

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