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Message to the Senate Transmitting the International Grains Agreement, 1995, With Documentation

April 7, 1997

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Grains Trade Convention and Food Aid Convention constituting the International Grains Agreement, 1995, open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from May 1 through June 30, 1995. The Conventions were signed by the United States on June 26, 1995. I transmit also for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Conventions.

The Grains Trade Convention, 1995, replaces the Wheat Trade Convention, 1986, and maintains the framework for international cooperation in grains trade matters. It also continues the existence of the International Grains Council.

The Food Aid Convention, 1995, replaces the Food Aid Convention, 1986, and renews commitments of donor member states to provide minimum annual quantities of food aid to developing countries.

The International Grains Council and the Food Aid Committee granted the United States (and other countries) a 1-year extension of time in which to deposit its instruments of ratification, and have permitted the United States in the meantime to continue to participate in the organizations.

It is my hope that the Senate will give prompt and favorable consideration to the two Conventions, and give its advice and consent to ratification so that ratification by the United States can be effected and instruments of ratification deposited at the earliest possible date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 7, 1997.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Supplemental Funding for the Federal Election Commission

April 7, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests for an FY 1997 supplemental and an FY 1998 budget amendment for the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

The FEC is charged with guarding the integrity of our election process. I have sought to strengthen this important agency; its budget has increased from $21 million per year in 1993 to $28 million per year today. But the agency plainly lacks the resources it needs to keep pace with the rapidly rising volume of campaign spending and electoral activities. In fact, over the past 2 years, the Congress has appropriated for the FEC substantially less than I requested.

Today, commissioners of both parties have testified that the FEC is overworked, underfunded, and unable to address the many issues raised in recent elections. Campaign spending by candidates, soft money expenditures by parties, independent expenditures, and issue advocacy expenditures have exploded. As part of a bipartisan effort to restore the public trust in the way we finance elections to the Congress and the Presidency, I urge you to provide these additional funds for the FEC.

In addition, I urge the Congress to enact legislation that would strengthen the FEC as part of comprehensive campaign finance reform. The bipartisan campaign finance reform legislation introduced by Representatives Chris Shays and Marty Meehan and Senators John McCain and Russell Feingold includes several critical steps to strengthen the FEC, strengthening the agency's ability to stop improper practices and allowing random audits of campaigns.

The details of my budget requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director

of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks Welcoming Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada
April 8, 1997

Prime Minister and Mrs. Chretien, members of the Canadian delegation, distinguished guests, it is a great honor and personal pleasure for me to welcome to Washington the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien, leader of a land of great beauty and bounty and a great and good people.

When Hillary and I visited Ottawa in 1995, the Prime Minister and the Canadian people made us feel as if we were family. The personal working relationship I have established with the Prime Minister for nearly 4 years now has made us good friends.

Today we celebrate one of history's most remarkable partnerships, for if nature has made us neighbors, we are friends and allies by choice. The close cooperation between our two nations should be a model for the world in the 21st century. Every day, 250,000 people and nearly $1 billion in trade cross our border. From the snowy Yukon to the shores of eastern Maine, our border does not divide our people; it joins us as partners and friends, with more and better jobs, cleaner air and water, the comforting knowledge that our freedom is jointly guarded and defended. Together we are working to shape the force of change to serve our region and our world, expanding trade throughout the Americas, exploring the mysteries of space, speaking out for freedom, and standing up for peace from Bosnia to Haiti. In a world where suffering too often results because people cannot live with others different from themselves, Canada's compassionate, tolerant society inspires us all with hope.

A Canadian Ambassador to Washington once said that summits between our nations are a time to set the beacon jointly. Under your wise leadership, Mr. Prime Minister, relations between the United States and Canada have never been closer or more constructive. As we stand on the threshold of a new millennium, let us raise our beacon high. Let us build a future of peace and prosperity, of freedom and dignity for our continent and beyond.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Prime Minister Chretien was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Chretien's wife, Aline.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada and an Exchange With Reporters
April 8, 1997

President Clinton. Good morning, everybody. I'm delighted to have the Prime Minister here, and we're just about to start a conversation about NATO expansion, which is something of importance to both of us, and about some trade issues and a number of other matters. We have a lot of good agreements that we're going to have signed during this trip, so we're excited about that.

And we're going to have a press conference afterwards, so we'll be able to answer questions about it all.