

¶5.19 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—
FISHERIES AGREEMENT WITH
LITHUANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. GOODLATTE, laid before the House a message from the President, which was read as follows:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania Extending the Agreement of November 12, 1992, Concerning Fisheries Off the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended ("the 1992 Agreement"). The Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes at Vilnius on June 5 and October 15, 1996, extends the 1992 Agreement to December 31, 1998.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Lithuania, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 4, 1997.

By unanimous consent, the message, together with the accompanying papers, was referred to the Committee on Resources and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 104-40).

¶5.20 RECESS—4:22 P.M.

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. GOODLATTE, pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, declared the House in recess at 4 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m., until approximately 8:40 p.m.

¶5.21 AFTER RECESS—8:54 P.M.

The SPEAKER called the House to order.

¶5.22 JOINT SESSION TO RECEIVE A
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Vice President and Members of the Senate, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned them, the Vice President taking the Chair to the right of the Speaker.

Whereupon, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 9, the SPEAKER called the joint session of the two Houses to order.

The SPEAKER announced the appointment of Messrs. ARMEY, DELAY, BOEHNER, COX, DICKEY, HUTCHINSON, GEPHARDT, BONIOR, FAZIO, Mrs. KENNELLY, Messrs. BERRY, and SNYDER as members of the Committee on the part of the House to escort the President into the Hall of the House.

The Vice President announced the appointment of Messrs. LOTT, NICKLES, MACK, COVERDELL, CRAIG, MCCONNELL, HUTCHINSON, DASCHLE, FORD, Mrs. MIKULSKI, Messrs. BREAUX, KERRY of Massachusetts, REID, ROCKEFELLER, DORGAN, and TORRICELLI as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President into the Hall of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the dean of the ambassadors, ministers,

and charges d'affaires of foreign governments, who entered the Hall of the House and took the seat assigned to him.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned to them.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Members of the President's Cabinet, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned to them.

The President of the United States at 9 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m., escorted by the committees of the two Houses, entered the Hall of the House and, at the Clerk's desk, delivered the following message:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of the 105th Congress, distinguished guests, and my fellow Americans:

I think I should start by saying thanks for inviting me back.

I come before you tonight with a challenge as great as any in our peacetime history, and a plan of action to meet that challenge, to prepare our people for the bold new world of the 21st century.

We have much to be thankful for. With 4 years of growth, we have won back the basic strength of our economy. With crime and welfare rolls declining, we are winning back our optimism, the enduring faith that we can master any difficulty. With the Cold War receding and global commerce at record levels, we are helping to win an unrivaled peace and prosperity all across the world.

My fellow Americans, the state of our union is strong, but now we must rise to the decisive moment, to make a Nation and a world better than any we have ever known. The new promise of the global economy, the information age, unimagined new work, life-enhancing technology, all these are ours to seize. That is our honor and our challenge. We must be shapers of events, not observers. For if we do not act, the moment will pass, and we will lose the best possibilities of our future.

We face no imminent threat, but we do have an enemy: The enemy of our time is inaction.

So tonight I issue a call to action, action by this Congress, action by our States, by our people, to prepare America for the 21st century. Action to keep our economy and our democracy strong and working for all our people; action to strengthen education and harness the forces of technology and science; action to build stronger families and stronger communities and a safer environment; action to keep America the world's strongest force for peace, freedom, and prosperity. And above all, action to build a more perfect union here at home.

The spirit we bring to our work will make all the difference. We must be committed to the pursuit of opportunity for all Americans, responsibility from all Americans, in a community of all Americans. And we must be com-

mitted to a new kind of government, not to solve all our problems for us, but to give our people, all our people, the tools they need to make the most of their own lives.

And we must work together. The people of this Nation elected us all. They want us to be partners, not partisans. They put us all right here in the same boat. They gave us all oars, and they told us to row. Now, here is the direction I believe we should take. First we must move quickly to complete the unfinished business of our country, to balance the budget, renew our democracy, and finish the job of welfare reform.

Over the last 4 years, we have brought new economic growth by investing in our people, expanding our exports, cutting our deficits, creating over 11 million new jobs, a 4-year record. Now we must keep our economy the strongest in the world. We here tonight have an historic opportunity. Let this Congress be the Congress that finally balances the budget.

In two days, I will propose a detailed plan to balance the budget by 2002. This plan will balance the budget and invest in our people while protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment. It will balance the budget and build on the Vice President's efforts to make our government work better even as it costs less.

It will balance the budget and provide middle class tax relief to pay for education and health care, to help to raise a child, to buy and sell a home.

Balancing the budget requires only your vote and my signature. It does not require us to rewrite our Constitution.

I believe it is both unnecessary and unwise to adopt a balanced budget amendment that could cripple our country in time of economic crisis and force unwanted results, such as judges halting Social Security checks or increasing taxes. Let us at least agree we should not pass any measure, no measure should be passed that threatens Social Security. Whatever your view on that, we all must concede, we do not need a constitutional amendment; we need action.

Whatever our differences, we should balance the budget now. And then for the long-term health of our society, we must agree to a bipartisan process to preserve Social Security and reform Medicare for the long run so that these fundamental programs will be as strong for our children as they are for our parents.

And let me say something that is not in my script tonight: I know this is not going to be easy, but I really believe one of the reasons the American people gave me a second term was to take the tough decisions in the next four years that will carry our country through the next 50 years. I know it is easier for me than for you to say or do, but another reason I was elected is to support all of you without regard to party to give you what is necessary to join in these decisions. We owe it to our country and to our future.