

keep faith with these great leaders whose memory we honor today and enter the 21st century with our Union stronger than ever.

Best wishes for a memorable observance.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for David Satcher as Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health and an Exchange With Reporters
February 13, 1998

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President; Secretary Shalala, thank you for your heroic efforts in this regard. To the Satcher family, Senator Kennedy, Senator Jeffords, Senator Frist, Congressman Stokes, Congressman Waters, to the members of the Satcher family and friends, and all the people who've worked so hard for this nomination, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the National Medical Association. Dr. Sullivan, it's nice to see you back here.

This is a good day for America. It should be a happy day for America, and it bodes well for the health of the American people and especially of the American children.

I am very, very grateful to the bipartisan majority of the United States Senate who made it possible for us to swear in David Satcher as the next Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary of Health. Besides being superbly qualified, I can't help noting, he also looks good in his uniform. *[Laughter]*

Only once before has the President had the honor and the opportunity to appoint one person to fill two of the most demanding public health positions in the Nation. Dr. Satcher is more than capable of meeting this challenge. From the overwhelming bipartisan support he received, and the strong support he received from professional organizations, it is clear that we have found the right advocate for America's public health.

He takes on his role at a pivotal time in American health care. Stunning medical breakthroughs, new treatments for some of our most deadly diseases, a rapidly changing health care system make it more important than ever that our Surgeon General truly be America's family doctor and guide us through this time of change.

As Surgeon General, Dr. Satcher will give us plain talk and sound advice about what each of us can do to live healthier lives. He'll guide our Nation on the most important public health issues of our time, from increasing public awareness on how to prevent some of our most devastating diseases, to helping free our children from the deadly grip of tobacco. Later today in Philadelphia, I will be talking to some of America's premiere scientists about what we as a nation can do to protect our young people from tobacco. And I know that Dr. Satcher will continue to lead our efforts.

This is a time of great opportunity and great challenge. We are also going to try this year to pass in the Congress a 21st century research fund to make unprecedented efforts to find cures for diseases from diabetes to Alzheimer's to AIDS. We are going to do our best to deal with the challenge of cloning by securing legislation that would ban the cloning of human beings but permit necessary medical research to go forward. We are going to try to pass a health care consumer bill of rights, increasingly important with over 160 million Americans in managed care plans. We are going to try to expand coverage—and the law is already enacted—to 5 million more children and to increase opportunities for people between the ages of 55 and 65 to have health care coverage.

All those things are important, but in the end, the decisions the American people make day-in and day-out about their own health care, collectively, will have a bigger impact, certainly in the near and medium term on the welfare of their families, the health they enjoy, and therefore, the strength of our country. David Satcher is taking a very important job, and I am very, very glad that he is doing it.

When I nominated him, Dr. Satcher told me how proud his mother would have been that

a boy whose parents never had the chance to finish elementary school, and who nearly died from whooping cough, could grow up to become Surgeon General. Well today, Dr. Satcher, we here, and indeed, all Americans, share that pride.

Under your leadership, an old-fashioned, genuine, honest-to-goodness, all-American dream story will go forward to lead America into the 21st century stronger and healthier than ever.

Now I'd like to ask the Vice President to swear Dr. Satcher in.

[At this point, Vice President Gore administered the oath of office, and Dr. Satcher made brief remarks.]

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the Russian Defense Minister very publicly, yesterday, ripped the—[in-audible]—Secretary Cohen. How big an obstacle to the policy that you're pursuing, which might have to use military force, is this?

The President. Let me say, first of all, to the members of the Satcher family who aren't from Washington, when all the people from Washington started smiling when Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News] asked the question, you should understand that proves that this is a truly important event. [Laughter]

Q. Flattery will get you everywhere. [Laughter]

The President. I'm just trying to do it an inch at a time. [Laughter]

Let me say that's a very important question because of the reports of the meeting. I have talked at some length with President Yeltsin about this matter. This is a difficult thing for the Russians because they have long had—going back decades—a relationship with the nation of Iraq that long predates Saddam Hussein.

The Russians agree with us that they are not in compliance with the United Nations resolutions. They agree with us that they must let the inspectors go back to work, do their job, open the sites. They want a diplomatic solution; I want a diplomatic solution. I have bent over backwards for months now to try to achieve a diplomatic solution. I am still working with the Russians, the French, the United Nations, anybody, to try to find a diplomatic solution.

