

Assistant Attorney General Nominee

Q. Mr. President, what do you plan to do to save Bill Lann Lee's nomination, and is there anything you can do to overcome Senator Hatch's opposition?

The President. Well, I'm disappointed in Senator Hatch's statement because I think everybody who knows Bill Lee believes he is superbly qualified to be head of the Civil Rights Division. The Civil Rights Division enforces the laws of the United States against discrimination, and we need a strong and nationally recognized leader in that position.

You know, in his hearing, no one could say anything bad about this man. I mean, here he is, the son of Chinese immigrants that's worked his heart out all of his life. He's devoted his

entire life to fighting for equal opportunity and against discrimination. He is superbly qualified. And that's what I want to say—how can anybody in good conscience vote against him if they believe that our civil rights laws ought to be enforced? That is a question that we will be pressing to every Senator without regard to party.

I had thought there was a bipartisan consensus in the United States for enforcing the civil rights laws of America. I still believe there is in the country, and I think there ought to be in the Senate.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on Fast-Track Trade Legislation

November 4, 1997

This week Congress has the opportunity to renew decades of partnership between the Congress and the President in building America's economic future and security through trade.

That partnership has been a key component of this Nation's successful economic strategy, which has given America its strongest economy in a generation and helped build this country into the world's greatest trading nation. By working together for over 60 years, Congress and the President have provided a foundation for prosperity at home while bolstering democracy, security, and living standards around the world.

Our predecessors learned the bitter lessons of protectionism firsthand during the Great Depression and wisely set the world on a path toward mutual prosperity. Today, with our economy and our workers, farmers, and firms the envy of the world, America can lead from strength. In a world where economic activity in one corner of the globe can affect economic activity in every other, America's leadership in international trade is more vital than ever.

Over the past 5 years, American exports have helped power and sustain a U.S. economy of unparalleled productivity, strength, and vitality. From year to year, we have added hundreds of thousands of high-wage, high-productivity jobs in our dynamic export industries.

Our challenge today, and for our children, is to sustain that growth and our standard of living well into the next century, while promoting worker rights and environmental protection at home and abroad. To secure our economic future, we must take advantage of quickly expanding market opportunities around the globe that are available for America's workers and firms—if we seize them. Some 96 percent of the world's consumers live outside our borders.

Here at home, we have the world's most open and competitive marketplace. Americans thrive on fair competition, as the sustained growth in our economy has shown. But in some foreign countries, particularly in the new, emerging marketplaces around the world, American products and services are not given a chance to compete. Now is the time for us to unlock those markets and make them as open to fair competition as our own.

Legislation is pending before the Congress this week that will allow us to do that, while addressing important labor and environmental concerns. It makes Congress a vital partner in shaping our trade strategies and strengthens the hand of our negotiators. It tells our trading partners that America is united at the negotiating

table in securing the best possible market opportunities for our firms, farmers, and workers.

American leadership has helped prompt tremendous progress towards democracy, stability, and economic security in our hemisphere and around the world. Our sustained efforts to bring about fair and open trade worldwide have been a major reason for our success.

I am committed to pursuing not only more open markets for our companies and working people but more open societies that encourage respect for core labor standards and for the environment. To accomplish those goals, to build on our strength, and to sustain American leadership over the years to come, Congress must join me in a partnership for the future.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senator John F. Kerry November 4, 1997

Thank you very much, John, Teresa, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would very much like to thank Senator Kerry for explaining the commitments he made in the last election, because we were all wondering why we were here tonight. *[Laughter]* And now we know we've come to help Reverend Kerry keep his vow of poverty. *[Laughter]*

Let me say on a only slightly more serious note, I liked a lot of things about the campaign of 1996. I liked the fact that we were able to go out and finally say that there were two different visions of this country. The American people voted for one of them in 1994; they voted for another one in 1992. They fought us on everything we tried to do with the economy, with crime, with welfare, with the environment. The results were in, and the American people made a judgment.

And John Kerry in many ways had to run the most difficult of all races for an incumbent, because he had to run against a sitting Governor who was immensely popular and was not sort of a cardboard cutout of the contract on America. And I was absolutely determined that if I could do anything to help him get reelected, I would do it. And I loved every minute of every day I ever spent in Massachusetts, and I was tickled that he won.

And I might say, in the campaign that he had to put together to win, with the grassroots support and the intensity, it was—Massachusetts became the only State in the country where every single Republican running for Federal office was removed. And it was a great, great effort. And it is not because—contrary to what a lot people think—the State is a doctrinaire

liberal State; that's just not true. Those of you who live there know that. *[Laughter]*

So, I'm glad to be here. I'm also glad to be here because I do consider that John and Teresa are sort of soulmates of mine and Hillary's and our whole crew. They believe in the nobility of public service, and they believe in the imperatives of change.

You know, when I came here back in '93, one of the reasons I ran for President is that I really thought our country was getting in deeper and deeper and deeper trouble and drifting more and dividing more because Washington continued to be dominated by the same old stale debates and name-calling and categorizing that didn't bear much relationship to the real world in which I lived.

You know, on the budget, are you going to cut taxes and explode the deficit, or spend more money and just run it up a little less? On crime, were you tough or soft? That's the dumbest thing I ever heard. I never met anybody who was for crime. I'm still looking for the first person to come and say, you know, "My policy is, vote for me and I'll bring you more crime." *[Laughter]* We should either treat everyone on welfare as if they're pikers who are milking the system, or just give them more money for the same system—all these things that you heard in these debates and it was—it was so jangling. And I realize a lot of it—now I know a lot of it is the way it is presented to the people through the interlocutors. But what we tried to do was to change the way people thought.

And I agree with John—a lot of—I'm not sure that it's all that clear to the American people that that's been done, but it is true. I said, you know, on the economy, why don't we cut