

is no difference between what might have been and what is.

We look at Hebrew University and see all three pieces of David Ben-Gurion's dream coming to life. We see biologists developing techniques to locate a single cancer cell among millions of healthy ones; we see the moral commitment to keeping people's health among the scientists there; we see Hebrew University researchers undertaking efforts in cooperation with Palestinian researchers in East Jerusalem. One of the participants in the project said, "It's science and peace together." We know that much more is possible. We must understand that much more is essential.

Fifty years from now the 21st century will near its midpoint and Israel will have a 100th birthday celebration. Sure as the world, our grandchildren will be hanging around here on this lawn. What do you think they'll be able to say? And what will they be celebrating? It is my dream that on that 100th anniversary, people from every country in the Middle East will gather in the Holy Land, and all the land will be holy to all of them.

As a Christian, I do not know how God, if He were to come to Earth, would divide the land over which there is dispute now. I suspect neither does anyone else in this audience. But I know that if we all pray for the wisdom to do God's will, chances are we will find a way to close the gap in the next couple of years between what might be and what is. I think that is what we owe the founders of Israel, to finish Ben-Gurion's dream.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Menachem Magidor, president, and Menahem Ben-Sasson, rector, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Rev. James M. Dunn, executive director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Sulayman S. Nyang, president, Interfaith Conference of Washington, DC; Ismar Schorsch, chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary; actors Richard Dreyfuss and Linda Lavin; Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Eliahu Ben-Elissar and his wife, Nitzza; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks on Receiving the Surgeon General's Report on Tobacco Use Among Minority Groups

April 27, 1998

Thank you very much, Dr. Satcher, for the exceptional report. I thank all those who worked on it. Mr. Vice President, Secretary Shalala, thank you for your long and constant fidelity to this cause. Thank you, Senator Frist, for being here, for demonstrating that it is a medical, not a political issue, and an American, not a partisan issue. You gave us a "two-fer" today, and we thank you for that. You were great. [Applause] Thank you.

I also thank Senator Hatch and Senator Chafee for being here, all the Members of the House of Representatives. I thank the leaders of the Native American tribes who are here. I especially thank the attorneys general who are here. They had a lot to do with beginning this long struggle to free our children from tobacco, and they deserve a lot of the credit for the efforts that are now going on. And I'd like to thank the young people who are standing behind me and those whom they represent, all across America, in the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Youth. They represent the future we are trying to preserve.

This report gives us fresh evidence that those of us in this society who are adults, and especially those of us who are parents, are not doing our jobs very well. Any of us who have ever been parents know that our most profound and instinctive urge is to protect our children from danger so that they can grow up healthy, safe, and secure.

Just today I was talking before I came in here with a Member of the House who was at our previous event, and he was talking about a young staff member of his who was dealing with a serious health problem. And he choked up; he couldn't even finish the conversation. And he's a good person with a good heart, but that reflects the natural human response we have to protect our own children, and all those who are of the younger generation from whatever dangers we can, in the hope that they will have the opportunity to live full, good lives.

Well, we've done a good job over the years of strapping our kids into seatbelts in cars,

in safety seats. We do a pretty good job of bundling up children against the winter cold; not many of them die of pneumonia anymore. We make sure that they get to school safely each day. But we haven't done what we should in wrapping the protective arm of parents and other adults in our society as a whole around them when it comes to resisting advertising, peer pressure, or whatever other forces get young people into smoking, even though it's illegal to sell cigarettes to children in every State in the United States.

We know that today about a third of our children are smoking. The report issued by Dr. Satcher shows that more and more are becoming hooked on cigarettes. Smoking rates are up among teens of all backgrounds, but now we see especially among Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and especially, and most dramatically, among African-Americans, where the rates used to be dramatically lower than the average.

These are children just starting out in life; they've got enough challenges as it is. We ought to do more to clear the way, to assure them the best possible chance at the future of their dreams. Instead, they are still becoming the targets of highly sophisticated marketing campaigns. They are the "replacement smokers" of the advertisers' strategy. But they are our children, and we can't replace them.

