

at 3 times the rate of inflation. What we say is, "Adopt our plan, and they'll only go up at twice the rate of inflation." Now, in Washington, they think that's a cut. Where I come from, most of us would give anything to have an income increase at twice the rate of inflation, wouldn't we?

So I ask you to think about these things. The time has come to give the American people security, health care that's always there, health care that can never be taken away. The time has come to simplify the system. The time has come to prove that we can make savings. These are unconscionable areas of waste. And we can do it and preserve quality. We can do it and actually increase the choices most Americans have. We can do it and let about two-thirds of the people who have insurance get the same or better insurance for the same or less cost. But it is going to require some change in the system.

But this is a security issue. Unless we can be secure in our work and families, unless we can be secure in our streets, unless we can be secure in our health care, I'm not sure the American people will ever be able to recover the personal optimism and courage to open up to the rest of the world, to continue to lead the world, to continue to reach out and break

down the barriers of trade because we know a rich country can only create jobs through increasing the volume of trade, to make these internal educational and investment changes without which we cannot move toward the 21st century. So I ask you to keep doing what you're doing. Help us pass these bills. Get us a crime bill. Get us a health care bill. Get us the economic bills that we've got up there. Pass the Education 2000 bill, all of our education bills.

But remember what the big picture is. The big picture is, the world is trending in directions we cannot fully understand but we pretty nearly can imagine. And we have got to get to the 21st century with America still the strongest country in the world and with the American dream alive again and with a strong middle class again. That means we've got to change. And to change, we have to give our people security again. We can do it. Together, we can do it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. at the Washington Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic National Committee officers David Wilhelm, chairman, Kathleen Vick, secretary, and Lottie Shackelford, Martha Love, and Debra DeLee, vice chairs.

Exchange With Reporters on Departure for New Brunswick, New Jersey October 8, 1993

Secretary of Defense Les Aspin

Q. Are you going to support Les Aspin?

The President. Well, yes. I mean, what is the question in reference to? I'm sorry.

Q. In reference to all the complaints on Capitol Hill about his performance.

The President. Well, I will say again, I asked Secretary Aspin why the extra—weren't sent to Somalia. He said to me that when they were asked for, there was no consensus among the Joint Chiefs that it should be done. And he normally relied on their reaching a consensus recommendation on an issue like that, a military—[inaudible]. And secondly that it was never suggested to him that they were needed for the kind of defensive purposes that it's been speculated that they're useful for during this

last raid, that it was only for offensive purposes, and that it was his best judgment that we were trying to get the political track going again, and we didn't want to send a signal that we were trying to conduct more offense in Somalia. He also said if anybody had made the defensive argument, that would have been an entirely different thing. And obviously if he had known then what he knows now, he would have made a different decision.

Q. Mr. President, did you know about the request in advance, sir?

The President. Did I know? No.

Q. Were you told—[inaudible]—and also do you think—

The President. No. And I was talking to General Powell on a very regular basis about this

whole thing. This was not something that anybody brought to me directly.

Somalia

Q. Why won't the Somali warlords just go underground for 6 months and wait for us to get out and then declare victory? Isn't there a danger in giving them a deadline when we're going to get out?

The President. Well, it might happen. But keep in mind, we're going to wind up—by then there should be an even larger U.N. force there. And that's our objective. In 6 months, we will have been there well over a year longer than we ever committed to stay.

So we will have given them well over a year longer, more personnel, and more efforts in this endeavor. We have obligations elsewhere, including this very important effort that we've invested a lot in in Haiti, to try to support that. So, I just don't believe that we can be in a position of staying longer than that.

I also think once we send a signal to them that we're not going to tolerate people messing with us or trying to hurt our people or trying to interrupt the U.N. mission, that we have no interest in denying anybody access to playing a role in Somalia's political future. I think a mixed message has been sent out there in the last couple of months by people who are doing the right thing. Our people are doing the right thing. They're trying to keep our folks alive, trying to keep the peacekeeping mission going, trying to get the food out there. But we need to clearly state, unambiguously, that our job is not to decide who gets to play a role in post-war Somalia, that we want the political process to work. So let's give it a chance to work and see if it does.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:20 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey
October 8, 1993

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, Governor and Mrs. Florio, Congressman Menendez, Congressman Klein, Mayor Cahill. To the distinguished participants in this program, Mr. Holzberg, Dr. Hammond, Sheriff Fontura. I hope he doesn't decide to run for President anytime soon. He gave a fine talk, I thought.

Mrs. Jones, thank you for coming here and sharing your story with us, and I thank your son sitting over here, and two other fine young men who were the victims of violence, for helping to describe their condition to Governor and Mrs. Florio and to me today and what happened to them.

I am delighted to be back here not only in New Jersey but in New Brunswick. I started one of my other crusades here not very long ago, the crusade to pass a national service bill that would give tens of thousands of our young people a chance to earn credit against their college educations by working in their communities. A few days ago, we signed that bill into law, and I think it will change the face of America.

That is one of the many changes that I hope we can make as we move toward the 21st century. But I believe very strongly that in order for us all to have the courage to make those changes, we need a higher level of personal security in this country. And I wanted to come back here to this magnificent health facility to talk today for a moment about the relationship between health care and the need for health security and violence and the need for personal security.

As you've already heard, these two things are very closely related. I'm honored to be here with my good friend and former colleague, Governor Jim Florio. You know, I was elated when Jim was awarded the John F. Kennedy Profiles in Courage Award earlier this year, because I think he really earned it. My guess is, he earned it by making even some of you in this audience mad from time to time. But I know what it's like to be a Governor and to have to work on a balanced budget, and I know what kind of trouble New Jersey was in, and you now have the best credit rating in the Northeast. I know, too, how hard it is to stand up and