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called the Silent Majority, but really—the first time, getting into America—"America is divided between us and them," carried the day.

I want you to know something. I'm not running for anything, but as an American, I have waited more than 30 years for my country once again to be in the position that we lost because of the tragedies that happened in 1968, because of the riots in the streets, because of the breakdown of the economy, because we squandered our moment. And every one of you that's anywhere near my age who was moved to believe that we could make a difference by the heroes we lost 30 years ago, you must believe that this election—not '92, not '96—this election is the moment when America is back where we were when we lost our way.

Most people don't get a second chance in life as a people. And most of us who are still here are here only because we did get a few second chances. America cannot let this go. That's why you ought to be here and be here for our crowd all the way to November. And if somebody asks you why you're doing it, you tell them what I just told you: This is the chance of a lifetime, and we better make the most of it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to James D'Orta and Joseph A. DeFrancis, dinner hosts; Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Maryland House of Delegates; Wayne L. Rogers, chairman, Maryland Democratic Party; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Andrew Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Departure for McAllen, Texas, and an Exchange With Reporters

February 9, 2000

Patients' Bill of Rights

The President. Good morning. Before I leave, I'd like to say just a few words about the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation. A House and Senate conference will take it up beginning tomorrow. My message is simple and straightforward. Congress should seize this moment of opportunity to do what is right for the health of the American family, to seize this moment to stand with doctors, nurses, and patients, to restore trust and accountability in our health care system.

Last fall the House of Representatives passed by a large margin a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. The legislation, sponsored by Congressmen Norwood and Dingell, says you have a right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to see a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of treatment, the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one great harm, and it covers all Americans in all health plans.

Now this bill is in the hands of House and Senate conferees. It reflects the beliefs and represents the needs of the overwhelming majority of the American people without regard to party. It has the endorsement of over 300 health care and consumer groups. It has the votes of 275 Members of the House of Representatives, including 68 Republicans. Although I remain concerned that the conferees on the bill do not share the majority's view, I believe, nevertheless, they have a clear responsibility to ratify these fundamental rights, to put politics aside and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

Americans who are battling illnesses shouldn't have to battle insurance companies for the coverage they need. Passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights for all Americans in all health plans is a crucial step toward meeting our goal in the 21st century of assuring quality, affordable health care to all our citizens. I ask the House and Senate conferees to take the next vital step.

Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what are you doing about the daily bombing of Lebanon?

The President. Well, let me say, we are doing our best to get the peace process back on track. I think it is clear that the bombing is a reaction to the deaths, in two separate instances, of Israeli soldiers. What we need to do is to stop the violence and start the peace process again. We're doing our best

to get it started. And we're working very, very hard on it.

Disruption on the Internet

Q. Mr. President, are you monitoring the situation with the hackers who have been disrupting some of the main websites around the country the past few days? Are you monitoring that situation? Is there anything that Washington could possibly do about this?

The President. I don't know the answer to that. But I have asked people who know more about it than I do whether there is anything we can do about it.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, Republicans are considering adding the right to sue in Federal court, just not district court, would that be sufficient, sir, in your opinion?

Q. I couldn't hear that question.

The President. I honestly don't know the answer to that because I haven't ever considered it, and I haven't discussed it. I'd like to have a chance to discuss it. I think any indication that there is movement and that they're trying to get together is hopeful. But I don't want to commit to something I'm not sure I understand the full implications of yet.

Possible Visit to Pakistan

Q. Have you decided whether to go to Pakistan yet?

The President. We haven't made a decision on the final itinerary yet. I want to make a trip which maximizes the possibilities, not only for constructive partnerships for the United States in the years ahead but, even more urgently, for peace in that troubled part of the world. It has enormous implications for people in the United States and throughout the world, more I suspect, than most people know. I hope in the time that I have here that we can make some progress because it is something that I remain profoundly concerned about for years and years into the future.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Any telephone calls from Northern Ireland—[*inaudible*]—can you give us an update, sir?

The President. Well, it's correct that we're working very hard on it. I have some hope that we may find a way through this which would enable every aspect of the Good Friday accord to be realized. That's after all, what the people of Northern Ireland voted for overwhelmingly and that could achieve that objective without interrupting the progress so far.

But I have nothing else to report to you except to say that I'm working very hard; the British and Irish Governments are; and I think that the leaders of all the political factions are. I think everyone understands that we're at a very important moment, and we're trying to keep it going. And we have a chance. And I just hope everyone will—everyone—will belly up to the bar and do their part so that we don't have any kind of backsliding or reversal here. We've come too far.

I was quite encouraged that there was universal condemnation of the explosion in Northern Ireland last week. That's a good first step. We just need to keep at it.

Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Is the law suit provision still the major stumbling block, at least with the Senate negotiators there in terms of the Patients' Bill of Rights? You may have asked that, but I couldn't hear.

The President. He did in a different way. I think so. You're following it so you know there are a few other differences of opinion, but we want universal—first we want to cover all Americans, that's a very important thing. And there has to be some way of enforcing a right, or it's not a right. Otherwise it's just a suggestion.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in McAllen

February 9, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, how very grateful I am to Jesus and Elvia for having us in their beautiful home;