

May 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

look at the whole sweep of American history, at critical periods, we've always been willing to redefine our responsibilities as a nation: first, in ways that brought us together as a people, in the 19th century and then all the way through the Great Depression and later through the civil rights revolution and the women's rights movement and the environmental movement; and second, in ways that recognized our unique responsibilities first to our neighbors and then to those across the globe as we became more and more blessed.

One of the things I was thinking about in terms of our relationship with China is that President Nixon and President Carter and President Ford and even President Bush, for whose support we're very grateful for, they all faced a different world than we face here today. And frankly, they faced different challenges at home when they were making these tough decisions abroad.

We haven't been in this kind of economic and social shape in America since the early 1960's. If we can't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever be able to do it? Why—what could we possibly be afraid of, based on the capacity of this country to grow its economy and improve its social condition? If we can't meet this kind of a challenge now, we are abandoning the legacy of the last 50 years, when previous Presidents and previous Congresses have done things harder to do than this in economic and social turbulence far greater than we face today.

In fact, I almost think that these good times are some sort of a disability here because they encourage people to lose their focus, to lose their concentration, to sort of drift off and assume that there are no consequences to decisions that are not responsible. There are always consequences.

And this country has never had a better chance to shape the world of the future for our children. We all know it's the right decision. And virtually 100 percent of the people at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue know it's the right decision. We cannot allow our prosperity to lull us into self-indulgence.

We have to use our prosperity to build the 21st century world that many of you fought in World War II for, Senator Mansfield fought in World War I for, that you served in the Government for, that you gave your lives to public service for, that you sustained our standard for freedom throughout the cold war for, that you supported all these other trade-opening measures for.

And if we can't do it with the lowest unemployment in 30 years and 21 million new jobs and the longest expansion in history, we'll never be able to explain it to our children and our grandchildren, and this place will not be nearly as happy a place to be for the next several years. But if we do it, one more time we will say, we kept faith in our time with America's eternal march.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young; Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and former Senator Michael J. Mansfield. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James A. Baker III, former Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter, and Vice President Al Gore.

Statement on Protection of Forest Roadless Areas

May 9, 2000

The plan proposed today by Secretary Glickman to prohibit road building in roadless areas of our national forests is an important step toward my goal of lasting protection for these priceless lands. These pristine areas are some

of the last wild places in America, and I am firmly committed to preserving them for future generations. I commend the Forest Service for its extraordinary effort in developing this proposal and providing the American people with

every opportunity to help shape it. I encourage members of the public and all those with a stake in the future of our national forests to carefully review this proposal and make their voices heard as the Forest Service continues to develop and refine this historic initiative.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Legislation May 9, 2000

I am extremely pleased that today the House passed H.R. 4386, the "Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act," in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Each year thousands of women who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer do not receive the comprehensive coverage they need, despite extraordinary efforts by Federal health programs to provide that care. This legislation, which I was proud to include in this year's budget, will provide States with the option to provide the full Medicaid benefit package without delay to uninsured women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through Federal screening programs.

I also want to commend the Congress for today's strong bipartisan vote in support of the "Long Term Care Security Act." This legislation, which I have long advocated, provides authorization for the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program to offer long-term care insurance to current and retired Federal employees. I hope that the legislation serves as a model for all private employers and encourages them to provide this type of coverage to their employees. While this is an important step, it is only one step. We must also continue to work to pass

a broad range of long-term care initiatives, including a \$3,000 tax credit for people with long-term care needs or their caregivers; new funding for services which support family caregivers of older persons; and efforts to enable States to improve equity in Medicaid eligibility for people in home- and community-based settings.

I am encouraged by the news of Congress acting on these significant policy initiatives. We need to build on these achievements and act now to pass a range of policies of importance to the American people, including the creation of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights and a new voluntary prescription drug benefit option as we take steps to modernize and strengthen the Medicare program. And finally, we must redouble our efforts to expand high quality, affordable coverage for all Americans. I urge the Congress to work towards passing the administration's health coverage proposals that would expand coverage to at least 5 million uninsured Americans and provide health services to millions more by providing new, affordable health insurance options for parents, 19- to 20-year-olds, legal immigrants, workers between jobs, and the near elderly.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority May 9, 2000

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Delegation of Authority for Submission of Report Under Section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65)

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of Amer-

ica, I hereby delegate to the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility of the President to submit annual reports under section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65). You are authorized to re-delegate this responsibility consistent with applicable law.