The call to action should be getting louder. Congress has a very important opportunity to build on the work done by the attorneys general, the representatives of individuals who have been harmed in smoking, and others—the work of the FDA—to pass a comprehensive, bipartisan tobacco bill that will cut teen smoking by raising the price of cigarettes, putting into place tough restrictions on advertising and access, imposing strong penalties on those who continue to sell cigarettes to children, ensuring the FDA has the authority it needs to regulate tobacco products, protecting farmers and farming communities, and yes, doing what Dr. Satcher says we still need to do, continuing to invest more in research to find out the answers that we don't have yet in this regard.

A bill sponsored by Senator McCain and voted out of the committee with all but one

vote—a unanimous vote save one—is a good step in that direction, because it explicitly changes the rules of the game to make it much harder for the tobacco industry to profit at the expense of our children's health.

I want to say a special word of thanks, too, to Senator Frist, because he's worked so hard to make sure that the bill provides the FDA with the authority it needs to continue to cover tobacco products.

Now, folks, the Surgeon General has just issued his first report. It's a fine report. It's a compelling report. It is obviously compelling to the leaders of the groups from whom these children come, because they have come here. We know what the danger is. We know what the remedy is. They're just kids; we're the grown-ups. Now, if we know what the danger is and we know what the remedy is, are we going to do what it takes to save their lives and their health and their future, or not? It is as simple as that. This is not rocket science.

I have been profoundly moved by the extent to which this really has become an issue about health, not politics, an issue about our children, not partisan differences. Every step along the way we have been able to reach across party lines; we've been able to put aside rhetoric; we've been able to try to look to the health issue of our children.

Now, I know there are some complexities surrounding this issue. There are complexities: How much money should be raised? How should it be spent? How should we assure the continuing jurisdiction of the FDA? Exactly what are the nature of the advertising restrictions? There are complicated questions. But my experience now, after many, many years in public life, is that all the complicated questions get much simpler if you focus on the big issue.

The big issue is that the children behind us deserve to have a future, and we know that unless we do something to stop them from being treated as replacement smokers, their future will be restricted. That is the big issue. We know what the problem is; we know what to do about it. I suggest that these children—you look at them, look at all those they represent, look at those who don't yet have the good sense to put their tee shirts on and join their crusades—and it becomes

pretty clear that we need to take this very first report by our latest distinguished Surgeon General and do the right thing with the report and for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The report was entitled, "Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups."

Memorandum on the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

April 27, 1998

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 1998 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

I am delighted that Rodney E. Slater, Secretary of Transportation, has agreed to again serve as the Chair of the 1998 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area. I ask you to support the campaign by personally chairing the campaign in your agency and appointing a top official as your vice chair.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to support many worthy charities. This year our goal is to again raise more than \$38 million. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign but assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help guarantee another successful campaign this year.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28.

Remarks on Receiving the Report of the Social Security and Medicare Trustees and an Exchange With Reporters

April 28, 1998

The President. Good afternoon. Five and a half years ago, America chose a new course

of fiscal discipline and economic growth, balancing our budget and investing in our people. Holding fast to that course, our people have built the strongest economy in a generation.

Success of this strategy cannot be cause for complacency, however. Instead, it offers us an opportunity and an obligation to act boldly to strengthen our Nation for the new century. Above all, we can harness our unsurpassed prosperity to uphold our duty to our parents, to our children, and to each other through Social Security and Medicare.

I've just been briefed by the four Social Security and Medicare trustees for the administration: Secretaries Rubin, Shalala, Herman, and Social Security Commissioner Ken Apfel. The trustees have issued their annual report on the future financial health of these vital programs.

The trustees have told us today that the Balanced Budget Act I signed into law last year has significantly improved the financial future for Medicare. The unprecedented reforms included in that law have cut the so-called 75-year deficit of Medicare in half, even as we have extended new preventive benefits, provided more health choices for Medicare beneficiaries, and instituted other reforms that extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for a decade.

In fact, because of the bipartisan steps taken last year, the long-term prognosis for Medicare is stronger than it has been in over a decade. A bipartisan commission is now at work to craft further steps to strengthen the complex program into the 21st century. I look forward to their recommendations.

The trustees also report that the strength of our economy has led to modest improvements in the outlook for Social Security. They project that economic growth today will extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund by 3 more years, now to 2032.

Today's report is encouraging. It shows we can honor our values and meet our most fundamental obligations, even as we balance the budget. However, these modest improvements only underscore the fundamental challenge we face. We must act to make certain that Social Security is as strong for our children as it has been for our parents.