The difference here is that I simply do not believe it is acceptable to permit Iraq to walk away from its obligations, because what we want

to do is to significantly diminish the capacity of the Iraqis to reconstitute, to develop, to deploy their weapons of mass destruction, and to threaten their neighbors. That is the difference. We don't believe it is acceptable, if diplomacy fails, to walk away.

And our relationship with Russia is very important to us. My relationship with President Yeltsin has been very productive, and I believe we have advanced the cause of world peace in substantial ways and advanced our future partnership. But I don't think you can have a United Nations set of resolutions about something this important to the future of the world and simply walk away if diplomacy fails. And so, that's the rub. But we're going to keep working with the Russians and with everybody else. We're trying to find a diplomatic solution. And I hope that whatever happens, that our relationships with Russia will continue to be productive and constructive and strong because that's very important to the future of our people.

Q. When push comes to shove, are you going to be able to go forward—if Russia says *nyet*?

The President. I don't believe—*nyet* is not “no” for the United States under these circumstances.

Q. Sir, if *nyet* is not “no,” how close are we to having troops in harm's way in Iraq?

The President. Well, what—we are simply doing what we always do under circumstances like this. We're taking the necessary steps that you would expect the United States to take. But I will say again, if there is military action over this matter in Iraq, it will be Saddam Hussein's decision, not mine. It's up to him to make that decision. And I hope and I pray that he will permit qualified, honest, nonpolitical, technically competent inspectors to have access to those sites which have been forbidden and then to permit the monitoring system to go.

Just look at the volume—look at the sheer volume of stocks and weapons in the chemical and biological area. Look at the nuclear work that's been done since the end of the Gulf war. The inspection system works. It has made the world safer. If he would let that inspection system be completed and accept the offer of the international community, which the United States strongly supports, to sell more oil and have more funds for food and medicine and for reconstituting the basic, fundamental necessities of human life in this country, we would be well on the way to resolving this.

This is not a complicated thing. A country like Iraq can be a great country and succeed without having a chemical and biological weapons program and the means to visit those weapons on their neighbors. And this is a decision for him to make. I think it is a no-brainer in terms of what's right for the people, the children, and the future of Iraq. But the rest of us have to worry about the children and the people and the future of all the people that are around Iraq or might someday find their

way in harm's way if those weapons of chemical and biological destruction are more widely disseminated.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia. A reporter referred to Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev of Russia.

Remarks to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania February 13, 1998

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, to all the young people in the audience, I thank you all for that warm welcome. Thank you, Dr. Dresselhaus, for making me feel so welcome; Dr. M.R.C. Greenwood, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, and over 5,000 members of the AAAS. I'd like to recognize the presence here of Congressman Chaka Fattah of Philadelphia, my friend and Congressman from Philadelphia—thank you for being here; General Barry McCaffrey, the head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; Dr. Neal Lane, the Director of the National Science Foundation; Dr. Harold Varmus, the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

There are very many other people in this audience, and I hesitate to mention any of them for fear of omitting some who have helped this administration in some way or another to advance the cause of science and technology. But I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge, because of their unique support for us in the last 5 years, Dr. David Hamburg and Dr. John Holdren. Thank you especially for what you have done for us and for our country.

I want to thank Jack Gibbons for that wonderful introduction. You know, just as there are laws of science, there are laws of politics. That introduction reflects Clinton's fourth law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. *[Laughter]*

I had to—you may find this hard to believe, but I actually had to fight the highest people in my family, both my family and my larger

family, to get to give this speech. The First Lady wanted to give this speech. *[Laughter]* She said, "Look, it was my idea to create this research fund for the 21st century and have this idea that we should celebrate the new millennium by imagining the future and preserving our past treasures, like the Star-Spangled Banner and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights."

And the Vice President, he really wanted to give this speech. *[Laughter]* This is all he ever thinks about, you know. *[Laughter]* This is a guy who goes absolutely rhapsodic when contemplating the Spallation Neutron Source. *[Laughter]* We had this huge fight, but I won it fair and square. I pulled rank. *[Laughter]*

You should know, on a more serious note, that the Vice President did have one honor that I am not given by the Constitution. Today he got to swear in a world-renowned public health leader and a great doctor, Dr. David Satcher, as America's new Surgeon General.

Before I get into my remarks, I'd like to make another couple of announcements about important changes in our science and technology team. First of all, with great regret, I have accepted the resignation of Dr. Jack Gibbons as my science adviser. His ability to build bipartisan coalitions on contentious issues from nuclear testing to cloning to climate change has strengthened our Nation immeasurably. And I thank him for those contributions, as well as for his work in our initiative on race. I know this afternoon he will chair a panel discussion