

partment team. Some of them are new to me; some I have known and admired a very long time. At least one of them once sued me; shows you how broadminded I am. [Laughter] And I can tell you, I am very pleased that each of them has agreed to join our administration.

This may surprise you if you've been reading the press reports, but with these appointments, our administration has in 100 days nominated 172 people for consideration by the Senate. At the same point in their administrations, President Reagan had named 152 people, and President Bush had named 99. By any measure, we're doing a fairly good job in staffing up this administration with high-quality folks. And I might add, since I look across here I can't resist saying, a third of them are women, for a change.

Today when I walked through these halls and I went to the Attorney General's office, I couldn't help but remember that it was 25 years ago in this springtime when Robert Kennedy, by then a Senator from New York, was running for President and was subsequently killed, just 2 days before I graduated from college, with one of my roommates working in his office. It's impossible for me still, especially now as I think back across those 25 years, not to be moved by his memory and his work and the power of the example he set for all Americans, regardless of their gender or color or station in life.

I hope 25 years from now, another daughter or son of America will walk in here and remember what you have accomplished here and be moved. I believe the tradition of greatness here is still very much alive. I believe that Janet Reno and the team that she is assembling can bring it to life for all Americans. The American people want you to succeed in your work; I do, too. Working together, we can be proud to honor the tradition of the Justice Department by ensuring its great future.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. in the Courtyard at the Department of Justice.

The President named the following Assistant Attorneys General:

Walter Dellinger, Office of Legal Counsel
Lani Guinier, Civil Rights Division
Frank W. Hunger, Civil Division
Anne K. Bingaman, Antitrust Division
Eleanor Dean Acheson, Office of Policy Development
Sheila Foster Anthony, Office of Legislative Affairs
Gerald Torres, Environment and Natural Resources Division

Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks at a Reception for the President's Health Care Task Force and an Exchange With Reporters

April 29, 1993

The President. Thank you very much. Let me say how pleased I am that one of the things that even people who care about health care can't control, the weather, cooperated with us today. How delighted we are to have you here to just say a simple thank you for all the work you've done.

I have a few other things I want to say, but I think I should begin by introducing the First Lady by way of saying that 10 years ago we tried this once before when I was Governor of our State. And it was obvious that we needed to dramatically overhaul our education system, and I asked her to chair this committee. And

she looked at me as if I had lost my mind because we knew we had to make everybody in the State mad to do what needed to be done. And it turned out to be all right. We had to change a lot of things, but it was one of those remarkable moments in history when all the people were ahead of all the policy-makers.

I think we may be there again with health care. And I think that if all of this works I will be once again indebted to my wonderful wife and all of you. And I just want you to know that she has sung your praises to the Moon from the beginning of this. And so I

hope that you think that she did as good a job as she thinks you did, because I think you were both pretty great. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Hillary Clinton and Tipper Gore made statements welcoming members of the task force and commending their efforts.]

The President. Thank you very much. You know, I wish there were something more I could do for all of you. I think you deserve a medal just for putting up with Ira's tollgates. I can't believe Ira's hiding back there. He's probably sharpening darts or something. [Laughter]

I want to say a special word of thanks to Tipper Gore for her involvement and for the work that she's done to personally sensitize me to a lot of the mental health issues that I think all Americans need to know more about.

I want to say, too, that the Vice President is not here tonight because he is on an errand for our administration in Florida and could not be here. But he sat in all those meetings with me, that we had, long hours trying to make sure that we understood the implications of every issue and understood all the incredible work that all of you have done.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Ira. Hillary and I have known Ira a long time. Ira and I were at Oxford together back in the late sixties, and we always used to say when Ira walked into a room he doubled the IQ of whoever was in there, however many people were in there. [Laughter] I don't know how many of his brain cells he has departed forever in this endeavor, but—[laughter]—I hope that part of this endeavor will lead some of you to encourage him to take more care of his health. I don't think he's had any sleep since this whole thing started. He's really been a champ, and Hillary and I are very grateful for his efforts.

I want to say, too, that there are a lot of people who said, well—I mean, I never could believe this—for years and years and years we all complained of gridlock and do-nothing and nothing ever got done. And the last 5 days, I see all these articles complaining that I'm trying to do too much. [Laughter] I plead guilty to that.

But the overwhelming focus of this administration has been on the economy, jobs, deficit reduction, and investment in our people and on health care. That's what we have focused on, the things that will lift this country up again

and bring this country together again and give people some measure of security, even as they go out in the highly changed and charged world that we're moving toward.

