families, I'm taking the advice of the military commanders. I do not want to interrupt this mission.

The mission's success is the most important thing. And that's what I believe should guide everyone. I think everyone—there are different levels of disruption that different trips would cause, and I think we ought to try to just keep it nonpolitical. I hope anybody that wants to go there that has a reason to go, including Senator Dole, will be able to go at the appropriate time. And that's the determination that needs to be made.

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned the safety of the troops as being part of your decision a couple times in that last answer. We're sending quite a large force involved in the Bosnia mission. Some might say, awfully large for a peaceful mission. How extensive do you think the danger is to our troops there?

The President. Well, I think there is—let's look at what the sources are. No one can—the extent of the danger depends on factors that we can't fully predict. But I believe that we have minimized the risks. What are the possible problems? First of all, if you look at what the United Nations went through over the last 4 years, I think something over 200 people lost their lives in Bosnia. But more than half of them lost their lives in accidents. So we have really worked hard to train against accidents, to prepare—to look at the roadways, to look at the railways, to look at the airfields. We've worked hard to minimize the loss of life or serious injury due to accidents.

Then we know there are a lot of land mines there. I got a very encouraging report today that the parties themselves in many places are assisting us in removing the mines. But there are a lot of places where there are a lot of mines laid where the land was first in one hand and then another, where we don't have records of the mines, where people don't have memories of them. So we have trained very hard to deal with land mines. I think that's the next biggest danger after accidents.

Then the third problem is people that fought in that war who are either from the country or who came in from without the country who may have either a specific grudge against the United States or, more likely, will just be frustrated because they don't agree with the peace agreement that the leaders made and, therefore, some—and then, fourthly, there is just the possibility of encounters that go wrong. The only casualty we sustained in Haiti had nothing to do with opposition to our being there. It was a man who was literally a common criminal who ran through a barrier, and there was an incident, and he shot one of our soldiers dead.

So I would say that those are the dangers in order.

Q. Mr. President, I think that's all the time we have.

The President. Thank you, and Merry Christmas. I appreciate what you do.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:35 a.m. in the Visual Recording Facility at the National Military Command Center, the Pentagon. The following journalists participated in the interview: Sgt. Austin Camacho, American Forces Radio and Television Service; Jim Garamone, American Forces Information Service; Cindy Killion, Stars and Stripes; Bill Matthews and Jim Wolffe, Army Times; and David Gollust, Voice of America. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. George A. Joulwan, USA, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing Limited Continuing Appropriations Legislation

December 22, 1995

Today I have signed into law House Joint Resolution 136, which ensures that the Government makes veterans' benefit payments to 3.3 million veterans and their survivors without further delay.

The resolution also provides funding for several vitally important programs for children and families. It continues funding for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), ensuring that nearly 9 million children receive benefits vital to their well-being. It funds child care for about 600,000 children whose parents are trying to work their way off welfare. And it continues funding for State child support enforcement agencies to ensure that "deadbeat dads" do not get a reprieve from supporting their children.

In addition, H.J. Res. 136 provides authority for the District of Columbia to continue full operations. The resolution contains an objectionable provision that would single out poor women by prohibiting the use of District funds for providing abortion services. I have opposed including this provision in the regular fiscal year 1996 District of Columbia appropriations bill. Nevertheless, H.J. Res. 136 allows the District government to continue to operate without disruption.

Although I welcome H.J. Res. 136, it is a poor substitute for what the Congress should do immediately—that is, send me an acceptable continuing resolution to reopen the departments and agencies that are at least partially shut down because they lack fiscal year 1996 appropriations. Along with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, they include the Departments of Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Justice, State, and the Interior; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Small Business Administration.

To be sure, H.J. Res. 136 prevents the serious impact that the partial shutdown could have had on 3.3 million veterans and their survivors as well as nearly 9 million low-income children. But the shutdown continues to hurt millions of innocent Americans—from the 20,000 parents and students each day who cannot apply for student aid, to the 2,500 moderate- and low-income working families each day who cannot get their Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage loans processed.

The shutdown also has forced the affected departments and agencies to furlough a total of about 280,000 Federal employees, throwing their lives into disruption and raising their fears just as the holidays approach. Federal workers, who are already being asked to do their jobs more efficiently as we downsize the Government, deserve better.

The congressional majority apparently wants to use a partial Government shutdown to force me into accepting their extreme budget plan. It did not work last month, when the majority prompted an earlier shutdown by not sending me an acceptable continuing resolution. And it will not work now.

The Congress should send me an acceptable continuing resolution to reopen the Government, return to work the 280,000 Federal employees who were furloughed through no fault of their own, provide back pay for these workers, and give the American people the services they expect from their Government.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 22, 1995.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 136, approved December 22, was assigned Public Law No. 104–69. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Airline Tragedy Near Buga, Colombia

December 22, 1995

Hillary and I offer our profound condolences to the many families whose loved ones perished in the crash December 20 of American Airlines flight 965 near Buga, Colombia. Coming on the eve of the holiday season, this tragic event takes on even greater poignancy. I have dispatched an interagency team to the site which, working alongside Colombian authorities, will pursue the goals of searching for survivors, identifying victims, and determining the cause of the crash.

Our hopes and prayers, along with those of all Americans, are with those whose lives have been so affected by this tragedy.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 23, 1995

Good morning. As you know, I have spent the last week in intense discussion with congressional leaders over how to balance the budget in 7 years. It's important to balance the budget to lift the burden of debt from future generations.

In the last 3 years, we've cut our deficit in half, and we need to finish the job. But we have to balance the budget in a way that