

The President. You've got a deal. We can also play this year, if you want to come.

Mr. Klein. By the way, I broke 90 for the first time between last interview and this.

The President. That's great.

Mr. Klein. Two birdies.

The President. Two?

Mr. Klein. That meant I screwed up some other holes.

The President. That's great. If you want to come to Washington and play, I'd like that.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:55 p.m. aboard Air Force One en route from Monroe, MI, to Andrews Air Force Base, MD. In his remarks, the President referred to former Secretary of State William Christopher; and conservative philanthropist Richard Mellon Scaife. Mr. Klein referred to former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Signing Legislation on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

October 10, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, Secretary Albright; Mr. Speaker; Senator Roth; Senator Moynihan; Chairman Archer; Representative Rangel. I thank you all so much for your steadfast leadership in this important cause.

I also want to thank Senator Lott and Senator Daschle in their absence and, indeed, all the Members who are here. And if you would just indulge me in one personal remark, this is probably the largest gathering of Members of Congress anywhere in Washington today, except in the Chambers of the House and Senate.

And I would like to take a moment to pay my respects to the memory of our friend Congressman Bruce Vento, who passed away earlier today, a great teacher, a great Representative, a wonderful human being.

I also want to join the previous speakers in thanking all those who worked so hard on it, Charlene Barshefsky and Gene Sperling, who accompanied her to China, and they worked on this deal until the 11th hour. We knew it would take until the 11th hour. We only hoped by then they wouldn't be too tired to tell time, so we would be able to finish.

I thank Secretaries Glickman, Summers, and Mineta; and Secretary Slater, Secretary Shalala, who are here, John Podesta and Sandy Berger. I can't thank Bill Daley and Steve Ricchetti enough for the extraordinary job they did to lead our efforts to secure passage of this initiative, along with Chuck Brain and Mary Beth Cahill.

I want to thank all the State and local officials, the retired officials and business leaders who helped us, and I would like to acknowledge two great champions of trade who I just saw in the audience, just because I'm glad to see them, former Congressman Sam Gibbons and former Congressman and Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. Thank you both for being here.

This is a great day for the United States and a hopeful day for the 21st century world. This signing ceremony marks the culmination of efforts begun almost 30 years ago by President Nixon, built on by President Carter, who normalized our relations with China, pursued firmly by Presidents of both parties to normalize ties with China in ways that preserve our interests and advance our values.

During that time, China has grown more prosperous and more open. As the world economy becomes vastly more complex and interconnected, China's participation in it, according to the rules of international trade, has only become more important for America, for Asia, and the world. Today we take a major step toward China's entry into the World Trade Organization and a major step toward answering some of the central challenges of this new century. For trade with China will not only extend our Nation's unprecedented economic growth, it offers us a chance to help to shape the future of the world's most populous nation and to reaffirm our own global leadership for peace and prosperity.

I guess I ought to point out that our work's not over when I sign the bill. For China must

still complete its WTO accession negotiations and live up to the agreements it has negotiated with us and our partners before it can join. But when it happens, China will open its markets to American products from wheat to cars to consulting services, and our companies will be far more able to sell goods without moving factories or investments there.

Beyond the economy, however, America has a profound stake in what happens in China, how it chooses to relate to the rest of the world, and whether it is open to the world, respectful of human rights, upholding the rule of law at home and its dealings with other nations.

Of course, opening trade with China will not in and of itself lead China to make all the choices we believe it should. But clearly, the more China opens its markets, the more it unleashes the power of economic freedom, the more likely it will be to more fully liberate the human potential of its people. As tariffs fall, competition will rise, speeding the demise of huge state enterprises. Private firms will take their place and reduce the role of government in people's daily lives. Open markets will accelerate the information revolution in China, giving more people more access to more sources of knowledge. That will strengthen those in China who fight for decent labor standards, a cleaner environment, human rights, and the rule of law.

We also will continue to press China to meet its commitments on stopping the transfer of dangerous technology and deadly weapons. We will continue to be a force for security in Asia, maintaining our military presence and our strong alliances. We will continue to support, from the outside, those who struggle within China for human rights and religious freedom.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Congressmen Levin and Bereuter. Because of them, we will have both normal trade relations and a good new policy tool to monitor our human rights concern. They made this a better bill, and all Americans are in their debt. Thank you.

