

the Congress will work with me and so that all Americans can have health care security.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 21, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3103, approved August 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104-191.

Statement on Signing the War Crimes Act of 1996

August 21, 1996

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 3680, the "War Crimes Act of 1996." This bill, in furtherance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, extends U.S. criminal jurisdiction over certain war crimes and provides the United States with clearer authority to prosecute violations of the laws of war.

Most grave breaches of the Conventions are already subject to U.S. prosecution if committed in the United States and many—such as hostage taking, terrorism or genocide—could be prosecuted even if committed abroad. However, many other crimes which would be considered grave breaches of the Conventions could not be prosecuted in United States courts. This legislation is designed to help fill that gap. It authorizes the prosecution of war criminals if they are found in or extradited to the United States. It applies to U.S. nationals or members of the Armed Forces who are perpetrators or victims of war crimes. It would apply, for example, in the case of American civilians subjected to war crimes in an overseas conflict.

This legislation represents an important reaffirmation of American leadership in the development of the law for the protection of victims of war.

In keeping with this leadership role, however, we can and should do even more to strengthen the law in this area. To that end, my Administration is committed to working with the Congress to expand the scope of this legislation. This expansion should address: (1) war crimes committed by *any* person who comes within the jurisdiction of the United States courts, including crimes committed by non-U.S. persons against non-U.S. victims; (2) cases involving other serious war

crimes not covered by H.R. 3680, such as those prohibited by The Hague Conventions of 1907; and (3) cases involving acts to be made criminal under the recently improved landmines protocol of the Convention on Conventional Weapons. This broadening of the law would not require the United States to exercise jurisdiction in any particular case, but would provide the authority to do so in the national interest.

This bill and the expansions we seek have been endorsed by the American Red Cross, which has had an important role to play in this area ever since its founder Clara Barton took the lead in securing U.S. ratification of the first Geneva Convention. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also voiced its support for our efforts to broaden the scope of this legislation.

In sum, this bill serves important goals and is a significant step forward. Now we should build on this progress and seek further improvements in promoting respect for the laws of war and in reinforcing protections for the victims of war.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 21, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3680, approved August 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104-192.

Proclamation 6912—Women's Equality Day, 1996

August 21, 1996

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Since America's earliest days, our citizens have engaged in a passionate struggle to create a Nation where all can enjoy the benefits of democracy in equal measure. In 1920, we took a great step toward that noble goal by declaring that the right to vote could not be denied on the basis of gender. This 76th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution gives us an opportunity to celebrate the advances made in empowering women to fully participate in the

political, cultural, social, and economic life of our country.

At long last we are seeing the fruits of our efforts to establish a society made strong by its vast diversity—a place where women not only make gains in traditionally male fields, but also use their talents and perspectives to enlarge the scope of public life. The extraordinary success of our female athletes at the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta is one stirring example of this progress. Historically excluded from so many arenas, today's women are carrying a shining torch of hope for younger generations to follow.

Now the challenge is to keep the doors of opportunity open and to build on the changes begun by the ratification of the 19th Amendment. We must continue to encourage women to pursue elected office and to contribute to the civil discourse. Every American stands to gain when women and men of all backgrounds participate in the political process and exercise their right to vote. This is a right that we must never take for granted—and a responsibility we must never shirk—because it gives each of us a voice in our national debate and calls every citizen to join in the pursuit of our Nation's fundamental ideals.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 26, 1996, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon all Americans to reflect on both the struggles and accomplishments of all women and to promote the observance of this day with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:49 a.m., August 22, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 23.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on the Korean
Peninsula Energy Development
Organization**

August 21, 1996

Dear Mr. _____:

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading "International Organizations and Programs" in Title IV of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104-107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Mark O. Hatfield, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on the
Partnership For Peace Initiative**

August 21, 1996

Dear Mr. _____:

In accordance with section 514(a) of Public Law 103-236 (22 U.S.C. 1928(a)), I am submitting to you this report on implementation of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative.

The ongoing adaptation of Europe's security structures to post-Cold War realities remains one of our highest foreign policy priorities. A central element of this adaptation is the extension of NATO's zone of stability and security to Europe's emerging democracies. Over the past two and a half years, the Partnership for Peace has made a significant contribution to this goal by forging new cooperative ties between the Alliance and its Partners. This U.S. initiative has united NATO Allies with countries recently emerged from communist and traditionally neutral states in a partnership based on respect for democratic principles, peaceful resolution of disputes, and practical cooperation.

For all Partners, PFP will be an enduring instrument for forging stronger ties with