

Remarks at the National Governors Association Dinner
February 24, 2024

Well, thank you, Gov. I—may be the only Irishman you ever met that's never had a drink. And my grandfather used to say, "Joey, if you toast with anything other than alcohol, you've got to use your left hand." *[Laughter]*

Folks, Governor Cox, Governor Polis, and everyone—to all the family members that are here—and thank you—*[inaudible]*—for being here tonight. Appreciate it very much.

You know, let me just say that we have a lot to do together. The thing that makes me feel good about having the Governors here is, there is still the tradition of doing things together. We fight like hell. We make sure that we get our points across. But, at the end of the day, we know who we work for. The objective is to get things done.

And you know, standing here in front of this portrait of the man behind me here, he—said—and I want to make sure I get the quote exactly right. He said, "We—the better angels"—he said, "We must address the counsel—and adjust the better angels of our nature." And we do the—and we do well to remember what else he said. He said, "We're not enemies, but *[we're]* friends." This is in the middle of—this is in the—in the part of the Civil War. He said, "We're not enemies, but *[we're]* friends. We must not be enemies."

Folks—and I've been around. I know I don't look it. I've been around a long while though. *[Laughter]* And I mean this sincerely, we've gotten—politics has gotten too bitter—Democrats and Republicans. Politics has gotten too personally—and it just is—it's just not like it was.

And by the way, I served in times when we had very, very staunch differences. I mean, there were incredible differences, but we always—not always, but the vast majority of the time, we looked out for a compromise when the end of the—when the end of the day came.

And you know, it seems to me that—I'll conclude by saying, I've spent a lot of time with Xi Jinping, someone whom I have a great deal of difference with. And I was—when I was Vice President, President—my President was—told me that he wanted me to get to know Xi Jinping because it was clear he was going to be the head of Russia—of China and that he—we had a—we were having problems with Russia at the time and other countries as well.

And so what he said was: "Get to know him. He's going to be there." I—and he couldn't because he was the President, and he couldn't travel. So I traveled 17,000 miles with him throughout the country—our country and—in—China, as well.

We were in the Tibetan Plateau. And he turned to me, and he said, "Can you define America for me?" And I—given this has been documented, and it's real—I looked at him, and I said, "Yes, I can. In one word." And he looked at me. And he said, "What's that?" And I said, "Possibilities." Possibilities.

Here is to possibilities.

[At this point, the President offered a toast.]

Possibilities, because there's so—I have never been more optimistic in my life about the prospects of what we can do if we just work together. There's nothing beyond our capacity.

So, again, to possibilities.

[The President offered a toast.]

Okay. I'm right here?

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Spencer J. Cox of Utah, in his capacity as chair, and Gov. Jared S. Polis of Colorado, in his capacity as vice chair, of the National Governors Association; President Xi Jinping of China; and former President Barack Obama.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National Governors Association dinner.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Cox, Spencer J.; Obama, Barack; Polis, Jared L.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Bipartisanship; China, President; Colorado, Governor; National Governors Association; Utah, Governor.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400135.