

*The President.* I do. And of course, if the future proves otherwise, then there are always other options open to us. But former Defense Secretary Bill Perry, and others who worked with him, worked very hard on this, and then our negotiator in Berlin did a very good job. We worked very closely with the Japanese and with the South Koreans on this approach. They are agreed with it. And it offers the most promising opportunity to lift the cloud of uncertainty and insecurity and danger that otherwise would

hand over that whole region, including the American service men and women who are there.

So I'm very, very hopeful about it. If it works, it does; if it doesn't, then there will be other options open to us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the West Portico at the White House.

## Statement on the United States Lawsuit Against Major Tobacco Companies *September 22, 1999*

Today the Justice Department announced that the United States is filing suit against the major tobacco companies to recover the costs of smoking-related illnesses. As I said in my State of the Union Address in January, smoking has cost

taxpayers billions of dollars through Medicare, veterans' health, and other Federal health care programs. The Justice Department is taking the right course of action. It is time for America's taxpayers to have their day in court.

## Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception *September 22, 1999*

Thank you, Peter. A lot of you know I've been hoarse, so for me, less will be more, too. [Laughter] I wrote out this very elaborate speech here, you can see.

Let me say the most important thing I can say to you tonight is, thank you. Thank you for being here; thank you for your commitment; thank you for your friendship to me and to the Vice President, to Hillary, to Tipper, to our administration over these last years; and thank you for your commitment in this election.

I want to make some very brief points that I hope you won't be shy about repeating around the country. I think it's important that people remember what this country was like when Al Gore and I went out to the people in 1992 and asked them to give a chance to put people first. We had the largest, the deepest recession since the Great Depression. We had increasing social division which was aggravated by the previous administration's vetoes of things like the family and medical leave law and the Brady bill.

We asked the American people to give us a chance, and they did. And the results are clear. It's not even really an argument anymore. We've got the lowest unemployment, crime, and welfare rates in a generation, and the longest peacetime expansion in history.

Now, election time is coming. What is the Vice President's great challenge? People think at election time they're supposed to vote for change, and I agree with them. The American people always want change. The issue is what kind of change are we going to vote for? Are we going to build on all the good things that are going on in America to meet the big challenges still out there, or are we going to go back to the approach that got us in so much trouble in the first place? That is the central question.

Now, all of you know this, but the Vice President has played a more pivotal role in the good things this administration's been able to do than any Vice President in history. He cast a deciding vote on the economic plan in 1993, and just

a few weeks ago, he cast the deciding vote in the Senate on the plan to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill, the background check law, a law that has, in spite of what its critics said would happen, resulted in 400,000 people who shouldn't have gotten guns not getting them and no inconvenience to hunters and sportspeople.

So along the way, he's played the critical role in our efforts to hook up all the schools in this country to the Internet and giving the American people the smallest Government since John Kennedy was President, in dealing with a whole host of foreign policy and national security issues, in managing a lot of our environmental policy, in helping us to generate the Technology Telecommunications Act, which has already generated about 300,000 jobs, high-paying jobs, for our country, and I could go on and on.

Even more importantly, he's told the American people how he would change things with an education plan, with a health care plan, with an anticrime plan, with a plan to save Social Security and Medicare. And in every critical re-

spect, it is markedly different from the approach taken by all of the candidates running for the Republican nomination.

Now, it seems to me that if we go out to the American people and tell them those things, and tell them what he stands for, which he can speak for himself better than me, and what kind of person he is and what kind of record we've made and what the real choice is—the question is not whether we're going to change; it's how we're going to change.

He needs you. Everything we have worked for all these years requires your continued efforts. And I am profoundly grateful that you are here in support of him. He has not only been the finest Vice President in our history; he would be a magnificent President of the United States.

Mr. Vice President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. in the Concorde Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Peter S. Knight, who introduced the President.

## Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception September 22, 1999

Thank you very much. You have to give me 2 seconds to recover myself; Ann Richards just told me a joke. [*Laughter*] I've got to collect myself here. [*Laughter*]

I'll be quite brief tonight, first because I'm hoarse, and secondly, because you're all hungry, and thirdly, because I want to listen to the Vice President. But I want to say a few things, beginning with thank you. Thank you for being here; thank you for supporting his campaign; thank you for giving the good things that we have done these last 8 years a chance to be the springboard for positive change in America.

You know, a lot of people have forgotten that when Vice President Gore and I went out across the country in 1992, we were in the worst recession since the Great Depression. We had a lot of division in our society that was complicated by the previous administration's vetoes of the Brady bill, which is now the law, and the family and medical leave bill, which is now the law.

And we asked the American people to give us a chance to put them first and to take a new direction. And the results are clear: We've had the lowest unemployment, welfare rolls, and crime rates in a generation, and the longest peacetime expansion in history.

So the question facing the American people now is not, as it is often put, do we need a change? The answer is, yes, we do. The question is not will we change? The question is how are we going to change? Are you going to build on the good things that are going on in America now to face the unmet challenges of the country in the 21st century, or will we basically go back to the approach that got us in so much trouble in the first place? That is the choice before the American people.

And I want you to know three things about Al Gore. Number one, he's done more with the job he's had the last 6½ years than any person in history, whether it was something very