I wish I could write a book. I wish I could even remember all the incredible stories I heard along this last year and a half when we were out on the campaign trail, related to health care.

I'll never forget the woman I met in Columbus, Ohio who had six or seven kids and had to give up a \$50,000 a year job because one of her children was so sick, and the only way she could get any care was to become Medicaid eligible; the farmers that I met along the way who couldn't get health insurance, or if they did, it took up the whole profit from the farms in the average years; the small business person I met who had only four employees and was chagrined because of the exploding cost of insurance in his small group, he had to go to a \$2,500 deductible, and how badly he felt for his own employees; the big businesses that told me about their inability to compete in a global economy because they had to spot their competitors so much; the doctors that I know who wanted to be good doctors and wanted to reach out to people who were spending more and more of their time and money on paperwork and regulation, and on and on and on.

The human dimension of this issue is utterly enormous. The economic dimension is also very great. We're here, struggling to really be serious about reducing the Government's deficit, and under every scenario we can cut it quite a bit in the next 5 years, and then it starts to go right up again because of health care costs. So there has rarely been a time in the history of this country when an economic issue and a social issue, when an issue that affects all the big people and all the little people and all the people in between has been so tightly joined, as this health care issue.

I know there are those who say, "Well, we shouldn't try to deal with this. It ought to be enough just to have a fundamental budget that dramatically changes the priorities of America." But if you want to get rid of the deficit and have any money left to invest in your children and your education, your economy and your future, we have to do both.

And so I just want to reaffirm to you that all of your efforts have not been in vain, and I'm going to do my best to give us a health care reform package that can pass the Congress

this year. And I'm going to do my best to fight for it, and I hope you will, too.

It may be that we can only do one thing at a time in this town. That may be, but I'm not prepared to acknowledge that. Congress has worked out smaller bills, but they're all different. I mean, they've got an agreement on the family and medical leave, and now they're apparently going to send me the motor voter bill I've been working on. And today, they voted for a modified line-item veto in the House, which I thought was remarkable, the first bill we've had with real bipartisan support.

I think we can do more than one thing. And I think if people understand that you have to do both of these things—have a new budget and a new direction and a new approach to health care to get control of our deficit and our financial future and to have something left to invest in our people, our economy, and our own future, I think we can do it.

And I just have to ask all of you to be committed now to be agents of change. You've done all this work on this program. And you know, the final thing we come out with, none of you will agree with all of it. I won't agree with all of it. We're going to do the best we can to put something together that's good for America and that we can get through the United States Congress. And we're going to do our best to continue to reach out to both Democrats and Republicans as we have throughout this entire process, to try to make this an American effort, not a Bill Clinton effort, not a Democratic effort, not a Republican effort, but an American effort. America needs this.

I'll say this: You know, when this group began to get together, I kept reading all this stuff about secrecy. And you know, shoot, I've read more about everything you've done in the press than anything else I've seen. [Laughter] If you can't keep a secret in Washington with two people, you sure can't keep a secret with 1,000. [Laughter]

I think you've been great. I want to ask you to commit now to do what you can. A lot of you don't come from here. A lot of you live out in the country where a lot of these problems are being grappled with. When you go home, try to mobilize your friends to tell your Members of Congress that the time is now. The time is now to deal with this. And if you do live here and you have even more contacts on the Hill or with others that can influence this

process, use your time now to pass it. Don't let all your work have been in vain. This is a magic moment in the history of this issue. People have been working for decades just to have the circumstances which exist now. And I hardly see anybody who doesn't admit that the time has come to do something, to do something bold and do something substantial, to do something we can live with from years to come that will really make our country better off, our people more secure, healthier, and happier.

We're going to have enough insecurity as it is in America, and everybody is, with all the changes that are going on in this world. The least we can do is to join the mainstream of the world in taking care of our people better, providing a comprehensive, affordable, good, quality health care system. And it's good for the economy. If we can get that idea across, we can prevail.

I need your help now to carry the fight to the floors of the Congress, both Chambers and both parties. And let's lift this issue up. Let's keep it high in America's mind and heart, and let's make sure that all this work you have done will be rewarded for generations to come.

This is a real moment in the history of this country. You can be a part of it. Now the time has come to bring it home.

Thank you very much.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, does this reconvening of the peace talks take the pressure off you at all, sir?

The President. Well, let's see what happens there. Let's see what happens. Let's see how serious they are. You know, they've said things before and not meant it. If they mean it now, so much the better. I'll see.

Q. How are you going to know if they mean it, sir?

The President. We will know them by their deeds, not their words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ira Magaziner, Senior Adviser to the President for Policy Development.