding lead in computing and communications technology.

Our nation's economic future and the welfare of our citizens depend on continued advances and innovations in the information technologies that have produced so many remarkable developments in science, engineering, medicine, business, and education. Sustained prosperity for America requires a steady stream of technological innovation. The knowledge-based society of the next century makes our participation in the front ranks of research essential if our nation is to capture the gains of scientific and technological advances. Half of our economic productivity in the last half century is attributable to scientific and technological innovation. One third of our economic growth since 1992 has been spurred by businesses in the computing and communications industries. Information technology sustains our global competitiveness, provides opportunities for

lifelong learning, and expands our ability to solve critical problems affecting our environment, health care and national security.

Through my Administration's initiatives in computing and communications, such as the Next Generation Internet, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's support for breakthrough technologies, the Department of Energy's high performance computing programs, and the National Science Foundation's Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence emphasis, we have laid the foundations for the technological advances that promise to profoundly transform the next millennium. Yet, to maintain this momentum, we must adequately fund critical federal investments in fundamental research. In my recent speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I proposed significant increases in computing and communications research. Your proposed research agenda will help guide Dr. Neal Lane, my Assistant for Science and Technology, in developing a detailed plan for my review.

For six years in a row, I have proposed budget increases to sustain American leadership across the frontiers of scientific knowledge. Most recently, I was pleased to sign into law the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 1998, which will create new knowledge, spur innovations, foster future breakthroughs, and provide cutting-edge research facilities that will produce the finest American scientists and engineers for the 21st century.

I am hopeful that the Congress and my Administration can work together to advance the leading edges of computational science to help us discover new technologies that can make this a better world. We have a duty -- to ourselves, to our children, and to future generations -- to make these and other farsighted investments in science and technology to take America into the next century well-equipped for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Sincerely,
Bill Clinton