

So I believe we made the right decision, and I believe that the factors that I cited to you make it the right decision. Now, what I—

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Wait. Wait. Wait. What I'd like to do now—you, naturally enough, want to get into a lot of the specific questions here that I believe that Secretary Cohen and General Shelton and Mr. Berger can do a good job of answering. And none of us have had a great deal of sleep, but I think it would be appropriate for me to let them answer the rest of the questions.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. The President also referred to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). H.R. 4655, the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, approved October 31, was assigned Public Law No. 105-338.

Remarks on the Tobacco Settlement November 16, 1998

Thank you very much. To Attorney General Gregoire and all the others who are here, and the attorneys general of North Carolina and California who are not here but who are part of this initial group, I want to congratulate you. Bruce Reed, who spoke first and is my Domestic Policy Adviser, and I and the rest of us have been at this for quite a long time, and we are very pleased by your success.

Situation in Iraq

Because this is my only opportunity to appear before the press today, I'd like to begin by making a few comments about the situation in Iraq.

I am pleased that the weapons inspectors will return to Baghdad tomorrow to resume their work. As I've said from the start, the best outcome is to get the inspectors back on the job, provided they have unfettered access and full cooperation.

We know what the inspectors can accomplish. Since the system was created and the inspections began, Iraq has been forced to declare and destroy, among other things, nearly 40,000 chemical weapons, nearly 700 tons of chemical weapons agents, 48 operational missiles, 30 warheads especially fitted for chemical and biological weapons, and a massive biological weapons plant equipped to produce anthrax and other deadly agents.

The weapons inspectors, in short, have done a remarkable job. They must be permitted to finish their work. The burden of compliance is where it has always been—on Iraq. Baghdad

has an affirmative obligation to comply with the U.N. resolutions that require it to disclose and destroy its weapons of mass destruction and the capability of delivering those weapons.

Governments all over the world today stand united in sharing the conviction that full compliance, and nothing short of full compliance, is needed from Iraq. The world is watching Saddam Hussein to see if he follows the words he uttered with deeds. Our forces remain strong and ready if he does not.

Tobacco Settlement

Now, let me join the others in once again saying that today is a milestone in the long struggle to protect our children from tobacco. This settlement between the State attorneys general and the tobacco companies is clearly an important step in the right direction for our country. It reflects the first time tobacco companies will be held financially accountable for the damage their product does to our Nation's health.

Again, let me thank Attorney General Gregoire, the others who are here, and those who are not. And I believe there were four States who previously signed individual settlements with the tobacco companies. All of them deserve the thanks of the country.

With this very large settlement which every other State has the opportunity to join, we are moving forward. But we have a lot more to do, for only the National Government can take the full range of steps needed to protect our

children fully from the dangers of tobacco. So it is still up to Congress to act, to rise to its responsibility to pass national tobacco legislation.

Our administration began this effort nearly 4 years ago, with the strong leadership of Vice President Gore and the then-Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA then put in place a strong crackdown on tobacco advertising aimed at teenagers, the broadest and most significant effort to date to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco.

It has been challenged, as all of you know, in court by tobacco companies from the beginning. Today I want to report that the Solicitor General will ask the Supreme Court to resolve this matter. But let us be clear: When it comes to protecting our children from tobacco, ultimately, it is up to Congress to finish the job.

The past Congress began with strong momentum toward action, only to see national tobacco legislation derailed by partisanship and special pleading. In the new Congress, I am determined that all of us will choose progress over partisanship. I think that's what the voters were saying to us on election day.

Comprehensive national tobacco legislation must include many things, but especially it must clarify the jurisdiction of the FDA. And because of the cost inherent in this settlement and any further action by Congress, it should also include appropriate protections for tobacco farmers, as I have said from the beginning. It should

be, it must be, one of the top priorities for the new Congress. I will work hard to see that it becomes law.

We should always remember what the real stakes are. Let me say them one more time: Every day we fail to act, more than 3,000 children start to smoke, even though it is illegal to sell them cigarettes. More than 1,000 will die earlier than they would have as a result. Our children continue to be targeted by multi-million-dollar marketing campaigns designed to recruit what the industry has called in its confidential documents "replacement smokers." With strong legislation, working with what the attorneys general have already done, we can save a million lives in the first 5 years.

Our duty to our children, therefore, is clear. We should give them the future they deserve. We can do it.

This is a good day for our country, and I thank all of you who have helped to bring it about.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to State attorneys general Christine Gregoire of Washington, Daniel Lungren of California, and Mike Easley of North Carolina; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and former Commissioner of Food and Drugs David A. Kessler.

Joint Statement by President Clinton and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan

November 16, 1998

Today we are pleased to announce a new multilateral initiative to revitalize private sector growth in Asia. Several of the countries hardest hit by the crisis have made great strides in recent months toward restoring stability. The major challenge they face today is restarting growth as quickly as possible. To support this effort, Japan and the United States, with the support of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, are launching the Asian Growth and Recovery Initiative.

This initiative has four main components:

First, accelerating the pace of bank and corporate restructuring by removing impediments to the return of growth. By mobilizing new financing to recapitalize banks, we aim to provide strong incentives to remove policy and institutional constraints that block rapid restructuring.

- The Asian Growth and Recovery Program, with the support of the World Bank, the ADB and bilateral contributors, will help catalyze significant private financing for countries in the region which have put comprehensive restructuring programs in place.