There are so many Members here today, I can't introduce them all, but some who had no institutional mandate to do so also joined us in fighting hard for this bill. Among them, Senator Baucus, Congressman Matsui, Congressman Dooley, Congressman Dreier, Congressman Kolbe, and Congressman Crane. I, in particular, thank those of you who worked so closely with

me in this regard, and all the rest of you who fought hard for this.

Let me say, in case you've all forgotten, this thing was hard to pass. [Laughter] This was a lot of trouble. And I would just like to close in reiterating something that I often said in these endless meetings we had in that room right up there on the third floor where, ironically, President Franklin Roosevelt had his office during World War II.

I do think this is a good economic deal for America. I think it will increase our exports and, over the long run, will strengthen our economic position in the world. But I think, by far, the most important reason to ratify this agreement is the potential it gives us to build a safer, more integrated world.

You heard Senator Moynihan talking about the day he joined the Navy. In the last 60 years of the 20th century, we fought three major wars in Asia. We can build a whole different future there now. We concluded a trade agreement with Vietnam. Today a very high official from North Korea came into the Oval Office to bring a message from the leader of North Korea. But nothing—nothing—can enhance the prospects of peace and the prospects of a very different 21st century like having China take the right path into the future.

Like all people in the United States, the Chinese people ultimately will have to pick their own path. And they will make their own decisions. We can't control what they do, but we can control what we do.

We overcame fears, misgivings, honest disagreements, to come together in a stunning bipartisan coalition. One Republican House Member shook hands with me today, and the first thing he said is, "Well," he said, "I'm glad to see you, Mr. President. This is the first time I've ever come here since you've been here." [Laughter] And I thought, "Well, if there had to be just one time, this is the time," because we did something together here that gives our children and our grandchildren the chance to live in a world that is coming together, not coming apart. It gives all of us the chance to meet the common threats of the future together as free and interdependent people.

Our children will live in a world in which the information technology revolution, the biotechnology revolution, and the increasing globalization of the economy will force them to find ways to meet our common challenges

and seize our common opportunities together. It's hard to imagine how that future will work if China is not a part of it.

So to every one of you, from every part of America, those in Congress and those who lobbied the Congress, I hope for a long time to come you will remember this day and be proud of what you did to bring it about. And I hope and believe that our children and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of your labors.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks,

the President referred to former Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley; and National Defense Commission First Vice Chairman Cho Myong-nok and President Kim Chong-il of North Korea. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert, Senator William V. Roth, Jr., Representative Bill Archer, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Representative Charles B. Rangel. H.R. 4444, approved October 10, was assigned Public Law No. 106-286.

Statement on Signing the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act

October 10, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act, which significantly strengthens efforts to make America's beaches clean, safe, and healthy. America's coasts are not only a natural treasure—they are also the number one destination for vacationing families, making their health vital to our Nation's tourism industry. Yet each year, pollution forces thousands of beach closures or health advisories. The Beach Act will ensure that in the future fewer families arrive at the beach only to discover that it is too polluted for fishing or swimming. It requires States to adopt enforceable standards for water quality, regularly test coastal waters for health-threatening pollution, and notify the public of unsafe

conditions. In addition, it provides assistance to States to carry out these efforts.

This act builds on my administration's strong efforts to ensure healthier beaches and cleaner coastal waters, greater protection for endangered and threatened marine species, sound fisheries management, and support for marine protected areas. I urge Congress to fully fund ocean and coastal conservation programs for the coming fiscal year so that communities around the country may enjoy healthy beaches and clean waters for years to come.

NOTE: H.R. 999, approved October 10, was assigned Public Law No. 106-284.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Health Care Legislation

October 10, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am writing to express my serious concerns that the Congressional Republican Leadership is preparing to pass unjustifiably large Medicare health maintenance organization (HMO) payment increases while preventing passage of a strong Patients' Bill of Rights. Managed care reform in the 106th Congress should focus on

patient protections, not on excessive payments to managed care plans. Moreover, these reimbursement increases are effectively diverting resources from critically important health care priorities.

This past weekend marked the 1-year anniversary of the overwhelmingly bipartisan passage of the Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights.