

also determined that this benefit would improve the lives of Medicare beneficiaries.

Forty-six years ago, Harry Truman passed through this community campaigning for guaranteed private health insurance for every American. He was right then. When Richard Nixon said 20 years ago, as Ron Ziegler said, that “employers and employees ought to contribute and ought to provide health insurance for everybody; we ought to cover everybody,” he was right then, and we’re right now.

The real question is whether Senator Dodd is right: Are we in one of those cycles of history where we’re going to do something about it? The early part of the century, free public education; in the thirties, Social Security; in the sixties, civil rights. Are we going to fulfill the responsibilities of this generation to finally, after 60 years of talking about it, solve this problem? Are we going to continue to make excuses, walk away because everybody’s got a different idea, or are we going to solve the problem? That is the great question facing the United States Congress and the American people.

I full well realize that when you have a system that involves 1,500 separate insurance companies writing thousands of different policies with a blizzard of different rules and regulations, compounded by the Government’s Medicare and Medicaid programs that have a lot of good features but a lot of dizzying complexities and things that aren’t covered, when we are spending 10 percent more on paperwork than any other country in the world but that employs a lot of people and generates a lot of earnings, that there are a lot of interests at stake. I know that. But fundamentally, this is a simple, direct, profound issue. How can we justify spending almost 50 percent more of our income than any other country on Earth and still have to put up with stories like the stories of the people I introduced here who stood up? I say to you, my fellow Americans, this is the responsibility of our generation, and we must fulfill it.

The strange thing is that this is just another one of those deals, as my mother used to tell me, when doing the right thing turns out to have the right consequences in all kinds of other ways. If we do this, we will also help to reduce the Government’s deficit; we will also help to improve the quality of life; we

will also actually lower the cost of the health care system.

If we adopt our program, we will improve individual responsibility because we ask everybody to share some of this. But most importantly, we will not have to listen to these stories anymore and all the other stories that are in those million letters that Hillary got.

I once heard a distinguished New Englander, former Senator and Secretary of State, candidate for Vice President, Ed Muskie from Maine, say that when he was the Governor of Maine, one of the ways that he really thought that you could gauge success was by whether the problems came around twice. And if the same problem came around a second time, somebody hadn’t done their job. This problem, my fellow Americans, has been coming around to us and getting worse and worse for six decades.

I say to you, it is time for all of us to do our job. The Congress cannot do it alone. They have got to know that you will stick with them. They have got to know that you expect them to work their way through all these complicated claims and counterclaims by the interest groups with the vision, the stark, clear vision, of the human beings that are being affected by this and our responsibility for the future.

In spite of the difficulties we face, I think we are going to do it, thanks to you.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. in the Slater Hall Auditorium at the Norwich Free Academy. In his remarks, he referred to John Kiszkiel, owner, Greenville Drug Store; Charles West, president, National Association of Retail Drug-gists; Ron Ziegler, president, National Association of Chain Drugstores, and former Press Secretary to President Richard Nixon; and Mary Lou Bargnesi, principal, Norwich Free Academy.

Nomination for Deputy Secretary of Defense

February 24, 1994

The President today announced his intention to nominate John M. Deutch, a highly respected expert on military technology and current Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, to serve as Deputy

Secretary of Defense under Secretary William Perry.

“John Deutch is a sound and sophisticated adviser whose expertise on military technology and policy has served the Department of Defense well in his tenure as Under Secretary of Defense,” the President said. “Secretary Perry and I will rely heavily on his knowledge, imagination, and judgment as we work to maintain the strongest military in the world at a time of budgetary constraints.”

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Nomination for Ambassador to Kuwait

February 24, 1994

The President today announced his intention to nominate Ryan Clark Crocker, a career member of the Foreign Service and formerly Director of the Iraq-Kuwait Task Force, to be Ambassador to Kuwait.

“Ryan Clark Crocker has led a distinguished career in the foreign service and has a keen understanding of the issues facing Kuwait and the rest of the Middle East,” the President said. “He is well-qualified to serve as our country’s Ambassador to Kuwait, and I am pleased he has agreed to accept this new assignment.”

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Nomination for Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

February 24, 1994

The President today announced his intention to nominate Nelba R. Chavez, of San Francisco, as Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Department of Health and Human Services.

“Dr. Chavez’ broad range of experiences in the areas of mental health and substance abuse will provide valuable perspective in addressing these problems,” the President said. “Her dedication to these issues will be a great benefit in her new position.”

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

The President’s News Conference

February 25, 1994

Hebron Massacre

The President. Good morning. I want to speak briefly about events in the Middle East and in Russia.

Early this morning, Palestinian Muslim worshipers at prayer in the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron were brutally gunned down by a lone Israeli settler. It can be no coincidence that the murderer struck during the holy month of Ramadan and chose a site sacred to Muslims and to Jews. His likely purpose was to ruin the historic reconciliation now underway between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

On behalf of the American people I condemn this crime in the strongest possible terms. I am outraged and saddened that such a gross act of murder could be perpetrated. And I extend my deepest sympathies to the families of those who have been killed and wounded.

I also call on all the parties to exercise maximum restraint in what we all understand is a terribly emotional situation. Extremists on both sides are determined to drag Arabs and Israelis back into the darkness of unending conflict and bloodshed. We must prevent them from extinguishing the hopes and the visions and the aspirations of ordinary people for a life of peaceful existence.

The answer now is to redouble our efforts to conclude the talks between Israel and the PLO and begin the implementation of the agreement they have made as rapidly as possible. Accordingly, this morning I asked the Secretary of State to contact Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat and to invite them to send all their negotiators involved in the Israel-PLO talks to Washington as soon as possible and to stay here in continuous session until their work is completed. They have both agreed to do that.

Our purpose is to accelerate the negotiations on the Declaration of Principles and to try to bring them to a successful conclusion in the shortest possible time. Those negotiations have already made considerable